

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania II: The Ugly Stepchild Of Wrestlemania

Wrestlemania II

Date: April 7, 1986

Location: Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, New York City, New York/Rosemont Horizon, Chicago, Illinois/Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena, Los Angeles, California

Attendance: 16,585 (New York), 9,000 (Chicago), 14,500 (Los Angeles), 40,085 (Total)

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Susan St. James, Gene Okerlund, Gorilla Monsoon, Cathy Lee Crosby, Alfred Hayes, Jesse Ventura, Elvira

This is one of those ideas that they tried once and only once before never thinking about doing it again. After the success of Wrestlemania, the idea was that Wrestlemania 2 had to be bigger, so Vince came up with the idea of splitting it into three cities. This show is widely considered to be one of if not the worst Wrestlemania of all time and with main events such as Piper vs. Mr. T. in a boxing match and Hogan vs. Bundy in a cage it's not hard to see why. Let's get to it.

This is on a Monday for some reason.

This was a tape I watched to death back when I was a kid so the theme music for this brings a smile to my face.

Vince opens things up in New York and introduces Susan St. James, a popular actress of the day, to be his co-commentator.

Ray Charles sings America the Beautiful.

Gene is in Chicago and welcomes us to the city for later on.

Roddy Piper and his trainer for the fight Lou Duva (famous boxing trainer) say Piper is ready. Piper promises to quit wrestling and boxing if he gets knocked out. He'll also quick playing tiddlywinks and dating

girls, but he'll stick with Bob Orton of course. Those two spent WAY too much time together.

Paul Orndorff vs. Don Muraco

This is fallout from the main event of Mania last year as Orndorff turned face due to Piper and Orton leaving him behind. Muraco is an associate of Piper so this is kind of a proxy feud for Paul. Muraco has Fuji with him too. Both guys say they'll win in a voiceover as the match starts. Paul slams Muraco down to start and the crowd is already hot. Orndorff makes a slant eyes face at Fuji which today would get him thrown out of the company. In 1986, he was making \$20,000 a week later in the year. It's funny how times change.

Paul takes him down to the mat with an armbar as Susan St. James clearly has no idea what's going on. She's trying but this isn't something she knows about at all it would seem. Paul cranks on a wristlock before going back down to the armbar. Susan: "He looks like he's using some ancient Chinese techniques". Uh...yeah. Muraco finally escapes and sends Paul into the corner, only to have Orndorff go off on him as they brawl to the floor. In something you won't ever hear again I don't think, the opening match of Wrestlemania goes to a double countout. The fans chant some expletives.

Rating: D. What do you want here? The match is four minutes long and ends in a double countout. It was hot while it lasted, but the problem is that it didn't last long enough at all. This was a pretty big feud and it gets a four minute match? That's all they can spare these guys? Orndorff would have a MEGA heel turn later in the summer which would eventually draw 74,000 people to an outdoor show in Toronto. That's some drawing power.

Mr. T. says he doesn't like to do a lot of talking before a fight before proceeding to talk more in 30 seconds than Goldberg said in his entire career. To show you the production values, he's drowned out by Fink announcing the results of the previous match.

Intercontinental Title: George Steele vs. Randy Savage

This was a pretty big feud that also wound up meaning a lot more the next

year than it does here. The basic idea is that George is in love with Liz and doesn't like how Savage treats her. There's a great angle right there that hasn't been used in a LONG time (Punk/AJ/Bryan isn't the same thing). Savage in an inset interview babbles as only Savage can without saying anything of note.

Steele does a freaky kind of dance and Savage immediately bails to the floor. That works so well that they do it again and make it three times until FINALLY George chases after him. Steele catches Savage going back in and bites his calf before they head back in. Randy hits a running knee to the chest but Steele easily lifts him into the air and chokes him down. George gets caught looking at Liz though and is tied up in the ropes so Savage pounds away.

A top rope cross body gets two for the champ (Savage in case you're really young) and Steele throws him to the floor. Randy slips under the ring and sneaks up on George, only to get bitten on the arm. Savage goes to the floor and finds....a bouquet of flowers? George shoves them into Randy's face before going to eat a turnbuckle (don't ask).

The stuffing goes into Savage's face but Steele AGAIN gets distracted by Liz, allowing Savage to hit the ax handle to the back. Back in and Savage hits the slam and elbow for two. Wait what? This is 1986 and the SAVAGE ELBOW only gets two? Steele grabs Savage by the face and sends him into the corner, only to get tripped up and pinned with the feet on the ropes to retain the title.

Rating: C-. This is one of those matches where your individual taste is going to vary a lot. On one hand, it's a comedy match but not an incredibly funny one, while on the other hand it's terrible from a wrestling perspective. On the other hand, you have three hands and should see a surgeon immediately. The point is this wasn't much of a match and never would have made it onto a modern Mania card. Of course it wouldn't; the Intercontinental Title doesn't exist around Wrestlemania time. Also, of all the people in the WWF, GEORGE STEELE gets to kick out of the elbow? REALLY? This was fun for the goofiness if nothing else.

Savage and Liz immediately bail so Steele eats another buckle.

Bill Fralic (a football player) and Big John Studd are both in a battle royal later today and they talk some trash, once again being drowned out by Fink.

Vince asks Susan if she likes snakes. Make your own jokes.

Jake Roberts vs. George Wells

Wells is a former football player who never did another thing of note in wrestling other than be in this match. Jake is brand new at this point and is promptly run over and backdropped down in the first ten seconds. A flying shoulder takes Jake down and there's a headbutt for good measure. Wells hits a decent flying headscissors followed by a slam for no cover. A knee lift has Jake draped in the ropes and a powerslam gets two. Roberts comes back with a poke to the eyes and a knee lift followed by the DDT for the fast pin. This was pretty much domination until the last ten seconds.

Jake wraps George up in the snake post match and makes Wells foam at the mouth.

We recap Piper vs. T which is allegedly based on a boxing match that happened in Phoenix, as apparently we're ignoring ALL of the stuff from last year that set up the first Wrestlemania.

Hogan predicts T to win and says his ribs will be fine in the cage tonight.

We introduce the "celebrities." First up is Joan Rivers as guest ring announcer, Darryl Dawkins, Cab Calloway and G. Gordon Liddy as guest judges and Herb from Burger King commercials (you won't remember him) is guest timekeeper.

Roddy Piper vs. Mr. T.

This is a boxing match with ten three minute rounds. T has Joe Frazier as his trainer and the Haiti Kid to counter Orton. Piper is the aggressor to start as Vince calls T's defensive stance a peek-a-boo style. Roddy grabs on the ropes and T fires away some body shots. These rounds might only be two minutes rounds. Piper takes him into the corner but T bobs and weaves

before popping Roddy in the face a few times. It turns into another brawl on the ropes for the last thirty seconds or so of the round.

Everyone comes in to break up the brawl and we take a break between rounds. T gets in a few shots to the face to open round 2 but Piper apparently has a bunch of goo on his face. There's an Orton/Piper joke in there somewhere. After the face gets cleaned off Piper starts pounding away and T is in trouble. I'll change the numbers again because the rounds are indeed three minutes long. Piper gets him into the corner and pounds away, dropping him with a pair of shots to the head after about seven shots that missed BADLY. That gets an eight count and round 2 ends with T going down just after the bell.

Piper gets in a few cheap shots after the bell because that's the kind of guy he is. We start round 3 with T firing away but they're clearly getting tired. Piper goes down in his corner but pulls himself up before the count. T pounds him right back down in the corner and this time gets a seven count. This turns into move of a shoving match until T gets in a right hand to knock Piper out of the ring and out to the floor. Round 3 ends with nothing of note going on.

T talks trash in between rounds so Piper throws his stool across the ring as round 4 begins. They slug it out with T finally taking over. Piper DRILLS him with a right hand that knocks T's mouthpiece out. T comes back with the same kind of a punch...and then Piper shoves the referee down and slams T for the DQ.

Rating: D. This was one of those things that everyone knew was going to be a disaster and the best chance they had was to make it goofy.

Thankfully we're talking about Roddy Piper in the 80s so you know he can bring the goofy. There were some decent punches in here but like all other wrestling boxing matches, you knew it would end with some sort of a DQ. This was pretty much it for Mr. T in the WWF other than a few cameos later on.

Off to Chicago!

Gene and Gorilla bring in Kathy Lee Crosby to do commentary.

Women's Title: Fabulous Moolah vs. Velvet McIntyre

Moolah is defending of course and hits about five hair mares in a row to start things off. Velvet comes back with some one footed dropkicks before going up and missing a splash for Moolah to get the pin. This barely lasted 90 seconds which may have been due to McIntyre's outfit breaking when she came off the ropes.

Corporal Kirchner vs. Nikolai Volkoff

This is a flag match which means a regular match where the winner gets to wave their flag. For some reason the ring is VERY loud all of a sudden. Kirchner is a guy you likely won't have heard of but he's famous for being VERY stiff which is why he wasn't around long. Blassie is with Nikolai here and his man hits a spinning kick to start.

We head to the floor where Volkoff rams him into the post and cuts the Corporal open with a piece of razor that he immediately puts back down into his trunks. Blassie yells at Kirchner a bit before they head back inside. It's a slugout but Blassie throws in his cane which goes upside Nikolai's head for the pin. This was another very short match.

Gene takes over the ring announcing for the NFL/WWF battle royal. There are six football players and fourteen wrestlers. Dick Butkus is a guest referee.

Battle Royal

NFL: Jimbo Covert, Harvey Martin, Ernie Holmes, Bill Fralic, Russ Francis, William Perry

WWF: Pedro Morales, Tony Atlas, Ted Arcidi, Dan Spivey, Hillbilly Jim, King Tonga, Iron Sheik, B. Brian Blair, Jim Brunzell, Big John Studd, Bruno Sammartino, Jim Neidhart, Bret Hart

Perry is the hometown boy but once they said Andre's name there was little doubt as to who was winning. Ernie Ladd jumps in on commentary as a former wrestler and football player. Andre chills in the corner and beats up anyone that comes near him. Perry gets ganged up on a few times in the corner but fights them off as Covert and Tonga go out. Francis

goes after Andre like a crazy man and Holmes is gone.

The two giants go at it for a bit and Brunzell is gone. There's never much to talk about in battle royals as most of it is just a bunch of brawls and the occasional elimination like Atlas going out here. Studd beats up Perry in the corner as Martin and Morales put each other out. Arcidi loads up Blair but Bruno makes the save for some reason. Not that it matters though as Arcidi is put out just a few seconds later. Spivey is gone as are Blair and Hillbilly. We're down to about eight or so.

Fralic is dumped out by a bunch of people and Bruno backdrops Sheik out. Studd dumps Bruno and we're down to Andre, Studd, Francis, Perry and the Harts. Perry shrugs off both Harts and sends them to the apron for the biggest pop of the night. He starts firing off tackles at Studd before running into an elbow for the elimination. Perry offers a handshake but pulls Studd out to the floor to another big pop. The Harts get Andre tied in the ropes and easily dump Francis. They pound away on Andre a bit but the big man is like dude please. He grabs Neidhart by the beard and kicks him out before tossing Bret on Anvil to win.

Rating: D. This was another pretty lame match with the football players not being able to do much due to not being wrestlers. Perry was incredibly popular and got a great reaction from the crowd, but other than him the NFL guys didn't add anything at all here. Andre winning was the only logical choice and there's not much else to say here.

Vince and Susan talk to Piper in New York and of course he says he's awesome and didn't lose at all.

Back in Chicago Jimbo Covert says he got cheated by Fralic. Iron Sheik says he's proven wrestlers are better than football players.

We look at the end of the battle royal again.

Tag Titles: Dream Team vs. British Bulldogs

The Dream Team is Brutus Beefcake and Greg Valentine and they're defending. For absolutely no apparent reason, the Bulldogs have Ozzy freaking Osbourne in their corner. Smith and Valentine start things off

with Davey pounding away in the corner. Off to a wristlock before Dynamite comes in to send Valentine into the buckle for two. There's the snap suplex for no cover and it's back to Davey for the delayed vertical.

Greg gets in a few shots in the corner including a forearm to the back to take over and finally bring in Brutus. He cranks on the arm and is immediately gorilla pressed down by Smith. Dynamite comes in again and gets two off a small package. Beefcake makes a blind tag though and Valentine comes in off the top via another forearm to the back and the champions take over. Kid comes right back and pounds away before bringing Smith back in.

The Bulldogs hit a double headbutt for two for Kid but Brutus comes in sans tag to switch momentum right back. Valentine gets two off a kneeling piledriver but falls victim to the Arn Anderson self-crotching mistake. He continues the Horsemen theme by going up top and getting slammed down ala Flair as everything breaks down. Dynamite gets sent to the floor so Smith comes in with the powerslam (not yet the finisher) for two on Valentine.

Davey misses a charges into the post though and his shoulder is hurt in a hurry. Brutus comes in to work over the arm and hits a kind of hammerlock slam. Valentine hits a shoulderbreaker but pulls up before covering. In a VERY sudden ending, Dynamite gets on the top rope while still illegal and Davey rams Valentine's head into that of Dynamite for the pin and the title.

Rating: B. It's not a great or even a very good match but after nearly two hours of lame wrestling with nothing matches, this was a great breath of fresh air. The Bulldogs would be champions for the better part of a year while the Dream Team would survive for another year before splitting at the next Wrestlemania. Good stuff here though.

Both sets of announcers talk about the title change. I'll give the female celebrities this: they sound like they're enjoying themselves and they're trying at least.

Off to Los Angeles.

Ricky Steamboat vs. Hercules Hernandez

Lee Marshall of non-fame in WCW is the announcer. This was supposed to be Steamboat vs. Hart but WWF saw more star power in Hernandez. This wasn't their best time from a thinking standpoint. Hercules pounds on him to start but Steamboat goes to the arm as is his custom. A kick to the ribs puts Hernandez down and it's off to an armbar. Back up and Steamboat does some leapfrogs before elbowing Herc down.

We head to the armbar again until Hernandez rams him into the buckle and hits a clothesline to take Steamboat down. A hot shot has Steamboat in trouble again but he comes back with a failed slam attempt that gives Hercules two. A pair of elbows get two more due to a very lazy cover. Hercules hits a tilt-a-whirl slam for two and there's a gorilla press slam to go with it. Make it a pair of gorilla presses but Hernandez's splash hits knees, allowing Ricky to hit the top rope cross body for the pin.

Rating: C-. Very basic match here with power vs. speed, although most of the speed guy's offense involved an armbar. That's something you have to get used to in Steamboat matches though so it's not a disappointment or anything. The match itself was pretty dull stuff but Steamboat in the 80s is never a bad thing.

Adrian Adonis vs. Uncle Elmer

We hit the stereotypes now the gay character vs. the hillbilly character. Elmer, weighing roughly 450lbs, runs off Adonis and Jimmy Hart before the match and we get a good shot of Adrian's pink dress. We finally get inside and Elmer starts pounding away before sending Adonis into the corner for a Flair Flip. Adrian gets sent into the corner two more times in a row with the second time landing him on the floor. Back in and there goes the dress as Adrian gets tied up in the ropes. A single punch to the chest puts Elmer down but he comes back with a corner splash, only to miss the big leg drop. A top rope headbutt gives Adrian a pin.

Rating: D-. What are you expecting here? We've got REALLY basic gimmicks (although Adonis wasn't bad in his day) in a three minute match involving a man wearing a dress. This is what you call filler, albeit terrible

filler. Elmer wouldn't ever really do much in the WWF but he was a pretty big deal in the indies.

Adonis puts a flower on Elmer's back post match.

We get Hogan's second promo of the show with him saying he's ready for Bundy and he begs Heenan to get involved.

Funk Brothers vs. Junkyard Dog vs. Junkyard Dog/Tito Santana

It's Terry and Hoss here, with the latter being more famous as Dory Jr. Hoss and Dog start things off with JYD sending one Funk into another and slamming them both down before the Funks head to the floor for a breather. Off to Tito vs. Terry for a bit now and it's a short bit as Terry gets clotheslined to the floor. Hoss takes a dropkick to send him out to be with his brother and the heels huddle on the floor again. Oh and they have Jimmy Hart too.

Back to the Dog vs.. Terry and they slug it out with Dog taking over. JYD rams Terry into the buckle so many times that the pad starts to come off. Terry gets thrown to the unpadded floor yet again and it's back to Hoss. Tito comes in as well and Hoss fires off the famous Funk forearms. Speaking of forearms, the flying variety takes Hoss down and the Funks head to the floor again.

Hoss gets back in for a crisscross with Terry hitting Tito in the back with a knee to take over. Tito gets knocked to the floor and JYD has to chase Jimmy off a few times before throwing Santana back in. Terry gets two off a suplex and argues with the referee a bit before getting suplexed himself. They hit the ropes and collide but Terry falls into his own corner to bring in Hoss. The Funks hit a double clothesline which gets two for Terry who is getting frustrated.

Santana finally slides between Terry's legs and makes the hot tag to JYD. We prove we're in the 80s with a double noggin knocker to both of the Funks and a punch sends Hoss to the outside. Terry has a rope from somewhere as everything breaks down. JYD throws Terry to the floor and slams him on a table for good measure. Terry's knee is hurt and he can't stand up but he gets back inside anyway as Jimmy gets decked. Everything

breaks down again and Tito puts Hoss in the Figure Four but Terry blasts Dog in the head with the megaphone for the pin.

Rating: B-. I've said before that the 1980s were the best era ever for tag wrestling and this show proves it again. Most of the show hasn't been all that great but the tag matches have been by far the best matches on the card. This was a fun and WILD match but not to the point where you couldn't keep track of what was going on. Good stuff here and after two boring matches in the LA section this was a good match to pick things up.

We set up the cage, which is the big blue kind for the first time ever.

Hogan is lifting weights with bad ribs and we recap Hogan vs. Bundy. On SNME, Hogan defended the title against Don Muraco and after the match, Bundy ran in and destroyed Hogan with a bunch of splashes to injure the ribs. The doctor says Hogan shouldn't be doing this, so Hulk does chinups with a 100lb weight around his neck.

Heenan and Bundy say they're going to take the title from Hogan.

Elvira sends it to New York for comments from Susan and Vince.

WWF World Title: Hulk Hogan vs. King Kong Bundy

Escape only here, as it should be. Tommy Lasorda of the LA Dodgers is guest ring announcer. Ricky Schroder, a child actor, is guest timekeeper and Robert Conrad, an adult actor, is guest referee. Hogan starts firing off right hands to start and knocks Bundy into the cage before choking Bundy with his own singlet. The following clothesline in the corner has Bundy in even more trouble and a forearm to the head staggers him even more. All Hogan so far.

Both guys block shots into the cage but King goes to the ribs to stop Hogan cold. There's a slam to mess with the ribs even more and Bundy goes for the door. You know it's not ending that fast though so Bundy comes back to choke with the tape a bit. Another attempt to escape goes about as well and Hulk comes back with an elbow in the corner. Bundy gets rammed into the cage to bust him open and Hogan rakes his back a bit. More cage ramming occurs and Hulk climbs to the top to choke away on the

ropes.

Hogan goes for the slam but Bundy falls down onto him as you would expect him to. Bundy goes to the door but Hulk grabs him for some choking with the rib tape. The Avalanche splash hits in the corner and a regular one hits as well so Hogan can shake like a fish. Hogan dives to stop Bundy from getting out but takes another Avalanche....with no effect whatsoever. The champion busts out a powerslam of all things and easily climbs out to retain.

Rating: D. It's Hogan vs. a monster in 1986 so what in the world were you expecting to see here? At the end of the day this was the safe move but with all of the other heels on the roster, this is the best they could come up with? I mean, you have Savage, Piper or even Roberts to be in there, but you pick Bundy? It's not like this was some huge feud as the SNME that set this up was five weeks before this show. I've heard that Vince was trying desperately to get Nikita Koloff to jump and be in the main event but when they fell through, they picked a monster instead. Eh when all else fails, go with the safe pick.

Hogan beats up Heenan to close the show.

Overall Rating: D. This is a tough one to grade for the same reason that I don't consider it the worst Mania ever: it was the second one and they had NO idea what they were doing here. The main thing that helps this show is that while most of the matches are worthless, they're FAST. Of all the non-tag matches, only the cage match and the boxing match break ten minutes and the cage match does so by about 15 seconds. It's certainly not a good show and if this happened today Vince would be jumping off a building, but for its time this wasn't completely terrible.

Ratings Comparison

Paul Orndorff vs. Don Muraco

Original: D+

Redo: D

Randy Savage vs. George Steele

Original: C-

Redo: C-

Jake Roberts vs. George Wells

Original: F

Redo: D+

Mr. T. vs. Roddy Piper

Original: F

Redo: D

Fabulous Moolah vs. Velvet McIntyre

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Corporal Kirschner vs. Nikolai Volkoff

Original: D-

Redo: N/A

Battle Royal

Original: B

Redo: D

British Bulldog vs. Dream Team

Original: B-

Redo: B

Rick Steamboat vs. Hercules Hernandez

Original: C-

Redo: C-

Adrian Adonis vs. Uncle Elmer

Original: N/A

Redo: D-

Terry Funk/Hoss Funk vs. Tito Santana/Junkyard Dog

Original: B-

Redo: B-

Hulk Hogan vs. King Kong Bundy

Original: B-

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: D+

Redo: D

Dang those must have been the strong rose colored glasses back then.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/09/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-2-what-the-hell-were-they-thinking/>

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