

Summerslam Count-Up – 2003: Meet The Old HHH, Same As The New HHH

Summerslam 2003

Date: August 24, 2003

Location: America West Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Attendance: 16,113

Commentators: Jim Ross, Tazz, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

Another year another Summerslam and yet again the company has changed. Tonight we have a double main event with a Wrestlemania rematch of Lesnar vs. Angle II for the Smackdown Title and an Elimination Chamber match for the Raw Title. 2003 was split down the middle in quality as Raw was atrocious and Smackdown was some of the best television in company history. It's always interesting to see the two shows come together. Let's get to it.

The US Marine Corps presents the American flag while Lillian sings the Star Spangled Banner.

The opening video talks about how there is evil in this world and the Chamber tonight will prove it.

Raw Tag Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. La Resistance

The Dudleyz are challenging and the EVIL foreigners are Rene Dupree and Sylvain Grenier. Bubba of course comes out with an American flag to hammer in the face status. The whole patriotism thing was a big deal in this feud as the third member of La Resistance, an American named Rob Conway, pretended to be a soldier to sneak up on the Dudleyz. It's a brawl to start in the aisle with the challengers in full control.

D-Von chokes Dupree with the robe to start before armbarring Grenier down. A slam and a legdrop gets two on Sylvain and it's off to Bubba for the power brawling. He puts Grenier in the Tree of Woe and stands on his

crotch to make the French guy scream. The Dudleys clear the ring but Grenier gets in a cheap shot to give the champions control on Bubba. A double shoulder puts Bubba down for two as the USA chant starts up.

Back to Dupree for a bearhug, which isn't often a move you see on a fat man like Bubba. Some headbutts break up hold but Bubba walks into a spinebuster for two. Bubba punches his way over to the hot tag (four minutes into the match) and D-Von cleans house. A rollup gets two on Grenier as everything breaks down. D-Von walks into a double spinebuster for two but it's What's Up to Dupree. The 3D lays out Dupree but Grenier makes save. Now a cameraman lays out D-Von with a camera to the head to retain the titles. It's Rob Conway of course.

Rating: D+. That's a pretty lame choice for an opener. Not only did the fans not get what they wanted but the match sucked as well. This was a dark time for the tag team division and there was no reason at all for there to be two sets of titles at this point. At the end of the day there wasn't nearly enough depth and it made for lame matches like this. The Dudleys would get the belts next month.

Spike tries to run in for the save but Conway lays him out with the camera. Conway hasn't been named here but I think the spoiler is ok at this point.

Coach says La Resistance was clever so Bubba accuses him of being anti-American and vows to get the belts back.

Eric Bischoff is warming up when Intercontinental Champion Christian comes up. He wants to know why he isn't on the show but Bischoff blames Co-GM Steve Austin. Christian isn't pleased but offers to be in Eric's corner for his match later. Bischoff says he has his own plan and won't answer what happens in the bedroom with Linda. Eric says he'll tell everyone later.

We recap A-Train vs. Undertaker. A-Train (Tensai) is working for Vince who is in a semi-war with Taker, setting up tonight's match. This would evolve into a bigger war soon enough.

Undertaker vs. A-Train

A-Train comes out with Vince's mistress Sable and Undertaker has bad ribs. Feeling out process to start with A-Train grabbing a few headlocks for early control. Taker hits a quick Russian legsweep for two and he cranks on the arm to set up Old School. The second attempt works a bit better and Taker stays on the arm. A big boot misses and Taker falls out to the floor, reinjuring the ribs.

A-Train starts pounding away on the ribs and sends them into the barricade for two back in the ring. Taker gets in some shots to the ribs of his own for a breather but A-Train comes back with an impressive suplex to take him down. This is the kind of character A-Train was perfect as: a heavy who could do some impressive moves at times. A-Train fights out of a sleeper with a belly to back suplex but Taker hits a quick Snake Eyes to get a breather. A big boot misses the big bald head and a double clothesline puts each other down.

Taker wins a slugout after A-Train hung in there a lot longer than expected. Now the big boot sets up the legdrop (BROTHER) for two and another legdrop to the back of the head with A-Train on the apron has the bald one staggered. The Last Ride is easily broken up but the referee is bumped.

A-Train hits the Derailer (chokebomb) but the delayed count only gets two. Taker accidentally clotheslines the referee down again (the second match does NOT warrant two ref bumps) and A-Train brings in a chair, only to have it cracked over his own head for a near fall. A-Train escapes a tombstone but gets caught in a chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: D. What are you expecting out of this match? This was back when Taker was pretty bad in the ring due to being completely unmotivated and bored with the biker character. Thankfully he would be the Dead Man again by Wrestlemania and would eventually reignite his career around 2007.

Post match Sable tries to seduce Taker for some reason but Stephanie comes in to go after her, presumably setting up a mixed tag.

Coach polls some fans on who wins the Chamber.

We recap Shane McMahon vs. Eric Bischoff. Shane was feuding with Kane but

Bischoff stopped them from fighting. Austin made Bischoff vs. Shane for that night but Kane interfered and cost Shane the match (he later tied Shane to the steps and electrocuted his testicles. It was stupid back then and it's even worse now. This is what I had to deal with people).

Later, Bischoff caused JR to nearly be lit on fire, so Austin had to prevent a lawsuit by making Kane vs. Bischoff but Kane walked away for some reason, giving Bischoff the win by countout. This was a qualifying match for a Summerslam match with Kane, making our match tonight. Then Bischoff went to Linda's house and pinned her arm behind her back and kissed her against her will. Think that's enough to set up this match?

Shane McMahon vs. Eric Bischoff

Before the match, Eric implies that he screwed Linda several times over that night. This brings out Shane to send Eric into the corner for a beating. Crossface punches send Bischoff to the floor but Shane clotheslines him in the back of the head. Back to ringside and Shane breaks the referee's count (sidebar: why doesn't that happen when both guys are on the floor and one guy slides back in at the last second?) before kicking away at Shane even more.

Bischoff is sent into the announce table and stomped down, only to have Coach come in with a chair and turning heel by helping Bischoff. The referee says ring the bell but Bischoff makes it No DQ and falls count anywhere. Shane is sent into the steps for two as Coach is playing the enforcer here. He holds Shane as Bischoff tells the production truck to turn off JR and King's microphones so Coach can do commentary.

Bischoff starts firing off kicks as Coach does the eternally annoying JR impersonation. This keeps going for awhile until Shane gets in a right hand, only to be dropped by a low blow from Coach. Cue Steve Austin who can't fight unless physically provoked. Shane shoves Coach into Austin which is enough for the beating to begin. Austin and Shane stomp Coach down in the corner and clear the ring. Austin has the mics turned back on as Shane grabs Eric's hand and uses it to slap Austin's face, meaning Austin can Stun Bischoff. That's not good enough or Shane so he puts Eric on the table for the big elbow for the pin.

Rating: N/A. This was a long segment instead of a match. Also to recap how stupid things were at this point, we're supposed to be interested in Austin/Shane vs. Coach/Bischoff when Austin has equal power to Eric. We also have Stephanie vs. Sable, because EVERYONE wants to see the McMahons dominating the show. This is in addition to Evolution dragging Raw down the drain with the Kevin Nash and Goldberg feuds. See why 2003 is considered so bad?

Wrestlemania moment. Kind of an odd time for one of these but Shawn superkicking Bret was an awesome moment.

We see Kevin Nash getting ready. JR: "Nash is a street fighter at heart." I haven't laughed that hard in awhile.

Flair and HHH tell Orton to keep the title on the Game tonight and nothing more.

US Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Benoit vs. Tajiri vs. Rhyno

Eddie is defending and this is one fall to a finish. Eddie has ticked off all three challengers so they all want to take him out. The champion bails to the floor so everyone else can fight and we quickly get down to Rhyno vs. Benoit. Chris hooks a quick Crossface, drawing Eddie in for the save. Tajiri is back in as well but Eddie breaks up a cover. Everyone is in now and all three challengers go after Eddie at the same time.

Rhyno hits a running shoulder to Eddie's ribs in the corner and powerslams him down for two but Benoit comes back with a German suplex. A belly to back gets two on Tajiri but Eddie makes another save. Benoit is suplexed to the floor and Eddie is left alone with Tajiri, only to have the challenger monkey flip Eddie down for two. Rhyno comes back in and sends Tajiri to the floor but Benoit wants to beat up Eddie himself, triggering a brawl between challengers.

Rhyno gets control again and superplexes Eddie down for two but Tajiri kicks him in the back of the head. Tajiri snaps off the handspring elbow for two on Chris but Rhyno sends Tajiri to the floor, only to have Eddie headscissor him out to the floor. Eddie hurricanranas Benoit out of the corner for two and it's Tajiri in again for some hard kicks. Eddie hooks

the Lasso From El Paso (Liontamer crossed with the Texas Cloverleaf) on Tajiri but Benoit stops Rhyno from making the save with the Crossface.

Tajiri makes the ropes so Eddie turns around to dropkick Benoit in the head for the save. Benoit grabs the Crossface on Guerrero but Rhyno and Tajiri make the double save. Rhyno hits a spinebuster for two on Tajiri but Benoit knocks Rhyno to the floor. Chris rolls some Germans on Tajiri but Tajiri reverses into one of his own for two on Benoit.

Tajiri catches a charging Benoit in the Tarantula and the distraction lets Eddie get the US Title to shield himself from Rhyno's Gore. Tajiri breaks up the Frog Splash but gets caught in the Tree of Woe. Benoit Swan Dives Rhyno but Tajiri makes a last second save. Tajiri and Benoit fall to the floor and Eddie frog splashes Rhyno to retain.

Rating: B+. This was non-stop action for about eleven minutes and incredibly entertaining as a result. It's a great example of how wrestling and action can be so much more interesting than whatever drama the McMahons have going on at the moment. Watching these four make save after save is WAY more fun than hearing about Bischoff forcing himself on Linda or Stephanie being FURIOUS with Sable over whatever affair her dad is having this month.

We recap Brock Lesnar destroying Zack Gowen on Smackdown (good for him). Lesnar had him COVERED in blood and rubbed the blood on his own chest. Gowen had his leg broken in two places so he couldn't face Matt Hardy tonight. Matt declared himself the winner on Heat like a good heel would.

We recap Angle vs. Lesnar. Angle lost to Brock in the main event of Wrestlemania, leading to Vengeance where Angle pinned Lesnar in a three way to get the title back. The two of them became best friends and friendly rivals, leading to Brock wanting a rematch. Vince said no, but if Lesnar can beat Vince in a cage with Angle as referee, he can have the shot. Before the match, someone attacked Brock and laid him out with a concussion. Brock popped up and turned on Angle, revealing that he's working for Vince as the new heavy and getting the title shot for tonight. Vince called this the REAL Brock Lesnar.

Smackdown World Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle

Angle is defending of course. Brock shoves him in the corner to show off the power so Angle starts getting lower. They hit the technical stuff on the mat but Brock escapes into a standoff. Brock quickly takes him down with a headscissors but it's Angle escaping to another stalemate. Lesnar shoves him around with the power so Angle leverages him into the corner and says bring it on. Some quick armdrags send Brock out to the floor and various things are destroyed in frustration.

Lesnar picks up the belt and tries to walk out with it but Kurt pounds him down in the aisle to start the brawling. Back in and Angle snaps off the first overhead belly to belly for two before stomping him down in the corner. Brock comes right back with a gorilla press and throws Angle out to the floor. Angle is sent into the steps as this is far different from the Wrestlemania match. Back in and Brock hits a release belly to belly without leaving his feet.

Angle slips out of another gorilla press and gets two off an O'Connor Roll, only to walk into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. We hit the rear naked choke on Angle which is turned into a bodyscissors. Angle fights up but runs into a knee to the ribs to put him right back down. Kurt is pounded into the corner but grabs a rollup for two, only to be clotheslined back down. The story of this match isn't working as well as their first fight. This is much more of a traditional wrestling match with good vs. evil and that's not what these two are best at.

Lesnar comes right back with something like a Muscle Buster for two, followed up by shoulders to the ribs in the corner. Brock sends him into the corner to stay on the ribs and back before firing off more shoulders in the corner. Angle finally moves to avoid a charge, sending Brock shoulder first into the post. A dropkick takes Brock's knee out and Angle rolls some Germans for a close two. Brock comes back with an overhead belly to belly of his own but Angle pops up and tries the Slam, only to be countered into a spinebuster for a close two. The fans are into this match.

Angle counters an F5 into a DDT and both guys are down. A delayed cover gets two for the champion and there go the straps. The Angle Slam connects but Brock is up at two as per tradition. In one of my favorite

moments, Angle puts the straps up so he can take them back down, firing himself up even more. There's the ankle lock but Brock makes a rope. Angle pulls him back so the rope doesn't count in a questionable call, so Lesnar rolls out, bumping the referee in the process.

Lesnar sends him into the corner and Angle tries a sunset flip but stops before going down, wrapping his legs around Brock's neck in a choke before putting on another ankle lock. Lesnar eventually taps but there's no referee so here's Vince with a chair to Angle's back to break the hold. Brock gets to his one good foot and hits a pretty awesome one legged F5 for a delayed two. Vince demands another F5 but Angle counters into the ankle lock. Brock grabs the rope but again Angle pulls him to the middle for no break. Brock grabs all four bottom ropes but the referee doesn't break it, forcing Brock to tap out.

Rating: B. It's a good match but the ending never worked for me. At the end of the day, if you touch the ropes the hold is supposed to be broken. That's wrestling 101, but for some reason it doesn't count at the end of this match. The match was good but it was overbooked when you have these two being able to own whatever ring they're in. The Vince stuff was annoying but that's what you have to expect in WWE.

Post match Vince tries to jump Angle again but gets Angle Slammed through a chair for his efforts. And on Vince's birthday too.

Goldberg is listening to an iPod to get ready. That's such a wrong image.

Some Arizona Diamondbacks are here.

We recap Kane vs. RVD. They had been friends and tag champions but Kane lost a match to HHH, forcing him to unmask. This unleashed Kane's inner demons for the 10th time or so, turning him into a psycho who lit JR on fire. Kane swore everyone was laughing at him even though RVD told him everything was fine. Kane beat up RVD in a match and tombstoned Linda McMahon on a stage to start his feud with Shane, leading to a rematch with Rob here tonight.

Kane vs. Rob Van Dam

Fink says this is No Holds Barred. So does that make Kane Zeus? JR calls Kane an inbred mongrel dog, which isn't that high up on his list of sayings. Van Dam fires off right hands to start but Kane takes him to the floor with a few uppercuts. Kane charges into a boot and gets kicked in the face to put the monster down. Kane easily slugs him down and pulls out a ladder. Van Dam manages to smash the end of it to drive the ladder into Kane's face, only to have Rolling Thunder caught by the throat.

RVD kicks out of the chokeslam but gets knocked out to the floor as the brawl continues. Kane sends him into the steps and is in full on monster mode. Back in and Van Dam scores with a kick and some shoulders to the ribs for two. Rob goes up top but gets shoved down onto the barricade to give Kane control again. A ladder to the face gets two back in the ring and a big clothesline puts Van Dam down again.

We hit the slow motion part of the match as Kane pounds on Van Dam very slowly to stop the crowd from being interested. Van Dam is backdropped to the floor but Kane badly botches the top rope clothesline, nearly falling on his head and dying. Kane avoids another ladder shot and DDTs Van Dam on the floor, only to have Rob catch a charging Kane in a drop toe-hold to send him face first into the steps. Kane is kicked into the crowd and crotched as he tries to come back to ringside.

Van Dam's spin kick off the apron puts Kane down again as this match just keeps going. Back in and Rolling Thunder onto the chair crushes Kane but Rob can't follow up. Kane sits up but gets caught by a Van Daminator. Rob loads up the Van Terminator but Kane rolls away at the last second. They head to the floor and Kane tombstones Rob onto the steps, killing him dead for the pin.

Rating: C-. This was an ok brawl but it went on WAY too long. At the end of the day this was just a rest stop on the way to Kane vs. Shane next month which was probably the more interesting feud anyway. The match was Van Dam trying his best but not being able to keep Kane down. It certainly wasn't a squash but it wasn't many steps above one.

Eric is annoyed that Terri is asking him questions. Linda comes in and slaps Bischoff in the face.

HHH looks at the world title.

The Chamber is lowered.

We recap the world title match. There isn't much to this other than HHH is injured and can't fight Goldberg one on one so we get an Elimination Chamber instead. Goldberg is in for obvious reasons, Jericho and Nash have been feuding lately, Orton is there to give HHH a hand and Shawn is there for past issues with HHH. This gets the music video treatment, set to St. Anger by Metallica.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Kevin Nash vs. Goldberg vs. Chris Jericho vs. Shawn Michaels vs. Randy Orton

After about 12 minutes of entrances we start with Shawn vs. Jericho, who will go for three minutes. After that time is up, a pod will open to release another wrestler. Three more minutes and another pod opens. This repeats until everyone is in and it's last man standing wins.

Eliminations can occur at any time and have to take place in the ring, not on the cage floor outside the ring next to the pods. They trade hammerlocks to start until Jericho rolls through a cross body for two.

They trade chain wrestling moves into a pinfall reversal sequence as the fans chant for Goldberg. Back up and Shawn slaps him in the face before backdropping him down. Jericho's Walls attempt is countered into a small package for two but Jericho comes back with a bulldog to take Shawn down. JR screws up the world title continuity by saying the title has only changed hands once in Phoenix, but that's the other world title. Not that it matters to WWE but they make such a big deal about the continuity that it's worth pointing out.

Anyway Orton is #3 and gets two off a high cross to Shawn. Michaels is clotheslined to the cage floor but he comes back in to pound away on Jericho. Randy dropkicks him down and stomps Jericho down against the ropes but can't RKO Shawn. Instead Orton is sent to the cage floor by a combined effort, only to have Jericho put Shawn in the Walls. Kevin Nash is in at #4 to make the save and go after Jericho as Shawn and Orton brawl in the ring. Jericho's face is rubbed against the cage to give us our first blood.

Nash (with short blonde hair here for a movie) cleans house but walks into a superkick into a rollup for the pin by Jericho. Nash was in there about two minutes or so. HHH is #5 but Shawn superkicks him before he can get out of the pod to make sure the injured champion doesn't have to do much. Nash lays out Jericho, Orton and Shawn with Jackknives, leaving everyone down for a massive dead spot. Shawn is busted as well.

They finally get back up to slug it out as JR talks about Oklahoma for no apparent reason. Here's Goldberg at #6 to FINALLY wake the crowd up a bit. He cleans house and clotheslines Jericho and Shawn down before spearing Orton down for the pin, leaving us with four. Jericho hits a quick missile dropkick for two on Goldberg but he launches Chris into the cage to put him back down.

Goldberg sends Shawn into the corner before spearing Jericho through the glass pod. Goldberg is dazed though, allowing Shawn to drop the elbow to set up Sweet Chin Music. This is Goldberg though so the kick is blocked by a spear and the Jackhammer gets us down to three. A quick spear and Jackhammer to Jericho leaves us with HHH vs. Goldberg. HHH is still in the pod as he's been in the match for about six minutes now and literally hasn't done anything.

Flair shoves the pod door closed to save HHH so Goldberg kicks the pod door in so we can actually have a match. Goldberg pounds away in the pod before sending HHH face first into the cage. The champion is busted open but he FINALLY gets in a kick to the leg and sends Goldberg into the cage. Goldberg comes right back with a clothesline and they head into the ring. The spear is loaded up but hits the sledgehammer that Flair slid in, keeping the title on HHH.

Rating: C-. This didn't work very well and the ending sums up everything wrong with Raw in 2003. The fans were primed for a Goldberg title win, HHH was injured and had no business being in the match anyway, Goldberg dominated the match, HHH literally hit two offensive moves in ten minutes of match time, but HHH uses the sledgehammer to retain the title. Yeah Goldberg got the title a month later, but THIS is the match people remember because THIS is the big show. HHH wins at the big show, the monster wins the next month at the B show. Does this sound familiar to

fans in 2013?

As for the rest of the match, there's nothing going on here. It's less than twenty minutes long from bell to bell and the three minute intervals really hold this down. No one had time to do anything, making it more like the 1995 Rumble than anything else. It's just not very good and the ending sucked whatever life it had out of the match. Again, 2003 Raw just wasn't that good and this match sums up why.

Post match HHH and Evolution gets to destroy Goldberg again with the hammer to really pound in who is the star. Goldberg is handcuffed to the cage so HHH can shove the belt in his face and remind him who the champion is to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. There's some good stuff on here but the HHH factor drags it down again. I've said this a lot tonight but 2003 just wasn't a good year overall. It's a bunch of matches and feuds that people don't want to see but we have the same McMahon nonsense over and over again because WWE is their playground and they can do whatever they like. Over on Raw HHH gets to keep the title FOREVER despite being hurt and having beasts like Benoit and Guerrero waiting in the wings to be the next guys. Did they pan out in the end? No, but at this point no one knew that was the case and HHH got the title as a result.

Ratings Comparison

La Resistance vs. Dudley Boyz

Original: C

Redo: D+

A-Train vs. Undertaker

Original: D

Redo: D

Eric Bischoff vs. Shane McMahon

Original: D

Redo: N/A

Tajiri vs. Rhyno vs. Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Benoit

Original: B-

Redo: B+

Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle

Original: A-

Redo: B

Rob Van Dam vs. Kane

Original: C-

Redo: C-

Goldberg vs. HHH vs. Kevin Nash vs. Shawn Michaels vs. Chris Jericho vs. Randy Orton

Original: D

Redo: C-

Overall Rating

Original: D+

Redo: C

So I liked almost all of the matches more or the same the first time, but the overall rating is much higher this time. Not surprising.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/08/06/history-of-summerslam-count-up-2003-brock-vs-angle-ii/>

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