

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania VIII: Who Needs Hogan?

Wrestlemania VIII

Date: April 5, 1992

Location: Hoosier Dome, Indianapolis, Indiana

Attendance: 62,167

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Bobby Heenan

We're into another huge stadium here and the interesting thing is that Hogan, while in the final match, isn't in the title scene at all. We've got a double main event here of Hogan vs. Sid in Hogan's "retirement" match and the still pretty new Flair defending the world title against Randy Savage in a match built not only around the title but also Liz, which we'll get into later. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about how it's a double main event. They're not really going for the epic feeling here it seems.

Reba McIntyre sings the national anthem.

Tito Santana vs. Shawn Michaels

Tito is El Matador now and Shawn is freshly heel. Bobby says Reba is Tito's sister: Arriba McIntyre. Say it out loud and you'll get the joke. After taking forever to get Sherri to the floor, Tito gets a fast two off a cross body. They head to the mat for a headlock on Shawn which doesn't last long. Michaels avoids a punch to the face but gets clotheslined out to the floor instead.

Back to the chinlock which doesn't go anywhere this time either, so Shawn takes over in the corner. That also goes nowhere so Santana punches him in the face and takes it right back to the mat. Shawn finally comes back and pounds away even more, this time sending Tito out to the floor. A backbreaker gets two for Shawn and we hit the chinlock again, this time

by the future world champion. Santana fights up but walks into the superkick for no cover.

The Backdrop Suplex (Shawn's old finisher) is countered and there's the flying forearm to send Shawn to the floor. Back in and a slingshot forearm puts Shawn down again as does a big atomic drop. Tito's forearm to the back of the head sends Shawn to the outside again, only to have Sherri trip Tito up on a suplex attempt to give Michaels the pin.

Rating: C. This was ok but it was a lot of kicking and chinlocks for an opening match. Tito was good for giving you a guaranteed decent performance out there, so putting him against Shawn was a good move for the most part. The match wasn't great or anything but it did a decent job at what it was supposed to do.

Gene is on the old school interview platform and calls out the Legion of Doom. With them however is their former manager Paul Ellering complete with the rolled up Wall Street Journal. Ellering talks about bringing the LOD together before talking about how this is the beginning of the end. They want the tag titles back but would never get them again. Hawk says they were a runaway train, but now look who's driving it. They don't care who the champions are, because they're coming for the gold.

Jake Roberts says there's no truth to the rumor of him bringing a snake to the ring. We get a clip of Jake slamming Taker's hand in a coffin and laying out a helpless Paul Bearer.

Jake Roberts vs. Undertaker

A right hand to the face has no effect on Taker so Jake pounds away so more. Heenan is already freaking out about how Taker can't be hurt as is his custom. Jake knocks him to the floor but Undertaker lands on his feet. Roberts is pulled to the floor as well and rammed into the post to give the dead man control. Heenan cracks jokes and says he thinks he has two brilliant minds. Gorilla: "I'm in big trouble."

As Heenan talks about Bearer earning the Urn, Taker chokes away in the corner and pounds on Jake for a bit. An elbow drop keeps Jake down and there's the jumping clothesline for good measure. Out of NOWHERE, Jake

hits the DDT to put Taker down but he sits up a few seconds later and grabs Jake by the throat. A second DDT puts Taker down again but Jake goes after Bearer instead. There's the sit up and Undertaker follows Jake outside, hitting a tombstone on the FLOOR to end Jake and make Undertaker 2-0.

Rating: C-. The problem with these early Wrestlemania matches for Undertaker is that they didn't have a ton of story or drama to them. Jake was in his last match for the company here before he went to WCW for a cup of coffee, so he didn't seem to be giving it his all out there. The kicking out of the DDTs was impressive as was the Tombstone, but that's about it.

Piper and Bret are facing each other later tonight and Piper talks about growing up near the Hart Family. Some jokes are cracked and Bret doesn't take too kindly to it. Things get testy when Bret wants the IC Title back. This is much more of a match of respect than hatred.

Intercontinental Title: Roddy Piper vs. Bret Hart

Piper is defending. There's a story here actually: Bret was "sick" and lost the title to Mountie, only to have Piper win it about a day and a half later. This is Bret's rematch. Heenan: "How would you handle Piper if you were Bret?" Gorilla: "I would use my speed advantage. You?" Heenan: "Waffle him with a tire iron." Bret takes him down to start and Piper spits in his face, basically becoming the heel of the match early on.

They trade arm holds to start but Piper can't escape Bret's non-evil clutches. Once he finally frees himself, it's a dropkick to put Roddy down instead. Bret might have hurt his shoulder in the process, but of course he's goldbricking, which gives him a two count via a small package. Piper slaps him in the face so Bret cross bodies both guys to the outside. Back in and Piper gets in a cheap shot which apparently busts Bret open. This was a big deal actually as Bret claimed it was a legit cut but in reality he bladed and lied to prevent punishment and still make it look good. Smart guy that Hitman.

Roddy pounds away for awhile and is reverting to his old style far more

than he has in years. Bret comes back with a sunset flip for two and the mat is getting bloody in a hurry. Piper punches him down for two but Bret comes back with a forearm to send the champion to the outside. Back in and a double clothesline puts both guys down. Piper's head lands on Bret's ribs which should be a count but the referee sits up instead. Roddy goes up but Bret is goldbricking again, allowing him to slam Piper face first into the mat.

A suplex gets two for Hart and it's time for the FIVE MOVES OF DOOM. Piper blocks the Sharpshooter though, so Bret settles for the middle rope elbow. Roddy blocks that too though with a boot to the face and they slug it out again. There goes the referee and Piper clotheslines Bret to the outside. As they come back in, Roddy grabs the ring bell to complete the heel turn. He lifts it up to crush Bret, only to stop himself and put on a sleeper instead. That proves to be his downfall though as Bret climbs up the corner and falls back on Piper for the pin and the title.

Rating: B+. This might be Piper's best matches ever but even rarer is seeing him pinned in the WWF. Piper was VERY protective of his character, meaning that he was very rarely pinned. The match was great here and wound up being Piper's last match in the company for several years. Really good stuff here as Bret is on the verge of shooting up the card to the world title in the fall.

Piper puts the title on Hart after thinking about clocking him with the belt.

We hear from WBF Bodybuilding Pro Lex Luger. He wouldn't have a major appearance again until January of 1993. Again, who thought bodybuilding on PPV was a good idea? That would be Mr. XFL, Vince McMahon.

The Mountie, the Nasty Boys and the Repo Man laugh evilly.

Duggan, Slaughter, Virgil and Boss Man respond with nothing of note to say.

Jim Duggan/Sgt. Slaughter/Virgil/Big Boss Man vs. Nasty Boys/Mountie/Repo Man

Just a collection of lower midcard guys getting a Wrestlemania payday here. Neither team gets an entrance. Instead, Ray Combs of Family Feud is guest ring announcer for this and cracks a few jokes about the heels pre-match. The good guys clean house to start and hit a quadruple clothesline to clear the ring. Heenan announces that Shawn Michaels has left the building. Gorilla sums up our responses: "WHO CARES???"

Anyway Duggan and Sags start things off and it's Jim hitting a few clotheslines to take over. Off to Slaughter who gets poked in the eye, allowing for the tag to Knobs. Slaughter pounds away to take over before it's off to Boss Man for a boot to the face. Brian avoids a charge into the corner and Boss Man's splash misses Repo Man as well, giving the heels control for a bit. Repo crotches himself and Boss Man slugs him down for good measure.

Off to Virgil who seems to mess up almost anything where he jumps into the air. Duggan tries to come in to save his partner but it's back to Sags to beat on Virgil even more. A pumphandle slam gets two on Virgil and it's back to Mountie. Everything breaks down and in the melee the Nastys are rammed together, allowing Virgil to steal the pin.

Rating: D. As I said, this was nothing more than a way to throw a bunch of guys onto the show at the same time. This was a much better idea than having four matches eat up a few minutes each as it accomplishes the same goal here. They were out there as filler before the world title match and there's nothing wrong with that at all.

Flair and Perfect smile over having a large centerfold of Miss Elizabeth. I can't imagine how teasing this angle was for thirteen year old boys. They say Savage is losing tonight and that Liz is leaving with Flair.

Savage won't give any interviews.

To recap the world title match, Flair claims that he had a relationship with Liz before she was married to Savage, so tonight Savage is out for revenge and the title. Flair had some doctored photos and that's about it, so it was more about humiliation than anything else. It's a great angle and would still work perfectly to this day if done right.

WWF World Title: Ric Flair vs. Randy Savage

There's no Liz in sight to start and Savage comes to the ring last. Oh and Mr. Perfect is in Flair's corner which will come into play later. Flair tries to walk up the aisle so Savage decks him from behind. Perfect makes a save by throwing Randy down as things are looking chaotic already. They get into the ring and Savage starts fast with some shots into the corner and punches down onto Flair's head.

Heenan is at his most biased ever and his voice is almost cracking already. A clothesline puts Flair down and a back elbow gets two. Flair comes back with a big backdrop to put Savage out on the floor as the champion takes over. Flair rams Savage's back into the apron and takes over with a few suplexes including a belly to back for two. Heenan wants to see the pictures and I can't say I blame him.

A big chop puts Savage down for two and we head to the floor. Savage has his back rammed into the apron again and Flair suplexes him back into the ring for two more. Randy comes back with a single right hand and the place ERUPTS. A swinging neckbreaker puts Flair down but he pokes Savage in the eye to take him down. The champ goes up top, only to jump into a clothesline from Savage. Savage whips him into the corner and we get a Flair Flip to the apron where Ric runs up top, only to jump into another clothesline for two.

Savage hits his third clothesline in a roll to send Flair out to the floor. A top rope ax handle sends Flair into the barricade followed by a shot into the post. Flair is busted open and there's the Flair Flop on the floor. A suplex puts Flair down on the floor again as Heenan is begging for the match to be stopped. Back in and Savage pounds away before hitting a top rope ax handle for two.

The top rope elbow hits but Perfect breaks up the pin. Thankfully the referee doesn't call for the bell as Perfect throws something to Ric. The referee is bumped but it's not that bad. A shot to the face with the object puts Randy down but it only gets two. The fans are losing their minds on these kickouts. Flair pounds away and is pulled away by the referee, allowing Perfect to blast him in the knee with a chair.

This brings out Liz who marches through some suits (one of which being worn by Shane McMahon) as Flair works over the leg. The knee crusher sets up the Figure Four (complete with interference from Perfect). Heenan: "SHOW ME THE PICTURES!" Randy turns the hold over but Flair breaks it quickly. Savage's leg is done but he grabs a two count off a small package. Flair says this is for Liz as he stomps on the knee even more. He grabs Savage's leg but Savage gets in a quick right hand and rolls Flair up (with a handful of trunks) for the pin and the title.

Rating: A. If you ever want a match based on the good guy overcoming insurmountable odds, this is pretty high up on the list. Savage came back from EVERYTHING and while Liz was there, she wasn't a major factor at all. The match is a masterpiece with both guys looking great. Savage was in a career resurgence, despite being world champion only three years earlier. Anyway, great match here and it still holds up very well today.

Post match Flair tries to kiss Liz, triggering another brawl. Perfect helps take Savage down and lets Flair pound away for a bit. Referees finally break it up and Savage is announced as the new champion to a big roar.

Flair, Perfect and Heenan go on a huge rant against Savage with Flair saying that Savage is going to be lying about being champion and lying about having the love of Liz. They tell Savage to do it again and claim that Savage was a cheater which won't work again.

Savage gives a rebuttal, saying that he's going to go after Flair no matter where or when it is. He hands Liz the title and says that it's hers. As for Flair, Savage is for him and it's going to continue. I love these two promos and they still work very well.

We recap the Wrestlemania VII press conference where Hogan was announced as the #1 contender. Sid wasn't happy but joined Hogan in a tag match on SNME. However he turned on Hogan and left him alone against Undertaker and Flair. Sid then destroyed Beefcake's Barber Shop set and wound up with a bunch of shampoo on his face in an unintentionally hilarious scene. We also get a montage of Sid beating up jobbers and Virgil.

Rick Martel makes a stupid joke about Tatanka scalping tickets.

Rick Martel vs. Tatanka

There are Indians at ringside chanting for Tatanka. This is about two months after Tatanka debuted on TV so you should be able to figure out what's going to happen pretty quickly here. Tatanka start off hot as Heenan explaining that Flair did nothing wrong. Gorilla shouts that Heenan is a liar, so Heenan challenges him to a fight. Martel makes a quick comeback and sends Tatanka out to the floor. Back in and Bobby makes Indian jokes as Martel stomps away a bit more. Rick goes up and gets crotched, allowing Tatanka to pound away even more. Out of nowhere a cross body pins Martel.

Rating: D+. The match was ok but it was nothing more than a way to give the fans a breather. Like I said, no one knew Tatanka at this point due to how little time he had been on TV. Martel was in total jobber to the stars territory by this point and would be gone pretty soon. Nothing to remember here at all.

Money Inc. isn't worried about the Natural Disasters because they've stolen the Disasters' manager in the form of Jimmy Hart.

The Disasters say they're ready and are after the titles and Jimmy Hart.

Tag Titles: Money Inc. vs. Natural Disasters

Money Inc. is defending and is comprised of Ted DiBiase and I.R.S. DiBiase and Earthquake start things off with the heels (Money Inc.) getting beaten down and the rich man being knocked to the floor. Off to Typhoon vs. I.R.S. For osme arm work by the big guy. Typhoon misses a charge into the corner and it's off to DiBiase....who is immediately beaten down as well. Typhoon misses a splash against the ropes and falls over the top and out to the floor.

I.R.S. cranks on a front facelock for a bit as Ted hits an ax handle off the middle rope for two. A double clothesline puts both guys down as this match is DRAGGING. Everything breaks down and the challengers take over. A clothesline puts DiBiase on the floor and there's the big splash from Typhoon. Jimmy Hart pulls Irwin out to break up the Earthquake splash and the champions walk out to retain the titles.

Rating: D-. I have no idea what the point of this was. The match wasn't entertaining, it wasn't good, and the match didn't accomplish anything. I'm guessing this was supposed to be filler between the other matches, but we already had one of those and that's what we're about to get next. Nothing to see here at all.

Brutus Beefcake supports Hogan.

Owen Hart vs. Skinner

Skinner catches him with the tobacco juice to the face to start and hits a shoulder breaker for no cover. Skinner's reverse DDT gets two but Owen gets tired of selling and rolls him up for the pin. This was about a minute long.

Gene is with Sid and the tall man calls him a fat bald headed oaf. Sid guarantees this is Hogan's last match, which triggers an interview with Hogan where he says he isn't sure if he's retiring or not. Sid doesn't care.

Hulk Hogan vs. Sid Justice

With the music still playing, Sid jumps Hogan but Hulk pounds back and knocks Sid to the apron. The music is still playing and Hogan hits a forearm to the chest and a clothesline to put Sid on the floor. AWESOME opening sequence here and it still works really well. Back in and they stare each other down but Hogan knocks Sid right back out to the floor. Back in again and Sid wants a test of strength.

Sid puts Hogan down but Hulk makes the big comeback to the delight of the crowd. Justice gets knocked into the corner but Sid's manager Harvey Wippleman (totally unneeded here) distracts Hulk, allowing a chokeslam to put him down. Hulk gets knocked to the floor and hit with Wippleman's bag, setting up a nerve hold by Sid.

Hogan fights up, only to get put right back down in a side slam. The powerbomb gets two and it's Hulk Up time. Sid eats a few buckles and it's big boot, slam, legdrop....TWO? This is assumed to be a screwjob by Sid but in reality, the scheduled run-in by someone we'll name in a second was

late so Sid had to kick out. Anyway there's the DQ by Wippleman to end things.

Rating: D. Well that sucked. It's about twelve minutes long and went nowhere at all due to the majority of the match being spent in a nerve hold. Well maybe not the majority but far longer than it should have been. Anyway, this was nothing of note and saving Sid was stupid due to him being gone in a few weeks due to failing a drug test. Nothing to see here, until after the match.

Post match, Papa Shango of all people (the guy who missed his cue) runs out and beats down Hogan along with Sid until the Ultimate Warrior makes a legitimately shocking return for the save. A lot of posing ends the show.

Overall Rating: B-. You have two classics, a huge shocking return, and some other decent stuff in there. What else do you want from a Wrestlemania, especially in 1992. Good stuff here as the Hogan era is definitely coming to a close. He would somehow get another world title the next year and the main event here sucked, but things were moving beyond him and it was clear that things would survive. Good stuff here.

Ratings Comparison

Shawn Michaels vs. Tito Santana

Original: B-

Redo: C

Undertaker vs. Jake Roberts

Original: D+

Redo: C-

Bret Hart vs. Roddy Piper

Original: A

Redo: B+

Big Boss Man/Virgil/Sgt. Slaughter/Jim Duggan vs. Repo Man/Nasty Boys/Mountie

Original: F

Redo: D

Randy Savage vs. Ric Flair

Original: A+

Redo: A

Tatanka vs. Rick Martel

Original: D

Redo: D+

Natural Disasters vs. Money Inc.

Original: D-

Redo: D-

Owen Hart vs. Skinner

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Sid Justice vs. Hulk Hogan

Original: D

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: B-

It's the same overall despite some of the main stuff being different.

That's interesting.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/15/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-8-hogan-who-needs-the-bald-man/>

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