

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 1995: A Big Fish And The Bottom Of The Barrel

Royal Rumble 1995

Date: January 22, 1995

Location: USF Sun Dome, Tampa, Florida

Attendance: 10,000

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

Oh dang it 1995 WWF still exists. This is that year that no one likes to talk about and you have to fly through it as fast as you can or you might risk seeing something on it. The big twist this year is that the intervals in the Rumble are only 60 seconds, so the whole match is like 40 minutes long. The other problem is that Diesel is WWF Champion here. The good news is that he's facing Bret Hart, one of the two men capable of dragging an awesome match out of him. Let's get to it.

We open with the big deal about tonight's show: Pamela Anderson arrives. She'll be escorting the winner of the Rumble to the ring at Wrestlemania. A bunch of guys arrive to greet her.

Intercontinental Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Razor Ramon

Jarrett is challenging and now has the Roadie with him. Razor starts with his usual assortment of punches and a fallaway slam to send Jeff to the floor. After a little toweling off on the floor, Jeff armdrags Razor down and struts. They trade arm holds until Razor gets taken to the mat where Jeff messes with his hair. Careful with the grease there Jeff. Razor gets annoyed and knocks Jeff to the floor for some more Memphis stalling.

Jeff gets back in and is immediately puts in an armbar where Razor can mess with Jarrett's hair. Some dropkicks floor the champ and a clothesline gets two. Razor catches a boot coming and ducks the enziguri from Jeff, but Razor misses an elbow to keep Jarrett in control. We hit the chinlock followed by a sunset flip by Jeff for two. Another dropkick

gets the same and Jarrett is getting frustrated.

Jarrett hooks a sleeper but Razor quickly counters. The counter doesn't last long though as Jeff hits a swinging neckbreaker for two. Ramon slides behind Jeff in the corner and crotches him on the post to a big pop. We get a messed up (not botched mind you) spot where Razor was going to try a bulldog off the middle rope but Jeff turns around and it had to be a clothesline. Eh no harm no foul. Jeff backdrops Razor to the floor, injuring the champ's knee. Roadie clips him in the knee and Razor gets counted out.

We won't get to the rating just yet. Post match Jeff calls Razor a coward for taking the easy way out like that and calls him back into the ring. Razor pulls a Marty McFly and takes the bait, giving us another match.

Intercontinental Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Razor Ramon

Razor tries some quick rollups for two but Jeff goes right for the knee to take over. Jeff does his best Ric Flair imitation but as he goes for the third cannonball down onto the leg, Razor kicks him over the top and out to the floor. Back in and Jarrett puts on the Figure Four, putting Razor in a lot of trouble. Razor escapes and starts his comeback with punches and the belly to back superplex but Jeff counters in mid air for two. Razor clotheslines him down and loads up the Edge, but the knee gives out and Jeff rolls him up for the pin and the title.

Rating: C+. I always remember liking this match and it holds up pretty well. Memphis stalling isn't for everyone but it's a good way of drawing heel heat, which Jeff might as well have been an iceberg for otherwise. Razor was awesome at this point and had good chemistry with Jeff, so this worked pretty well all around. The ending was smart as it was Razor's trademark ending for house shows, but he would usually win in about 30 seconds with the Razor's Edge. Nice to see them switch things up here.

Pamela Anderson has been given a lot of gifts from various wrestlers. One of the running gags on this show is that Pamela clearly doesn't want to be here at all and has these "GET ME OUT OF HERE" looks on her face the whole night. Todd Pettingill tries to hit on her and completely fails of course.

Jeff says it's time to celebrate.

IRS vs. The Undertaker

This is the start of the Undertaker vs. Million Dollar Team feud which went on FOREVER. The bell rings and we stand around a lot. IRS tries to jump Taker from behind and it goes nowhere. Taker glares him down to the floor and the stalling continues. IRS slides in, gets glared down, and hides on the floor again. Finally we head back in with IRS pounding away and getting kicked in the face for his efforts.

Taker grabs him by the tie and swings him out of the corner, followed by Old School as this is dominance so far. IRS and DiBiase get in an argument on the floor, causing DiBiase to call for some druids. Taker loads up Old School again but the druid shakes the rope and Taker goes down. A clothesline puts Taker on the floor where he beats on the druids a bit before IRS jumps him from behind.

The druids send Taker into the steps and there's an abdominal stretch by IRS. That goes nowhere so Taker misses an elbow to really slow himself down. IRS hits some basic stuff as the crowd is almost completely silent. Druid interference gets two for IRS and also allows him to escape the Tombstone. A clothesline puts Taker down but he pops up and hits a chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: D. At the end of the day, this was about thirteen minutes of Taker beating up IRS. I mean....did ANYONE buy IRS as a threat to the Dead Man here? That was the problem with the eight month long feud between Taker and DiBiase's group: no one on the team was a real threat to him at all. Bad match here but that had to be expected.

Post match Taker beats up the druids and has a staredown with King Kong Bundy. During the staring, IRS steals the Urn. There's the launch of the feud and Bundy beats up Taker for awhile.

Diesel doesn't have much to say about his match with Bret.

Bret is ready for his chance at the title.

WWF World Title: Diesel vs. Bret Hart

Diesel is defending in case you're really slow. Bret tries to brawl to start but is almost immediately knocked down by a big shot to the face. A clothesline puts Bret on the floor where he chills for a bit. Back in and Bret goes after the knee like a smart Hitman. He puts on a quick Figure Four and after a good deal of time in it, Diesel gets to the rope. Bret does something you hardly ever see enough: he puts the same hold back on. Why don't more people do that? He had Diesel in trouble, so why mess with what was working?

Diesel makes the rope again and heads to the floor where Bret hits a suicide dive to have the champ reeling. Diesel shrugs it off and sends Hart into the steps to get a breather. With Bret in the ropes, Diesel hits the running crotch attack to his back. There's a backbreaker to Bret and Diesel bends him across the knee a bit. Bret fires off some right hands but gets whipped hard into the buckle to stop him cold.

The champ loads up the Jackknife but instead puts Bret on his shoulder for a backbreaker. Why he doesn't JACKKNIFE HIM WHEN HE HAS THE CHANCE is beyond my intelligence as Bret escapes. A big boot (Diesel's leg seems fine) puts Bret down for two, but Bret gets a boot up of his own, followed by a middle rope clothesline for two. Hart goes up and Diesel tries to slam him off, but the knee goes out, giving Bret a two count.

The knockout sends Bret to the floor and he pulls Diesel's legs out for the figure four around the post. Actually scratch that as he ties Diesel's legs together instead and pounds away. The Five Moves of Doom get two but Diesel grabs a rope to block the Sharpshooter. Bret clotheslines him to the floor but a dive is caught in mid-air. The tall guy rams him into the post and hits the Jackknife in the ring, but Shawn Michaels runs in to break up the count.

Shawn beats on Diesel's leg which isn't a DQ for no apparent reason. Shawn and Diesel had split up at Survivor Series if you're wondering why this beating is happening. We get a ruling that the match must continue to the delight (yes I said delight) of the crowd. Bret goes back to the knee, hooking another Figure Four. Diesel can't get to the ropes so he hits Bret in the bad ribs to escape. Ah selling, how I love you.

Diesel is all ticked off now and pounds away on Bret in the corner. A gutwrench suplex of all things gets two for the champ but a big boot in the corner misses. Bret wraps Diesel's leg around the post and blasts it with a chair. There's the Sharpshooter but now it's Owen coming in for the save and a beatdown on Bret. I would say there's a great tag match in there, but Bret and Shawn teaming up would mean the end of the world as we know it.

The match is going to continue AGAIN though and Diesel gets two on Bret. The place is starting to lose its minds over these near falls. Bret sends him into the buckle that Owen exposed and pounds away as Diesel is rocking again. Diesel comes back AGAIN with elbows and forearms to the face before punching Bret into the ropes where Hart's legs are caught. Bret is holding his knee but you never know with him.

Yep, he stands up and lays back down in some classic Hart goldbricking. Diesel goes for the Jackknife but Bret fakes him into a small package for two. Bret tries an O'Connor Roll and the referee is bumped. Backlund, Michaels, Roadie and Jarrett run in and that's FINALLY enough for the double DQ.

Rating: A. These two had MAD chemistry together and this was no exception. They knew how to work the David vs. Goliath (I'm not sure how fair it is to call Bret David actually) formula to perfection and the matches were great as a result. Why the company kept going with Diesel vs. power guys is beyond me, because his best stuff comes against small guys like Bret and Shawn and always has.

Backlund stays in the ring and puts the Crossface Chicken Wing on Bret. This set up their I Quit match at Mania which even Bret admits sucked. Diesel makes the save and hugs Bret.

More Pettingill and Anderson stuff.

Bob Holly and 1-2-3 Kid are excited to be in the finals of the tag team title tournament.

Tag Titles: Bob Holly/1-2-3 Kid vs. Bam Bam Bigelow/Tatanka

Shawn and Diesel split up and we needed champions. Holly and Tatanka start things off with Tatanka hitting a side slam for two. Holly comes back with a slam and a few dropkicks as this is going nowhere so far. Off to the Kid vs. Bigelow, with the big man running over both of the smaller guys with ease. Bigelow LAUNCHES Kid into the air but gets caught in a rana to send Bam Bam rolling.

Back to Tatanka who whips Kid into the buckles a few times before it's off to Bigelow to pound on the small guy some more. In something that actually impressed me, Kid backdrops Bigelow to the floor. Both small guys try top rope cross bodies but they escape and dropkick the heels together. Things settle down with Tatanka beating on Holly for a LONG time. Bigelow comes in, allowing Tatanka to distract the Kid. Holly goes to the corner to find no partner and Bigelow splashes Bob.

Holly gets beaten down so badly that he goes to the wrong corner and tags in Tatanka. Thank goodness this isn't the Attitude Era because it probably would have been legal in some of their matches. Tatanka comes in for more beating on Holly until Bob FINALLY gets in a clothesline for the hot tag to the Kid. Everything breaks down and Kid is LAUNCHED to the floor by Bigelow. Bam Bam loads up the moonsault but Tatanka accidentally hits the ropes to knock him to the mat. Somehow that's enough for the pin and the titles for the Kid.

Rating: C+. This went nearly sixteen minutes which was just too long. It's quite good but it would have been great if they cut off five minutes or so. Those launches by Bigelow were awesome looking as Kid continues to be an excellent seller of moves like those. The idea was that it was all Bigelow's fault, even though Tatanka is totally to blame for Bigelow crashing like that. The Gunns would win the titles back the next night on Raw, making this whole thing pretty pointless.

Post match DiBiase and Tatanka leave Bigelow in the ring, where Lawrence Taylor, NFL legend, laughs at him. Bigelow shoves him down, and there's Wrestlemania people.

We get a recap of the 94 Rumble, focusing on Diesel's dominance and Shawn helping to eliminate him.

Shawn laughs a bit.

We look at the ending to the match from last year.

Luger says he wants the title. Lex, it's been over for you for like eight months now. Let it go dude.

Vince apologizes to Lawrence Taylor.

Here's Pamela Anderson to watch the Rumble at ringside and MAN does she look miserable.

Royal Rumble

Shawn is #1 and Bulldog is #2. Shawn immediately jumps Bulldog but this isn't going to last long. Remember there are one minute intervals, which was just a bad idea in general. Smith gets a quick gorilla press, but why throw Shawn OUT when you can just slam him? That clearly won't come back to haunt him later or anything of course. Smith charges into a boot and here's Eli Blu (one of the Harris Brothers, who were the big bald bikers who were around for WAY too long) at #3.

Nothing happens so here's Duke Droese (a wrestling garbageman) at #4. Eli fights Smith and Droese squeezes Shawn until Jimmy Del Ray of the Heavenly Bodies is #5. Nothing continues to happen because there isn't enough time between entries. Sione (Barbarian) of the Headshrinkers is #6 as Del Ray is tossed out. Tom Prichard of the Heavenly Bodies is #7 and STILL nothing is happening.

Doink is #8 as the Rumble is going way too fast. It's like the original Rumble: not enough names to care about and nothing going on at the same time. Kwang is #9 and Rick Martel is #10, I believe in his last WWF match. There are nine people in the ring right now. Shawn is almost out but fights off Kwang to survive. Owen Hart is in at #11 and here's Bret to jump him in the aisle. Owen survives and climbs in, only to be eliminated in three seconds.

Shawn puts out Droese and Timothy Well (partners with Steven Dunn in the tag team of Well Dunn) is #12 and is out almost immediately. Martel and Prichard go out faster than I can see them and Kwang superkicks Doink

out. Luke of the Bushwhackers is #13 and during his entrance, everyone but Bulldog and Shawn are gone. Literally, four people were put out inside of six seconds. Luke is out almost immediately and it's Shawn vs. Bulldog again.

Here's Jacob Blu at #14 and HE T00 is gone in like fifteen seconds. This is so stupid. King Kong Bundy is #15 and he beats on both guys for about twenty seconds before it's Mo at #16. Mo is like the fifth guy to last less than thirty seconds. If your roster is this weak, CUT THE FREAKING MATCH DOWN. Nothing else happens until Mabel is #17 for the showdown with Bundy. Mabel dumps him out as Butch is #18 and is gone in less than 20 seconds as well. More on this later.

Lex Luger is #19 and he goes right for Mabel for no apparent reason. He eliminates the fat purple and gold dude before gorilla pressing Michaels down like an idiot. Mantaur, a stupid monster character, is #20. He beats on Luger and Bulldog until Aldo Montoya (Justin Credible with a jockstrap on his face) is #21. Henry Godwinn is #22 as we're waiting on a bunch of people to get thrown out so everyone can go home. I think this is one of Henry's first matches.

Billy Gunn is #23 so naturally Bart Gunn is #24. Bob Backlund is #25 and also lasts about fifteen seconds due to a Bret Hart attack. Steven Dunn is #26 as there are like ten people in there. Bret and Backlund fight in the aisle again and old man Dick Murdoch is #27. Mantaur misses a charge at Bart and Adam Bomb is #28. For the second year in a row, Vince decides Adam Bomb is going to win the Rumble. Seriously.

Fatu is #29 and Luger eliminates Mantaur. Crush is #30, giving us a final group of Shawn, Bulldog, Luger, Montoya, Godwinn, Bart, Billy, Dunn, Murdoch, Bomb, Fatu and Crush, or WAY TOO MANY PEOPLE. Thankfully Crush immediately eliminates the Gunns to clear the ring out a bit. We cut to Anderson who gives a very uninterested wave and points to the ring. You know, because this is SO beneath her. Well, not beneath her enough to give the check back or anything but you get the idea.

Dunn is put out off camera and Murdoch almost puts Shawn out. Luger makes the save due to a lack of intelligence as Murdoch tries headbutts on

Fatu. Naturally it doesn't work at all because YOU DON'T HEADBUTT A SAMOAN. Bomb is backdropped out and Shawn throwsn Montoya out. Luger saves Shawn AGAIN and Crush eliminates Fatu. There are six guys left: Murdoch (who hits a dropkick and airplane spin on Godwinn), Godwinn, Shawn, Bulldog, Crush and Luger.

Murdoch gets dizzy from the spin and falls out to get us down to five. Lex dumps Godwinn and we've got four left. Michaels and Crush double team Luger as Bulldog gets a breather. They dump Lex and we've got three guys left. Smith gets double teamed until Shawn turns on Crush and is lifted into the air. Bulldog uses the distraction to eliminate Crush and it's one on one. Davey destroys Shawn and presses him onto (not over. That would make sense) the top rope. Shawn is knocked over the top, but in the famous finish, he hangs on and ONLY ONE FOOT touches, allowing Shawn to come back in and eliminate Smith to win.

Rating: D. This is a hard one to grade, because the stuff that was decent was in fact decent. The problem is there wasn't much stuff that falls into that category. First and foremost, SEVEN PEOPLE OUT OF THIRTY did not last thirty seconds. If they're that meaningless to the match, simply do not put them in the Rumble. It looks stupid and there's no reason to have them out there.

Second, the time intervals. These were a major issues because there's no time to get ANYTHING going in the match. When you count ten seconds or so to get into the ring (some people take up to twenty), you're looking at about 45 seconds of action with the new guy before someone else comes out. That's just not enough time to get anything going at all.

Third, and this is probably the biggest problem of the match, look at the roster here. At a glance, I see four people with actual chances to win: Crush, Luger (they're both BIG stretches), Bulldog, and Shawn. After that there's Owen Hart but he was one of the guys that didn't make it thirty seconds in the ring.

Then you're looking at guys like Montoya and Well Dunn and the Bushwhackers (who amazingly still had jobs in 1995) and the Heavenly Bodies (by my count there were five tag teams in here, or one third of

the match. WAY too many guys at that level) and Dick freaking Murdoch. This is a match that was BEGGING for a midcard to come in and fill in some spots. Guys like Ramon and Jarrett and Bigelow and Tatanka would have helped this match a ton, but instead we get all these fillers. That's a big reason why this didn't work.

Anderson poses with Shawn to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This is a hard one to grade because as good as the world title match is, the Rumble sucks it right back down. IRS vs. Taker isn't anything good but it's much more boring than bad. The opener and tag matches are good so I can't complain much there. 1995 would be AWFUL for the most part though, mainly due to all of the problems you could see coming in the Rumble. Still though, not an awful show by any stretch and it has a great world title match.

Ratings Comparison

Jeff Jarrett vs. Razor Ramon

Original: B+

Redo: C+

Undertaker vs. IRS

Original: D

Redo: D

Bret Hart vs. Diesel

Original: B-

Redo: A

Bob Holly/1-2-3 Kid vs. Bam Bam Bigelow/Tatanka

Original: D+

Redo: C+

Royal Rumble

Original: D+

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: C+

What in the world was I thinking on the title match? It was great.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/14/royal-rumble-count-up-1995/>

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