

# History of Summerslam Count-Up – 2008: Batista vs. Cena And Undertaker in the Cell. This Works.

## Summerslam 2008

Date: August 17, 2008

Location: Conseco Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Indiana

Attendance: 15,997

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz, Todd Grisham, Matt Striker

Another year and here we are at the final Summerslam before this year's installment. The main guys are still the main guys, except CM Punk is now the World Heavyweight Champion. The belts have switched again by the way. The real main event here is Batista vs. Cena but the match going on last is Taker vs. Edge in the Cell to finally blow off this feud.

They tried to make this show more of a dream card and I think to an extent it worked. HHH vs. Great Khali is the other title match and it's gotten a lot of criticism, but I've always liked it. Since it's been such a short time since this show, there's only so much I can rant on here, but let's get to it.

The theme of this show is the biggest blockbuster of the summer. This led to some creative ideas of various wrestlers in movie roles, with the best one being Jericho as Indiana Jones. The voiceover guy says there's never been a box office bust. He never saw Summerslam 1995 did he? They play up Taker and Edge as the main event which is fine as it's likely the bigger match. I'll get to that later as it deserves a real tribute for one of the promos that was done about it.

## Jeff Hardy vs. MVP

Jeff would be launched into the world title scene shortly after this, eventually getting the title in December. Needless to say, he's ridiculously over. Ross says that Hardy gets a Michael Phelps like reaction. That's just funny knowing what we know now about Phelps. MVP is still full heel here as he should be every time he's in the ring. The set looks cool too as it looks like a movie marquee with the match that's going on at the moment on it. I like that.

MVP is dominating this. Hardy has had next to no offense the entire match as it's been all MVP since he hit a belly to belly suplex very early on which messed up Jeff's neck and back. Since then, that's all MVP has worked on. What a great concept. Someone hurts something and you go after it. Who would have thought of something like that?

There's so much back and neck work here that it's like I'm watching an Angle match. Hardy gets to the apron and tries a springboard move but MVP just punches him in the face. I freaking LOVE that. When all else fails, just hit him in the face.

MVP gets him down in the corner and sets up for the Drive By, but apparently his slapping the mat, posing and yelling allows Jeff to hear him coming and he avoids it. Jeff makes his comeback but as he's going for the Bomb, Shelton runs out and Jeff dives on him. He misses the Swanton this time and MVP kicks him in the head for the pin. I don't remember Jeff and Shelton doing anything.

**Rating:** B. This was a good match. The psychology was right there and MVP got the win which he needed far more than Hardy. Hardy just got beaten up in this match and he got beaten up badly, so that's a perk. Either way, this was a good match with both guys looking solid. Why they never pulled the trigger on MVP I'm not sure.

Maria is an interviewer tonight I guess and is with Santino and Beth. This was when Santino was I guess at his peak and so of course the company decided to shove him down our throats. Beth looks ungodly hot here.

We have a poll about will Edge and Vickie divorce? Yes they would about 6 months later.

### IC/Women's Title: Mickie/Kofi vs. Beth/Santino

There's a very simple concept here as Adamle was out of room on the card for both matches so he put them together and the winners leave with both titles. I love Kofi as the IC Champion. He was young, good, popular and in need of the push. What more can you ask for from the IC Champion? Mickie needs to wear white more often. The men can fight the women here. Beth beats up Mickie but she beats up Santino as spellcheck hates this match.

Kofi beats up the Italian so this is getting better all the time. Kofi is one of the few guys that can pull off the all yellow look. This is a lot of stalling until Kofi can kick it into high gear. Santino is pure comedy here, or at least an attempt at it. Mickie beats him up even more, but Beth catches Mickie with the Implant Buster or whatever it's called to win it. Cole calls Beth he I think by mistake. Beth carries Santino out on her shoulders.

**Rating:** D. Not only was it boring but the booking was stupid. Oh yeah let's take the belt off of a great choice in Kofi for the sake of comedy! Yeah the belt will be just fine. This was the beginning of the killing of the IC belt that it took Rey to save. I hated this, but Kofi and Mickie's figure brings us back to a passing grade.

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We hear about Shawn's eye injury from the Great American Bash. More or less, he's going to announce if he's retiring or not

here tonight. Jericho wants him gone. He was wrestling at house shows in between the PPVs, so obviously he wasn't that hurt. Shawn comes out with his very hot wife named ReBECCA for this big announcement. She's taller than he is. That's just funny. This is going to be a long segment.

Shawn surprisingly says that he's going to retire. Shawn thanks the fans and goes through all of his career highlights, including the screwjob and beginning DX. Geez his hair is falling out fast. As he's thanking everyone, Jericho's music kicks on. You know for someone that's gotten rid of everything old, he's sticking to that music like processed horse. Jericho says that he wants Shawn to admit that he's quitting because of Jericho and not the eye injury.

Shawn says he'll sit his kids and his wife down and admit that but Jericho has to sit his wife and kids down and tell them that he'll never be Shawn Michaels. The crowd pops like crazy over that as this is one of the best segments I've ever seen. To up this even further, Shawn turns to leave but Jericho throws a punch that hits Shawn's wife. Jericho leaves as Shawn is panicking. Everyone runs out to help her as Jericho leaves. The fans are eating this up with a spoon.

She sold it perfectly too so that's helping a lot. This would lead to Shawn nearly killing Jericho at Unforgiven where Jericho would actually win the title, leading to the ladder match at No Mercy to finally end this feud.

Some movie is sponsoring this show.

ECW Title: Matt Hardy vs. Mark Henry

Henry is champion here. He came over to ECW and just tore the place up, leading to this match. This is what I guess you could call the Michael Hayes Special. It was around this time that Hayes had used some racial slurs in the back and Henry complained about it. Soon thereafter, Kofi won the IC Title, Shelton got the US Title and Henry the ECW Title. You might

call it a coincidence, but it's a bit too much for me to believe.

Henry even got the new belt because it didn't fit around his overly large gut. He also has Tony Atlas with him here for no apparent reason. I think it was because Henry is horrible as a talker. We get the big fight introductions which never cease being cool. Bell rings and we're off. Striker tells us who is who and what colors they're wearing since we couldn't tell that ourselves. Matt pops him with some punches but Henry just powers him to the corner.

Wait, Matt hits the Twist and goes for the cover? What the heck? Atlas pulls him out...and it's a DQ in 30 seconds. Um, WHAT THE HECK? I know the Shawn segment was long but DUDE, you couldn't fit in a three minute match before we do this? Oh that's right. We had to have Santino celebrate instead.

Atlas beats on Matt but Jeff runs out and helps fight the two muscle guys off. Striker says the Hardys might be the best tag team in the last twenty years. Yeah, I'm not going near that one as it's too easy to make fun of.

**Rating:** N/A. Really, what was the point of this? Matt would get the title the next month.

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Same poll question is asked.

We get a recap of JBL vs. Punk. Punk won the title back in June in an epic moment, stealing the belt from Edge with the MITB contract. The problem was Punk was treated badly as champion, just as he was in his second reign. Think about it. This past reign he lost clean to Morrison twice. In the first reign, Batista won or barely lost at least once. Why can they not just give him a clean win? Maybe they will here, but over a weak opponent.

## Raw World Title: JBL vs. CM Punk

Punk's line of "some people like to refer to me as a fluke. I like to refer to myself as world heavyweight champion." is just great. Punk gets a solid reaction during the intros. It's not huge but it's good. They talk about how this is a culture clash and they're exactly right. I really like that actually as it's definitely old school vs. new school as they say it is. For once they're absolutely right. I love that suicide dive that Punk throws out a lot of the time.

They actually call JBL Bradshaw which I haven't heard him referred to in forever. JBL tries a bearhug but it turns into a reverse waistlock. JBL is pretty bad at this point as his injuries were just getting to be too much for him. The main thing here is Punk's ribs being worked on, which while a bit generic is something that works just about every time. Bradshaw's style works well there so it's not like he is doing something out of the ordinary.

A few submissions follow but surprisingly enough Punk wins a slug out. He hits a leg lariat but in an unplanned spot, JBL's head slams into Punk's which busts him open without cutting him. That was just painful looking. They hammer on each other a bit more, but Punk avoids a big power move to hit the GTS for a clean pin. I know that was short, but it wasn't designed to be an epic match.

It was about 11 minutes and it made Punk look good as it was supposed to. He needed a clean win with the GTS to make himself look at least respectable. Lawler and Cole don't do him any favors as they still talk about how he's a fluke champion and a Cinderella story. Why do they need to do that? We get it, but the point of that match was to build him up a bit harder. Why mention what they were trying to overcome here?

**Rating:** B-. It was pretty generic at times, but it was

certainly solid. JBL was doing what he was best at: slow methodical offense that made Punk look good when he came back from it. This was what Punk needed to make his reign a lot more credible: a clean pinfall victory over a big name. He would lose the title without being in the match next month due to the Scramble while JBL would move on to HBK after he got done with Jericho.

Khali is warming up in the back. That leads us to this recap. There wasn't much of a story here other than Khali wanting a shot. The basic idea of this feud is simple: HHH can't get the Pedigree on Khali.

### Smackdown World Title: HHH vs. Great Khali

The fans pop huge for HHH. Khali's size is flat out scary. I've seen him at house shows and he's just absolutely massive. We get a cool stat that the WWE Title has been defended 17 times out of 20 Summerslams but it's only changed 3 times. That's very impressive actually. One more time we get the big match introductions. Khali is booed pretty loudly. HHH is only 255 here so he's slimmed down a bit. HHH is the faster guy here which isn't something you see that often.

He goes for the Pedigree within 30 seconds which doesn't hit. Less than a minute in Khali hits the double handed chokeslam and the vice. HHH becomes the first guy to escape that hold but it's not him hogging the spotlight. He's smart enough to kick the knees out, which plays to his being the Cerebral Assassin. That makes sense, so shut up HHH haters. Ok, we've been in this two minutes and Khali has used his three signature moves. That makes sense. MASSIVE you can't wrestle chant.

Khali busts out a leg drop, so obviously he can wrestle, since that guy was an in ring general. The crowd isn't convinced though as the chant starts again. It might be the neck grip that he's using that doesn't really cause a lot of pain I

wouldn't think. HHH gets the facebuster to lock Khali in the ropes.

Nothing comes of it though as he's out very fast. Pedigree try #2 doesn't work either. HHH is smart again as he goes for the knees. That's the best thing to do against a guy this massive. He uses the vice again as this is very back and forth. The Game forces the hands off but they're right back on again, and it's knee time. The third time on the Pedigree works and HHH wins.

**Rating:** B+. Now a lot of people are going to say this match sucks, but I disagree. This is probably Khali's best match ever, and I think a lot of the credit for that should go to HHH. The idea here was that HHH just had to survive until he could hit his one big home run move.

Once he got that the match was going to be over and that's exactly what happened. That makes perfect sense. The whole match was about him trying to hit the Pedigree and when he did it won the match. What more can you ask for out of something like this? There's only so much you can do with Khali, so they did the best they could, and it worked out very well to me.

We get the recap of Cena vs. Batista, which the more I think about it, the more I like the short buildup. This match was based on two titans clashing and that's all there needed to be. Cena's One Day promo is something I really like.

More or less what he says is that despite all the years of him being the supposed biggest thing in the company, Batista got all the accolades and that one day, they would have their showdown. When you hear Cena talk, you have to give him this: he admits he has faults, unlike someone like Hogan who just screams about how great he is. It's nice to hear both sides of it for a change.

John Cena vs. Batista



Big staredown before the bell and it's on. This definitely has the big fight atmosphere and it's working perfectly. You may not like either guy but you can't argue that this is the biggest match the company had for a long time. Seeing this as one of the main events at Wrestlemania is still just awesome looking. Batista Bomb is avoided early as it's kind of a long feeling out process to start.

Release fisherman's suplex gets two for Cena as I have a feeling a strong style is coming. Side slam by Batista gets two. FU is blocked and Big Dave goes for the knee. Batista gets a figure four as the fans all go WOO as you would think two people just kissed on a sitcom. After a rope is grabbed Cena hits the FU on Batista but it's over the top rope so we kind of hit a break.

Here come the shoulders and the Protoplex sets up the 5 Knuckle Shuffle. Since it's a freaking punch though Big Dave pops up and kicks Cena's head off so that both guys are down. Big spinebuster by Batista but the Batista Bomb is countered into the STFU that has ZERO pressure on the neck or upper body at first. The fans boo the heck out of this.

The positioning of the knee in this hold is always freaky looking to me and looks horrendous every time. A rope is almost grabbed but Cena pulls them back to the center. He's been in it nearly a full minute now but FINALLY the rope is grabbed. FU is blocked again into a rear naked choke of all things by the Animal. The good thing here is you get a closeup of the arm and it's not fully on so there is a legit reason for Cena not dying.

After elbows get Cena out of the hold a BIG OLD SPEAR puts him down. Sometimes there's nothing better than a big old tackle. Batista goes for a powerslam but Cena counters like people counter Tombstones into a BIG FU for a long two. Fans are WAY into this too.

Cena goes up top but Batista goes up too and we slug it out on the buckle. Nice place for the boo/yay spot. Cena shoves him off but goes for the leg drop into the powerbomb which more or less snapped his neck after it was already hurt and put him out for three months until the biggest shock in like ever as he was #30 in the Rumble. Somehow it gets two so Batista hits one of the biggest Batista Bombs ever ends this clean.

Rating: A. This was the super match that everyone wanted to see and it was a great one. Both guys were spot on to say the least. Batista gets an unfair reputation as being bad, but when it's a big match, he brings it. The ending of this match was excellent, with neither guy being able to do it. I don't like the strong style like that being used that often, but when it's done right, it's a thing of beauty.

The ending with Batista just losing it and beating Cena down until there was no way he was getting up was great as it plays up to the Animal theory. This was a showdown that lived up to the hype and left the door open for the Mania rematch that we know is coming one day. This loss does something else: it keeps Cena human.

He's dominated everyone, but there's one man that he just can't beat: Batista. It gives him something to shoot for. He lost the Rumble to him in 2005 and he lost here as well. That's a great touch indeed.

The poll results say that Vickie and Edge will divorce.

The Cell is lowered and the fans pop huge. This is the newer model of the cell which is less wide but taller, making it look more like a cell than a cage. We get the recap for the feud. It started with Taker going after the title and beating Edge at Mania. Edge cheated on his wife later on, resulting in her punishing him with the Cell match upon Taker's return from suspension.

The title aspect of the feud was long over by this point, so

this was a bit weird for a choice. Before the show though, Edge and Foley cut an in ring promo where Foley said that Edge wasn't the same guy he used to be and that Edge would get killed if he didn't change. It was probably the best promo of the year and was absolutely great to say the least.

### Hell in a Cell: Undertaker vs. Edge

Both guys are well received, but of course Taker gets the mega pop as he's beyond legendary status at this point. We start with a fistfight and of course Taker dominates. He hits a SWEET kick to the face to get a real advantage. Taker always gets insane out there and it's great every time. His most famous moment has to be throwing Foley, so if nothing else consider that for his stuff in here.

They're already on the floor and have spent more time there than they did in the ring. Stairs are brought into the ring so we're going hardcore already. Taker hits Snake Eyes onto the stairs but Edge blocks it I guess as he really isn't hurt by it. Spear is hit into the steps, (granted Taker is sitting up against them so it's more like a running shoulder block) so they're saying screw the thought process I guess.

Oh look it's a table, so I guess this is the hardcore cell now? Another table is leaned against the cage. We have a double stack of tables on the floor. I'm curious to see how that's going to work as there's far less room between the cage and the ring than there used to be. Edge gets a chair so we're up to three different weapons in less than ten minutes. At least they're staying true to the original concept. I hate changes to a match like this.

You can hear the fans chanting Edge so even back then he had a lot of fans. It'll be good for him to come back as a face. He's a great heel, but it's not going to kill him to change a bit. Sick chair shot to Taker as Edge is completely in control here, which I think I expected him to be. This isn't your

standard HIAC match yet though as it's been more of a hardcore match in a cage, which I don't think I like that much. And now we have a ladder.

They had a TLC match already, so I guess they need one in a cage too? We get a ton of weapons shots but it ends with Edge trying a conchairto that Taker just sits up and chokes him to escape and take back over. Back on the outside, Taker just kills Edge with the steps. The sound on this was just great. Edge of course is back on offense in about 8 seconds and he spears Taker through a section of the Cell which crashes down onto the table.

It wasn't as cool as when Lashley did it to Umaga, but it certainly wasn't bad. Now they're on the floor in front of the cage. You know, I don't remember if there's ever been a Cell match that stayed in the cage. It's almost a running joke. Again, there's only so much I can make fun of here as it's been an intense, well fought match. Edge runs across some tables and spears him through the ECW table which has replaced the Spanish Announcer Table as the destroyed furniture of choice.

Taker pops up of course and is now dominating. The no selling is getting to be very annoying now. They're back in the cell now with Edge beating on him with the ladder as the Home Depot main event continues. We see Vickie and the remnants of La Familia, the worst stable in recent history, looking on. The commentators try to figure out if they're happy or not. Well they're not clapping their hands, so if they're happy they don't know it. Edge brings in a camera so maybe it's a Staples match.

Taker avoids the spear and chokeslams Edge for a long two. Jim Ross must be the Chris Berman of wrestling with all of these annoying nicknames for people. Also, why does he have to keep referring to the cell like it has thoughts of its own? Is this a wrestling match or a Stephen King story? Edgecution which is

called the Impaler, which needs to come back. It's such a better move than the spear which a lot of people use and he's not that good at it either.

Taker sets for the Last Ride through the double stack of tables on the outside but takes a spear instead. They say that Taker has had more issues dealing with Edge than anyone else. I think Kane and Foley would disagree. Also the fact that he never beat Bret Hart could be a factor in there. Last Ride gets two. Ross gets the great line of Last Ride means Last Rites. If you thought I was being legit there, you need help.

Edge is pretty much dead at this point but he comes back long enough to hit an Edge-a-Matic on the stairs to make ANOTHER comeback out of the Tombstone. Ross points out that Taker isn't standing. That's another line that I don't even need to make fun of. Edge tries Old School. Now, let's count how many ways this is going to not work. Well, Taker chokeslamming him through the two tables outside would be the best way I guess, and that's what he does.

Tazz says that Edge looks like he fell off of a building. Actually I'd say he looks like he got chokeslammed off of the top rope through two tables inside a Hell in a Cell cage by the Undertaker at Summerslam 2008, but keep in mind I'm not a professional. How many buildings do you know of that have tables stacked up on the ground outside of them? Back in the ring, Edge gets speared as Taker shows how you steal a move.

It was B+A while in special mode on No Mercy for those of you interested. He follows this up with a SICK camera shot to Edge's head. Dang this is more of a slaughter than he should have gotten in the WZ Tournament this year. Conchairto is next, as Edge never should be able to wrestle again. The tombstones finishes this absolute massacre. La Familia is applauding. Taker walks up the aisle but turns around and comes back.

Ok, I'm not huge on Edge, but dang it let the man live. He gets the ladder which isn't much taller than Taker is actually. He stands Edge up on it so it's like he was climbing and fell asleep. Taker gets another ladder next to it as I'm not sure what he's setting for. He chokeslams Edge through the ring to FINALLY end the show.

OR DOES HE???

Taker gets on his knees and raises his arms, as fire stars shooting out of the hole. JR says where Taker sent Edge. Oh man it why did they have to go there? Yeah, that hurt things a LOT.

**Rating:** A-. I'm not wild on the weapons in there. The idea of the Cell is to have it be enough to hurt people. More or less you had a TLC match in the cage, which both worked and didn't work at the same time. On one hand, you had an incredibly violent match with a definitive winner of the feud in Taker, but you also had a lot of clutter in there.

I think the weapons could work but they just used FAR too many of them. The fire at the end was just stupid. So wait, Edge is there now? If so, then why was he back on TV a few months later completely fine? See why it makes NO FREAKING SENSE???

**Overall Rating:** A-. A very solid show here, as there's just one bad match and one headscratcher in the double title match. Other than that, this is a very good show. Your two non title matches are both great, the world title matches are solid, and you have a solid segment.

The only thing I think that's missing would be the match with Hardy and Henry. Why not have like 3 minutes worth instead of 30 seconds? Were they running so close to the time limit that they couldn't spare two minutes or so? Either way, this was a great show and one of the better ones I've seen.

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