

Summerslam Count-Up – 1993: Luger Chokes Again

Summerslam 1993

Date: August 30, 1993

Location: Palace of Auburn Hills, Detroit, Michigan

Attendance: 23,954

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Bobby Heenan

A lot has changed in the last year. Bret won the WWF Title about three months after the last Summerslam but lost it at Wrestlemania to the monster Yokozuna. Yoko went on a path of destruction through the WWF over the summer, but it was WCW signee Lex Luger who stood up for the USA on the 4th of July in a body slam challenge and is challenging for the title tonight. Hogan is gone, so America's hopes rest on Luger. Let's get to it.

We see Luger's Lex Express bus arriving earlier today. Luger had gone around the country in a bus to get fan support for the match against Yokozuna. Why he didn't stay in the WWF and win matches to get a title shot is beyond me.

Ted DiBiase vs. Razor Ramon

The match starts fast as DiBiase jumps Razor coming in. Razor comes back with a quick backdrop and a slam, sending DiBiase running to the floor. Back in and DiBiase takes it into the corner for some chops, only to be reversed on a whip and clotheslined out to the floor again. Razor pulls him back in but Ted chokes away on the top rope. I love basic heel moves like that. You never see those anymore because it's all about attitude or whatever nonsense WWE tells you now.

Heenan makes jokes about the 1-2-3 Kid, who recently defeated Ramon and triggered his face turn. A clothesline gets two for DiBiase and it's off to the chinlock. It's clear that DiBiase is WAY past his prime here but his prime was so good that this is still totally watchable. Razor's arms stay up on the third drop but DiBiase takes him back down with a swinging

neckbreaker. Ted sends him to the floor and rips off a turnbuckle pad, only to be sent into it himself. The Razor's Edge is good for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not much to see here but DiBiase was nothing more than a jobber to the stars by now anyway. This would actually be the last match in the WWF for DiBiase as he would do a quick run in Japan before retiring by the beginning of the year. The match wasn't bad but it could have been the main event of any episode of Raw.

Todd Petingill interviews some of the Steiners' relatives as we're in their hometown. The sister calls Rick by his real name of Rob here.

Tag Titles: Steiner Brothers vs. Heavenly Bodies

Jim Cornette manages the challengers, who are Jimmy Del Ray and Tom Pritchard. This is part of the cross promotion with SMW. Heenan sings Cornette's praises, which was how Cornette got over as a heel. He had debuted not long before this and Heenan immediately hugged him. Since Heenan was a heel and Cornette was a friend of his, Cornette was instantly hated. No shades of gray, no thought to it, just basic heel work. I miss stuff like that so much.

The Bodies jump the champions and send Scott out to the floor early on. A double flapjack puts Rick down and Scott is knocked back to the floor, but the Bodies spend too much time double teaming. All four are in now with the Steiners cleaning house to the delight of the crowd. I'm sure it has nothing to do with them wearing University of Michigan colors. A tilt-a-whirl slam (called a suplex by Vince) puts Del Ray down and the Steiners stand tall.

We officially start with Pritchard vs. Scott and Tom is slammed down in a BIG gorilla press. A backdrop puts Del Ray down and it's off to Rick vs. Pritchard. Rick cleans house with Steiner Lines to send the challengers to the floor. Back in the and the Bodies finally start cheating, allowing Pritchard to hit an enziguri to send Scott to the floor, followed by a Del Ray moonsault press to wipe Scott out.

Back in and Del Ry hits a Rocky Maivia spinning DDT but doesn't cover like the schnook that he is. Heenan has the match 1112-9 in favor of the

Bodies. A powerslam gets two for Del Ray and Cornette jabs Scott in the throat with his tennis racket. Scott finally comes back with a belly to belly out of nowhere and makes the hot tag to Rick.

Everyone gets Steiner Lines (Heenan: "Mrs. Steiner just gave her daughter a Steiner Line!") but the top rope bulldog only gets two on Del Ray thanks to a save. Cornette throws in the racket but a shot to Rick's back is only good for two. Del Ray misses a moonsault and the Frankensteiner retains the belts.

Rating: C+. This was as by the book of a tag team match as you can get but it was still good stuff. I don't think anyone cared about the Heavenly Bodies but that's where a good manager like Cornette can come in handy: the fans are going to boo anyone he's out there with, including a tag team who never did anything of note in the WWF.

A new interviewer named Joe Fowler (he didn't last long) is with Shawn and Diesel, with the former saying he's the best IC Champion ever. Diesel says he's there to keep the chicks off the champ. Fowler wasn't bad actually.

Intercontinental Title: Mr. Perfect vs. Shawn Michaels

Shawn is defending. This match was literally months in the making with the WWF basically saying "this is going to be the match of the year, guaranteed." To continue the theme of things that just aren't the same today, Perfect is trying to become the first three time IC Champion. We also have Radio WWF with JR and Gorilla Monsoon doing commentary. Wrestling used to be broadcast on the radio back in the day, with legendary sportscaster Bob Costas doing commentary at one point.

Shawn easily takes it down to start but Perfect snapmares him down as well. Perfect takes over with an armdrag and drives some knees into the arm. Shawn comes back with a headlock out of the corner but Perfect avoids an elbow and we have a stalemate. Some LOUD chops in the corner snap Shawn's head back and a clothesline turns him inside out for two. Back to the armbars on the champion but Shawn escapes and goes up top, only to dive into an armdrag.

Perfect puts on another armbars before catapulting Shawn out to the floor in a great crash. Perfect goes to the floor but has to stare at Diesel, giving Shawn an opening for the yet to be named Sweet Chin Music. Shawn hits an ax handle of the apron to Perfect's back before heading back inside to drop knees onto the back. A hard whip into the corner puts Perfect down again and Shawn drops down onto Perfect's back.

Off to a backbreaker with Shawn bending Perfect's back over Shawn's knee. A stiff right hand gets Perfect out and a running dropkick puts Shawn down again. Perfect gets two off an atomic drop before countering a backslide into the PerfectPlex, only to have Diesel pull the leg for the save. Diesel gets punched in the face before both guys brawl on the floor. Shawn slides back in to distract the referee, allowing Diesel to post Perfect for the countout.

Rating: C. This was ok and nothing higher than that. The ending was lame and the match was a bunch of arm/back work with no heat segment or drama at all. It was a one off match that collapsed under the weight that the company put on it by saying it would be a classic and all that jazz. Not much to see here.

Perfect gets beaten down post match with Shawn claiming to be the best ever. Perfect gives chase and catches up with Shawn during an interview with Gene. The fight winds up being Perfect vs. Diesel in a match I don't think ever happened, unless it was on some random Raw or Superstars.

1-2-3 Kid is nervous for his PPV debut.

I.R.S. vs. 1-2-3 Kid

The Kid is relatively new at this point, having shocked the world by beating Razor Ramon in May. He also beat IRS' partner DiBiase recently so IRS is here for revenge and to stop the Kid's lucky streak. The Kid is launched into the air and bounces off the mat for early control but he dropkicks IRS out of the air on a second attempt. Nice psychology there, but IRS knocks him to the floor a few seconds later.

Kid comes back in with a sunset flip for two but gets caught in an abdominal stretch to drag the match out even longer. We hit the chinlock

for a bit before Kid takes him to the corner for some kicks and a moonsault press for two. A side roll gets two as Heenan is losing his mind. Kid dropkicks him down for two more, but IRS hits a flying clothesline for the pin out of nowhere.

Rating: D. What in the world was that? The Kid had been undefeated since May and you have him lose to a jobber to the stars in IRS? I don't get the thinking here at all and it would continue to make little sense as the Kid would only lose one more singles match this year, and not again until next June. Yet he loses to IRS here? I don't get it.

Owen and Bruce Hart say their dad is at home recovering from knee surgery but they're here to support Bret.

Bret Hart vs. Jerry Lawler

This is the blowoff to a MAJOR feud which started at the King of the Ring. Bret won the tournament but Jerry attacked him during the coronation, saying he was the only real king in professional wrestling. Jerry comes to the ring on crutches with a big ice pack on his knee. He claims an injury from a car wreck (going into hilarious detail about a blue haired lady causing a ten car pileup) so Bret's new opponent is the court jester.

Bret Hart vs. Doink the Clown

This is evil Doink, meaning he's AWESOME. Doink comes out carrying two buckets, one of which contains confetti to throw at the fans. The other is full of water which is thrown on Bruce Hart in the old Harlem Globetrotters trick. Bret jumps Doink on the floor and we get things going inside. Doink is punched back to the floor before he can even get his jacket off before Hart sends him into the post. Heenan talks about how Lawler was in an 18 car pileup, crawled out of the car and into a school bus, saved 40 kids from the bus and bought them all hamburgers before coming to the arena tonight. Vince's stunned reaction is great.

Doink gets in a shot and goes up, only to be crotched on the buckle. Heenan: "He's been de-Doinked!" Bret offers Lawler a chance to come in before dropping Doink with an atomic drop. Another Lawler distraction

lets Doink hit a knee to the back before sending Bret into the steps. Doink starts working on the leg and wraps it around the post with Lawler cheering him on.

The Clown puts on an STF and Heenan swears Bret gave up. Doink transitions into a lame chinlock before putting on a stump puller (you sit the other guy down and push his head down while pulling up on a leg) to stay on the leg and neck. Bret comes back with a right and the Five Moves of Doom. He hooks the Sharpshooter but Lawler runs into the ring and breaks the crutch over Bret's back for the DQ.

Rating: C+. The match was your usual good Bret match when he had a good opponent to work against. Lawler pretending to be injured is the perfect action for him as he's such a slimy coward most of the time. The Bret vs. Lawler feud had incredible heat to it as the fans wanted to see Lawler get beaten up.....and then there's this.

President Jack Tunney stops Lawler in the aisle and says get in the ring right now.

Bret Hart vs. Jerry Lawler

Bret blasts him in the head with one of Doink's buckets before the bell. They head inside and Bret immediately pounds Lawler down and gets in a crutch shot for good measure. Lawler gets in a crutch shot to the throat and chokes away as the referee (ECW's Bill Alfonso) is trying to restrain the Hart Brothers.

Bret gets crotched against the post, allowing Lawler to tell the referee to go yell at the Brothers again. The distraction lets Lawler get in more crutch shots in a classic simple heel move. He stops to tell the booing fans to shut up but Bret is ready to fight. Hart destroys Lawler and even throws in a piledriver before putting on the Sharpshooter for the academic submission. He won't let go though and the decision is reversed.

Rating: B. The match itself isn't much from an action standpoint, but the story was perfect (Bret wants revenge) and it's a short form clinic on how to work a crowd from Lawler. Those subtle things like distracting the referee and sneaking in weapon shots and telling the crowd to shut up are

so basic and easy but you NEVER see them today. Today's writers need to watch some Lawler matches and they'll learn how to have a crowd eating out of a heel's hand in no time.

It takes about ten referees plus two Brothers to pull Bret off of Lawler. Bret is told that Lawler is the undisputed King so he goes after Jerry again as Lawler is put on a stretcher. Bruce Hart gets in some shots as well but Lawler is finally wheeled off, raising his arm in victory like the true villain he is.

Unfortunately we never got the planned blowoff to this feud as some 15 year old accused Lawler of rape (she admitted she made the whole thing up and Lawler was acquitted) so the Hart Brothers vs. Jerry and three hired goons at Survivor Series never happened. That's a shame as the reaction for Lawler being destroyed by the whole family including Stu would have been a sight to behold.

Ludvig Borga is on the streets of Detroit to show us the country that Lex Luger wants to stand up for.

Bret and his brothers say Lawler deserves a broken leg.

Marty Jannetty vs. Ludvig Borga

Borga is basically the original Antonio Cesaro but from Finland. Marty fires away to start but gets punched in the corner by the former boxer. A hard clothesline puts Jannetty down before Borga throws him into the air for an uppercut (much like Cesaro). More punches in the corner have Jannetty in trouble and a clothesline stops his comeback dead. Borga blows his nose on Jannetty before putting on a bearhug. Marty escapes and makes a quick comeback with a pair of superkicks but gets caught in a powerslam and a torture rack for the submission.

Rating: D-. This was one of the lamer squashes I can remember in a long time. Borga looked slow and limited in the ring but the rack looked good. Other than that though, Borga came off as much more flash than substance. He would get better, but at the end of the day he never quite did anything in the company.

Giant Gonzalez vs. Undertaker

This is a Rest in Peace match, which means No DQ and No Countout, or a street fight as we would call it. Gonzalez has been tormenting Undertaker all year and lost to him via DQ at Wrestlemania. Gonzalez is a legit 7'7" and his manager Harvey Whippleman has stolen the Urn. Paul Bearer is absent for reasons that aren't quite explained. The Giant pounds on Taker to start but Taker comes back with some clotheslines. A single elbow takes the Dead Man down and they head outside with the Giant in control.

Gonzalez hits some of the weakest chair shots you'll ever see before whipping Taker knees first into the steps. Back in and Undertaker hits some uppercuts but keeps reaching for the Urn. Taker is still down when the gong rings and Paul Bearer makes his return with a black wreath. Whippleman goes after him and gets decked, allowing Paul to get the Urn back. The Giant stares down at him, Undertaker sits up, hits five clotheslines and a sixth from the top for the pin. Seriously, that's it.

Rating: G. As in I long for **G**reat Khali. You often hear bad wrestlers said to be as bad as Giant Gonzalez and there's a good reason for that: the guy is HORRIBLE. I understand the idea of the guy being huge and not needing to do much, but Gonzalez couldn't do even the most basic stuff without screwing it up. Having seen a good deal of both, I can safely say that Gonzalez makes Great Khali look like Bret Hart.

Post match Harvey turns on Gonzalez and gets laid out.

Cornette says his men have been ripped off all night but that won't happen when Lex Luger faces his Yokozuna. All those people Luger has seen over the country aren't going to be able to help him now because it's just Luger vs. Yokozuna, and the last thing Luger will hear is BANZAI!

Smoking Guns/Tatanka vs. Headshrinkers/Bam Bam Bigelow

Aren't cowboys and Indians supposed to fight? The heels have Afa and Luna Vachon with them. The Samoans run over the Guns to start and we have Bigelow vs. Tatanka to get us going. Tatanka fires off a shoulder block and a dropkick followed by an impressive backdrop. Both guys try cross bodies and Tatanka actually gets the better of it. For a gimmick wrestler

Tatanka had some good success around this time.

A double tag brings in Billy vs. Fatu (Rikishi) with the Samoan hitting a quick superkick. Billy comes back with a top rope clothesline as Vince tells us Billy went to college on a rodeo scholarship. That actually exists? Another superkick from Samu knocks Billy into the tag to Bart who is slammed face first into the mat for his troubles. Bigelow comes in with a dropkick for two before it's back to Fatu for a wicked powerslam. The Samoans take turns double teaming Bart with headbutts and chops as the heat segment goes on for a good while.

Bigelow misses a charge and hits the post, allowing Bart to make the hot tag off to Tatanka. The Indian chops every heel in sight and takes Bigelow down with a DDT and a high cross body for two. Tatanka goes on the war path but walks into an enziguri from Bam Bam. Sometimes there's no better solution than to kick a guy in the head. Everything breaks down and Tatanka is left all alone against the three monsters. A TRIPLE HEADBUTT puts Tatanka down and all three go up for a triple flying headbutt, but Tatanka rolls away and rolls up Samu for the pin.

Rating: B-. Where in the world did this come from??? This was a shockingly good tag match with everyone moving fast and some great looking spots from Bigelow. Tatanka was one of those guys that the fans just liked and there's no way you can fake that. Good stuff here and a very nice surprise.

To fill in time, we talk to Luger's bus driver. The guy is so valuable he gets to sit in the bus and watch the show on a monitor. He talks about how great Luger is and how he visited a bunch of kids.

Pettingill asks some fans who they like in the main event and the answer is obvious.

Some guy sings the Japanese national anthem.

Randy Savage is master of ceremonies for the main event and comes out with some country singer who sings the American national anthem.

WWF Title: Lex Luger vs. Yokozuna

Remember, this is Luger's ONE title shot. It's a long staredown to start before Lex has to knock Mr. Fuji down. Lex starts pounding away but a single shot from the champion puts him down. Luger comes back with more right hands and down goes Yoko. A big elbow drop gets two for Luger and he avoid one from Yoko. Luger hits a running clothesline in the corner before pounding away on the champion's head in the corner. Yoko will have none of that though and takes Luger down with a single chop.

Luger gets in some right hands but can't slam Yoko again. Instead he gets kicked in the face and knocked to the floor with some headbutts. Out to the floor they go with Yoko choking Luger with a mic cord. A splash crushes Luger against the post but Yoko misses a chair shot. They head back inside where Luger hits two ax handle shots off the top and middle rope before a top rope forearm gets a very close two count.

A double clothesline puts both guys down and things slow down even more. Fuji throws in his bucket which Yoko uses to knock Luger out cold but only for two. A big belly to belly suplex and side slam get the same results as the champion is getting frustrated. Off to a nerve hold by the champion which eats up several minutes.

Luger fights up again but gets clotheslined down for two. To show you how impressive he is, Heenan actually compliments Luger. I don't think I ever remember him cheering for a good guy before. Yokozuna loads up the Banzai Drop but Luger rolls away at the last minute. They fight into the corner again but Yoko misses a charge. Luger slams him down and hits the loaded forearm, knocking the champion out to the floor. Unfortunately for Luger, he also knocked Yokozuna out cold, earning Luger a countout win.

Rating: D+. This was long and slow without being very good. Luger got good reactions though, especially for the slam. It was clear that his character was nothing but warmed over Hogan leftovers but at least the fans hadn't entirely realized that yet. This wasn't a terrible match, but it certainly was nothing of note either. The ending wasn't great but it was necessary to continue the story being told.

Luger celebrates with his friends to end the show despite not winning the title. We even get a music video of his push, which would be WAY more

effective if Luger had, you know, WON THE FREAKING TITLE. Heenan: "This was his ONE shot!" Vince: "Don't worry he'll get another one!" Heaven forbid we pay attention to storylines that PPVs are built around.

Overall Rating: C+. With a Luger title win, this would have been a very solid show. There are some bad matches on here but the majority of the show works amazingly well with Bret vs. Lawler and the six man being highlights. Much like last year it's a show where the overall show is better than its individual parts which made for a good show. Why Luger didn't go over here continues to elude me.

Ratings Comparison

Razor Ramon vs. Ted DiBiase

Original: C-

Redo: C-

Steiner Brothers vs. Heavenly Bodies

Original: B-

Redo: C+

Shawn Michaels vs. Mr. Perfect

Original: B-

Redo: C

1-2-3 Kid vs. I.R.S.

Original: F

Redo: D

Bret Hart vs. Doink the Clown

Original: B

Redo: C+

Bret Hart vs. Jerry Lawler

Original: B+

Redo: B

Marty Jannetty vs. Ludvig Borga

Original: D+

Redo: D-

Undertaker vs. Giant Gonzalez

Original: C+

Redo: G (As in I long for Great Khali)

Tatanka/Smoking Gunns vs. Bam Bam Bigelow/Headshrinkers

Original: F+

Redo: B-

Yokozuna vs. Lex Luger

Original: B-

Redo: D+

Overall Rating

Original: D+

Redo: C+

.....I had no idea what I was doing back then did I?

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/07/27/history-of-summerslam-count-up-1993-i-still-dont-get-the-ending/>

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