

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2001: There's Wrestlemania

Royal Rumble 2001

Date: January 21, 2001

Location: New Orleans Arena, New Orleans, Louisiana

Attendance: 16,056

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Austin is back and that's by far the biggest change from last year. He's been on a warpath after Rikishi and I think HHH for running him down last year. Other than that there isn't much going on in the Rumble. We also have Angle defending against HHH and Jericho vs. Benoit with twenty minutes and a ladder. I think we'll have another solid show here. Let's get to it.

The opening video is what you would expect: one out of thirty will win and the rest will fall.

Tag Titles: Edge and Christian vs. Dudley Boys

The Canadians have the titles and the Dudleys have concussions. It's a brawl to start with the champions trying to bail very quickly. We wind up with Edge vs. D-Von to start as the challenger gets two off a neckbreaker. Off to Christian who is elbowed down for two of his own. Bubba comes in as Jerry makes fun of the Dudleys' injuries. A side slam gets two on Christian and it's off to D-Von vs. Edge again.

Christian finally goes for the back of D-Von's injured head to give Edge control and we get into the meat of the match. Christian gets the tag and starts pounding away on D-Von's head, followed by a neckbreaker from Edge for two. After a quick chinlock Edge hits a neckbreaker for two more as Bubba looks like he's about to cry. Since it's a Dudleys match, the fans want tables. Lawler wants gumbo.

D-Von breaks up a spike piledriver for reasons of wanting to stay alive, catapulting Edge into Christian. Edge and D-Von clothesline each other

and the referee misses the ensuing hot tag. A Conchairto misses D-Von and there's the seen hot tag to Bubba. A pair of hot shots takes down a pair of Canadians and there's a Bubba Bomb to Christian. What's Up hits Edge but wouldn't that hurt D-Von's head even more?

D-Von goes to get a table and the distraction lets Edge get a title belt. Bubba ducks the shot and gets a VERY close two off a rollup. 3D is broken up by a spear to Bubba and a DDT to D-Von but Bubba kicks out again. The champions try What's Up but the Dudleys escape and the 3D on Edge gives us new champions.

Rating: B. This is one of those annoying matches where it's really good and therefore there's nothing to make fun of. These guys had some of the best tag matches the WWF has ever seen and this was no exception, with all four guys looking great out there. Notice something about Edge and Christian and the Hardys: they came from tag teams but they were allowed to grow up in said tag teams, meaning once they made the transition to singles matches they had a far easier time. That NEVER happens today which is why tag teams don't make good singles wrestlers anymore. The crowd is white hot tonight too.

Drew Carey is here. He's promoting an improv comedy PPV and somehow got in the WWE HOF out of it.

Vince says Austin will be in the Rumble despite what happened on Smackdown with HHH. What actually happened isn't mentioned but whatever.

HHH tells Stephanie to not come to the ring with her tonight but she says she'll be there to take care of Trish. Drew Carey comes in and pleasantries are exchanged. He talks about meeting Kamala in an airport and plugs his PPV a bit. Drew seems cool here at least. Stephanie offers to introduce him to Trish for some reason.

The APA shows each other their Rumble numbers. Crash comes in and says he'll throw them both out even though they're friends.

We recap Jericho vs. Benoit. Do you really need an explanation here? They suplex each other a lot and fight over the IC Title so tonight it's a ladder match with Benoit defending. Oh and Benoit has hurt Jericho's arm.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Benoit vs. Chris Jericho

It's a slugout to start with Jericho getting a very early advantage. Benoit tries the Crossface but has to escape the Walls instead. Jericho misses a charge and hits the post before missing the springboard dropkick and crashing to the floor. Benoit posts him and goes for the ladder but stops to send Jericho into the steps. We're only three minutes into the match though so Jericho stops Benoit's climb. A ladder shot to the face puts Benoit down and the referee tells them they have thirteen minutes left.

Jericho lays the ladder across the top rope and of course goes face first into it as a result. Good to see that even Canadians follow the first law of wrestling. Benoit tries a suicide dive but Jericho puts up a chair, causing Benoit massive head trauma. Jericho tries to ride the ladder from the apron onto Benoit on the barricade but the other Chris moves out of the way. A ladder to the face stops Jericho again and now Benoit swings a chair.

Back in and Benoit loads up a ladder in the corner before ramming Jericho face first into it. Jericho gets up and puts the ladder in the corner again before tying Benoit's legs between the rungs for a kind of Russian legsweep off the middle rope. Benoit comes right back with a dropkick to send the ladder into Jericho's face and a hard belly to back suplex. The ladder is placed on the top rope again and Benoit's face is whipped into it HARD. Jericho immediately follows up by see-sawing the ladder into Benoit's face. Almost every one of these shots would be classified as FREAKING OW MAN.

A missile dropkick puts Benoit down again but he saves a climb attempt by Jericho. Benoit suplexes Jericho out to the floor and both guys are down again. Benoit goes up again but has to stop to kick Jericho away. Jericho gets up anyway and bends Benoit backwards into the Walls ON TOP OF THE LADDER. Benoit falls on his head but still kicks the ladder over to stop Jericho. AWESOME sequence there.

Jericho drills him with the ladder and goes up, but Benoit immediately pulls him down into the Crossface. Jericho taps out but it means nothing

other than pleasure for Benoit here. Benoit sends him shoulder first into the post but Jericho comes back by sending Benoit face first into the ladder. The ladder is moved to the corner and both guys climb, resulting in Jericho being superplexed back down.

The Swan Dive hits the mat though and Benoit is in big trouble. Jericho puts the ladder on top of Benoit's ribs, but the champion shoves it over anyway from the mat, sending Jericho face first into the buckle and out to the floor. Benoit goes up again but gets shoved out to the floor, allowing Jericho to sprint up the ladder and win the title.

Rating: A+. Take two Canadians, give them a ladder and 19 minutes and this is what you should expect. These two beat on each other HARD and the match was excellent as a result. They came up with some new stuff while mixing in basic stuff like HIT THE GUY IN THE FACE WITH A LADDER but it was so intense that it became a classic. Check this one out.

Drew hits on Trish but she says no because she's involved with someone. Vince comes in and isn't exactly cool with Drew being around Trish. More PPV plugging ensues and Vince says to promote the PPV, Drew should be in the Royal Rumble. Drew says sure why not.

Billy Gunn is worried about Chyna hurting her neck again in the next match.

Jericho says he proved Benoit wrong.

We recap Chyna vs. Ivory. The RTC (Ivory's censorship group) hurt Chyna's neck with a spike piledriver and tonight is about revenge. This forces us to sit through Chyna trying to be emotional.

Women's Title: Chyna vs. Ivory

Ivory is defending here. Chyna immediately runs her over with a pair of clotheslines and a toss around by the hair. Stomping ensues and Chyna knocks her out to the floor. They head into the crowd so Chyna gorilla presses her right back to ringside. Back in and Steven Richards gets beaten up as well. In an ending to set up Wrestlemania, Chyna tries the Muta Handspring Elbow but hurts her neck (on the softest bump in the

corner you'll see in years) and Ivory gets the pin to retain.

Rating: D. Ivory was squashed until the end when she won off an injury. What are you expecting from a match like this? This was designed to get more attention on Chyna because no female could conceivably beat her, so making her Women's Champion for her Playboy hype wouldn't do much good. Nothing to see here at all unless you're a fan of Chyna in leather.

Chyna gets looked at by Lawler, Gunn and medics, resulting in a stretcher job.

Trish and Stephanie run into each other and still don't get along. I can't decide if Chyna or Stephanie is a worse actress.

Drew Carey gets some gear and talks to Kane. Nothing funny is said and much glaring ensues.

Low Down, as in Headbanger Mosh and D'Lo Brown doing an Arab comedy gimmick (don't ask) is told that the Rumble spot they won earlier on Heat will be going to Drew Carey. See, THIS is a good use of a celebrity. Who cares if Mosh or Brown isn't in the Rumble? Carey isn't exactly a huge star, but he's more interesting than either of those two. He promotes his PPV, the WWF gets some publicity, life is good.

Fans at WWF New York talk about the world title match.

HHH breathes a lot.

We recap Angle vs. HHH. Angle is on the roll of a lifetime to begin a career, having won the title from the Rock and defended it against Undertaker. HHH got the shot through some corruption and says he's allowed Angle to be champion this long. Trish is playing both sides of the field, being in Kurt's corner tonight but obviously sleeping with Vince, who is on HHH's side at the moment. Stephanie couldn't act, but dang she looked good in leather pants while she argued with Trish.

WWF World Title: HHH vs. Kurt Angle

Angle is defending. They trade wristlocks to start with Angle taking it to the mat before HHH takes it to the corner. A clothesline puts HHH on

the floor as things slow down early. Back in and Angle escapes a suplex and hits three of his own for a near fall. HHH bails to the floor and gets punched for his efforts, but he manages to send Angle into the barricade to slow things down.

Back in and HHH takes Angle to the mat which isn't likely his best option. Since it's a HHH match, we go old school with an Indian Deathlock. A dragon screw leg whip puts Angle down again but as he loads up another one, Angle takes him down with an enziguri for two. Kurt comes back with a whip to send HHH over the corner and out to the floor. This is slow to start but they have a ton of time.

They slug it out on the floor and HHH goes into the steps. Angle punches him around a bit more until a Stephanie distraction lets HHH crack Angle's knee with a chair. Still good psychology so far and I'm digging the pace. We get our first Flair move as HHH hits a knee crusher onto the steps. They head back inside after about three minutes on the floor and HHH cranks on the knee even more.

Off to an inverted Indian Deathlock because we can't quite reach the 80s yet. The facebuster gets two for HHH and it's time for a bad looking Figure Four, although at least it's on the correct leg. Trish interferes to try to break it up and we get a catfight on the Spanish announce table. Vince comes down to break it up as we completely stop watching the match. Vince carries Trish away but Stephanie pulls her off her dad's shoulder. We haven't seen anything in the ring for about two minutes now.

We FINALLY return to the match for a small package for two for Angle before it's back to the knee. HHH gets kicked into the buckle and Angle grabs a DDT for two. A Russian legsweep looks to set up the moonsault but HHH hits him low to block. HHH busts out a Razor's Edge out of the corner of all things for two. I've never seen him use that other than here. The Pedigree is countered into a slingshot into the post and Angle headbutts HHH in the crotch to boot.

Now the moonsault hits (I'm as shocked as you are) but he hurts his knee in the process. It only gets two as a result and Angle heads to the floor to walk his knee out. HHH dives off the apron and takes out Hebner by

mistake. Angle goes into the post and we head back in where Angle runs the ropes (selling the knee? What's that?) for an armdrag off the top. Angle tries to get Hebner up but HHH rams Angle into Hebner, sending Earl into the steps as a result.

HHH grabs the belt but Angle counters into an overhead belly to belly. Now Kurt gets the belt but HHH blocks into a Pedigree for no cover. Austin runs out and beats on HHH before hitting him in the face with the belt. He throws Hebner back inside but Angle is still down. A Stunner puts the bloody HHH down and Angle gets a VERY delayed pin to retain the title.

Rating: B. This was good but the overbooking brings it way down. Basically you have two matches here with the dividing line being the Vince/girls stuff. The match was starting off as a great psychological battle and it turned into an Attitude Era main event which it just didn't need to be. This was disappointing after the way the match started.

Rikishi (#30) and Undertaker warm up for the Rumble.

Rock talks about how the Rumble is like a big bowl of jambalaya. As for Kane and Undertaker possibly being together, he doesn't really care if they want to give each other a box of chocolates or kick each others' faces in, because Rocky is throwing them both out. It could come down to Rock vs. Bull Buchanan, Rock vs. Perry Saturn, or Rock vs. Steve Austin, but either way he's going to Wrestlemania. Rocky was feeling it here.

Rumbly hype video, where there are a legit high number of possible winners. Austin is the favorite but it's not 100% as long as Rocky is in there. This is also one of the last years where they really pushed the idea that ANYONE could win.

Royal Rumble

Jeff Hardy is #1 and Bull Buchanan is #2. Bull charges into the ring and the beating is on fast. Jeff fights back and goes up top before hitting a headscissors. The intervals are two minutes again this year if you care about those kinds of things. They slug it out in the corner with no one getting an advantage until Matt Hardy is #3. Poetry in Motion and a

double clothesline quickly dispatch Bull, so the Hardys fight for awhile.

The clock starts so the Hardys stop brawling as Faarooq is #4. Things don't go any better for Faarooq than they did for Buchanan, resulting in a Twist of Fate and Swanton to knock him out as well. Jeff poses and Matt tries to dump him, resulting in some friction. Matt wins a slugout but gets caught by a Whisper in the Wind. Drew Carey is #5 and he wisely stands at ringside as the Hardys eliminate each other off the corner.

Drew is the only one left standing and the crowd seems amused. Then Kane is #6. JR: "Oh my God oh my God oh my God." Drew begs the Hardys to get back in as Kane stalks him. After about a minute, Kane gets in and Drew offers a handshake and then cash. Kane grabs Drew by the throat until Raven is #7. Drew wisely eliminates himself, high fives some fans and bails. This was perfectly fine as he was in there like 3 minutes and gave us a decently funny moment. Also he seemed to enjoy being there which is more than I can say for most celebrities. Good stuff.

Anyway, Raven pounds on Kane with a kendo stick and a fire extinguisher blast. Al Snow jumps the gun at #8 to pound on Raven who eliminated him recently. Snow legally comes in a few seconds later with trashcans and lids, followed by a bowling ball which goes into Raven's crotch. Big gasp from the crowd for that one. JR: "It looks like a hurricane has blown through New Orleans."

Snow and Raven pound away on Kane with everything they can find before FINALLY taking him down with a double drop toehold into a trashcan. Perry Saturn is #9 and goes after Kane's knee which is pretty stupid in a battle royal. Everyone takes their shots at Kane and some triple teaming finally gets him to his knees. Steve Blackman with his hardcore fighting sticks is #10 as the hardcore segment continues.

Things slow down a bit as they are known to do in hardcore matches until Grandmaster Sexay is #11. Kane finds a trashcan and explodes, eliminating everyone in about thirty seconds. Honky Tonk Man, Lawler's second straight relative, is #12. He brings his guitar and starts to sing until Kane destroys the guitar over his head and gets his sixth elimination in a row.

Kane is standing tall so here's the Rock at #13 for our first big showdown. Rock goes off with punches and a jumping clothesline but Kane blocks the elimination attempt. Rock keeps pounding but runs into a big boot to put him down. Goodfather is #14 and Rock eliminates him after two punches. Kane pounds him down again, prompting JR to say "Kane is a carnivore chewing on a big piece of Rock Burger." Lawler: "...Rock Burger?" Tazz is #15 and lasts even less time than Goodfather.

Rock and Kane slug it out for a bit until Rock hits a Samoan Drop. Both guys are down until Bradshaw is #16. He's cool with fighting both guys and hits the Clothesline on Rock. Rock comes back with the spinebuster but Kane clotheslines Rock down to take over again. Albert is #17 to keep up the size and power trend. Albert and Bradshaw pair off as do the other two guys but we can't get an elimination.

Hardcore Holly is #18 as Albert hits the chokebomb on Bradshaw. A bicycle kick from Albert puts Kane down in a pretty impressive looking move. Rock tries to dump Kane but the dude in the mask stays in. K-Kwik (R-Truth) is #19 and is immediately slammed down by Bradshaw. Nothing of note happens until Val Venis is #20. The ring is getting full now with Kane, Rock, Bradshaw, Albert, Holly, K-Kwik and Venis.

Rock powerslams Kwik down and William Regal is #21. He also beats up Kwik who isn't having a good night so far. Nothing of note happens again until Test is #22. He immediately knocks out Regal before pounding away on Albert. Big Show makes his return from a trip to OVW to try (and fail) to lose weight. He clotheslines Test out and dumps Kwik as well. Everyone not named Rock gets chokeslammed as Rock kicks Show low and eliminates him for the second year in a row.

As Crash Holly is #24, Big Show seemingly turns heel and chokeslams Rock through the announce table. Everyone goes after Kane and Undertaker is #25, meaning it's finally time to get rid of some of these guys. The Brothers clear the ring other than the two of them and Rock left on the floor. The tall guys stare each other down and Scotty 2 Hotty is #26. Not exactly the brightest guy in the world, Scotty gets inside and is gone in about 45 seconds.

Austin is #27 but HHH runs out to avenge the earlier interference. Rock climbs in as the Brothers watch Austin get beaten up on the floor. Austin is busted open as Taker beats on Rock off camera. Billy Gunn is #28 to save Rock for some reason. Taker DDTs Rock down as HHH leaves. Haku, as in Meng, the reigning WCW Hardcore Champion, is #29. He goes right for Taker and pounds him into the corner and everyone pairs off. Rikishi is #30, giving us a final group of Rikishi, Haku, Rock, Austin, Undertaker, Kane and Billy Gunn.

Rikishi gets in a fight with Austin on the floor and everyone is in the ring now. Austin dumps Haku as Taker ERUPTS on Rikishi. A chokeslam puts Rikishi down but a pair of headbutts go badly for the Dead Man. Rikishi superkicks Undertaker out in a pretty big upset. As impressive as that was for him, he tries the Banzai Drop on Rock and deserves the elimination he gets.

We're down to four with Kane, Austin, Rock and Gunn. Gee I wonder which one is going out first. Gunn escapes the Stunner and hits the Fameasser on Austin but gets thrown out anyway a few seconds later. Rock DDTs Kane down as Austin chills in the corner. Rock and Austin lock eyes and the fight is on. That's Wrestlemania people. The spit punch drops a weakened Austin but he escapes the Rock Bottom. The Stunner hits but Austin stops to go after Kane and charges into a Rock Bottom.

Kane gets back up and gets sent through the ropes by Rock, leaving Rock vs. Austin for the moment. They slug it out some more and fight for an elimination, but Kane comes back in and dumps Rock in a shocker. That also gives Kane the record for most eliminations in a Rumble at 11. Austin kicks Kane low to put both guys down and Kane bails to the floor. Kane brings in a chair but walks into a Stunner. About four chair shots and a clothesline send Austin to the main event of the best show ever.

Rating: B+. It's not as good as last year but it was awesome for the most part with some BIG star power out there. They did a great job of keeping you guessing until the end as Rocky winning here was a very legitimate possibility. Austin is back from his surgery and back where he was before, which is exactly what he needed to do. Very good Rumble with some nice surprises.

Overall Rating: A. While it's not quite as great as last year, this is pretty easily the second best Rumble so far. The ladder match is excellent and the Rumble is quite good as well. The world title match is great too and there's a solid opening tag match on top of that. The Women's Title match sucks but it's less than four minutes long. Great show again, but things would be coming down soon.

Ratings Comparison

Dudley Boys vs. Edge and Christian

Original: B-

Redo: B

Chris Jericho vs. Chris Benoit

Original: A

Redo: A+

Ivory vs. Chyna

Original: N/A

Redo: D

Kurt Angle vs. HHH

Original: B

Redo: B

Royal Rumble

Original: B

Redo: B+

Overall Rating

Original: A

Redo: A

I'm surprised that I liked it that much less last time. Still a great show.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/20/royal-rumble-count-up-2001-drew-carey-could-go-to-wrestlemania/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of Wrestlemania at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0188BJRGU>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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