

Survivor Series Count-Up – 2003 (2015 Redo): The Last Ride



IMG Credit: WWE

Survivor Series 2003

Date: November 16, 2003

Location: American Airlines Center, Dallas, Texas

Attendance: 13,487

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz

This is the first of two redos that I'll be doing for the year. It's an interesting time for WWE and Raw in particular as there are two General Managers for the same show. While that sounds like a dream come true for WWE, it needs to be changed tonight. Therefore we have Steve Austin's team vs. Eric Bischoff's team, winner take all. That's not the main event of course because we've got HHH! Let's get to it.

The opening video asks if you have what it takes to survive. I know I usually make fun of this but it's something that fits the simple idea of the show. Why mess with something that works this well? It also gives the Smackdown Survivor Series match some focus and doesn't put the whole thing on the less interesting matches.

Team Angle vs. Team Lesnar

Kurt Angle, John Cena, Chris Benoit, Hardcore Holly, Bradshaw

Brock Lesnar, A-Train, Matt Morgan, Big Show, Nathan Jones

Holly is here due to Lesnar breaking his neck over a year ago. Lesnar's partners are just hired guns. Show is US Champion, which he almost never defended. Brock is WWE Champion (Smackdown) so everyone wants to fight him for obvious reasons. Morgan is an unknown and Jones never was any

good.

Cena rhymes a bit before the match, saying he's the fetus and everyone else is afterbirth. Can we stick with Dallas is the place to be and John Cena is the man to beat please? He doesn't need a stable, but he might want to trade his partners in for a one night stand with Sable. Brock might have something to say about that but as for Big Show, Cena is like a big whistle. I'll let you figure out the punchline. So he wants Sable and Big Show? That's...uh interesting.

Before we get to the match, I wish they would get rid of the sound effect they use for the name graphics. It sounds like metal creaking and is already annoying. Holly goes after Lesnar before the bell and sends him into the steps. A referee gets shoved down and Holly is disqualified before the match even starts. In the ring, A-Train misses a charge in the corner and eats Bradshaw's Clothesline for another elimination but Big Show chokeslams Bradshaw for the third elimination in less than a minute.

Cena can't FU Big Show and it's off to Lesnar for what would be a very different (and better) match later. John pounds Brock down in the corner and gets two off a rollup until Brock sends Cena flying. It's off to Morgan as the announcers are talking about the Cruiserweight Title for no apparent reason. Morgan's sidewalk slam has Cena in more trouble and it's off to Jones, who is finally allowed to appear on live pay per view. Cena finally scores with the Throwback (I miss that move) on Lesnar and it's off to Benoit.

Lesnar gets pounded into the corner as Benoit always looked awesome against Brock. A big clothesline puts Benoit down and it's off to Big Show for a gorilla press, who talks trash to Angle while holding Benoit in the air. The chokeslam is countered into the Crossface (I've always loved that counter) but Brock is right there to break it up. We hit the abdominal stretch with Show's back to the camera (that's probably a fine today) and you can't actually see most of Benoit. I never get used to how big Show really is.

The standing legdrop gets two for Show and the big brawl breaks out on the floor. Morgan comes in and gets dropkicked in the leg and face,

finally allowing for the hot tag to Angle. We're already at the rolling Germans so it's off to Lesnar who gets suplexed as well. Everything breaks down and the Angle Slam eliminates Morgan to tie it up. Show gets dumped to the floor and the ankle lock gets rid of Jones, only to have an F5 do the same to Angle. So after three more eliminations in less than a minute, we have Lesnar/Big Show vs. Cena/Benoit.

Lesnar misses a charge at Benoit and hits the post so Benoit goes right after the arm. The F5 is quickly countered into the Crossface and Cena is smart enough to knock Show off the apron but Brock gets his feet into the ropes. Another Crossface actually makes Lesnar tap clean, leaving Big Show alone 2-1. The YOU TAPPED OUT chants begin and Benoit takes Show down with a top rope shoulder. The Crossface is knocked away but Cena nails Show with the chain, setting up the FU for the pin and the victory, planting seeds for Wrestlemania in the process.

Rating: C-. I always liked the idea of this match on paper but it really didn't work in execution as it needed another ten minutes or so. There were two stretches here that added up to six eliminations in about two minutes. They went through this way too fast which is probably due to time, but a World Champion's match shouldn't be cut for time. Just too fast here.

Benoit and Cena shake hands after having issues for weeks.

Vince comes in to see Shane and points out that it's father and son vs. brothers tonight in separate matches. The only thing Shane feels is sorry for Vince, who faces Undertaker later. Vince leaves and runs into Austin. They start chuckling and then laughing but Austin gets serious really fast and walks away. Nothing was said and JR and King are confused as well.

Women's Title: Molly Holly vs. Lita

Lita is freshly back from her year and a half off with the broken neck and this is her first title shot. I'll give you two guesses as to who the fans are behind. Lita starts fast and suplexes Molly down, followed by a nice nipup. That's not serious enough for Molly so she sends Lita crashing out to the floor. We hit a dragon sleeper on the challenger as

Lawler can't seem to bring himself to talk about Molly's looks. To be fair, it really doesn't feel right to try.

Back up and Lita hammers in some right hands but the comeback is short lived as a sidewalk slam gets two. Molly actually tries to talk some trash in the corner and gets powerbombed off the middle rope instead. The Litasault misses though and the Molly Go Round (top rope flipping seated senton) gets two. Frustrated, Molly loosens the middle turnbuckle and drop toeholds Lita into the steel to retain. No I didn't skip anything. The referee either didn't notice or didn't care and it really is as sudden as it sounds.

Rating: D. Lita just wasn't back yet and the match didn't work as a result. Molly is really talented but the lack of charisma hurt her. At the end of the day, she's the most innocent and kind woman the company had in years and for some reason they made her a heel. It never fit and this was a good example of why it didn't.

We recap Kane vs. Shane McMahon. Kane was doing his annual monster thing and tombstoned Linda due to reasons of evil. That's Kane's evil, not Linda's evil. Shane came back for his annual (popular theme here) wrestling run by trying to stop the monster. This leads us to an ambulance match here.

Kane vs. Shane McMahon

Ambulance match which means casket but with an ambulance instead. Shane goes after him to start but has to use a chair to knock the steps into Kane's face. They're already loading up the announcers' table and thank goodness for that. Would you want to imagine these two trying to do a regular match? Shane hits him in the head with a monitor and drops the sweet top rope elbow through the table. Kane sits up so let's go into the crowd for a change.

They get to the back with Shane sneaking up on Kane with a kendo stick. Not a wrench or a pipe or something made of metal, but rather a wooden stick. He was an athlete, not a scholar. Shane puts him in a security booth and backs an SUV into Kane before calling in an ambulance on a walkie-talkie (where did that come from?). Also, would that count even if

it's not the designated ambulance? Wrestlemania XIV would seem to hold precedence here.

Kane comes back by throwing Shane into a wall and there goes the camera, drawing a lot of booing from the crowd. They're right too as they paid for a live show and are watching most of this on a monitor but then they don't even get to see all of it? I've never been a fan of going backstage for just that reason.

Back to the arena with Kane throwing him against the other ambulance. JR: "Like Shane was a cruiserweight." Shane probably would be a cruiserweight actually, or at least really close. An ambulance door to the face slows Kane down (When all else fails, hit them with a door. It got Christian the Hardcore Title at Wrestlemania XVIII.) but he just blasts Shane in the face. He can only get one door shut with Shane inside though, allowing McMahon to come back with a DDT on the concrete.

Again, since Shane isn't the brightest guy on the planet, he comes back with a trashcan. Not a heavy, thick object but rather a thin trashcan. He makes up for it a bit with a Coast to Coast off the top of the ambulance to drive the can into Kane's face, landing on a box (which appeared to have a crashpad inside) in the process. Kane still gets an arm out of the ambulance door (that's fine in this case as it took a long time for Shane to get him inside) and just throws Shane against the ambulance wall. A Tombstone on the concrete (no wonder Kane's knees are shot) is enough to put Shane away.

Rating: D+. Well that happened. Some of the spots were good but Shane going for the cool looking stuff instead of the logical stuff like HIT HIM WITH A WRENCH really brought it down. It also doesn't help that this got more time than the first match, because you want to push the boss' son in a feud he has no business winning that went on for months. This really could have gone to someone else to give them a rub but Shane gets it instead. That's not good and it got on a lot of wrestlers' nerves back in the day.

The ambulance leaves with Shane inside.

Brock tells Josh Matthews (who looks like even more of a tool than he

does now) that he didn't tap out or lose because he's not afraid of anyone. Goldberg comes up to shake his hands, planting the seeds for their, ahem, match at Wrestlemania.

Here's the Coach in a neck brace to waste some time. Coach assures us that he'll be back to health soon enough and not to worry about him. As he's about to leave, Coach spots Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban in the front row. We get a quick interview where Cuban says he's looking forward to Austin beating Bischoff. Being a Bischoff guy, Coach disagrees and asks Cuban about WWE referees vs. NBA referees (Cuban has a LONG history with NBA referees) so Mark says all referees suck.

This brings out Bischoff (JR: "What happened to Survivor Series?") to say he's in charge tonight. Cuban is in the ring with him now and Eric threatens to have him thrown out, but maybe Bischoff should just do it himself. Eric gets shoved down so here's Randy Orton to lay Cuban out with an RK0. They would actually revisit this SIX YEARS LATER when Cuban guest hosted Raw and screwed Orton out of a match. Again: the opening match with the World Champion gets thirteen match, Shane vs. Kane gets a little more and this gets about six.

Evolution is having a party with some good looking women. They make a toast to HHH getting the title back (from Goldberg) when Orton comes in. Orton: "Guys listen....whoa." They're proud of him for laying out Cuban (why?) and he promises to take out Austin as well. Evolution will drink to that.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Basham Brothers vs. Los Guerreros

The Bashams, with He-Man chest pieces, are defending and have Shaniqua with them. My goodness what happened to the Bashams? They spent FOREVER in developmental and were just another tag team on the main roster. It's a brawl to start with Danny (partner of Doug) being sent to the floor but both of them have to save Shaniqua. I'm not sure why as she was one of the most worthless managers and performers of all time.

Eddie starts with Three Amigos to Danny before it's off to Chavo for two off a basement dropkick. Back to Eddie who is sent to the floor and beaten up by Shaniqua. Danny puts on a reverse chinlock as this is just a

Raw match. Yeah they're all on Smackdown but Smackdown was a lot better than this. Chavo comes back in with dropkicks and a bad looking tilt-a-whirl slam for two on Doug.

Eddie saves his nephew from a middle rope spinebuster and Chavo adds a running hilo for two. Chavo and Doug clothesline each other and Shaniqua lets us have some Twin Magic. Even in 2003 I can't get away from the Bellas. Shaniqua takes a frog splash but Chavo accidentally kicks Eddie on a tornado DDT, letting Danny roll Chavo up and grab the tights to retain.

Rating: D+. Just a TV match here which isn't enough when you're on one of the biggest pay per views of the year. The problem here is this was meant to set up stuff in the future (Chavo vs. Eddie) instead of being about the titles. That's fine (see Royal Rumble 1994) down the road but it doesn't make for a good match here. The Bashams had no personality and it's a big reason why they weren't going to make it like this. It's a major problem of this era and the modern era still: finding something that works in developmental and scrapping it when they get to the main roster, making most of the developmental time a waste.

Lawler and JR preview the elimination tag and tell us that Shane is getting ready for a CAT scan.

We recap Team Austin vs. Team Bischoff, which is all about controlling Raw. Austin isn't allowed to touch anyone unless physically provoked which drove him crazy. He also doesn't trust anyone but he's been forced to trust five men tonight though because this is it. Bischoff had fired him as a wrestler but Austin was brought back as co-GM which caused a bunch of friction, setting up this match. If Austin wins tonight, he has full power and can fight whenever he wants.

Team Austin vs. Team Bischoff

Austin: Shawn Michaels, Rob Van Dam, Booker T., Dudley Boyz

Bischoff: Chris Jericho, Christian, Randy Orton, Scott Steiner, Mark Henry

Steiner has Stacy Keibler against her will as part of a very uncomfortable story. The Dudleyz are the Raw Tag Team Champions and Van Dam is Intercontinental Champion. Christian and D-Von get things going, which seems appropriate for old times' sake. That goes nowhere so it's off to Van Dam who gets tow off a quick kick. Jericho comes in and gets shouldered and suplexed for two.

Steiner gets the tag and eats a boot to the face, only to throw Van Dam with a suplex to take over. A little crotching on the top makes it even worse as we're firmly in the early stages still, meaning that this didn't fall to the curse of "what else can we give the time to?". Booker comes in but gets run over as well with the bicep elbow drop getting two. JR just has to bring up the three mini kings from 1994 because that story NEVER gets old.

Booker nails a quick scissors kick and a Spinarooni as everything breaks down. A low blow stops Booker and Steiner puts on the absolute worst camel clutch I've ever seen. Stacy gets on the apron to play cheerleader for Booker so Steiner breaks the hold. The reverse 3D plants Scott and the Book End is good for the first elimination. Never mind the lead though as the World's Strongest Slam (I didn't realize he had been using it that long) from Henry ties it up thirty seconds later.

Bubba comes in with some hard shots to the jaw but Henry runs him over Vader style. D-Von tries to help his brother, only to be slammed face first into him by Henry's insane power. Speaking of power, the Dudleyz come back with 3D followed by a Five Star (the ECW Special?) to get rid of Mark. Jericho is in next but Van Dam head fakes him to set up a split legged moonsault for two.

It's off to Orton for the first time and he blasts Van Dam with a big clothesline. I can never get over seeing Orton looking human or having hair. That's one of the most jarring physical transformations I've ever seen in wrestling and it always strikes me. Like a viper. Van Dam kicks him in the face but Jericho shoves Rob off the top, setting up the RK0 to tie it up again.

The fans want tables but have to settle for D-Von getting two off a

headbutt. Jericho comes back in for two off a dropkick, followed by a quick Flashback (sleeper drop) to get rid of D-Von. It's Shawn/Bubba vs. Christian/Jericho/Orton and Shawn gets his first tag to fire the crowd up again. Jericho is quickly sent running over for a tag to Orton who has a lot more luck with some forearm to the chest.

Back to Bubba who cleans house on all three until Jericho breaks up a Bubba Bomb with a low blow, setting up an Unprettier to leave Shawn down 3-1. Christian is up first and Shawn hammers away with right hands, only to be low bridged out to the floor by the other Canadian. The slow beatdown begins and Jericho cuts off the comeback again, allowing Christian to catapult him into the post. JR gets in his "local basketball team here" dribbling a ball line. Shawn is busted and you know the shaky legs are coming soon.

Christian does the signature Shawn pose and punches away, only to charge right into Sweet Chin Music to make it 2-1. That's where Shawn is at his best: looking dead on his feet with his back against the wall and throwing superkicks because it's all he's got left. Oh and bleeding normally helps. Jericho comes in for some right hands before it's back to Orton who grabs a belly to back suplex.

The heels start making some faster tags but Jericho dives into a kick to the ribs and a DDT. Lawler: "I want to believe. I'm trying to believe." Shawn sends Orton to the floor and blocks the Lionsault with knees. Jericho is up first though and tries the Walls, only to get small packaged to tie it up. Lawler: "I BELIEVE!" Before he leaves though, Jericho blasts Shawn in the head with a chair. Shouldn't that be a DQ on Orton as it's interference when it's down to one on one?

Orton comes back in with a high cross body but Shawn collapses to send Orton crashing into the referee. You can actually feel the drama here, even with JR being borderline obnoxious with the cheering for Austin. The VERY bloody Shawn tunes up the band but Bischoff kicks him down. That's enough for Steve and the beating is on, including a Stunner to Orton. Austin and Batista head to the back and here's Batista to powerbomb Shawn, giving Orton the final pin. And yes, you're supposed to believe that the referee saw or heard NONE of this.

Rating: B+. This took its time to get going but once they handed it over to Shawn, it was all gravy. There's no one better at making the impossible comeback than Shawn Michaels and this was one of the better ones he's ever done. There was really no way you could have Austin's guys win here but they did a GREAT job of making you think that his team could pull it off. That's really impressive stuff and the match was great drama with the action backing it up.

Shawn gets up in the big serious moment and says he let Austin down. Steve doesn't accept that and hugs him anyway as JR is being all serious, which actually works here. Austin isn't done though and comes back to the ring after walking Shawn to the back. He talks about his career starting in Dallas in 1989 and if it has to end, he's glad it ended here. Cue Coach with the cops, singing Goodbye. I think you get the drill here: he has nothing to lose so the beating is on. Naturally beer is consumed, just like it would be again when he was back in December.

We recap Undertaker vs. Vince McMahon. Undertaker had been feuding with Vince's handpicked champion Brock Lesnar so Undertaker was never going to be allowed to be near the title again. One night, Undertaker won a match granting him any match he wanted at Survivor Series. He picked Buried Alive, which Vince gladly agreed to because Brock would destroy him again. Undertaker meant Vince of course and the match was made. Undertaker is promising to bury Vince once and for all tonight. I'm sure.

Undertaker vs. Vince McMahon

Buried Alive if that's not clear. Tazz even has keys to victory. #3: AVOID THE HOLE! That's good advice in so many areas of life. I miss Undertaker's You're Gonna Pay song. Vince has recently been saying a higher power will protect him in this match. So he's protecting himself? Undertaker starts punching early on and SWEET GOODNESS Vince is gushing. The beating continues with Vince getting crotched against the post. Totally one sided as you would expect so far.

Undertaker chokes with a camera cord as payback for Vince threatening to have Undertaker's wife raped and his home blown up. Yep that happened. One heck of a monitor shot knocks Vince over the table and an even bigger

shot with a shovel has Vince in a heap on the floor. Undertaker crushes the ankle with the steps as there are LARGE red puddles underneath Vince's head. That's one of the deepest blade jobs I've ever seen.

Undertaker finally carries him to the grave but a low blow FINALLY gives Vince a breather and his first offense. A shovel to the chest puts Undertaker in the grave but he comes right back and throws Vince in instead. He goes to get in the bulldozer but the cab explodes. Cue Kane to knock Undertaker into the grave. Vince is sent to the bulldozer and Undertaker is buried.

Rating: C+. The match sucked but some of those shots to the head and that SICK blade job more than carries it up. This was a violent mess and that's exactly what it needed to be, especially with the ending designed to get us back to the Dead Man. That being said, WHY DID UNDERTAKER KEEP AGREEING TO THESE MATCHES??? HE NEVER WON IT ONCE! Bad match, GREAT violence and blood.

We recap Goldberg vs. HHH. After losing to him over and over, HHH issued a \$100,000 bounty because he thought he was Harley Race in modern times (look up Starrcade 1983). Batista returned from injury and claimed the bounty by breaking Goldberg's ankle. Tonight is HHH's rematch and Goldberg can barely walk coming in. This gets the music video treatment even though there's really not enough of a story to warrant it.

Raw World Title Goldberg vs. HHH

Goldberg is defending (doesn't that mean Batista didn't take him out?) and HHH is looking WAY less developed than usual. He had a groin injury around this time but did it really mess him up that badly? Like, it's WEIRD to see him looking like this. They slug it out before the bell and the spear connects but Goldberg has to beat up Flair. Ric is clotheslined to the floor and the bell actually rings. Even Lawler thinks waiting that long is pretty stupid.

After a quick trip to the floor it's back inside with Goldberg scoring off a powerslam. The leg goes out though and HHH starts in on it, including throwing him outside for some cheap shots from Goldberg. Back in and HHH drops an elbow onto the leg, followed by a lot of stomping to

put the champion on the floor. Say it with me: and Flair gets in some shots too.

There's a half crab with Goldberg grabbing the ring skirt but for some reason that's not enough to break the hold, giving us JR's sarcastic voice. Goldberg pulls him face first into the post and puts both guys down with a clothesline. It's HHH up first but the Figure Four is broken up, meaning we get a ref bump. Oh good as I was worried we might not have one.

Flair throws in some brass knuckles to knock Goldberg silly for two. HHH knocks the referee down again and it's sledgehammer time. Goldberg takes it away and hits Flair in the ribs, knocks out the invading Orton and Batista and breaks up a Pedigree attempt. The spear and Jackhammer connect to retain the title.

Rating: D. HHH sucked in 2003. I can barely remember a single good match he had in the year (and yes I know there are a few here and there) but the big ones were bad on top of bad on top of bad. It's the same formula no matter what and feels like it's never going to end. All that aside, what was up with his physique here? Go check this out. It's like someone went back to 1995 and inflated him. Bad match here, as you would expect.

Overall Rating: D. This show feels like they put the card together but never bothered to put the show in order. It would have been much better, and made WAY more sense, to have the Austin vs. Bischoff match go on last as it's implied to be Austin's final appearance, which is a lot more important than your run of the mill title defense. The rest of the show is pretty much just there, ranging from bad to dull. Swapping the card wouldn't have fixed it entirely but it would have made for a much more entertaining night instead of wanting to know what else we had to sit through.

Ratings Comparison

Team Angle vs. Team Lesnar

Original: B-

2012 Redo: C

2015 Redo: C-

Molly Holly vs. Lita

Original: D+

2012 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D

Kane vs. Shane McMahon

Original: D+

2012 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D+

Basham Brothers vs. Los Guerreros

Original: D

2012 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D+

Team Bischoff vs. Team Austin

Original: A-

2012 Redo: B

2015 Redo: B+

Vince McMahon vs. Undertaker

Original: D

2012 Redo: D

2015 Redo: C+

Goldberg vs. HHH

Original: D-

2012 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: C-

2012 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D

One step down every year.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/11/12/history-of-survivor-series-count-up-2003-austin-vs-bischoff/>

And the original redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/11/09/survivor-series-count-up-2012-edition-2003-austins-retiring-forever-and-doesnt-close-the-show/>

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