

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania IX: It Really Is That Bad

Wrestlemania IX

Date: April 4, 1993

Location: Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada

Attendance: 16,981

Commentators: Jim Ross, Randy Savage, Bobby Heenan

We're into the Monday Night Raw era as things are definitely shifting to a new generation. The main event tonight is Bret Hart defending the title against the new monster known as Yokozuna. Other than that we've got Beefcake/Hogan challenging Money Inc. for the tag titles in a match that sounds odd when I type it for some reason. Let's get to it.

Gorilla Monsoon is host this year, which means we need a new commentator. We'll get to that in a bit, but first of all let's acknowledge the theme of the show: the World's Largest Toga Party. Yeah that's not going to get stupid at all.

Jim Ross debuts on WWF TV for the first time ever in a surprise jump from the other company. Granted it was about a year or so since JR was last seen but it was still surprising.

Cesar and Cleopatra are introduced to the crowd.

Randy Savage comes out on a sedan with the vestal virgins. Bobby Heenan is brought out riding a camel backwards, which he claims was supposed to be the sedan. Funny bit here.

Intercontinental Title: Tatanka vs. Shawn Michaels

Shawn is defending of course and has the debuting Luna Vachon behind him. Tatanka is still undefeated here and would be so until much later in the year. Shawn's former manager, Sensational Sherri, comes down the aisle to stare at Shawn and presumably be in Tatanka's

corner. Tatanka takes Shawn down a few times to start and they fight over arm control. Shawn comes back with a headlock and climbs the ropes to roll Tatanka down with it for two.

The champion tries it again but gets caught in a belly to back suplex for two this time instead. Shawn goes up again but dives into an armdrag as things pick up a bit. There's a Flair Flip in the corner and a big chop puts Shawn on the floor. Sherri and Luna get in a staredown and Luna licks the ring post. More chops keep Michaels on the floor as the fans are getting into this.

Back in again and Shawn comes off the top with a semi-botched sunset flip for two but Tatanka comes right back with an atomic drop. A DDT puts Shawn down again and Tatanka works on Shawn's apparently bad shoulder. Shawn tries a clothesline like an idiot and hurts his own arm again. We hit another armbars but Michaels fights up, only to charge shoulder first into the post.

Back to the armbars followed by a shoulder breaker for no cover by the challenger. A top rope chop to the shoulder has Shawn in even more trouble but a second attempt jumps into the superkick. Since it's 1993 though that doesn't end anything so Shawn sends Tatanka out to the floor. The girls get in another staredown but Shawn hits a running clothesline off the apron to take Tatanka out again.

Instead of following up, Shawn yells at Sherri. Since he's Shawn Michaels though, he still maintains control with a neckbreaker for two. A standing dropkick gets two for Shawn and it's off to a chinlock. That goes nowhere so Shawn hits a modified victory roll out of the corner for two. The shoulder seems to be fine now. Tatanka counters another victory roll attempt into an electric chair to put both guys down. A very delayed cover gets two for the challenger and it's time to go on the warpath.

Shawn gets caught in a cross body for two and a slingshot sends him face first into the post for two. The crowd is WAY into this match now. Tatanka's Papoose To Go (Samoan Drop) is countered into a rollup for two for Shawn but he walks into a powerslam for two. Shawn sends him out to the floor and the fans chant for Sherri.

Michaels dives off the apron but slams his head into the steps, knocking himself silly and causing a countout win for the racial stereotype.

Rating: B. If Tatanks wins clean here, it's a near classic. This was a VERY solid opener with the fans getting completely into the near falls. The shoulder injury being forgotten ten minutes into it hurt things though as I can't stand a plot point being introduced and then left completely alone. Also Tatanka should have won but it still makes for a fine opener.

Luna lays out Sherri while Tatanka celebrates not winning the title. The Steiners are ready for the Headshrinkers.

Steiner Brothers vs. Headshrinkers

This should be solid stuff. The Shrinkers are Samu and Fatu (Rikishi) here. Historic moment: JR calls this match a slobberknocker, unleashing the term on the wrestling world. The Headshrinkers have Afa as their manager, which will be mentioned later. Scott and Fatu start things off and after being shoved by the Samoan, Scott easily takes him down by the legs. A big old Steiner Line flips Fatu inside out but the Headshrinkers take Scott into the corner to work him over.

The Steiners are sent to the floor so they both climb to the top and hit a double Steiner Line to take both Samoans out to the floor. We settle down to Scott vs. Fatu again but it's quickly off to Rick. Apparently Luna has attacked Sherri at the first aid station. Samu pounds on Rick in the corner and hits a running clothesline, only to be taken down by a running forearm/clothesline. Samu goes face first into the post to absolutely no effect, because he's Samoan you see.

Back to Scott but Afa gets on the apron for a distraction. Scott charges into a hot shot to send him out to the floor in a NASTY looking bump. Afa cracks his staff over Scott's back which looked great and sounded even greater. Things settle down a bit and Fatu hits a backbreaker and middle rope headbutt for two on Scott. A spinning kick to the face takes Scott down again but Samu charges

into a boot in the corner.

Fatu blocks the hot tag by knocking Scott to the floor where he gets sent face first into the post. In a sweet sequence, Scott tries to ram Fatu's head into the mat but Fatu pops up and superkicks Scott right back down. A modified Demolition Decapitator gets two on Scott and let's hit that nerve hold. Scott fights up and they collide as is common in tag matches. Heenan keeps ripping on JR and Oklahoma as Ross has almost no idea what to make of this kind of sarcasm. That says a lot when he used to work with Jim Cornette.

Back to Samu who goes up top, only to miss a top rope splash. The hot tag brings in Rick but a double headbutt immediately puts him back down. Here's your awesome spot of the match: Rick gets loaded up in a Doomsday Device position but when Samu dives at him with a cross body, Rick catches him in mid air and powerslams/belly to belly suplexes him off Fatu's shoulders and down. AWESOME looking move and they hit it perfectly. Scott hits a belly to belly on Fatu but Samu hits a superkick to take him right back down. Out of NOWHERE Scott hits the Frankensteiner for the pin. Nice bump from a guy that big.

Rating: B. I liked this one as much as I liked the opener which is saying a lot. This probably should have kicked the show off as the spots were hitting better and the fans were popping a lot louder, but I can get why they went with a title match. I'm a Headshrinkers fan so seeing them hold their own against one of the best teams ever is a very fun sight. Good match here and that powerslam was great.

Strap yourselves in now people, because it's ALL downhill from here.

We cut to the back where Doink has desecrated a statue of Julius Caesar. This is when Doink is still the evil clown which had a ton of potential, but they of course had to make him kid friendly because that's how wrestling works. The idea here is that Doink has been using evil pranks on Crush, including beating him with a prosthetic arm.

Crush vs. Doink the Clown

This is during Crush-A-Mania when he was on the verge of getting the mega push to the stars which would never happen. Crush chases him around the ring to start and slams Doink on the floor before pounding Doink in the face a bit. Doink tries to punch back but Crush no sells everything. Back inside and Crush hits a neckbreaker for no cover. A neck snap over the top keeps Doink down as does a backbreaker. We're three minutes in and it's all Crush so far.

As Crush is hitting some Sheamus forearms on the apron, Doink hits a kind of Stunner on the top rope to take over. A few top rope forearms to the back of Crush's head keeps us in clown control and a lame piledriver gets no cover. Doink actually slams him but goes up top and jumps into a boot to the jaw. A cross body attempt by the Clown doesn't work as Crush hits a powerslam before clotheslining Doink to the floor.

Doink tries to crawl under the ring but gets hit with a gorilla press back in the ring. Crush puts on the head vice (finisher) but as Doink gets to the ropes, the referee is bumped. The vice goes on again but another Doink comes out from under the ring with the cast. He blasts Crush in the head with it and the original Doink gets the pin.

Rating: D+. This was basically a squash until Doink got in some not terrible offense. Again though, this was when Crush was about to get pushed to the moon, so he loses to Doink? The Clown character had a ton of potential, but instead of going with something interesting like the Joker, we got FUN Doink soon after this, because that's interesting stuff right?

Japanese tourist jokes aren't funny so here are a bunch of them.

Razor Ramon vs. Bob Backlund

This is right before Razor turned face and it's clear why given how big the pop he gets here is. Backlund offers a handshake and gets a toothpick in the face instead. A LOUD Razor chant opens things up as Backlund is shoved into the corner. Ramon slams him down and stomps away as Savage brings up Lex Luger knocking Bret Hart out cold earlier today.

It comes up out of nowhere in the middle of this match because there's no reason for this match to take place. Leave it to JR to bring it back to the match as Backlund makes his comeback. A butterfly suplex puts Razor down and there's Backlund's atomic drop. That gets no cover though, as Razor grabs a small package to pin the wrestler with a wrestling move.

Rating: D. This was a squash at a Wrestlemania in 1993. Razor would be turning face soon after this while Backlund did nothing at all for a LONG time until he went nuts and actually won the world title. Nothing to see here though and it was clear that the announcers didn't care about the match at all.

We recap Money Inc. attacking Brutus Beefcake and injuring his face (again) on Raw. Hulk Hogan was watching and came back to save his little buddy. The champions (Money Inc.) says they'll bankrupt Hogan and Beefcake. Oh and we hear about a black eye that Hogan has from working in the gym the previous night. I've heard a bunch of stories over that before, but the most common one I hear is Savage decking him in the eye because he thought Liz had cheated on him with Hogan. The other version (and possibly the real one) is that Hogan had an accident on a Jet-Ski.

Tag Titles: Money Inc. vs. Mega Maniacs

Jimmy Hart is with the challengers because of how the champions hurt Beefcake. Hogan and Beefcake clear the ring while the music is still playing as the match begins. The champions stall on the floor for awhile until we get down to Beefcake (in a red/yellow mask) vs. I.R.S. The tax dude immediately goes for the face and it's off to DiBiase for more of the same. DiBiase hits a middle rope ax handle to the mask and injures himself in the process. Ted continues to act way dumber than he is by ramming the mask into the buckle. So why did the punches work earlier?

Beefcake rams DiBiase's head into the buckle instead and in the match we should have gotten five years ago, it's Hogan vs. DiBiase. Ten punches in the corner put Ted down so Hogan pounds on the mat a bit. Off to Beefcake for a slam before it's back to hogan for more

punching. DiBiase ducks low and is immediately punched in the face again. I.R.S. comes in again and is punched by both Maniacs. All challengers so far.

The champions try to walk out but Finkus Maximus (remember the Roman theme) says that if they leave, they lose the titles. They get back in and the fans are chanting for Hogan. Ted goes for the throat to finally take over and I.R.S. chokes away a bit from the floor. More choking by DiBiase ensues before he cranks it up with the Million Dollar Dream. Savage: "They're hanging from the rafter! Well they would if they had rafters. They have columns here and they're hanging from them!"

I.R.S. tries to interfere for some reason but it allows Beefcake to come in with his own sleeper and put DiBiase out to break the hold and buy Hogan a breather. Hogan pops up and the double tag brings in Schyster to face Beefcake. An atomic drop puts Ted on the floor but the tax dude gets in a shot to Beefcake's back to take over. DiBiase comes back in and rips the mask off of Brutus' face so the champions can work over the face.

Beefcake comes back with a double clothesline out of nowhere but instead of tagging he puts I.R.S. in the sleeper. Ted breaks it up but the referee is bumped in the process. Hogan comes in like a hero and hits both guys with the steel mask but there's no referee. What else do you do in this situation? You have Jimmy Hart turn his jacket inside out so it has white and black stripes and have him count then CELEBRATE LIKE YOU WON THE FREAKING BELTS. Another referee comes out to explain to Hogan how stupid he is and give Money Inc. the win by DQ.

Rating: D+. The match was ok at best but the ending is so dumb that I can barely comprehend it. I mean....HOW STUPID CAN HOGAN POSSIBLY BE??? The guy has been around for nearly ten years and he thinks that would actually work? The match was just ok as it was mainly choking and punching for the first half, which is decent but nothing mind blowing. Then the ending sucked the life out of my brain which is normal for Hogan a lot of the time.

Lots of posing ensues but then the Maniacs open Money Inc.'s briefcase. They find tax forms, cash, and a brick. Heenan: "Well you never know when you're gonna need a brick." Hogan gives the money away and Heenan is suddenly a huge fan.

Todd Petingill finds Natalie Cole (singer I think) and the owner of Caesar's Palace who are as riveting as you would expect.

Mr. Perfect says he's going to solve the Lex Luger puzzle.

Lex Luger vs. Mr. Perfect

That sounds pretty awesome on paper. Anyway, Luger is the Narcissist at this point and comes out with some women in bikinis with thongs, sending Heenan through the roof. Well over the top of the columns at least. Perfect gets a very solid pop here but he would be used sparingly until he left in the fall. They trade headlocks to start and Luger bails to the corner. Now they trade hammerlocks and Luger bails to the ropes again.

Perfect hits a dropkick to send Luger to the outside as the crowd is staying hot. Back in and Luger starts using the power but Perfect blocks a big boot attempt. There's the Robinsdale Crunch on Luger's knee and Perfect cranks on it a bit for fun. We head to the corner for some LOUD chops but Lex whips him into the corner a few times to take over. We head to the floor with Luger ramming the injured back into the apron, followed by a backbreaker in the ring for two.

Perfect fights out of the corner with right hands but Luger scoops his legs and puts his own feet on the ropes for two. Mr. comes back with a nice sunset flip for two but a quick sleeper attempt is broken up. Back up and they slug it out a bit more with Perfect hitting a backdrop to take over. A slingshot sends Luger into the buckle and a forearm to the head gets two. Perfect hits a clothesline and neckbreaker for two each, as does a kind of missile dropkick. Luger wins the fight over a backslide and even though Perfect gets his feet in the ropes, Luger gets the pin anyway.

Rating: C. Decent match here but it never hit the level they were capable of. That ending was actually designed to set up something at

the NEXT Wrestlemania which was unheard of at this point in time. Anyway, decent match here but it's a disappointment due to how good this could and should have been.

Luger knocks him out post match and leaves. Perfect finally staggers after him and the fight starts again, until Shawn Michaels helps beat up Perfect.

Savage yells at Heenan for supporting Luger too much.

Gorilla Monsoon talks about the remaining matches.

Giant Gonzalez vs. Undertaker

Gonzalez is a legit 7'7 and is working for Harvey Wippleman for revenge on Undertaker after Undertaker got rid of Kamala. Taker comes out in a chariot and carrying a vulture. Undertaker literally only comes up to Gonzalez's chest. Some uppercuts stagger the Giant but he grabs Taker by the throat to stop him cold. Taker climbs to the second rope and grabs Gonzalez by the throat, only to get hit low to stop him again.

Old School staggers the Giant a bit but he comes back with a clothesline to take over. Taker is thrown across the ring and we get a standing chinlock by the monster. The famous one fights up but gets thrown to the outside with ease. Taker is sent into the steps and we head back inside. Gonzalez pounds away a bit more but Taker slugs away, knocking Gonzalez down to one knee. Wippleman throws in a rag, which apparently the announcers can smell a chemical on from twenty feet away in an outdoor arena with over 15,000 people in it. Apparently it's ether or something, earning Taker a DQ win.

Rating: D-. Gonzalez was AWFUL which really hurt things a lot. The main issue Undertaker had at this point was no one had any idea what to do with him. They just had him fight monsters for years on end which you can only watch for so long. This story would be reused about 12 years later with Undertaker playing Undertaker, Daivari playing Wippleman and Great Khali playing Gonzalez.

Referees check on the unconscious Undertaker as Gonzalez chokeslams a referee. The fans chant for Hogan but a gong goes off and Taker

staggers out to beat up the monster.

We recap Jim Duggan being destroyed by Yokozuna. The fat man did the same to Bret Hart as well, setting up this match. In the back, Hogan says he wants the first title shot against either Hart or the Jap. His words, not mine.

Todd Pettingill continues to annoy fans.

WWF World Title: Bret Hart vs. Yokozuna

Bret is defending against Yoko who won the Royal Rumble. It wasn't an automatic title shot yet but starting the following year it would be. Bret hits a quick dropkick and pounds away but a single shot knocks the champion away. A big tackle runs Bret over and sends him to the outside but he trips Yoko up to take him down. Bret pounds away but it doesn't do a lot of damage. Yoko wins a battle of the clotheslines and a big old legdrop crushes the champ's face.

Off to a nerve hold for a bit but Bret gets his feet up in the corner to block a charge. A middle rope bulldog puts the monster down for two which is a victory in and of itself. Yoko superkicks Bret down and it's right back to the nerve hold. Bret fights up and makes his comeback, finally knocking Yoko down with a middle rope clothesline. A buckle pad is ripped off somewhere in there and Bret rams him face first into it. Yoko falls on his stomach and Bret gets the Sharpshooter, only to have Fuji throw salt in the champ's face. That's actually enough for the pin and the title.

Rating: D+. Bret did what he could but there's a limit to what you can get out of a big fat guy like this. The ending is pretty lame and the match lasted less than nine minutes. That just doesn't fit for a Wrestlemania main event but thankfully the rematch the next year would get more time and would be MUCH better.

Hogan runs out to check out Hart, so Mr. Fuji issues a challenge to Hogan for a title match RIGHT NOW. Bret tells Hogan to go get him and the fight is on.

WWF World Title: Hulk Hogan vs. Yokozuna

Fuji misses a salt through, clothesline, legdrop, new champion.

Hogan poses a lot to end the show. Yeah that's how Wrestlemania ends: in 22 seconds.

Overall Rating: D. The opening matches are as good as you'll find for two straight openers at Mania in a long time, but after that it's ALL downhill. The ending here was just stupid. First off, pride or whatever, WHY WOULD YOU GIVE A FRESH HULK HOGAN A WORLD TITLE SHOT AFTER YOU JUST WON THE BELT??? On top of that, we had some stupid endings with the tag title match and the Undertaker match, making this even worse. The problem with this show is other than the openers, it isn't entertaining. I've never liked this show and most people don't either, which is easy to understand.

Ratings Comparison

Tatanka vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: B+

Redo: B

Steiner Brothers vs. Headshrinkers

Original: B+

Redo: B

Doink the Clown vs. Crush

Original: D

Redo: D+

Razor Ramon vs. Bob Backlund

Original: C-

Redo: D

Money Inc. vs. Mega Maniacs

Original: C+

Redo: D+

Lex Luger vs. Mr. Perfect

Original: C-

Redo: C

Undertaker vs. Giant Gonzalez

Original: F+

Redo: D-

Yokozuna vs. Bret Hart

Original: D+

Redo: D+

Yokozuna vs. Hulk Hogan

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Overall Rating

Original: F+

Redo: D

I actually liked it better this time. Man alive I must have been in a bad mood for the first one.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/16/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-9-wrestlemania-goes-outside/>

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