

Survivor Series Count-Up – 2008: Not As Bad As It's Made Out To Be

Survivor Series 2008

Date: November 23, 2008

Location: TD Banknorth Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Attendance: 12,498

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

This is one of those shows that just doesn't look that good. We've got three Survivor Series matches, a casket match between Undertaker and Show, and the two title matches. It's the title matches where things get shaky. First of all there's Cena vs. Jericho. In Boston. With Cena returning from injury. Then we get to the infamous part of the show: the Smackdown World Title match.

On I believe the late Saturday night/early Sunday morning, as in like 2am EST, a story broke on WWE.com, saying Jeff Hardy, one of the guys in the title match, had been found in a stairwell. I want to emphasize that THIS IS ALL THAT WAS SAID. The backlash to it was strong, with some critics saying that it was tasteless given Hardy's drug issues. Meltzer said it was the worst promotional tactic of the year. Maybe it was just me, but I had ZERO problem with this.

Hardy's issues had rarely if ever been mentioned on WWE TV, the article said nothing about drugs or alcohol, and it was announced like two days later that it was a physical attack. I never thought it was a drug issue until someone mentioned it to me, and even then I didn't buy it as it was broken by WWE.com at 2 in the morning before a PPV. But hey, since the guy had issues, we can never run any kind of angle with him right? Anyway, let's get to it.

The opening video is the EXACT SAME THING it's been for two years. Literally, they're the same clips before we get to the stuff about the

main events.

JR and Taz talk about the Hardy issue and say that ABC and TMZ picked up the story. I seem to remember that being a lie.

Team HBK vs. Team JBL

Shawn Michaels, Rey Mysterio, Cryme Tyme, Great Khali

John Bradshaw Layfield, The Miz, John Morrison, Kane, MVP

I think you can figure out the feuds yourself here. MVP and Mysterio get things going as all of the commentators are talking at once here. MVP is in the middle of a massive losing streak that would result in a face turn and I believe the US Title. Rey hits a quick rana and a clothesline for two before it's off to JTG for a double dropkick. JTG hits a HARD right hand but MVP gets in a shot to the ribs and hits the Drive-By (running kick to the side of the head) for the elimination. Khali immediately comes in and chops MVP in the head for the elimination to tie things up.

Kane comes in for the staredown of the giants and Khali clotheslines him down with ease. Khali slugs him down and easily breaks up a chokeslam attempt. There's the chop to the head and Rey climbs on Khali's shoulders for the splash and another elimination. Off to Morrison who speeds things up. We hear about how great Morrison is from Striker, but unfortunately that chick Melina screwed up his future. Mysterio hits a quick kick to the head and it's off to Shad.

Now Cryme Tyme vs. Miz/Morrison was a feud ahead of its time: their internet shows got in an argument and a wrestling feud followed. Shad misses a charge into the corner and it's off to Miz. Since Miz isn't quite the worker he is at this point, it's back to Morrison very quickly. Shad runs over both members of the tag team and powerslams Miz down before hitting another overhyped elbow. Miz pops back up and hits the Reality Check (backbreaker/neckbreaker combo) to eliminate Shad.

It's off to Shawn who comes in via a slow, dramatic step. He gets to face the Miz, meaning that entrance was wasted. To the shock of almost everyone, Miz takes over and double teams with Morrison to work over

Shawn's back. JBL, the slimmed down version, comes in to pound away and drop an elbow for two. Back to Miz who pounds away at Shawn's bad eye, busting it open again.

Morrison comes in again to crank on a headlock and send Shawn over the top. Why would you turn your back when you throw Shawn over the top rope? At least Morrison jumps him when Shawn skins the cat. A forearm puts Shawn down and Morrison nips up in a little jab at HBK. Morrison misses the top rope elbow and it's a double tag to bring in Miz vs. Mysterio. Rey hits a springboard rana into the 619 and the top rope splash puts Miz out.

JBL comes in and hits a hard shoulder to take Mysterio down. The crowd is WAY into Rey here. The fans think JBL can't wrestle. The correct chant would be "You can't work a style we like because we think that flying around and using a lot of moves is how a wrestler's talents are determined because we don't know what we're talking about!" Off to Morrison with a European uppercut followed by a backbreaker.

Rey gets in a kick to the face but it's off to JBL to hook an abdominal stretch with the leg being cranked on at the same time. Once Rey escapes, JBL uses something you don't often see: a big boot to the back of the head. Rey blocks a belly to back superplex and hits a moonsault press to put JBL down and bust open his lip. There's the tag to Shawn who hits the forearm and nip up of his own (take that Morrison) to send Bradshaw to the floor.

Shawn dives out to take Bradshaw out and loads up the superkick to send JBL running away. With JBL running away from the kick, Shawn slides back in and beats the count by one second, meaning JBL is gone via a countout. Morrison tries to superkick Shawn but Shawn is like boy these boots are older than you and kicks Morrison's head off for the final pin and 3-0 final score for lack of a better term.

Rating: C. This was fine but the ending was kind of anti-climatic. They were trying to save the Shawn pin over JBL which was a good idea as they would have a solid feud in the next few months which resulted in Shawn being JBL's lackey because Shawn was poor. The guys other than the

captains in this didn't do much of note but that's kind of the idea behind a match like this. Not bad but nothing great either.

HHH doesn't think he needs to give his opinion on the Jeff Hardy situation. Either way, Hardy will be back. Instead it's going to be Kozlov vs. HHH. The Game (Smackdown World Champion here) says tonight is Kozlov's first defeat.

Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown

Beth Phoenix, Mickie James, Kelly Kelly, Candice Michelle, Jillian Hall
Michelle McCool, Victoria, Maria, Maryse, Natalya

Beth is the captain of Team Raw and McCool is captain of Team Smackdown. They're also Women's and Divas Champions respectively. Santino is here with Beth because awkward romances are funny right? Mickie has her signature look down now and is very bouncy. For the sake of simplicity, only Michelle McCool will be referred to as Michelle. Beth and Michelle start things off with Beth controlling via a top wristlock. Michelle uses some decent chain wrestling to set up a dropkick to send Beth backwards a bit.

Maryse tags herself in and gets in a brawl with her own partner Michelle. Team Raw: "LET THEM FIGHT!" After the brawl is broken up, it's Beth vs. Maria with Maria avoiding a charge and hitting a slow motion headscissors. Off to Kelly vs. Maria and hopefully this doesn't last long. Victoria tags herself in and gets caught in a rana by Kelly for the pin. Kelly tries the same thing on Maryse for two so Maryse hits a backbreaker and gets the pin.

It's 4-4 now if you're keeping track and Mickie comes in while swearing a bit. A Thesz Press puts Maryse down and it's off to Michelle again. They try to bridge into a backslide, fail miserably, and try again to a standoff. McCool hits a Russian legsweep for two and Mickie hits a clothesline for the same, but Maria's save hits McCool on the save, allowing Mickie to hit the jumping DDT and pin Michelle. Mickie gets in an argument with Beth and gets rolled up by Maryse to tie it right back up.

Off to Candice vs. Natalya and they trade some rollups for two. Natalya busts out a Sharpshooter (it is the Survivor Series after all) but Jillian makes the save. Candice hits a spear for a quick pin on Natalya and it's 3-2. For those of you keeping track, it's Jillian, Beth and Candice vs. Maria and Maryse.

It's Jillian vs. Maria with Jillian getting two off a Samoan Drop. Maria grabs a quick victory roll to eliminate Jillian and ten seconds later, Candice hits a northern lights suplex to put Maria out. Maryse hooks an inverted figure four on Candice and we're down to one on one. Maryse gets in a few shots and a rollup but the Glam Slam gets the final pin very quickly.

Rating: D. As decent as last year's was, this felt like your traditional Divas match. You had some decent workers but most of the girls are models who are there because of how they look in swimsuits. I've seen worse matches and the right choice was the survivor, but this just didn't work for the most part.

Matt Hardy says that Jeff was hit in the back of the head with a blunt object. There. Controversy over. I'm sorry you had to suffer for less than a day you whiny people.

We recap Undertaker vs. Big Show. Show isn't scared of Undertaker so he'll win the casket match tonight.

Undertaker vs. Big Show

Casket match if that wasn't clear or if you're an idiot that needs everything spelled out for you. The casket gets the full druid entrance. I wonder if those guys hang out at catering after this. Show took all of 2007 off and lost a ton of weight so he's still kind of slim here. Well slim for him that is. They have a nice casket this year too. I don't think the bell rang but Show starts throwing punches anyway. One misses and Taker tries to dump him into the casket to no avail.

They head to the floor and Undertaker's headbutt has no effect. Show pounds away at the ribs and rams Taker face first into the announce table to daze Undertaker. The announce table gets loaded up but Show headbutts

him instead of putting Taker on the table. Taker grabs one of those big monitors WWE uses (you would think they would have upgraded by this point wouldn't you? They still use those things in 2012 I believe) and bashes Show's head in a few times with it. Taker drops a BIG leg to put Show through the table in the big spot of the match.

Very slowly we start heading back to the casket but take a detour back into the ring instead. Old School is countered and things slow down again. There's a side slam from Show as the crowd is a lot less interested than they were when Undertaker was on offense. The casket is opened and Taker is put inside, but Show has to close the casket himself. Since Show won't close the lid, Taker comes back with a bunch of punches and the jumping clothesline. Show hits a big elbow in the corner to slow down Taker (and the crowd) again. For some reason Show loads up a Vader Bomb when Taker is half up and gets chokeslammed down.

The casket is opened again and a big boot to the side of Show's head knocks him inside, but Show blocks the lid from being shut again. Back in and Show hits the chokeslam...then destroys the casket. Show starts walking away and there's a wall of fire to stop him from leaving. Taker goes after him and gets punched down again, but here are more druids with another casket.

Show punches Taker a bit more and stands the casket up so he can ram Taker into it and knock both of them down. The casket is stood up again but it's open this time. Taker punches Show to the edge of the stage before whipping Show into the casket, causing it to fall and shut to give Taker the win.

Rating: D. This is a horrible casket match by some people but it's really not that bad. It's certainly a bad match but the ending was kind of creative and what are you expecting from Taker vs. Big Show? They're going to hit each other a lot and it's going to be slow, so why do people act surprised when any match with either of these two or Kane is the same formula? Not a good match but it's definitely not terrible.

Carlito and Primo hit on the Bellas but can't tell them apart. In something I never thought I'd have to say again, the Gobbledygooker pops

up and the Colons think it's Charlie Haas, but of course he pops up in the room and the Gooker is played by the Boogeyman. This would be another pointless segment.

Randy Orton doesn't want to be team captain but his team will win anyway. He implies Cody is the weak link of the team. Cody says that if Randy is eliminated first, it's addition by subtraction. The team has to hold them apart.

Team Orton vs. Team Batista

Randy Orton, Mark Henry, William Regal, Cody Rhodes, Shelton Benjamin

Batista, Kofi Kingston, CM Punk, R-Truth, Matt Hardy

Shelton is US Champion, Matt is ECW Champion and Punk/Kofi are Raw tag champions. Yeah that didn't last long. Punk immediately charges at Regal and hits the GTS for the elimination in about ten seconds. Shelton gets a very fast two on Punk before pounding away on his back. Off to Kofi who grabs a front facelock. Kofi is even more over here than usual as he went to college in Boston. Kofi tries a monkey flip but Shelton lands on his feet and brings in Henry to pound away all slow like.

Henry apparently gets tired after a few seconds so here's Cody. Matt comes in, does nothing of note, and tags in Truth who pounds away. Striker talks about what a killing Truth is making as we can hear a lot of spots being called here tonight. I don't know if the ring is mic'd loudly or what but you can hear all kinds of stuff here. Batista comes in and everybody runs until it's only Cody left to face him. Ok make that Shelton actually. Batista takes him down with ease and gets two via a powerslam. Off to Matt vs. Randy as things speed up. A bulldog gets two for Matt but a moonsault misses.

It's off to Henry who lost the ECW Title to Hardy a few months ago. Cody comes in and chokes a bit but there's the double tag to Truth vs. Shelton. A victory roll gets two for Truth and he does his backflip into the splits spot. The spinning forearm misses completely and Paydirt (the same move Truth now calls Little Jimmy) gets the pin for Shelton. Kofi immediately comes in with a springboard cross body for two and a dropkick

to put Shelton down.

The Boom Drop gets another two for Kofi but Henry blasts Kofi in the back of the head. Henry comes in legally now for more quick pounding and it's finally off to Orton. Orton does his really slow stomp but the knee drop misses. Randy drapes him over the top rope and hits the Elevated DDT for the elimination. Punk is immediately waiting on Orton as Randy is the guy that cost Punk the world title at Unforgiven. Orton gets beaten up for a few moments but gets in a rake to the eyes and tags out to Cody.

Rhodes works on the arm for a bit but gets caught by the knee and bulldog combo for two. Punk goes up but Manu (the other member of Legacy who kind of sucked) distracts him long enough for Cody to shove him off the top. A DDT eliminated Punk quickly and we're down to...4-2 I think? It's Batista/Matt vs. Orton/Cody/Henry/Benjamin. Matt comes in and hits a quick Side Effect for two on Rhodes but it's quickly back to Henry. Matt hits an elbow to the back of Henry's head and manages to pull off the Side Effect for two. That's about it for Hardy as the World's Strongest Slam takes him out, leaving Batista all alone.

Big Dave immediately spears down Henry to make it 3-1 as Shelton comes in. Benjamin gets caught in a spinebuster almost immediately and the Batista Bomb gets is down to 2-1. Cody comes in and peppers Batista with some right hands before charging into a boot. Batista powerslams Rhodes down and says Orton is next. Batista hits the Bomb on Rhodes but Randy made a blind tag while Cody was in the air. The RKO gets the elimination and win for Rhodes and Orton.

Rating: B. This was a kind of throwback to the old school Survivor Series matches where the numbers finally caught up with the big face and he got beat. Orton vs. Batista was one of the big matches that WWE never really got to do on the scale I think they were hoping for. They would have a long match next month at Armageddon but that's hardly the second main event at Wrestlemania which they were capable of having. Still though, good stuff here and the best match of the night by far.

Kozlov says he'll win.

Hardy is officially out of the title match tonight.

The recap video is pretty pointless now because the video is mostly about Jeff. Kozlov is here because HHH wanted to have some big epic match with him that no one but him was interested in. Jeff is here because he keeps getting so close to winning the title so EVIL Vickie wouldn't let him in the match. Jeff invaded the contract signing and beat up a lot of people until he was put in the match.

Then HHH decided he didn't want to put Hardy over for the title so we needed a transitional champion, which is why the stairwell thing happened. HHH is kind of a jerk like that.

Smackdown World Title: Vladimir Kozlov vs. HHH

After the big match intros we're ready to go. The fans chant USA of course and for once it's actually appropriate. Kozlov, the amateur wrestler/combat sports expert, takes it to the mat with amateur stuff. Now remember that, because it'll become important later. HHH gets on the mat with him and hooks a headlock. The fans now chant boring as we hit a standoff. Now they want Hardy. Well to be fair they only paid for him, so why should HHH not wanting to drop the title matter?

They trade arm holds on the mat and then trade even more arm holds on the same mat. Back up and HHH hits the high knee and a facebuster followed by the DDT for no cover. The fans chant for TNA before HHH hits the spinebuster. Kozlov counters the Pedigree and hits the headbutt to the chest to take HHH down. Vlad sends HHH into the corner and out to the floor where very little happens.

Back in and a fallaway slam gets two for the challenger and he fires some shoulders to the ribs. A powerslam gets another two and it's off to a body grip to slow things down even more. Kozlov hits a pair of backbreakers for two and it's back to that grip. HHH comes back with some right hands but gets powerslammed down for another two. A comeback by HHH is countered into a belly to belly as Taz says Kozlov is going to win, further dooming him to lose. HHH hits a Pedigree out of nowhere and here's Vickie.

She says he's here and makes it a triple threat, with the third man being the returning Edge. Edge does the psycho eyes on the way to the ring and

I think a cameraman fell off the ramp as he was filming. Edge spears down HHH and here's Jeff Hardy to destroy the Canadian. His chair shot hits HHH though, allowing Edge to steal the pin and the title.

Rating: D. There's a lot to say here. First and foremost, as usual I disagree with his highness Dave Meltzer, who said this was the worst match of the year. It's arguably not even the worst match of the show, but think about this for a minute: are you telling me there isn't some terrible Divas match somewhere in the year worse than this? Or that Honky Tonk Man vs. Santino at Cyber Sunday was indeed better? He gave worst match of the year to Hardy vs. Sting in 2011, so apparently length doesn't mean anything.

This match was indeed bad, but let's think about this for a minute. Kozlov is supposed to be a combat sports expert and an amateur wrestler. So what did he do? HE WRESTLED LIKE HIS CHARACTER IS SUPPOSED TO! Now was it boring? Absolutely. Was it a REALLY stupid move to put him in a world title match? Absolutely. Were the fans interested? Not at all. If you want proof, back at Cyber Sunday the options for the title match were HHH vs. either guy, or a triple threat. The results were as follows:

Hardy – 57%

Triple Threat – 38%

Kozlov – 5%

Based on that alone, it's clear that almost no one wanted to see HHH vs. Kozlov. The interest just wasn't there, so they booked a triple threat instead which there was interest in. Then they screw the fans out of their money by taking Jeff out of the match because of whatever their reasoning was. Then they flip the fans off AGAIN by having Hardy run in at the end. Hardy would pin Edge in another triple threat the next month to win the title in a shocker. Why this match didn't happen here is beyond me, but again it's screwing the fans out of what was advertised until the night before the show.

At the end of the day though, no one bought Kozlov as a real threat to the title. The guy just wasn't going to be WWE Champion with the response

he got, which is why Hardy was the interesting factor in this match. Without him, you have twelve minutes of your time being wasted until the ending, which SHOULD HAVE BEEN HARDY. Anyway, nothing to see here but it's not the worst match of the year.

We recap Jericho vs. Cena. Jericho snuck into the Scramble match last month and stole the world title while Cena was on the shelf. Tonight, Cena returns from a neck injury to challenge for the title. In his hometown. Against a guy that has literally only beaten him once. And we're supposed to expect Jericho to have a chance because we're supposed to ignore all that stuff.

Raw World Title: Chris Jericho vs. John Cena

Cena almost immediately tries the FU but Jericho bails to the apron. Jericho comes back with a headlock which works on the neck followed by a shoulder block to take Cena to the floor. John holds his neck a lot and looks shaken. Back in and Cena pounds away in the corner as they're hitting hard but the pace of the match is pretty slow if that makes sense. Jericho takes over and things continue to go slowly.

Cena comes back with the Throwback and goes up for the Fameasser but comes down because that's the move that hurt his neck in the first place. Jericho takes over again and things go slowly. He kicks Cena in the side of the head which is good for a nine count from the referee. Back in and Cena slugs away but gets sent right back to the floor. Jericho throws him into the steps and heads back in for a neck crank.

After the hold is broken, it's time for more choking followed by a full nelson. The hold lasts almost a minute and a half but Cena blocks the bulldog. A shoulder puts Jericho down but the second shoulder hits. Jericho misses the Lionsault but the Shuffle is countered into the LIONTAMER! Cena escapes the hold so Jericho puts on the regular Boston Crab instead. Cena (as in the hold lasted a minute plus) grabs the rope to escape. Back up and Cena hits an FU out of nowhere but can't follow up.

Both guys head up to the top with Cena slamming him to the mat, followed up by the top rope Fameasser. Cena is all fired up now but Jericho breaks

up the FU and hits a Codebreaker for a delayed two. Jericho takes over and hits a clothesline followed by an EVIL smirk. He smirks a bit too much though and Cena grabs the STFU. Cena has to try to pull the hold back to the middle of the ring and Jericho kicks him away. The champ tries a small package but Cena pulls him up into the FU for the pin and the title.

Rating: C+. The match itself was fine, but there was less drama in this than in a Donald Duck cartoon. At the end of the day, Cena does not lose to Jericho and he does not tap out no matter what. The wrestling was fine and it told a story and all that jazz, but I'd rather have a main event where I wasn't sure what was going to happen than a match being designed for Cena to have everything come together and win and then everything coming together for Cena to win.

Cena celebrates to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. I don't know if it's because I've been doing so many of these lately, but this wasn't the most interesting show in the world. It was dull at times and almost felt like a chore to sit through. The first hour or so is WAY worse than the rest of the show, but even the last two thirds aren't all that great. This didn't work that well and it's not something I want to see again.

Ratings Comparison

Team HBK vs. Team JBL

Original: B+

Redo: C

Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown

Original: D-

Redo: D

Undertaker vs. Big Show

Original: D+

Redo: D

Team Orton vs. Team Batista

Original: C-

Redo: B

Edge vs. HHH vs. Vladimir Kozlov

Original: D+

Redo: D

John Cena vs. Chris Jericho

Original: B

Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: D+

I've flipped on the two male Survivor Series matches but other than that it's about the same.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/11/17/history-of-survivor-series-count-up-2008-let-jericho-beat-cena-once-just-one-time/>

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