

Summerslam Count-Up – 1990: Now This Is A Tag Match

Summerslam 1990

Date: August 27, 1990

Location: Philadelphia Spectrum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 19,304

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Roddy Piper

This is a personal favorite of mine as I've probably seen this show upwards of 40 times. It was the first tape I ever owned and I went through at least two copies. We have a double main event tonight with Hogan returning to face Earthquake and Ultimate Warrior defending the world title against Rick Rude in a cage for the final blowoff in their rivalry. Let's get to it.

We open with a look at the fans coming into the arena and buying merchandise.

Now we get a traditional intro with Vince shouting about the double main event.

Rockers vs. Power and Glory

Power and Glory (Hercules and Paul Roma) get a jobber entrance. The camera immediately goes wide during the opening brawl so you don't see Shawn's knee get grazed by Hercules' chain. His knee was REALLY badly hurt at this time so he's just here for an appearance, making this a handicap match for all intents and purposes. Marty hits a quick dropkick to both guys and gets a small package on Roma but Slick has the referee.

Vince is freaking out over the referee missing stuff as Marty clotheslines Herc to the outside. We officially start with Roma vs. Jannetty and Roma tagging his way out of a sunset flip. Shawn is still on the floor as Hercules pounds away and slams Marty down. Roma plants Jannetty with a backbreaker for two but Marty comes back with a powerslam. The top rope fist connects with Paul's head but Hercules

breaks up the pin. Roma sends Jannetty into a clothesline from Herc as Shawn is screaming in pain. The superplex/top rope splash combo is enough to finish the massacre of Jannetty.

Rating: C-. The match wasn't too bad all things considered. The crowd is white hot here and they carried the match to a higher level than it could have reached on their own. It's kind of a shame that Marty had to be Shawn's partner as his own skills were overlooked by his far more talented partner.

Post match Shawn finally gets into the ring but Marty covers his injured leg and takes a beating himself. Shawn is taken out on a stretcher.

Mr. Perfect isn't worried about the Texas Tornado because he's perfect. Tornado had been around for only a few weeks if even that coming into this. Heenan says Texas Tornadoes never do any damage because you can see it coming from a mile away.

Texas Tornado says that Perfect doesn't know anything about Texas Tornadoes. They're powerful and devastating, and tonight he's going to go back into the clouds with the Intercontinental Title. I've always liked this promo: it's short, it's to the point, and it ties into the character name. Short and sweet. Note that Tornado is wearing yellow trunks here, just like Perfect. He'd change to white for the match

Intercontinental Title: Mr. Perfect vs. Texas Tornado

Tornado launches him into the corner to start and Perfect has a breather on the floor. The idea is that Perfect hasn't had time to plan for Tornado and doesn't know how to deal with him. Back in and Perfect hooks a quick hiptoss but Tornado slams him down and clotheslines Perfect out to the floor.

Back in and Perfect hits a clothesline of his own and the necksnap has Tornado in trouble. Off to a sleeper on Tornado but he quickly makes the rope. Perfect tries slapping him in the face, but Tornado pulls him into a slingshot, sending Perfect head first into the post. The Claw hold and Tornado Punch are enough for the pin and the title.

Rating: D+. This is a weird one as it's about three and a half minutes of stalling before the fast ending. This was supposed to be Brutus Beefcake's shot but he injured his face in a parasailing accident and Tornado was here as a surprise, which is likely why they went with the title change. Perfect would get the title back a few weeks later.

Mean Gene is talking about Sapphire being nowhere in sight (remember that as it becomes important later) when Hennig and Brain come in and say Tornado cheated by sending Perfect into the post. Heenan swears, yes SWEARS I SAY, that the shoulder was up at two.

Sapphire vs. Sensational Sherri

Sherri has on something like a big Mardi Gras mask which terrified me as a kid. Not that it matters as there's no Sapphire. The music plays again but there's still no Sapphire. Sherri says count to ten and then ring the bell. There's still no Sapphire so Sherri wins by forfeit.

Dusty Rhodes isn't sure where Sapphire, his chick, is. The idea is that Sapphire has been getting a bunch of gifts and no one knows who is sending them. The benefactor is scheduled to be revealed tonight. In what can only be described as a bizarre and random cameo, Jim Duggan pops up, says he hasn't seen Sapphire either, and walks away. Dusty lists off the gifts (ring, bracelet, fur coat, Cadillac etc) and that's about it.

Warlord vs. Tito Santana

Piper makes Mexican jokes as Tito grabs a headlock. Warlord easily shoves him down and Piper suggests going for a taco. Three straight dropkicks send Warlord out to the floor for a consultation with Slick. Back in and Tito pounds away but is launched to the outside on a kickout. Warlord rams Tito's back into the post as Piper does a horrible Slick impression. Back in and Warlord pounds on the back but Tito fires off a quick clothesline and right hands. The flying forearm hits out of nowhere but Warlord gets his foot on the ropes. Back up a few seconds later and a powerslam abruptly ends Tito.

Rating: D+. Tito was a jobber to the stars at this point and made Warlord look as good as he could have, but the match was nothing special at all.

Warlord just wasn't all that good other than having muscles on top of muscles. Tito also jobbed to Barbarian at Wrestlemania so they had an idea of what they were using him for at this time.

Ad for Survivor Series. That show SUCKED.

Demolition says it's going to be a surprise combination of them facing the Hart Foundation for the titles. Sean Mooney asks them about a match with Legion of Doom, giving us this joke from Crush: "They're just a couple of second rate imposters." It's funny if you know your history.

Demolition has their entrance and it's Smash/Crush. The Hart Foundation says they don't care which combination they were going to face.

Tag Titles: Hart Foundation vs. Demolition

This is 2/3 falls and Demolition is defending. Basically the Harts have about as much chance coming into this as I have at being Miss America 1974. Bret starts with Smash but the Harts knock Crush to the floor before anything gets going. Things settle down and Bret gets a quick rollup for two. Anvil comes in to crank on Smash's arm before Bret comes back in with a fist to the back. Smash tries to get into a technical match with Bret and gets caught in an armbar for his stupidity.

Smash finally slams Bret down and brings in Crush, only to have Bret avoid an elbow and pound away. Crush charges into a boot in the corner and gets rolled up for two before it's off to Neidhart vs. Smash, only to have Crush kick Jim in the back to give the champions the advantage. Crush comes in again and misses a charge into the corner, allowing for another double tag to Bret and Smash. Neidhart falls to the floor as everything breaks down. Smash is whipped into Crush and Bret gets two off the middle rope elbow but here's Crush again. The Decapitator to Bret is enough for the first fall.

The second fall begins with Crush hitting a hard clothesline on Bret and Smash pounding on the chest. After a quick neck crank by Crush, Bret fires off the Hart Attack clothesline on Smash, allowing for the hot tag to Neidhart. A powerslam gets two on Smash and Bret launches Anvil into Smash in the corner. The Hart Attack takes Smash down but Crush breaks up

the pin for the DQ to make it 1-1. Why they didn't let the Harts get the pin there is beyond me.

During the break between falls, Demolition knocks Bret to the floor, allowing Ax to run down and sneak under the ring. The third fall starts with Bret getting two off a sunset flip before taking Smash down by the leg. Neidhart picks Bret up for the reverse powerslam for two on Smash. Now things get tricky as Smash rolls to the floor and rolls under the ring, switching places with Ax.

The idea is that Ax and Smash look so much alike that the referee can't tell them apart. This is fine except for one problem: THEY DON'T LOOK ALIKE! Ax is taller, heavier set and has a rounder head, not to mention a deeper voice. This reasoning never made sense to me as a kid and it still doesn't to this day.

Anyway the fresh Ax destroys Bret and gets two off Bret's chest bump in the corner. Anvil comes in sans tag as Smash takes Ax's place again. They try to switch again and the Legion of Doom come out to break it up. Smash goes after Hawk and Animal as Anvil shoulder blocks Crush into a rollup by Bret for the pin and the titles. The place comes unglued as the Harts have shocked the world.

Rating: B. That's probably a bit high but I love this match. The wrestling is just ok but the storytelling is as good as you'll get in a tag match with the LOD coming out to even things up, allowing the Harts to finally do the impossible and win the titles. This is a popular match among old school fans and if you watch it you'll see why.

Wrestlemania VII ad, with Vince promising over 100,000 fans. "Terror threats" prevented this from happening, which is WWF speak for "the Los Angeles Coliseum would have been half empty so we'll move it to an arena."

The LOD goes on a big rant about how they're the real thing and Demolition is living in their world. The Harts come in and say they'll fight anyone anytime.

Demolition wants to get their hands on the LOD.

Sherri has heard rumors about Sapphire and thinks she might be a UFO and not that stupid. It's a rather strange interview and we'll leave it at that. Basically Sapphire has done something that Sherri thinks is smart.

Nikolai Volkoff and Jim Duggan are proud to be international tag team partners. We're in intermission if that wasn't clear.

Earthquake and Dino Bravo brag about putting Hogan on the shelf. Big Bossman, Hogan's friend of the month, will be no problem for Dino. Jimmy Hart says Bossman and Hogan will leave on side by side stretchers.

Jake Roberts says he isn't afraid of Bad News Brown's sewer rats. The snake keeps wrapping around Jake's throat in a creepy visual.

Jake Roberts vs. Bad News Brown

Big Bossman is guest referee for no apparent reason. Brown jumps Jake before Bossman is in the ring but has to bail out of a DDT attempt. Back in and Bad News tosses Jake down and gets two off a legdrop. Jake tries the DDT a second time but Brown bails to the floor again. Roberts follows him out and gets hit in the ribs with a chair which isn't a DQ for some reason. Back in and Bad News pounds away as Piper asks if Vince has ever smelled Brown. Jake avoids a middle rope elbow and hits the short clothesline but Brown backdrops out of the DDT. Another chair shot to Jake is good for the lame DQ.

Rating: D+. This didn't have time to go anywhere and I'm still not sure why Boss Man was in here at all. Jake and Brown didn't do anything else after this and Brown didn't go after Boss Man after the feud, so I guess he was there as an enforcer for reasons not important enough to explain. The match was just ok.

Brown tries to drop a leg on the snake but Bossman makes the save. Bad News beats him down as well but Jake pulls the snake out of the bag to chase Brown off. This was Brown's last major appearance in mainstream wrestling.

Demolition yells a lot.

Time for the Brother Love Show with a REAL American as his special guest:

Sgt. Slaughter. This would be the start of his heel turn as he didn't like the idea of Nikolai Volkoff becoming an American and wants America to be how he liked it. Slaughter gives Love the Great American Award and declares WAR on Volkoff, while also saying that Sadaam Hussein would destroy America in a real war. Somehow this took nearly ten minutes.

Mr. Fuji says his Orient Express will leave big red marks on Volkoff's head.

Gene sees Sapphire go into a dressing room and lock the door behind her.

Orient Express vs. Nikolai Volkoff/Jim Duggan

Duggan and Volkoff sing God Bless America and get jumped in a twist on the old foreigners' gimmick. We start with the small Tanaka trying to match strength with Volkoff. Vince: "That wasn't too bright." Piper: "Yep, real dumb." You can't make it any simpler than that. Sato kicks away at Volkoff a bit but it's hot tag to Duggan who cleans house and finishes Tanaka with the three point clothesline. This was nearly a squash.

Sapphire won't open the door for Dusty but Rhodes swears he'll figure this out tonight one way or another.

Macho King Randy Savage doesn't care about Rhodes being out there alone and says he understands Sapphire's decision to leave a common man. I'm a big Savage fan and the energy he puts into his promos always impresses me. He's got NOTHING to talk about here and he was going nuts anyway.

Dusty Rhodes vs. Randy Savage

Before the match we hear a familiar laugh and cut to Ted DiBiase on the interview platform. He's been spending the last several weeks telling Dusty that he has a price just like everyone else but Dusty has kept turning him down. Tonight, someone else had a price: Sapphire, Ted's latest purchase. Ted's latest gift to her is a bag of money which is hard to pass up. DiBiase brings up the most obvious point to the story: who else could afford to pay for all the gifts Sapphire has been getting?

Rhodes charges at DiBiase but Savage jumps him from behind to start the

match. Back in and Savage hits a top rope ax handle for two. Dusty comes back with some elbows but his heart isn't in this. He has to stop to chase Sherri though, allowing Savage to knock Rhodes out cold with Sherri's loaded purse for the pin. This was nothing.

DiBiase leaves his suite but bails with Virgil and Sapphire as Dusty arrives. This would start a long feud which would include the debuts of Undertaker and Dustin Rhodes and Virgil's face turn.

Hogan says that he can't tell a lie because he's like George Washington. He loved his Hulkamaniacs for supporting him and remembers Tugboat for leading the charge until Earthquake and Bravo beat him down. Bossman says that Quake and Bravo have the Constitutional right to a beating tonight.

Hulk Hogan vs. Earthquake

This is Hogan's big return after being gone all summer due to an attack by Earthquake which broke his ribs. They lock up but Hogan can't shove the big man around. Now Quake shoves him down a few times as Jimmy is losing his mind. Quake shoulders him out to the floor and Hogan takes a breather with Bossman. Back in and Hogan tries pounding away but Quake sends him into the corner to take him back down. Hogan gets a boot up in the corner and nails some clotheslines but Quake won't go down.

After knocking Bravo and Hart off the apron, Hogan finally drops Earthquake with the big windup punch. All four guys get inside and the heels both take big boots to the face. The referee puts Bossman out though, allowing Bravo and Quake to hit a double slam on Hogan. A big elbow drop keeps Hogan down and a top rope forearm (from the 468lb Earthquake) to the back has Hogan down again. Off to a Boston Crab but Hogan tries to push his way out. That doesn't work so Hogan looks to his left and realizes he's about four inches from the rope for the break.

Bravo gets in some cheap shots on the floor but Earthquake misses an elbow drop back inside. Hogan finally gets to his feet (sidenote: Roddy Piper should not be allowed to cheer for Hogan. Ever.) but falls back down on a slam attempt. Off to a bearhug by Earthquake as the match slows down. Hulk punches out of it and tries a cross body like a schnook, earning the powerslam he gets as a result. Earthquake drops a pair of

Earthquake splashes (seated sentons) but Hogan gets up at two to shock the crowd.

It's Hulk Up time and there's the slam but Dino distracts the referee after the legdrop. Jimmy comes in but gets tossed at Earthquake, sending everyone to the floor. Hart accidentally hits Quake with the Megaphone and Hogan slams the big man onto a table (it's in Philadelphia after all)....for a countout? For the life of me I have no idea why Hogan didn't get a pin here. I guess they wanted to save that for house shows, but it's not like people wouldn't want to see Hogan do it again live.

Rating: B-. The match itself was nothing of note but this is exactly what the fans wanted to see other than Hogan getting a pin. These two feuded on the house show circuit for the next four months or so, which really is amazing when you consider how basic the angle was that set it up. This falls into the fun category which is fine for a show like this.

Post match Quake chokes Hogan until Bossman blasts him in the back with a STEPLADDER. Quake finally drops him and looks at Bossman so the cop pulls out the nightstick to chase them off. Lots of posing ensues as you can see the house show rematches with any combination of these four guys being made up.

We go to the back where Rude and Heenan talk about Rocky Balboa facing Apollo Creed. Rude has beaten him before and he'll do it again because a cage is his kind of match. Heenan says there will be no sequels either.

Dusty goes on a rant about being in a storm with only America being able to offer him shelter. He doesn't have a price for Ted DiBiase and he's coming for the Million Dollar Man. The feud would have been better if Sapphire hadn't disappeared after this show.

Lord Alfred Hayes talks about the cage being constructed and how it's put together. It's more interesting than it sounds.

Hogan brags about winning and says there's a fourth demandment: believe in yourself. He wants the world title back and will beat Earthquake as many times as it takes to be #1 contender again.

Vince and Roddy talk about Hogan vs. Earthquake happening again.

Earthquake, Hart and Bravo say the war isn't over for Hogan and Bossman.

The Warrior rants about Rick Rude being cracked like the Liberty Bell. He says he'll win and quotes some historic documents to continue the Philadelphia theme.

WWF World Title: Ultimate Warrior vs. Rick Rude

In a cage where you can win by pin or escape. Rude tries to block Warrior from getting into the cage so Warrior knocks him off the top and down into the ring. The champion finally comes in with a top rope ax handle smash and throws Rude into the cage. Rick goes into the cage a few more times but ducks a charge to send Warrior face first into the bars. Rude kicks Warrior away but jumps off the top to put him down again instead of climbing out.

A hard slam into the cage has Warrior down but Rude still won't try to climb out. Rude tries the Rude Awakening after winning a quick slugout but Warrior easily breaks the hold with raw power. They clothesline each other down before Rude hits a quick Rude Awakening for no cover. Instead Rude goes up to the top of the cage for a right hand to Warrior's head. Heenan is losing his mind trying to get Rude to cover but Rude goes up the cage again.

This time Rude jumps into a right hand to the ribs but Heenan slams the door on Warrior's head as he goes to escape. After the two count both guys collide and they're down again as the match drags some more. Warrior stops him from crawling out while pulling Rude's trunks down in the process. Heenan is pulled in and whipped into the steel before being sent outside again. The champion Warriors Up and hits the gorilla press before climbing out to retain.

Rating: D. This match sucked and the ending was exactly what people expected. These two had a match on SNME a month earlier and maybe Rude should have taken the title there to give it back to Warrior here. There was nothing of interest here and Warrior never seemed to be in any real danger due to Rude not going for a cover or trying to escape.

Overall Rating: C+. This is a show where the individual parts don't reflect how the whole show comes out. This is a turn your brain off and have fun show. The main events were exactly what the fans wanted and the other stuff is fun as well. There was a show long angle with Dusty which set up another feud on top of all that. It's a good example of how not everything needs to be a huge show that changes everything and that's a good lesson for modern WWE to learn.

Ratings Comparison

Rockers vs. Power and Glory

Original: B-

Redo: C-

Texas Tornado vs. Mr. Perfect

Original: B

Redo: D+

Sapphire vs. Sensational Sherri

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Warlord vs. Tito Santana

Original: C+

Redo: D+

Hart Foundation vs. Demolition

Original: A+

Redo: B

Jake Roberts vs. Bad News Brown

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Nikolai Volkoff/Jim Duggan vs. Orient Express

Original: D+

Redo: N/A

Randy Savage vs. Dusty Rhodes

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Hulk Hogan vs. Earthquake

Original: B+

Redo: B-

Ultimate Warrior vs. Rick Rude

Original: C-

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: A+

Redo: C+

Nostalgia is a powerful drug.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2010/12/12/summerslam-1990/>

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