

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 1990: They Really Are On Their Feet



IMG Credit: WWE

Royal Rumble 1990

Date: January 21, 1990

Location: Orlando Arena, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 16,000

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Jesse Ventura

We hit the 90s and there's a bit of a new feel to the company with that new decade. Things are now being made to look a little newer and it's probably a good thing that they are. Oh and there's also probably the biggest moment in the Rumble for....arguably ever actually so there's that to look forward to. Let's get to it.

We get the list of almost everyone in the Rumble to start just like last year.

Jesse Ventura in Mickey Mouse Ears is a scary sight.

Buschwhackers vs. Fabulous Rougeaus

We get ALL AMERICAN BOYS for the Rougeaus and Jacques has his MANLY beard. This is a Wrestlemania rematch from the previous year. We start with Butch vs. Ray and while this may sound like a stretch, I think this might be a comedy match. A quick sleeper by Ray is broken up and it's

time to bite the trunks as well as the referee for some reason. The Whackers clear the ring but Jacques hits the floor to avoid the Battering Ram.

Off to Luke vs. Jacques, with Luke taking a bite out of his nose. Jacques says hit me in the face, so Luke charges with a clothesline and hits Ray instead. Things slow down again and the Rougeaus easily distract Luke, allowing Ray to jump him for two. Ray comes in for real and kicks Luke down for two more. Luke is sent to the floor and goes back first into the apron. This match is already dragging.

Back in and Luke bites some more but it doesn't get him anywhere. Luke gets rammed into the corner a bit, drawing Butch in which allows even more double teaming. We hit the chinlock followed by an abdominal stretch from Jacques. Now it's off to a reverse chinlock to keep things slow.

We get the Arn Anderson cannonball drop onto a guy on the mat but the guy on the mat gets his knees up to crush Arn's balls spot, followed by a hot tag to Butch. The Rougeaus are sent into each other and Jimmy Hart gets involved and beaten up. Jacques gets a quick rollup for two and Ray puts a Boston Crab on Butch. With the Rougeaus hugging for some reason, the Battering Ram to the back of Ray is enough for the pin by Butch.

Rating: D+. This was WAY too long at nearly fourteen minutes. The idea behind comedy matches is to keep things quick so that people don't realize that half of the stuff you see here is stupid. The Rougeaus clearly didn't care anymore and this would be the last match of Ray's career. Jacques would go on to be the Mountie and win the Intercontinental Title, in one of the biggest surprises ever. Well not really but it was pretty surprising.

Gene is with DiBiase and Virgil and Ted is annoyed. Gene brings up the shenanigans last year with Ted "drawing" number thirty, but this year there's additional security. Virgil drew the number for DiBiase and he got number 1. DiBiase's "Let me tell you something little man" is a GREAT delivery as he's so great at talking down to people.

The Genius vs. Brutus Beefcake

If you're not familiar with Genius, think Damien Sandow if he read WWF themed poetry. Oh and he's a jobber. And Macho Man's real life brother. Genius offers a left-handed handshake but Brutus isn't interested. Jesse gets on Tony about Genius beating Hogan via countout on SNME. Tony: "Well...." Jesse: "WHO WON THE MATCH???" Genius heads to the floor for a cartwheel and we finally get the first lockup.

We get a clean break and Beefcake tells Genius what he can kiss. They lock up again and Genius goes to the eyes to get the first advantage. Beefcake comes out with an atomic drop and Genius gets to do his way overdone selling. I miss that. Back in and Genius fires off some shockingly good punches so Brutus comes back with an even bigger punch. Expect to hear the word punch a lot in this match.

Beefcake steps on Genius' fingers like a total jerk and crotches Genius on the top rope. Half of Beefcake's taunts would get him fired today for suggesting that Genius is effeminate. We go back to the standard story of the match: Genius gets in some strikes, Brutus hits him once to take over again. A dropkick gets two for Genius as does a rollup, but Brutus catches him coming off the middle rope with a punch to the ribs.

There's the sleeper but Genius quickly escapes. Another sleeper attempt is quickly countered, but the Genius is knocked into the referee. Ref bumps weren't cliched back in the 80s, so this is kind of a big development. Anyway the sleeper goes on again and Genius is going down quickly. Brutus puts him out and starts cutting his hair, but Genius' buddy Mr. Perfect comes out for the save and the DQ.

Rating: D. This is one of those matches that was bad but it was energetic. For as much of a mess as Brutus would become in real life, the guy could get the fans fired up. That's pretty impressive as he was almost all punching and a sleeper. This was pretty lame stuff but the fans loved it which is the right idea.

Perfect and Genius DESTROY Brutus' ribs with the chair post match.

Sean Mooney is with the Heenan Family and suggests that they could fight each other. An argument ensues. That's what Mooney was good at: ticking people off.

A show is coming. It's called Wrestlemania.

Greg Valentine vs. Ronnie Garvin

This is a submission match as they both use submissions for a finisher. See? Not that complicated. Now the interesting thing here is that both guys have shin guards (Garvin even has his named: the Hammer Jammer) which blocks the pain of a Figure Four. They slug it out to start with Valentine being rammed into the buckles repeatedly. Greg comes back with chops and they slug it out in the middle of the ring.

It turns into a boxing match until Valentine goes after the leg. That gets him a thumb in the eye and they slug it out some more with both guys going down via a Garvin headbutt. Ronnie tries a sunset flip for reasons of stupidity and Valentine tries a cover of his own. Both guys go down again as this match is already running too long. Garvin rolls him up again to REALLY make it clear that it's a submission match. See, wrestling fans are stupid and can't understand the basic explanation of the rules.

Valentine adjusts his own shin guard (the Heartbreaker) and puts Garvin in the Figure Four. Ronnie's guard blocks the pain, so Garvin makes funny faces at Valentine. Since that doesn't work, Valentine puts on an over the shoulder backbreaker, much to Jesse's delight (his old hold). Garvin pounds away in the corner and puts on an Indian Deathlock which has an effect on Greg but Valentine finally makes a rope.

They slug it out for the fifth time, although this one is at least on the floor. Valentine backdrops out of a piledriver on the concrete and we head back inside. Garvin misses a dropkick in the corner and gets caught in the Tree of Woe. That goes nowhere so they collide again and both guys go down. Hart steals Garvin's shin guard and there's the Figure Four. After a rope is grabbed, Garvin can't even stand up.

Valentine goes up and Garvin slams him down from one leg. He takes off Valentine's shin guard and tries a rollup because Ronnie is STUPID. Valentine gets tied up in the ropes so Garvin beats up Hart for fun. A shin guard shot to the head knocks out Valentine and the Sharpshooter (called a reverse Figure Four) makes Valentine give up.

Rating: C+. Not a bad match here and it was even good at times, but MAN it was long, running nearly seventeen minutes. On top of that, the stupid pin thing went WAY too long into the match. This is probably the best Garvin match I've ever seen, but that doesn't really mean much as he absolutely sucks most of the time.

Mr. Perfect doesn't like Beefcake trying to take advantage of the Genius and we get a look at the chair attack from earlier tonight. Perfect says he got #30 in the Rumble. Well he is perfect after all.

It's time for the Brother Love Show. You might know Love as Bruce Prichard, or one of the Gut Check judges on Impact. This is his most famous role, as a parody of 80s televangelists. He talks about what it means to be a lady, and brings out the woman whose picture is in the dictionary next to the word lady: Queen Sherri. Love sucks up to her and says he also looked up the word peasant in the Book of Love. The Book of Love is the dictionary?

Anyway the point is Sapphire (Dusty's chick) is the definition of a peasant, making her fat and ugly. Sapphire comes out and they make fun of her looks, clothes and whatever else you would expect them to make fun of, while not letting Sapphire say a word at all. Now they make fun of Dusty for being fat and Sapphire finally blasts Sherri. Savage and Dusty come out and it's a big brawl. Even Brother Love gets in on it until security breaks it up. A dance party ensues between Dusty and Sapphire, resulting in Love being thrown to the floor.

Duggan doesn't have much to say about his match with Boss Man.

Big Boss Man vs. Jim Duggan

Boss Man has clearly lost a TON of weight since last year and he looks much better as a result. Duggan knocks him to the floor in a bump that Boss Man couldn't have taken a year ago. They slug it out on the floor with Duggan taking over for a bit. Back inside and Boss Man reverses a whip before crushing Duggan with a splash. Boss Man busts out an ENZIGURI to put Duggan down again. It really is amazing to see how much better Boss Man looks after being a big fat blob last year at this show.

Boss Man hits his running crotch attack on the ropes to keep Duggan in trouble but he makes the mistake of ramming Jim face first into the buckles. Duggan's comeback is short lived though as Boss Man hits him in the back to take over again. He cannonballs down on Duggan's ribs as this is a good physical fight so far.

That of course comes to a screeching halt as we hit a neck crank by the cop. Duggan fights up and makes a quick comeback, only to get caught by a knee lift to the ribs. Back to the neck crank followed by a bearhug which Duggan fails to break with some smacks to the head. Instead he falls into the ropes and the brawl continues.

They slug it out some more and Duggan clotheslines him out to the floor. Back in and more punching (notice a theme here?) ensues by Jim. Boss Man comes back with a clothesline but misses a top rope splash. They collide again to put both guys down but Slick slips the nightstick to Boss Man which draws the DQ.

Rating: C+. They definitely made the right move here by going with a pure brawl instead of anything resembling a wrestling match. The fans absolutely love Jim Duggan so there was no way the crowd wasn't going to be into this. Not a good match from a quality standpoint, but it was very fun which is the better way to go sometimes.

Wrestlemania is still coming.

We get some promos from guys in the Rumble, most of which are spent talking about whoever they're feuding with at the time: Earthquake, Bravo, Demolition, Bad News Brown, Dusty Rhodes, the Rockers, Hercules (calling it the Rumble Royal, which was the original name for the show actually), Rick Martel, Tito Santana, Snuka, Akeem (Slick does the talking) and Warrior (Intercontinental Champion), who talks about Hulk Hogan. This would have given fans chills up their spine at the thought of it happening but then they would say "Nah, that couldn't happen."

More promos as we're in intermission: Savage, the Powers of Pain (Fuji does the talking), Roberts, the Hart Foundation, Honky Tonk Man and Hogan (WWF Champion of course) who looks either bloated or high as a kite.

Royal Rumble

DiBiase is #1 and Koko B. Ware is #2. Ted jumps Koko as he gets in and stomps him down. The beating goes on for awhile until trying to ram Koko's head into the buckle, which has no effect. See Koko is black and in WWF logic, that means he has a hard head. Koko fights back and misses a charge, sending him to the floor. Marty Jannetty is in at #3 and in literally one second less time, basically the exact same thing happens as did to Koko (minus the racial aspects) and Marty goes out.

Jake Roberts is #4 and they fight on the floor which I think is a first in the Rumble. DiBiase slams him on the floor before they head back inside. A backdrop puts DiBiase down but the DDT is countered into another backdrop. They keep brawling and #5 is Randy Savage. DiBiase and Savage forget their past hatred to double team Jake for awhile until Roddy Piper is #6, setting up one of those AWESOME tag matches we never got. Seriously, that would be excellent on a Coliseum Video.

Piper and Jake beat up the heels, nearly punch each other, and then beat up the heels even more. The energy for this match is WAY better than the previous two years, which is saying a lot. Warlord is #7 and he should be solid cannon fodder for some of these guys. Piper pairs off with him as DiBiase and Savage continue their beatdown on Roberts. Roddy makes the save until Bret Hart is #8, drawing a BIG pop.

We get a six man tag for all intents and purposes, which would be another pretty interesting one with Bret being there to bump like crazy for Warlord. Bret goes after Savage, which would be great like their match on SNME. Bad News is #9 as the good run of talent continues. Jake loads up a DDT on DiBiase but Savage clotheslines him out, which is probably a good idea given how many people we've got out there.

Dusty Rhodes is #10 and the place continues to erupt. He heads right for Savage as you would expect him to do and it's elbows a go-go. A backdrop puts Savage out and we get Brown vs. Dusty for awhile, which I'm not sure what to think of. DiBiase takes Brown's place which is probably the right idea. Andre is #11 and the fans aren't sure what to think of this. Warlord goes right to him and gets tossed to a big pop. The fans still

love the Giant.

Heenan and Fuji get into a fight on the floor as Andre rams Piper and Dusty's heads together before crushing them in the corner. They come back on him and it's the Red Rooster at #12. Even HE gets a bit of a pop before people realize that's who just came out. Piper eliminates Brown but Brown comes back to the apron and eliminates Piper. They brawl to the back, setting up one of the strangest matches you'll ever see at Mania.

Andre beats up Rooster and tosses him out as Ax is #13. Their teams are fighting over the tag titles at this point so there's a story there. Hart and Rhodes try to throw out DiBiase and we get the traditional Andre is tied up in the ropes spot. Haku, Andre's partner, is #14. Andre stands on Ax as Haku beats on Dusty. Things slow down a bit, which is understandable after the very hot first twenty minutes.

Smash is #15, giving us a group of Ax, Smash, Haku, Andre, Hart, DiBiase and Dusty. Demolition demolishes Andre down for the second time in two years before going off to beat on Haku. Rhodes and Hart beat on Dusty as people swap partners a bit. Akeem is #16 to give us another big fat guy in there. He goes after the Giant, but it's a Demolition double clothesline that eliminates Andre. I've always loved that moment. Bret went out somewhere in there too.

Here's Snuka at #17 to go after Akeem and take him out with a running headbutt. Ted and Dusty hammer away on each other a bit more until Dino Bravo is #18 with his manly powder blood trunks. Demolition beats up DiBiase and Earthquake is #19. There's another team getting back to back numbers. Rhodes is out at Earthquake's hands, as is Ax. Neidhart is #20, giving us Neidhart, Earthquake, Haku, Bravo, Snuka, Smash and DiBiase. Everyone gangs up on Earthquake and eliminates him, much to Bravo's chagrin.

Neidhart and Smash work together on DiBiase, which would be unthinkable in about eight months. Here's Warrior at #21 to go right after Bravo. They've got a bit of a feud going right now so Warrior dumps him with ease. Things slow down until Martel is in at #22. Haku backdrops Smash to the apron and superkicks him out. We were getting too many people in

there so that's a good idea.

Tito is #23 and of course we get a Strike Force battle, as they feuded for like, ever. Honky Tonk Man is #24 as things slow down a bit. We need another blast of energy in this soon. A bunch of people get together and dump Neidhart and Warrior clotheslines DiBiase out, giving him a new Iron Man record at just under 45 minutes. At the moment we've got Warrior, Honky, Martel, Santana, Snuka and Haku. Remember that blast of energy I said we needed? Hulk Hogan is #25.

Snuka goes after him and is immediately put out. Haku takes a big boot and is gone. Warrior and Martel dump Santana and we're down to four in the ring. Shawn Michaels is #26. Hogan dumps Honky and it occurs to me that for some reason the entrance music for people stopped after like #6. Hogan dumps Honky, Warrior dumps Shawn and Martel and there are only two left in the ring.

This is the moment that changed the course of wrestling for a LONG time. You often hear the expression "everyone is on their feet". In this case, that's literally true as the place goes nuts and everyone in unison stands up. It's a really cool visual and proof that this would work for Wrestlemania. They collide a few times and no one moves.

We get a criss cross to set up a double clothesline to put both guys down and the place is eating this up. As I said, this changed wrestling because we now have a Wrestlemania main event, instead of the potential Hogan vs. Zeus or Hogan vs. Perfect. Perfect is great, but it wouldn't have worked as the main event in front of 67,000 people. Anyway Barbarian comes in at #27 and doesn't do much so Rick Rude comes in like twenty second early at #28. I've always wondered if that was intentional to prevent more of just Hogan vs. Warrior.

The heels double team Hogan to put him down but Warrior saves. They beat up Warrior a bit until Hogan Hulks Up and goes to the corner, eliminating Warrior in the process. Hercules is #29, which is pretty awesome luck as he got #28 the year before. Hogan tries to put Barbarian out but gets poked in the eye. Perfect is #30, giving us a final five of Hogan, Rude, Barbarian, Hercules and Perfect.

Hercules backdrops Barbarian out to get us down to four and we pair off with Herc vs. Rude and Perfect vs. Hogan. Rude backdrops the power dude out and we're down to a handicap match. I think you can see how this is going to end. A quick double team ends with Perfect getting punched to the apron by Rude. Perfect low bridges Rude out and we're down to two. Hennig pounds away and hits the PerfectPlex but it's time for more HULKING UP. Slingshot into the post, clothesline, Hogan wins.

Rating: A-. THIS IS MORE LIKE IT! They totally got the formula down here and had a white hot crowd to do it in front of. The first twenty minutes or so here are just about perfect with a ton of talented guys working HARD. The next big drags just slightly but certainly aren't bad, and then things went through the roof with Hogan vs. Warrior and the ending. Perfect was supposed to win here, but Hogan vetoed it and got the win himself. The more I think about that the less I dislike it because after the first two matches, you almost had to have a main eventer win this. Either way, great stuff here and one of the best Rumbles ever.

Overall Rating: B-. This is one of those tricky shows to rate as you have four pretty weak matches to start things off, but the Rumble is great and is longer than all four other matches combined. The Rumble is all that mattered here anyway and we got a great one to really establish a standard for the match for years to come. Also Wrestlemania is shaping up really well, so I don't have many complaints here at all. Good stuff.

Ratings Comparison

Bushwhackers vs. Fabulous Rougeaus

Original: D+

Redo: D+

Brutus Beefcake vs. The Genius

Original: C+

Redo: D

Ronnie Garvin vs. Greg Valentine

Original: F (Biased). B- (Unbiased).

Redo: C+

Jim Duggan vs. Big Boss Man

Original: C+

Redo: C+

Royal Rumble

Original: A-

Redo: A-

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: B-

Dang the weight of the Rumble has gone way up in the last few years.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/09/royal-rumble-count-up-1990/>

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