

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2000: When They Fought Like Angry Wrestlers

Royal Rumble 2000

Date: January 23, 2000

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 19,231

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross

After sitting through 1998 and 1999, this is my reward. What we have here might be the best Rumble show of them all with one of the best matches ever and a great Rumble on top of it. 2000 is the best in ring year the company ever had and this was a great way to kick that year off. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about Cactus Jack challenging HHH for the world title in a street fight. This is that "one of the best matches ever" that I was talking about. The idea is simple: Cactus wants the title back and he's facing HHH in a street fight, which means HHH is in WAY over his head. We're in Foley's hometown in Foley's match with Foley's most hardcore character. How can this not be a masterpiece?

Kurt Angle vs. ???

Angle is undefeated at this point. Kurt says he's a real winner here, unlike the New York Knicks. This is goofy Kurt, which means he's hilarious. He says that the mystery opponent must be scared to come face him, but the opponent needs to take a deep breath, come out here, and face Angle like a man. The self-help thing here is hilarious. The fans chant WE WANT TAZ...and here he is!

Kurt Angle vs. Tazz

Tazz pounds away on Angle and hits a HUGE backdrop to send him to the floor. Angle escapes a suplex in the aisle (painted like a street with a

big cab hanging above the entrance, which looks like an alley. It's really cool) and takes over. Back in and Kurt hits a forearm for two and chokes away in the corner. A belly to belly puts Tazz down but Angle goes up and gets crotched. Tazz hits a super Tazplex for two before getting rolled up for two. Angle gets two more off a bridging German before walking into a release German from Tazz. We unleash the suplexes on Kurt before the Tazmission ends Angle's undefeated streak.

Rating: C+. This was short, but to say it was an effective debut is an understatement. The place ERUPTED when Tazz won which is exactly the point of the opening match. See, this is what you call LISTENING to the audience. WWF knew they had to appeal to the ECW fans and what better way than to have Tazz debut here? Today, Tazz would be in some comedy match and would likely lose, because Heaven forbid that the fans get what they want in one city for one night.

Angle does a stretcher job.

We go to the Hardys in the back and get a clip of them and the Dudleys putting each other through tables. Terri, the Hardys' manager here, is told to stay in the back. She would be gone from the team soon, thank goodness.

Tazz says Angle is just the first victim.

Dudley Boyz vs. Hardy Boyz

I believe match #1 or #2 in a series of roughly 8000 and it's an elimination tables match. Bubba praises John Rucker of the Braves who had recently gone on a massive anti-New York rant in Sports Illustrated. The Hardys hit the ring and the match starts fast with Bubba hitting the Bubba Bomb on Jeff. No tags here thank goodness. Bubba sets up a table in the ring but before he can get another one, Jeff takes him out with a HUGE flip dive.

Jeff gets sent into the steps as Matt escapes a powerbomb through the table. D-Von suplexes Matt as Jeff CRACKS Bubba in the head with a chair. In a SICK spot, Jeff tries to run the railing but Bubba throws the table at Jeff, knocking him out of the air. That sounded GREAT. The pairings

trade off and Bubba loads up the backslash through the table, only for Jeff to come back and try a double superplex. D-Von moves the table but doesn't stop the suplex.

Matt brings in a ladder because this might as well be a TLC style match. We head to the floor where the ladder is set up in front of a table with Bubba on it. Matt dives through Bubba through the table just as Jeff dives in from off camera with a splash, sending Bubba through the table in another awesome looking spot. So it's 2-1 now with Jeff leaning a table up against the barricade. The steps are set up on their end and a table is set up like a bridge between the steps and the apron.

D-Von is placed on the bridged table but moves before Matt dives through him. He moves AGAIN to avoid a diving Jeff, sending him through the leaning table. Cool sequence there by Ninja D-Von. Apparently Bubba doesn't have to leave. Ok that makes things more interesting. The Dudleys set up two steps in the ring and put a table across them before hitting a HUGE powerbomb on Matt to eliminate (in a sense) him. The tables are LOUD tonight too. Jeff gets beaten into the aisle but Matt quickly follows, only to get WHACKED in the head with a chair.

The Dudleys stack up four tables in front of the entrance (it's the MSG setup where the entrance is opposite the cameras). Matt gets put on the tables and Jeff is CRACKED in the head again to break up the save attempt. Bubba climbs onto the taxi over the aisle to splash Matt, but remember that wouldn't win the match. Jeff climbs up after him (I'm not sure where D-Von went) and blasts him with a chair, knocking him through two of the tables (still doesn't win). Matt puts D-Von on the table and Jeff dives off the taxi with the Swanton through D-Von through the table for the win.

Rating: B+. This was AWESOME with all four guys being young and hungry here. The Dudleys were out to prove themselves and the Hardys were out to show they could hang in a fight. They had already proven they could fight in a violent match like the ladder match, but this was a brawl instead of a high flying match. REALLY fun stuff here though and well worth a look if you haven't seen it. The Dudleys would get the titles next month, setting up the first triangle ladder match at Mania.

Angle gets a concussion test and complains that being choked out is illegal.

It's time for the Miss Rumble Bikini contest with Sgt. Slaughter, Tony Garea, Moolah, Johnny V, FREDDY FREAKING BLASSIE and Andy Richter from Late Night with Conan O'Brien as judges. Jerry gets to emcee of course. The contestants are Ivory, Terri, Kat, Jackie, BB (You shouldn't remember her) and Luna. The idea here is that Kat legitimately took her top off (full exposure too, the only intentional female nudity in WWF history) at Armageddon and more nudity was promised here.

Ivory doesn't want to do it but eventually does. Terri does her usual skin colored one which we've seen before. Lawler freaks out over her bending over the ropes. Jackie...no one cares. BB isn't bad but again, the whole point of this is for Kat to win. Luna won't show. Kat is in a bikini made of bubble wrap. Creative if nothing else. The judges start tallying their scores but here's Mae Young to enter as well. She takes off her robe, and THERE is the nudity (it was fake). Mae wins to complete the joke. Lawler's reaction of "OH MY GOD I SAW THEM" is priceless. Mark Henry comes in to save our collective retinas.

The recently hired Coach doesn't have much to say from WWF New York.

Chyna and Jericho, the co-IC Champions, argue over who gets to wear the belt to the ring. There was a double pin in a title match and they became co-champions as a result, which is a pretty creative idea.

Angle says he's still undefeated. Rock would pin him on Smackdown a few weeks later.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. Chyna vs. Hardcore Holly

You know Jericho is fired up to be in MSG. He talks about how awesome his championship celebration will be, as it will make the millennium celebration look like his sister's seventh birthday party. Holly piefaces Chyna down to start before getting in a slap fight with Jericho. Chyna gets sent to the floor for the Slaughter fall, leaving the blondes to fight for a bit. Holly hits that perfect dropkick of his but Jericho comes back with the forearm.

They slug it out until Holly tries a rana (huh?), only to get caught in the Walls. Chyna makes the save, basically turning heel at the same time. Chyna sends Holly to the floor and gets drilled by Jericho. Holly and Chyna go to the floor where Jericho tries a dive but slips and only hits Holly. Back in and there's the handspring elbow and DDT from Chyna to the Canadian for two. Everyone heads to the floor where Jericho saves Chyna from a chair shot. Back in and both champions go up for a kind of double splash for two.

They both tried for a cover and a fight breaks out as a result. Chyna escapes a belly to back suplex and hits Jericho low, followed by a Pedigree for two on Holly. Chyna goes up but gets caught in a modified Doomsday Device (cross body instead of a clothesline) for a very close two. That probably should have been the finish. Now Jericho loads up a superplex but gets crotched for his efforts. Holly gets superplexed by Chyna but gets two on her off the bounce. Chyna chairs Holly in the head and puts on the Walls, only to have Jericho break it up and hit the Lionsault for the undisputed title and a BIG pop.

Rating: C+. This was pretty good and too short to get bad. It could have been on Raw but see, back in 2000, there was this crazy idea of finishing angles on PPV. I know that's insane now and everything ends in a big match on Raw or rather just stops happening one day, but back in the old days, they ended like this. Match was fine.

Rock is worried about two and only two men in the Rumble: Crash Holly and Headbanger Mosh. Cole (minus facial hair) suggests maybe Rock should be worried about, say, Big Show. Rock says go make a glass of shut up juice (not one of his better catchphrases) and tells Big Show he doesn't care what he thinks. He guarantees to win the Rumble right here in New York City and the place eats it up. I want one of those jerseys he's wearing.

Jericho says he said he'd win and he'll lead the Jerichoholics like a pied piper.

Tag Titles: Acolytes vs. New Age Outlaws

The Outlaws are defending and there's a backstory that doesn't deserve to be listed. Who would have thought that THIRTEEN YEARS LATER the Outlaws

would be on house shows for the WWE again? The Outlaws are heels here but they're over like free beer in a frat house here in New York. The APA storms the ring and the beating is on quickly. Bradshaw and Billy officially get us started with Billy taking a fast beating. Both guys tag as the referee is adjusting his ear piece.

Farooq imitates Dogg's dance before getting double teamed a bit. Bradshaw breaks up the shaky knee drop and everything breaks down. The Clothesline kills Billy and there's the spinebuster to Roadie...but Billy pulls the referee out. The ref is bumped and Road Dogg is hit with a double powerbomb. X-Pac runs in and kicks Bradshaw's head off. The Fameasser to the future JBL retains the titles in like two and a half minutes. This had to be cut for time. The Outlaws would lose the titles to the Dudleys next month and that would be the end of the team.

Dogg rhymes about keeping the titles.

We recap HHH vs. Cactus Jack. HHH won the title the night after Summerslam from Mankind via cheating. Big Show got the title at Survivor Series but lost it back to HHH in January. Mankind stood up to the newly formed McMahon-Helmsley Era and got beaten down for his efforts. Foley got fired and we had a fake Mankind get humiliated. Rock then said that every single wrestler would walk out and form the Rock Wrestling Federation if Foley wasn't rehired. See how different storylines could be back then? Mankind got HHH to agree to a street fight at the Rumble but got beaten up for his efforts.

This led to an AWESOME promo on Smackdown, where Mankind said he wasn't ready to face HHH in a street fight, but he knew someone who did. He took off his mask and ripped open his shirt to reveal Cactus Jack, scaring HHH to death. These two, as in Cactus Jack and HHH, had fought in 1997 in the match that basically brought hardcore to the WWF and they did it in MSG, with Cactus winning clean. This was an excellent story and there was a VERY real feeling that Cactus could pull this off, because HHH was in WAY over his head. Check out the build to this match as it's some of the best stuff you'll EVER see.

WWF World Title: Cactus Jack vs. HHH

Street fight. It should also be noted that Foley lost about 30 pounds inside of a month and a half and is by far the slimmest you'll ever see him look here. HHH does the long slow walk to the ring which makes things feel even more epic. Stephanie heads to the back which is probably a good thing. Dang I miss that big title. It's SO much better looking than the stupid spinner version. Even now when it doesn't spin it doesn't look like something special but rather something like a toy. The belt on HHH looks classy.

Cactus looks like an animal and HHH looks terrified. Jack wins a quick slugout and pounds HHH down into the corner. We head to the floor for a swinging neckbreaker on HHH and a legdrop onto the apron knocks the Game back to the floor. HHH is rammed into various metal objects but comes back with a bell shot to take over. NOW we get to the fun part as the first chair is brought in.

Back in and Jack charges right into a chair shot like an idiot. Granted for him, that's playing the character right. HHH goes to unhook the buckle instead of covering for some reason and Jack pops up to clothesline the champ down. There's a legdrop onto a chair onto HHH's head for two and we head outside again. HHH gets backdropped into the crowd and the beating begins again. JR: "They're out in the sea of humanity." Jerry: "Humanity? JR we're in New York."

HHH gets rammed into something made of metal that we can't see and they head into the aisle. Cactus sets up a wooden pallet and suplexes HHH onto it before screaming in his face. This isn't falls count anywhere mind you. There's a trashcan to the head and HHH gets rammed into the steel doors. The fans chant for Foley as he gets suplexed onto the trashcan. The crowd is just RUTHLESS against HHH here as they head back to the ring. The aisle is really short so it's not a long walk.

Jack rams a knee into HHH's head to drive it into the steps and it's back inside now. This is almost all Jack so far. There's the 2x4 in barbed wire but HHH hits him low to get the board away. Some shots to Cactus' ribs and back have him in trouble and HHH looks at the board as if to say "did I just do that?" Cactus blocks a shot to the head and hits HHH in the balls with the board. The double arm DDT puts HHH down as the referee

takes the board out of the ring, drawing the loudest booring of the night.

Cactus wants the board back and beats up the Spanish announce team who the board was left with. He gets a board (clearly not the same one but that's likely for safety reasons) and after the referee is crushed, HHH gets hit in the forehead with the wire. The board is driven into HHH's forehead and he's busted something fierce now. The referee is back up now and we get the most famous spot of the match with Jack ripping the wire across HHH's cut to make him scream.

Cactus tries to piledrive HHH through the announce table (same thing he won the 97 match with) but HHH counters with a backdrop. JR: "The champion is bleeding like a horse." When does a horse bleed? HHH is bleeding from his leg which is a rare sight to see. The place LOUDLY cheers for Foley and we head back inside. The Pedigree is countered into a slingshot into the post and a bulldog on the wire gets two.

HHH has a spot called to him about the steps before the Cactus Clothesline takes them both to the floor. Cactus charges but gets hiptossed into the steps, banging his knee in the process. You know a Flair disciple like HHH knows how to work on a knee. Back inside and HHH clips him down before picking up the barbed wire for another shot to the knee. HHH pulls out some handcuffs in a flashback to last year.

Cactus fights back and hits HHH in the head with the cuffs in a smart move. The cuffs are locked up a few seconds later though and HHH starts pounding away. The steps are brought in but Foley comes out of nowhere with a drop toehold to send HHH face first into the steel. A low blow keeps HHH down and Cactus bites away. HHH gets back up and grabs a chair which he literally BREAKS over the back of Cactus. They head outside again and Cactus takes some shots to the head from the chair.

Cactus says hit me again but before HHH can crush the skull, Rock pops out of nowhere and blasts HHH in the head with a chair of his own. A cop comes in and unlocks the cuffs, freeing Cactus. HHH starts backpedaling fast but gets caught on the Spanish Announce Table. The piledriver hits this time but the table DOESN'T BREAK.

We haven't gotten violent enough yet, so here's a bag of thumbtacks.

Stephanie comes out (complete with snakeskin choker in a nod to Cactus) and HHH comes back with a backdrop onto the tacks. There's the Pedigree but Cactus kicks out at two to blow the roof off the place. It doesn't last long though as a Pedigree ONTO THE TACKS finally ends Cactus.

Rating: A+. FREAKING OW MAN! If there's a match that made a guy into a legitimate force better than this one made HHH, I'd love to see it. This was an absolute war with both guys destroying each other for about 27 minutes. The place never gave up on Foley and it's easily one of his best matches ever. This is one of the best brawls ever and yet again it's well worth checking out.

HHH is taken out on a stretcher but Cactus pulls him back into the arena. There's a barbed wire shot to the head and the place cheers like crazy for Mick some more.

Linda is at WWF New York to talk about HHH's title reign. Wait no she's not. She would NEVER be involved with something involving bloodshed. And Stephanie is oh so precious and does SO much work for charity don't you know.

Royal Rumble

The intervals are "two minutes or less" according to the Fink. We get a quick look at Shawn's miracle save in 95 which would play a role in the coming weeks. D'Lo Brown is #1 and Grandmaster Sexay is #2. Feeling out process to start with Sexay countering Brown's running powerbomb into a rana. A middle rope missile dropkick puts Brown down and Mosh, complete with cones on his chest, is #3.

Kai En Tai, two guys ticked off about not being in the Rumble, runs in and are immediately thrown out. Nothing else happens for a minute or so until Christian (with his AWESOME solo theme called Blood Brother. Look it up) is #4. Nothing happens again so here's Rikishi to a POP at #5. Mosh, Christian and Brown are quickly dispatched, leaving Grandmaster and Rikishi.

Scotty 2 Hotty is #6 to complete the trio...and it's time to DANCE! The place absolutely loses it over this until Rikishi clotheslines and

eliminates them both. Note that it is NOT a heel turn and just business, which Too Cool is ok with. Rikishi dances a bit more on his own and the place is still erupting.

The company took notice of those eruptions too, and the three of them wound up feuding with the Radicalz for the next four months or so, resulting in Too Cool getting the tag titles and Rikishi getting the IC Title. In other words, they were given a stupid gimmick, got it over, and were rewarded. Today, you get to lose the US Title to Jack Swagger and become a jobber to the stars if you get yourselves over. As I typed that, Steve Blackman came in at #7 and was eliminated.

Viscera is #8 and you know New York loves itself a fat boy battle. Big Visc rams into him a few times but misses a charge and three straight superkicks put him down. Big Boss Man is #9 and won't get in, drawing some good heel heat. He stays out on the floor until Test is #10. Test pounds away on Boss Man to finally get all three guys in there. Boss Man hits Test low but Rikishi hits Test low to put both guys down.

British Bulldog is #11 as things slow down a bit. There's a low blow for Rikishi as well and Bulldog tries to get him out until Gangrel is #12. Kai En Tai comes out again and Taka is thrown over the top into a 360, landing face first on the floor. FREAKING OW MAN. This would be played multiple times over the rest of the match, much to Lawler's amusement. Edge (starting to mean something and over in New York) is #13.

Boss Man takes a Banzai Drop and Bob freaking Backlund is #14. He comes out to Hail to the Chief as he's legitimately running for Congress in Connecticut at this point. You would think that would have been a tip for Linda's future but alas no. Everyone goes after Rikishi and dumps him out to get us to the second part of the match. To recap, we've got Boss Man, Bulldog, Test, Gangrel, Backlund and Edge in there at the moment. Jericho is #15 to his third or fourth big pop of the night.

Jericho goes right for Edge in a match that would be for the world title eventually. That doesn't last long though as Jericho dumps Backlund, who yells at some fans before leaving. Actually he goes into the crowd to look for Connecticut registered voters. For a guy as bland as he was back

in the day, Crazy Backlund is one of the best performances I've ever seen.

Crash is #16 and gets a double spanking from Edge and Bulldog. Ok then. Edge is sent to the apron by Bulldog so he punches the British Boy in the balls. Chyna is #17 in the far less remembered Rumble appearance. She goes right for Jericho and suplexes him out in about 30 seconds but gets knocked out by Boss Man almost immediately. Faarooq is #18 and here's the Mean Street Posse who is also out of the Rumble. Those three and Kai En Tai were all thrown out of the Rumble on Heat so five more guys could be added in.

Anyway Faarooq is quickly dumped and Road Dogg is #19. The crowd does his entrance for him but he runs right into a low blow. The fans want Puppies, a term Road Dogg invented. Crash survives an elimination and Al Snow is #20. Roadie throws out the Bulldog and Val Venis is #21. Funaki runs in on his own and is thrown out almost immediately again. Prince Albert (Tensai) is #22 and there goes Edge.

The ring is getting too full now with Boss Man, Test, Gangrel, Crash, Road Dogg, Snow, Venis and Albert. Dogg continues his strategy: hide in the corner and wrap all four limbs around the bottom rope. I've heard worse ideas. Hardcore Holly is #23 and we're getting down to almost only big names left. Crash gets knocked to the apron but gets back in AGAIN.

Now we get to the final part of the match as The Rock is #24 to bring everyone to their feet. Boss Man is the first victim, being eliminated by a spit punch. Venis and Test double team him but Rock hangs on in the corner. He beats up Hardcore for a bit as Billy Gunn is #25. He goes right for Rocky but since no one believes Billy Gunn is going to eliminate Rock, the Great One throws out Crash to give himself something to do instead. Dogg has shifted over to another corner now.

Big Show, Rock's opponent for this match, is #26. Rocky pounds on him immediately but Albert sticks his fat head in Rock's business. Show dumps Gangrel and Test before going to stomp on Rocky. Bradshaw is #27 and is out in about 30 seconds at the hands of the Outlaws and the Mean Street Posse. Kane is #28 complete with the still sexy Tori. Venis gets thrown

out almost immediately and Show stupidly gorilla presses Gunn down instead of out. Kane knocks Albert out as Godfather is #29. The Ho's are especially good looking tonight.

Funaki comes out for the fourth time. JR: "For the love of Pete." Jerry: "No that's Funaki." X-Pac is #30 which was announced in advance. The final group is Road Dogg, Al Snow, Hardcore Holly, Rock, Gunn, Show, Kane, Godfather and X-Pac. Snow dumps Holly and Show puts Godfather out. Rock dumps Snow to get us to six. Billy dumps a talking too much Roadie just before getting dumped by Show.

We've got X-Pac, Kane, Big Show and Rock as the final four. I've seen far worse. Rock throws out X-Pac but the referee is with Kane who is fighting the Outlaws on the floor. Pac gets back in and the guys pair off. Show sends Rock into Kane for a big boot as the giants choke each other. Pac kicks Rock down and Kane hits a pretty good enziguri and an even better slam on Big Show. Pac kicks Kane out and a Bronco Buster on Big Show.

Rock dumps X-Pac and we're down to two. The spinebuster sets up the Elbow but since IT'S JUST A FREAKING ELBOW DROP, Show gets up and chokeslams Rock down. Show takes WAY too much time though and Rock holds onto the top rope, sending Big Show out to go to Wrestlemania. Awesome ending to an awesome match.

Rating: A. AWESOME Rumble here with the absolute right ending. This was the Rock's Rumble and there was no other person who should have won it. The only part that was a little dull here was the middle but it's certainly not bad. This followed the three part structure as all great Rumbles do and as usual, it worked like a charm. Great Rumble and one that might have a claim to best ever.

Rock says he's going to Wrestlemania when Big Show comes in and knocks him to the floor. Show stands in the ring as Rock leaves to end the show.

Overall Rating: A+. This is one of the best shows the WWF has ever put on. Period. There isn't a bad match on the whole card, the crowd is ON FIRE all night and you have two excellent matches to round out the show. I can't imagine anything in the next 12 years surpassing this one and I can't recommend it highly enough. Outstanding show.

Ratings Comparison

Tazz vs. Kurt Angle

Original: A-

Redo: C+

Hardy Boyz vs. Dudley Boyz

Original: A

Redo: B+

Chris Jericho vs. Chyna vs. Hardcore Holly

Original: C

Redo: C+

New Age Outlaws vs. Acolytes

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

HHH vs. Cactus Jack

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Royal Rumble

Original: A-

Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: A

Redo: A

Still great and still the best Rumble ever.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/19/royal-rumble-count-up-2000-match-of-the-decade-maybe-yeah/>

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