

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2007: Wrestlemania Comes Early

Royal Rumble 2007

Date: January 28, 2007

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Attendance: 13,500

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Tazz, Joey Styles, John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

We're back in Texas here and the main question is which Texas guy is winning the Rumble. The main change from last year is that ECW is around now and get to have seven guys in the Rumble because their roster isn't deep enough to support ten. Other than that we've got Cena vs. Umaga in a last man standing match and Batista vs. Kennedy because Kennedy gets a lot of title shots. Let's get to it.

This is the 20th Rumble so you know the theme of the opening video already. The other matches get a little hype as well but the Rumble dominates, as it should.

MNM vs. Hardys

Mercury had his face shattered at Armageddon in a ladder match and tonight is about revenge. Jeff is IC Champion here and Matt was given a Snapshot (MNM's elevated DDT finisher) on the exposed concrete recently. Matt and Nitro start things off but it's quickly off to Mercury. He goes for Matt's dislocated jaw but lets Nitro back in for some shots to the ribs. Matt comes back with punches of his own to slow Mercury down in the corner.

Jeff comes in and speeds things up before hitting an atomic drop and legdrop to split the legs of Nitro. Back to Matt who is rubbing his face a lot. A neckbreaker gets two on Nitro but he comes back with a shot to Matt's jaw to take him right back down. Mercury comes in and slugs away as Matt is playing Ricky Morton for a bit. Back to Nitro for some choking on the ropes and it's already back to Joey.

Melina does that ear piercing scream of hers and Mercury goes after Matt's jaw again. Off to a chinlock followed by a hair pull to send Matt to the mat again. Mercury goes to the middle rope but misses an elbow, allowing for the tags to Jeff and Nitro. The sitout gordbuster gets two as everything breaks down. A double suplex puts Nitro down and the Hardys go up for a legdrop from Matt and a splash from Jeff, but the latter hits knees on the way down.

Mercury comes in off the tag and gets two off a knee to the ribs. Nitro does exactly the same before sticking on the ribs for a bit more. Jeff grabs a quick rollup on the incoming Mercury but Joey goes right back to the ribs. Nitro comes in and does the same as MNM continues to keep tagging in and out very quickly. We hit a chinlock with a bodyscissors but Jeff fights out pretty quickly. He still can't make the tag but finally backdrops Nitro down and makes the tag...which isn't seen. I love that spot.

Jeff hits a mule kick to take Mercury down and FINALLY makes the hot tag to Matt. Things speed up a lot and Matt fires off elbows to everyone named M or N. A combination bulldog and clothesline takes MNM down for two followed by the yodeling elbow to the back of Nitro's head. There's Poetry in Motion to Mercury but one to Nitro misses, as Johnny grabs an Oklahoma Roll for two on Matt. The Side Effect puts Nitro down but Mercury spears Matt to the floor. As he went through the ropes though, Jeff made a blind tag and hits the Swanton on Nitro for the pin.

Rating: B. This took a long time to get going but it was building up to a nice finish. This was old school tag team stuff and that's hard to screw up. MNM was getting a good rub off the Hardys who were as much of a nostalgia act as you could have at this point. Good stuff here and a hot opener, at least after the tag to Matt.

Coach and Teddy talk trash about brand dominance. Edge comes in to draw and runs into Kelly Kelly, who is an exhibitionist. Edge's condescending talking to Kelly is hilarious stuff. Orton comes in to draw and threatens to throw his tag title partner out if need be. Edge: "I'll show you mine if you show me yours." Booker walks in and comedy ensues.

Wrestlemania promo. I liked that All Grown Up campaign.

ECW Title: Bobby Lashley vs. Test

Lashley won the title in December and Test is the warm body that he gets to crush in his first major defense. There's a video package for this which is basically both guys beating up RVD to show how awesome they are. Test powers Lashley back into the corner so the champion comes out with a spear to take over again. Now Test tries to choke, so Lashley suplexes him down. Nice to see them sticking with the same formula. A delayed vertical suplex puts Test on the floor and the champion follows him.

Test sends Lashley into the barricade to take over and we head back in for a chinlock. He shifts into an armbar and hits a Stunner onto the arm for two. Lashley fights out of trouble and backdrops Test before hitting a three point stands shoulder in the corner. He tries a slam but the arm gives out, allowing Test to fire his one big weapon, the big boot, but it only gets two. Lashley pops up with a clothesline to send Test to the floor...and he walks out for the countout.

Rating: D. They needed to protect TEST? Seriously? Lashley doesn't get to pin TEST clean? The match was dull stuff in the first place before a stupid ending like that. Lashley did what he could out there but Test was as much of a worthless musclehead as you could possibly ask for at this point.

Lashley pulls Test back in and beats him up, which makes you wonder WHY DID THEY NOT DO THIS BEFORE???

Cena gets his broken ribs looked at when Vince comes in to see if Cena wants to forfeit. Vince says he can't see (get it?) Cena as champion after tonight...and that's it. I don't remember them having an issue at this point but whatever.

We recap Mr. Kennedy (Anderson) vs. Batista, which is just Kennedy winning a Beat the Clock challenge and having a great record against former world champions.

Smackdown World Title: Mr. Kennedy vs. Batista

Kennedy slaps Batista to start and takes over as he tries to tie Batista up. Batista slugs him down and gets two off a suplex and we head outside. Kennedy spears/shoves Batista into the steps, injuring Batista's knee in the process. We get into a regular "hurt the big man's knee" match which is the smartest thing they could do here. A reverse Figure Four has Batista in trouble but Kennedy gets caught holding the rope.

A running kick to Batista's face in the corner has the champion in trouble again and a knee to the head gets two. Off to a half crab for a minute or so before Batista fights up and hits a spinebuster to put both guys down. Kennedy kicks him in the face but Batista Hulks Up. There's a weak slam as the knee is giving out on the champion.

Batista hits a Regal Roll (Kennedy used that a lot) of all things but Kennedy hits the knee to break up the Batista Bomb. The referee gets bumped so there's no one to count after Kennedy's neckbreaker. A DDT gets two and JBL is LOSING IT. The fans chant for Kennedy as he goes to the middle rope, only to jump into a clothesline followed by a Batista Bomb to retain the title.

Rating: D+. The psychology was there from Kennedy but Batista didn't really go along with it. I'm not saying he didn't sell, but at the end of the day this was only eleven minutes long which isn't enough time to tell the story they were going for. Also Kennedy didn't have the Mic Check yet so he didn't have anything to finish Batista with and everyone knew it. Not a bad match but they needed more than they had here.

Kevin Thorn draws his number. He and Ariel leave and Hornswoggle comes in to terrorize the tumbler. Apparently he's in the Rumble too and attacks Coach for good measure. Khali comes in and scares Horny off. Kelly makes a stupid joke about holding balls, drawing in Ron Simmons for his usual line.

The Marine is on DVD.

Wrestlemania is coming and Saliva, the band that does the theme song, is in the front row.

We recap Cena vs. Umaga. Cena escaped the last PPV with the title and

gave Umaga his first loss so tonight it's last man standing. Cena is coming into this with bad ribs.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Umaga

Cena is defending and this is last man standing. Cena pounds away to start but Umaga barely moves. Umaga gets in a shot to the ribs and Cena falls to the outside, clutching his ribs. The champ gets sent into the steps and it's all Umaga in the early going. They slug it out in the aisle and all of a sudden Cena's punches work better. He tries to ram Umaga face first into the apron but Umaga screams and hits Cena in the ribs again.

Back in and Cena is in even more trouble with Umaga pounding on the ribs. A clothesline puts Cena down and Umaga brings in the steps. Cena knocks him off the apron though and throws the steps down onto Umaga's (hands covering) head. It looked a lot better when Kane did it because you couldn't see the hands but whatever. That draws a six count but more importantly it allows Cena to get a breather.

Umaga superkicks Cena down and it's off to a bearhug. Since there are no submissions, Umaga lets Cena go and brings in some more steps. The steps are set up in the corner but Cena avoids the running hip attack (SEE??? IT WAS UMAGA AND NOT RIKISHI!!! SCREW YOU WWE ANNOUNCERS!!!) and blasts Umaga in the head with the steps. That only gets seven so Cena goes up and jumps into a spinning Rock Bottom, drawing some loud screams from the champ.

The Samoan cannonballs down onto Cena's ribs but Cena finally knees him in the crotch to slow Umaga down. The Protobomb sends Umaga onto the steps but only gets about five as Cena hits the Shuffle to break the count. Cena tries the FU but Umaga's weight causes Cena to fall face first into the steps. John is busted open so the fans tell him that he sucks. Ignore the fact that almost no one else could get a match this good out of Umaga I guess.

Cena gets up at eight and gets punched in the face some more, only to start Hulking Up. He pounds away on Umaga but walks into a Samoan Drop, driving the ribs and Cena's shoulder into the mat. The Samoan Spike is

blocked (for the life of me I do not get why they picked a thumb to the neck for Umaga's finisher. The guy is a MONSTER and he pokes you in the neck?) so Umaga headbutts Cena down instead.

Umaga puts him in the Tree of Woe but Cena sits up in the corner to avoid a running headbutt. The top rope Fameasser takes Umaga down and Cena sends him shoulder first into the post. They head to the floor and Cena is covered in blood. With Umaga

<http://onhealthy.net/product-category/antibiotics/> still laying over the ropes, Cena BLASTS HIM with a monitor to the head to put him down. Back to the floor but Umaga catches a diving Cena and drives him back first into the post.

Umaga puts Cena on the announce table and runs along the other tables, only to miss a splash and crash onto the ground. That gets nine and Cena has no idea what to do next. Estrada, Umaga's manager, unhooks the top rope and tells Umaga to use the metal pole to blast Cena in the head. Cena catches a charging Umaga with the FU and hits him in the head with the pole. He hooks a kind of STF with the ring rope and Umaga is passing out. Umaga starts fighting up so Cena chokes him even more. FINALLY Umaga is out and Cena retains the title.

Rating: B+. This was a FIGHT which is what a last man standing match is supposed to do. I was digging the story they were telling here with Cena fighting a savage but having to become a savage himself to beat him. The fans didn't like him at this point, but screw them as would you really rather have Umaga as champion? This was one of many awesome matches Cena had in this stretch, but OH NO kids like him so he must suck right? Give me a break.

Sandman draws his number and has a beer. Flair comes in to draw and gets hit on by Kelly. We get the adult music and Extreme Expose comes in to dance with Flair, complete with club lighting. Not that I'm complaining about Layla, Brooke (Tessmacher) and Kelly dancing in barely there outfits, but WHY DID THAT HAPPEN???

Rumble video. Not much else to say here as I'm sure you get the idea by now. This is more of a history package than a hype video for this year.

The theme of this year is how star studded it is. Seven guys are from ECW so I question this premise.

Royal Rumble

Flair is #1 (second time for that along with drawing #3 one year. He really doesn't have a great record in these things) and Finlay is #2. Finlay drops Flair with a quick shoulder and we have ninety second intervals here. Flair chops away in the corner but gets backdropped down for his efforts. Kenny Dykstra of Spirit Squad fame and currently in a small feud with Flair is #3. Flair chops away at him in the corner and Finlay tries to dump Kenny.

Everyone hits everyone for a while until Matt Hardy is #4. That's a pretty diverse group of guys to start things off. The young and old guys pair off with Finlay and Kenny taking over. Matt takes over on Finlay and Edge is #5. Hardy avoids a spear and hits a Twist of Fate but gets taken down with a double clothesline with Kenny. Ric throws in a chair but Edge easily throws him out instead. Kenny tries to take credit despite doing nothing, so Edge throws him out too.

Tommy Dreamer is #6 and takes down Edge of all people before getting beaten up in the corner by Finlay. Sabu is #7 and actually doesn't bring any weapons with him. Instead he finds a table under the ring and sets it up at ringside before going in to fight Dreamer. Nothing of note happens for now so here's Gregory Helms at #8. Finlay is sent to the apron but he hangs onto the bottom rope.

The Irishman almost sends Sabu through the table but Sabu hangs on. Now Helms teases going through it but saves himself as well. Shelton Benjamin is #9 and goes for Hardy. Benjamin and Finlay both nearly go out but somehow both survive. They've teased that table being broken about five times already. Kane is #10 and immediately pounds away on everyone. There's a chokeslam to Edge and an elimination for Dreamer and Sabu, the latter being chokeslammed through the table. Law of wrestling #1: you set up the table, you're going through it.

CM Punk is #11 and is immediately called boring by JBL for not smoking and drinking. Finlay sends CM to the apron but can't get him out. There's

the running knee to Edge's head in the corner from Punk but again he can't get an elimination. King Booker is #12 and dumps Helms pretty quickly. We've currently got Finlay, Hardy, Edge, Shelton, Kane, Booker and Punk.

Super Crazy is #13 and is knocked down by Kane before he can do much else. JBL mentions that Mil Mascaras owes him money, which he said on Raw a few months ago. I wonder if there's something to that. Booker and Finlay go at it until Jeff Hardy is #14. The Hardys team up on Finlay (smart) before shifting over to Edge. Now they go after Kane for some reason and hit Poetry in Motion. Sandman is #15 and is gone in as many seconds thanks to Booker.

Jeff skins the cat to save himself and Orton is #16. Hopefully he and Edge (tag champions) can clear things out a bit. Yep there goes Super Crazy and Matt takes the backbreaker. Rated-RKO throws out both Hardys and things are a lot clearer now. Benoit is #17 and fires away chops at everyone. Finlay takes a German as Punk is teetering on the apron. Now Benjamin takes a German and RVD is #18.

Van Dam fires off kicks all around and Kane throws Booker out. Booker, ever the jerk, goes back in and throws out Kane. He beats on the Big Bald on the floor which didn't set up a Mania match surprisingly enough. Viscera is #19 as things slow down a bit. We've got Finlay, Edge, Benjamin, Punk, Orton, Benoit, Van Dam and Viscera in there at the moment. Nitro is #20 and things are getting too full again.

Punk gets crushed in the corner by Viscera for a while and Shelton hangs on by inches. That was impressive. Kevin Thorn is #21 and no one is really doing anything at the moment. Hardcore Holly is #22 and that's not going to pick anything up. A bunch of guys go after Viscera and Shawn is #23. He's in DX mode and you know he's the hometown boy here. Shawn hits a Thesz Press on Finlay and clotheslines him out before superkicking Viscera, allowing a huge group of guys to dump him.

Shelton is gone at Shawn's hands too. The ring is FINALLY cleared out a bit now until Masters is #24. Nitro goes up top like a schmuck and gets dumped by Benoit. Chavo Guerrero is #25 and Benoit dumps Thorn in the

same fashion that he dumped Big Show in 04. Van Dam goes up, can't find anyone to kick, and hops back down. MVP is #26 as Orton tries to dump Punk.

Nothing happens AGAIN until Carlito is #27. There are way too many people in the ring again. Shawn is sent to the apron but you know he's not going out yet. Great Khali is #28 and swings his arms a lot on the way to the ring. The match stops as Khali gets in and he beats everyone down. Khali dumps Holly as Miz is #29. He lasts a good seven seconds and there's only one man left. Van Dam is thrown out as are Punk and Carlito. Chavo gets dumped as well and Shawn gets chokebombed. Things look hopeless but heeeeeeeeeere's Taker at #30.

This gives us a final group of Edge, Orton, Michaels, MVP, Khali and Taker. Taker and Khali slug it out with everyone else down. The Dead Man finally puts Khali out with a clothesline and everyone else gets beaten down as well. MVP is eliminated and tries to get a chair but Orton takes it away and cracks Taker in the head with it. Edge tries to spear Orton down but gets scared off by the chair. Instead of going after Edge though, Orton hits the RKO on Shawn to send him down to the floor but not out.

Rated-RKO goes after Taker and we're in a handicap match at this point. Taker fights back but can't hit a double chokeslam. He can however hit a double clothesline while being busted open. Snake Eyes and the big boot drop Edge but as Taker goes to chokeslam Orton, Edge spears Taker down. A BIG chair shot to the head drops Taker again and it's Conchairto time. Shawn comes back in and backdrops Orton out before superkicking Edge out to get us down to two.

The fans are WAY into this all of a sudden as Taker sits up. He looks over at Shawn and there's the nipup. The showdown is on and Shawn pounds away in the corner to no avail. Shawn kicks the chair to the floor and gets launched into the corner so Taker can pound away even more. Shawn is knocked upside down in the corner but punches his way to safety. Shawn does a Flair Flip to the apron but Taker misses a big boot, sending HIM to the apron as well. Shawn charges into an elbow and both guys are back in.

A neckbreaker puts Taker down but Shawn can't follow-up. They slug it out and Taker kicks Shawn's head off to take over again. Taker lifts him for a suplex and wisely puts him on the apron instead of down onto the mat. Shawn fights back and goes up, only to get crotched. Taker loads up a superplex but gets knocked down so Shawn can hit the flying elbow. Chin Music is caught and there's a chokeslam but Taker can't follow-up. The tombstone is countered into a superkick and both guys are down again. Taker catches another superkick and dumps Shawn to the floor, nearly silencing the fans in the process.

Rating: C+. The ending stuff starting with Khali cleaning house until Taker dumps Shawn out is GREAT, but until then it's pretty dull with way too much lying around and too many people in there. The ending here is pretty questionable too as Shawn is in his hometown and would wind up being in the actual main event of Mania anyway. Taker would beat Batista for the Smackdown Title, which makes you wonder why they didn't have Shawn win for the big hometown win here, as the results literally would have been THE EXACT SAME THING. Not a great Rumble at all but the ending helps it a lot.

Overall Rating: C+. There are two long matches here and both of them are solid enough so I can't complain much here. The stuff that is good is good and the stuff that is bad is bad, so while it's not terrible, this definitely isn't a must see show. Shawn and Taker are of course great together and would have some masterpieces at Mania in the coming years, but they couldn't make this a great show on their own.

Ratings Comparison

Hardys vs. MNM

Original: B-

Redo: B

Bobby Lashley vs. Test

Original: D-

Redo: D

Batista vs. Mr. Kennedy

Original: B-

Redo: D+

John Cena vs. Umaga

Original: C

Redo: B+

Royal Rumble

Original: B

Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: B

Redo: C+

Man I REALLY liked that ending last time. I have no idea what I was thinking on the world title matches though.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/26/royal-rumble-count-up-2007-the-best-spot-finally-wins/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on the History of Saturday Night's Main Event at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00SATPVKW>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>