

Royal Rumble Count-Up: 2013 Redo – 1992: Heenan And Flair's Night To Shine

Royal Rumble 1992

Date: January 19, 1992

Location: Knickerbocker Arena, Albany, New York

Attendance: 17,000

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Bobby Heenan

This year's Rumble is often called the greatest ever, but I wonder how much of that is because of Bobby Heenan's masterful commentary. The WWF Title is on the line in the Rumble, which to date (2012) is the only time this has ever happened. I could see that being a really good stipulation again, but for some reason it never has again. I remember loving this show so let's get to it.

We start with the usual listing of most of the people in the Rumble, all of whom are #1 contenders I suppose.

Heenan is betting on Flair for tonight's Rumble. Also we've got a NEW Intercontinental Champion as Mountie has beaten Bret Hart over the weekend. Now there's something you don't see everyday.

Orient Express vs. New Foundation

It's Owen/Neidhart as the Foundation here. Owen and Kato start thing off here. All four guys look like they're in pajamas here. Owen takes him down to the mat by the arm before climbing up the ropes (not in the corner mind you but just the ropes) to backflip into the ring for an armdrag. A rana puts Kato down and it's off to Neidhart vs. Tanaka. Tanaka gets run over as well, so here's Owen to beat him up.

Tanaka gets caught by an enziguri and it's back to Neidhart. The Express gets clotheslined down by Jim and Owen adds a double cross body for two. A spinwheel kick gets the same for Hart so Kato tries to come in sans

tag. The distraction lets Fuji hit Owen with the cane to finally give the Express control. Tanaka hooks a chinlock as this isn't exactly as fast paced as last year's opener.

Owen gets to do Bret's chest to the buckle bump before charging into a superkick in the other corner for two. After Kato comes in and does nothing, here's Tanaka again for a headbutt to the abdomen. A chinlock goes nowhere but a headbutt gets two on Owen. Neidhart gets the tag but the referee doesn't see it of course. The distraction allows Fuji to put the cane on the corner and Owen's shoulder goes through it in a loud crunch.

It only gets two though as Owen gets a leg over the rope. Kato channels his inner Anderson with a hammerlock slam before it's back to Tanaka. Owen finally escapes and things break down for a bit, resulting in a double clothesline for two on Hart. A superkick to the chest doesn't put Owen down, but Tanaka jumping over Kato to land on Hart's back does. Hart comes back with a dropkick to take out both members of the Express at once. There's the hot tag to Neidhart and house is cleaned. Owen dives onto Kato before a Rocket Launcher gets the pin on Tanaka.

Rating: B-. Decent match here but it felt like they were trying to do the same match that worked so well in 1991. The problem was the Express wasn't anything that good anymore and the team was gone almost immediately after this. Either way, the match wasn't bad and it's fine for an opener. The New Foundation never quite did anything until 1994 when Owen was a heel.

We get a clip from the house show where Mountie won the IC Title from Bret. Post match he kept beating on Bret but Roddy Piper came out for the save.

Jimmy and Mountie brag about winning the title. Mountie is ready for Piper tonight.

Piper is ready for Mountie and tells Mountie to just try to take his manhood.

Intercontinental Title: Roddy Piper vs. The Mountie

Piper slowly removes his kilt and Mountie cracks jokes. When the champ turns his head, Piper shoves the kilt in his face and takes over quickly. We head to the floor with Mountie quickly reeling. Back in the ring and Mountie chokes a bit before getting punched in the face. A very delayed bulldog puts Mountie down and Piper easily wins a slugout. He misses a dropkick though and Mountie puts on a half nelson. A jumping back elbow gets two for Mountie as does a sunset flip for Piper. Piper atomic drops him to the apron but Mountie skins the cat. He also collides with Jimmy Hart and the sleeper gives Piper the title.

Rating: D. The match itself sucked but there was never any doubt about this match at all. Mountie is about as textbook a definition of a transitional champion as you'll ever see and the place went NUTS when Piper won the title. This would be Piper's only singles title in the WWF and his only title period (other than those before he got to the WWF in the first place) until he won the US Title in WCW for less than two weeks.

Hogan says he has no friends in the Rumble tonight. He talks to Lord Alfred Hayes about tea because Hayes is British and that's about it.

The Bushwhackers and Jamison....oh geez it's him. This is one of the most annoying characters in wrestling history. He's supposed to be the ultimate nerd, with a nasal voice, taped up glasses, a suit that doesn't fit, and every other stereotype you can think of. Oh and he smells like sardines apparently. Let's get this over with.

Beverly Brothers vs. Bushwhackers

This is more about the managers (Genius and Jamison respectively) more than the teams. Jamison chews on his tie as the Whackers do their arm thing to the audience. The Whackers lick each other and Jamison pulls out a roll for a snack. One of the Beverlies slaps Butch in the head so the Beverlies get chased to the floor. We FINALLY get started with Blake vs. Luke with the blonde (the Beverlies) in control.

The Beverly gets bitten on the tights and the Whackers clear the ring again. Jamison throws bread at Genius as the match stalls again. Now Jamison blows his nose in his sock. The fans don't care at all here. Beau

comes in now to beat on Butch but for the third time in like five minutes the Whackers clear the ring again. The Beverlies try to sneak up on the Whackers but keep getting chased off.

Double teaming to Luke's back finally gets us down to a match, but let's keep the camera on Jamison. Jamison keeps chewing on his tie as this keeps up the dullness. A guillotine gets two on Luke as we hit the highlight of the match. No seriously, other than that it's been "comedy" and punching. Genius slaps Jamison to no reaction from anyone at all. A neckbreaker and legdrop hit Luke for no cover. Luke gets away with a move that I'm too bored to remember and it's off to Butch. Things break down and Beau hits a top rope ax handle on Butch for the pin.

Rating: T. As in The Worst Match In Rumble History. Literally. Up to this point the Rumble has had some dull matches but this was absolutely horrible. There's nothing of value here at all and it went on for FIFTEEN MINUTES. The Beverlies weren't even over so this just kept going and going without ever getting anywhere. Absolutely terrible.

Jamison kicks Genius in the shin post match in another moment that gets no reaction.

The LOD says they'll still have the belts after tonight and the Disasters' tongues will be hanging out like dead deer. Did I mention Hawk was pretty insane at this point?

Tag Titles: Legion of Doom vs. Natural Disasters

LOD is defending here. Typhoon (formerly Tugboat) and Hawk start things off. They collide a few times with no one going anywhere so Hawk goes up and takes Typhoon down with a top rope clothesline. Off to Quake who Hawk can't hurt either. A dropkick doesn't have any effect so Hawk convinces Quake to try one of his own. Guess how well that one goes. Off to Animal for a slugout which is a draw.

Animal starts hitting the ropes and speeds WAY up before they hit a double clothesline to put both guys down. Animal picks up Quake for a slam but can't turn him over, giving Quake two. Off to Typhoon who gets kicked in the face and clotheslined down. Back to the Bird Man as we get

a lot more of the collisions that went over so well earlier. Typhoon finally takes him down and Hawk is in trouble via a lot of back pain.

It's time for the hallmark of any power match: the bearhug. Quake comes back in and walks over Hawk a few times. Back to the bearhug for a little more time killing until it's finally back to Animal. Everybody brawls to the floor and it's a lame double countout. Oh wait Typhoon got back in so the Disasters win. Sure why not.

Rating: D. I love the LOD but this match sucked. At the end of the day, this was the totally wrong matchup for them as their entire offense revolved around throwing people around. This was around the time when Hawk was literally on the verge of a breakdown every day but Vince couldn't quite convince them to drop the titles, until they did it on a house show which was never aired because LOD didn't want to lose their heat. It was a different time to say the least.

The Disasters and Hart yell in the back a lot.

Roddy Piper is all fired up about winning the title and dedicates the win to his son Colt. He wants the world title now.

We get a clip from the Barber Shop incident where Shawn turned heel, igniting his singles push in the greatest team split ever.

Ric Flair says he drew #3 but when your name is Ric Flair, that's not a problem. This is a Coliseum Video exclusive so Heenan doesn't know yet.

Time for the interviews from people in the Rumble: Savage, Sid, Repo Man, Bulldog, Roberts, Flair (with Perfect talking with him too. You know, because Flair needs someone to talk for him), Undertaker (Bearer talks for him a bit too) and Hogan.

We get a statement from the biggest waste of oxygen that has ever been a boss in wrestling, Jack Tunney. He basically says the winner of this (he forgets the name of the Rumble) is the world champion. As he's talking, here's a recap of the title situation. Taker beat Hogan for the title at Survivor Series but Flair interfered. Hogan got a rematch about a week later but also kind of cheated to win it back. The title was vacated and

put up for grabs in this year's Rumble, making it by far the biggest Rumble of all time up to that point.

Royal Rumble

Davey Boy Smith is #1 and DiBiase is #2. The slugout is on quickly with Bulldog pounding away but getting sent to the apron. DiBiase stops paying attention and doesn't realize that Smith didn't hit the floor. A clothesline is enough to get rid of DiBiase and leave Bulldog alone in the ring. In at #3: Ric Flair. Heenan: "N00000000000000000000!!!!!!!" Gorilla starts listing off stats about how Flair has no chance and Heenan explodes. He says he can't be objective and you can hear Gorilla roll his eyes.

The gorilla press puts Flair down but he pokes Smith in the eyes to get a breather. It's only temporary though as Davey clotheslines him down. Jerry Sags is #4 and HE BE CLUBBERIN TONY!!! Smith gets double teamed as Heenan is trying to figure out how long Flair would have to be in the match. Smith comes back with a double clothesline and knocks Sags out. Notice how they're keeping the ring emptier here, which is a very good change from the 1991 version.

Haku is #5 and he immediately goes after Smith. Flair goes after Haku, sending Heenan into another fit. "HAVE YOU GONE NUTS???" Flair heads to the floor under the rope as Haku hits a piledriver on Smith. Flair goes after Haku again and hits the knee drop. Haku pounds on Ric in the corner but Smith tosses the Tongan. Shawn Michaels is #6 and he starts firing away punches to Flair. A superkick drops Flair and a gorilla press drops Shawn. I'll let you guess who slammed Michaels.

Flair comes back to drop both guys as Heenan wants a drink. His panic in every line he says is great stuff. Shawn gets caught on the ropes and crotched, followed by Davey throwing him to the apron. Tito Santana is #7 as we get down to a decent tag match, another Rumble tradition. Flair gets Smith to the apron but Tito saves. In far less than two minutes, it's Barbarian at #8. Heenan: "He doesn't like anybody. When I managed him he barely liked me!"

Things slow down a bit as Davey keeps getting sent to the apron. Flair

tries to dump Tito and Shawn at the same time but can't get either guy out. Texas Tornado is #9 and Heenan is losing it. "THEY JUST KEEP GETTING BIGGER!" Von Erich goes right after Flair before shifting over to Michaels. Smith slingshots Michaels, who has to jump a LONG way to get to the buckle.

Santana stomps on Flair as Repo Man is #10. Santana hits a cross body on Barbarian and Flair hits Tornado with LOUD chops. Valentine is #11 and he gets in a chopping match with Flair. Shawn is literally hanging on by his feet. Nikolai Volkoff is #12 (Heenan: "A 320lb Lithuanian!") but Repo Man dumps him in about a minute. Apparently he was a sub for Jannetty after the window thing. That makes more sense. While that's going on, Valentine has Flair in the Figure Four to send Heenan into a new level of panic.

The Boss Man is #13 and he punches everyone in sight. Valentine is out and Shawn starts his goofy selling. Boss Man throws out Repo Man, giving us a current grouping of Von Erich, Michaels, Boss Man, Haku, Santana, Smith and Flair. Flair backdrops Smith out and does the same to Von Erich in just a few seconds. Hercules is #14 as Santana and Shawn eliminate each other.

Barbarian helps Flair with Boss Man, so Flair turns on Barbarian because he, you know, Flair. Hercules dumps Barbarian so Flair dumps Hercules. It's Boss Man and Flair alone now as Heenan needs oxygen. Boss Man hits a spin kick off all things and a right hand, but misses a charge and eliminates himself. Heenan: "FLAIR WINS!"

Piper is #15 and the crowd is right back into this. We're clearly into the second stage now and Heenan LOSES IT. Piper backdrops him down and they head to the floor for a bit. Back in and Piper goes old school with an airplane spin, making Bobby want to cry. There's the sleeper but Jake Roberts is #16. This is when he's pure evil so the crowd goes into a hush. Jake sits in the corner as Flair is still in the sleeper.

Roberts finally breaks up the hold and works over Piper before hitting the short clothesline o Flair. Piper breaks up the DDT (Heenan: "Oh thank you Piper. It's not a skirt, it's a kilt!") and Flair puts Jake in the Figure Four, only to have Piper stomp away on Ric (Heenan: "YOU NO GOOD

DIRTY SKUNK! IT IS A SKIRT!"). Jim Duggan is #17 and he immediately goes after Flair in the corner.

Jake atomic drops Duggan to put all four guys on the mat for a breather. IRS is #18 and he too goes after Flair. Duggan grabs IRS by the tie (Heenan: "He's got him by the tongue!") and pounds away. Duggan saves Piper for no apparent reason and Flair gets beaten up some more. Snuka is #19 and for some reason he saves Flair. Snuka headbutts Duggan which has no effect on either guy of course. Flair, ever the grateful guy, pokes Snuka in the eye.

Piper chops Flair half to death in the corner and the Undertaker is #20. At the moment we've got Taker, Flair, Piper, Snuka, IRS, Roberts and Duggan in the ring. Taker immediately knocks out Snuka, so Flair goes after the Dead Man. Heenan: "WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU???" Duggan goes over to Taker and is immediately kicked in the balls. We get one of the major clock issues that would happen throughout the match, as Gorilla says Flair has been in there over 42 minutes. The whole match hasn't even gone 38 yet and Flair didn't even start. This will get stretched even farther later.

IRS goes to the middle rope for some reason but hops down a few seconds later. Taker grabs Duggan and Flair by the throat as Randy Savage is #21. Roberts immediately hides on the floor until Taker decks Savage. Randy ducks Jake's short clothesline and ERUPTS on him, eliminating Roberts via a high knee. Savage screws up by jumping over the top to get to Roberts. Taker goes to the floor and throws him back in, but Savage goes after Jake again. The ruling is that Savage wasn't thrown to the floor so he's still in. Ignore Andre eliminating himself in 1989 of course.

Flair comes back with a low blow on Taker which has zero effect at all. Berzerker is #22 and we've got IRS, Berzerker, Duggan, Savage, Flair, Piper and Undertaker. Berzerker hits a choke bomb on Savage as Virgil is #23. Everyone goes into one corner of the ring for some reason, with Flair chopping at Taker like a schmuck. Colonel Mustafa (Iron Sheik) is #24. Things slow down a bit as we need someone to come in and clear things out. Rick Martel is #25 and he pounds on the other Ric in the corner.

Savage dumps Mustafa and gets chokes by Taker for his efforts. Hogan is #26 (does he EVER get a bad number?) and he goes right for Taker and Flair. Heenan starts bargaining with God as Martel is sent through the ropes to the floor. Hogan clotheslines Taker out and dumps Berzerker as well. Duggan and Virgil put each other out as the ring clears up a lot. Skinner is #27, giving us Skinner, Hogan, Flair, Piper, Savage, Martel and IRS.

Hogan puts Flair on the apron as Heenan wants another drink. A clothesline puts Flair down again and Sgt. Slaughter is #28. Someone dumps Skinner as Flair officially gets the Rumble record. Sure why not. Sid Justice is #29 and he goes for IRS. Flair pounds on Hogan before shifting over to Sid. Flair pulls Sid to the mat but Sid nips up and clotheslines him down. Warlord is #30, giving us a final grouping of Martel, Piper, Hogan, Flair, Savage, Sid, Slaughter, IRS and Warlord.

Hogan and Flair fight on the floor with Flair getting suplexed. Slaughter gets eliminated by Sid and Hogan kicks Flair down. Piper is sent to the apron by IRS but Piper grabs the tie to eliminate the tax dude. Hogan Hulks Up on Flair but stops to eliminate Warlord with Sid's help. Justice dumps Martel and Piper, giving us a final four of Savage, Flair, Hogan and Sid. That's quite a group.

Sid tosses Savage and Flair tries to chop Hogan in the corner because that's what Ric Flair does. In a famous ending, Hogan punches Flair to the apron but as he's dumping Ric out, Sid comes up from behind to dump Hulk. Hogan grabs Sid's arm, allowing Flair to come up from behind and dump Justice, giving Flair the title and send Bobby into orgasmic bliss.

Rating: A. This is Ric Flair's coming out party in the WWF and it worked perfectly. There are a few down parts to it and while the 1990 edition was more consistently exciting and had a better overall structure, this was all about drama. It also helps that the match actually meant something, as the title was officially on the line. Excellent Rumble and a true surprise to see Flair win the title.

Sid and Hogan have a shoving match post match, setting up their match at Wrestlemania.

Jack Tunney presents an exhausted Flair with the title in the back. Flair gives a victory speech, saying this is the greatest moment in his life. He says this is the only title that means you're the best in the world and Heenan gushes some more.

Overall Rating: B. This is a hard one to grade because the stuff before the Rumble is HORRIBLE. The Rumble however is a masterpiece with Flair and it more than saves the show. There's nothing else on the card that you would want to watch, other than maybe the Piper title win if you're a big fan of the guy. Other than that though, there's nothing to see here other than the Rumble itself.

Ratings Comparison

New Foundation vs. Orient Express

Original: C+

Redo: B-

Roddy Piper vs. Mountie

Original: B

Redo: D

Beverly Brothers vs. Bushwhackers

Original: F-

Redo: T (For The Worst Match In Rumble History)

Natural Disasters vs. Legion of Doom

Original: D

Redo: D

Royal Rumble

Original: A+

Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: B

Redo: B

Other than Piper, this is almost the same set of ratings.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/11/royal-rumble-count-up-1992/>

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