

Survivor Series Count-Up – 2008 (Original): Nice To See You...Or Not See You...Again



IMG Credit: WWE

Survivor Series 2008

Date: November 23, 2008

Location: TD Banknorth Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Attendance: 14,500

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

So here we are at the most recent Survivor Series. This show is built around one thing and one thing only: the return of John Cena. He was coming back from being hurt by Batista, so therefore he's the #1 contender to Chris Jericho's title. Considering this is in his hometown, the ending is pretty clear. On the Smackdown side we have the triple threat between HHH, Kozlov and allegedly Hardy, but this was the infamous stairwell angle that I've never gotten why it had such a huge backlash.

More on that later though. Anyway, Hardy isn't there so we have a one on one match allegedly. There's also three Survivor Series matches so that should be good. They're going with

longer matches this year, which I'm fine with. Let's get to it and end this review series as even I'm fed up with this show at this point.

The intro is all about Cena and survival. No other matches are mentioned at all. Good to know that the company thinks so much of its other wrestlers. The theme song is by AC/DC though so I can't really complain. We immediately start talking about the Hardy incident where they claim that ABC, CNN and TMZ have all talked about this.

That would surprise me, but I'd be more surprised if they would flat out lie like that on a live PPV. That's something that's a bit hard to cover up, so maybe those outlets did. TMZ I could certainly see doing it. Anyway, Ross' voice sounds a bit off. Maybe he's sick or something. Let's get to it.

Team HBK vs. Team JBL

HBK, Cryme Tyme, Great Khali, Rey Mysterio
JBL, Miz, Morrison, MVP, Kane

The feuds here are pretty simple. HBK vs. JBL, the tag teams, Kane vs. Rey and MVP and Great Khali aren't really feuding but they just didn't have anything else to do. My goodness Lillian is gorgeous. How can you have multiple sole survivors? The money aspect of JBL vs. HBK hasn't kicked off yet but they're fighting a bit. These entrances are taking WAY too long. To say Rey is over is the understatement of the year.

MVP is in the middle of his big losing streak here that would ultimately make him a face. Miz and Morrison are just awesome, plain and simple. We start with MVP vs. Rey which should be a decent little match. If his partner didn't suck so much, JTG would be a decent wrestler. He's certainly the more talented member of his team, but dang he's small. He's also eliminated by a Drive By from MVP. He literally turns around and is hit by a Khali chop and pinned.

Well that's a decent way to get rid of two guys I guess. It's big on big now with Kane vs. Khali. The camera shot they use of looking up at them is really a cool looking thing. With an assist from Khali, Rey takes out Kane with a very high splash. We move on to Rey vs. Morrison here which should definitely be good.

The commentators are getting a lot of little verbal jabs in at each other which are at least being taken well. Good grief Shad is scary strong. Someone finally points out that Shad wears weird boots when he wrestles.

The commentators get into a long and weird debate/joke fest about 80s bands which makes no sense. They're interrupted by Miz taking out Shad with a Reality Check. It's 3-3 here as it's HBK, Rey and Khali against Miz, Morrison and JBL. We get HBK vs. Miz which is a pretty cool match that I'd like to see more of. After JBL and Miz punch the heck out of HBK's face, his eye is busted open a bit.

I would love to see Shawn vs. Morrison in a 20 minute match once. It would be awesome. Morrison starts using Shawn's old moves, after having beaten him with a superkick on Raw this past week. That's a cool angle when you think about it. After a long time of being in trouble, HBK makes the tag and Rey comes in. He goes completely human highlight reel and takes out Miz like he's a jobber.

The you can't wrestle chants kick off for JBL, which I've always thought was unfair. He's a big power brawler. It wouldn't make sense to have him do flips and technical stuff. It's not in his nature. Rey has been held down his entire career? Really Grisham? He's a former world champion, the greatest cruiserweight of all time and a surefire hall of fame guy. He's really been held down. Morrison gets a nice counter to the bulldog move that Rey does.

I like it when people use counters to signature moves. It's

nice to see as it can't be as hard as it's implied. I don't think it's fair to say that JBL can't wrestle, but dang his offense was pretty limited. Almost all he's used are punches, clubbing blows and shoulder blocks. Throw out a powerbomb or a suplex or something buddy. Shawn comes in and after the nip up throws out a crotch chop to Morrison, foreshadowing the inevitable DX reunion number 18,000.

HBK and JBL go to the floor and fight it out resulting in JBL getting counted out but in a way that reminds me of a video game for some reason. Shawn almost walks into what would have been a SICK Sweet Chin Music from Morrison but naturally he ducks and kicks John's head off for the pin and the victory.

Rating: B+. This was about as good of an opener as we were going to get. All of the eliminations made sense which is a lot more than I can say for some past matches. The feuds were kept alive which is the biggest thing you can ask for also. Everyone but JBL looked on their game out there and the result was solid. This is the epitome of a good Survivor Series match.

We go to the back where Eve, who is about to fall out of her top, is with HHH. HHH says that Jeff will be back, but tonight it's HHH vs. Kozlov, which is what it should have been all along. HHH says that tonight is Kozlov's first Survivor Series, his first title match, and his first loss. That's a very short but good promo that hit exactly what it was supposed to do. There was a real chance that the Russian got the belt tonight, despite everyone on here knowing how much of a disaster that would have been.

Raw Divas vs. Smackdown Divas

Raw: Beth Phoenix, Mickie James, Kelly, Candice Michelle, Jillian

Smackdown: Michelle, Victoria, Maria, Maryse, Natalya

This is Survivor Series rules. Santino is with Beth here. The

Divas are wearing their respective brands shirts which they all pull off. Yep, this is all about wrestling ability. Oh yeah Michelle and Beth are the respective champions here. Ok so more or less this is how the first few eliminations go: rollup, move, rollup, rollup, move. That's the issue with the modern Divas.

So many of them win matches with nothing but rollups, which I can't accept is due to anything other than a lack of knowing how to do anything else. That's just sad. To be fair they're not just school boys, but they're all leverage moves or jackknife pins or something like that. That's fine once in awhile but it eventually gets really old really fast. The Smackdown Divas keep arguing over who the captain is since Michelle is eliminated.

After that big rant, Jillian is taken out by a rollup. Within seconds a Northern Lights suplex takes out Maria. That's another thing: the eliminations are coming WAY too fast. Seconds later, Maryse takes out Candice with an inverted figure four which in essence is a Sharpshooter where you sit on the leg instead of pulling on it. The final two are Beth and Maryse. Beth wins it with a big power move. This was just boring. Santino of course celebrates because he needs to validate his existence.

Rating: D-. This was just a waste of time. The eliminations were like 45 seconds apart, the moves were just repetitive, this accomplished nothing, and no one cared. That's the main problems I can think of right now and I'm sure there were more in there. I don't get why these matches happen. I guess to keep pests off of Vince's back for doing swimsuit contests.

Matt Hardy says he doesn't know what happened to Jeff. He knows that Jeff got hit in the head but that's it.

We recap Taker vs. Big Show's 10,387th feud which was exactly the same as it always had been. This time it's a casket match.

Big Show says Taker has no power over him. That more or less seals the ending of this match.

Big Show vs. Undertaker

Taker comes out first here to his mega entrance, which comes off as odd to me. Not the big entrance but that he comes out first. That's just odd. Oh apparently that was just a group of random druids bringing the casket down. Yeah that's just odd. I always love thinking about the druids getting lunch or something. It's just amusing. Naturally the gong gets a bit pop.

This starts in the ring for about 12 seconds with most of that being Taker having the casket raised up. Immediately after that we're on the floor with Show in control. I really don't like these kinds of matches as they're just so basic and simple that they're not very interesting for the most part. Thankfully the ECW guys were allowed to leave.

I've always felt sorry for them having to sit out there all night long for a single match and then do nothing for the other two and a half hours but watch the show. Dang the announcers have nice chairs. A legdrop puts Show through the table because we've never seen that before. Hey we're in the ring for a change! This is the big problem with feuds like this: we know Taker is going to win and that Show is just there to give Taker something to do until he's back in the title hunt.

It gets old after awhile, but it's kept Taker very fresh over the years so I can't really complain. Show gets Taker down and has him in the casket but wants the referees to shut it, allegedly due to fear. Of course Taker pops up and starts his comeback. Ross calls Show a mastodon and before the word is out of his mouth he goes up for a Vader Bomb. It didn't work but whatever.

Show gets out of the casket as apparently we need to do even

more of the same stuff. The crowd is kind of into it but not really. They react to spots and that's about all. With Taker down in the ring, Show tips the casket over and starts to leave. A wall of fire stops him and heeeeeeeere's Taker. A bunch of druids bring out another casket as Taker is back up. They're really making Show look strong here which is a good thing.

In something unique they stand the casket up. That's new if nothing else. After the next ridiculous comeback from Taker, he beats on Show a bit and then Irish whips him into the standing casket which falls over and closes to end it. That was actually a cool ending but it got ZERO reaction. I mean no one did anything at all when it happened.

Rating: D+. This was a waste of time. No one cared, mainly due to who was in it. There was no reason at all to watch this and it was just boring. These two have fought so many times and had so many boring matches that there's just no reason to watch it. The ending was cool if nothing else, which is why it passes.

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The Colons hit on the Bellas, who are indeed hot despite what some would like you to believe. Of all things, the Gobbledygooker comes in. I wish I was making that up. They think it's Charlie Haas, but he walks up. It's the Boogeyman.

Team Orton is in the back. Orton says he'd rather be fighting Jericho, leading to him and Cody arguing. Legacy hadn't started yet but it was coming very soon.

Team Batista vs. Team Orton

Batista, Matt Hardy, CM Punk, Kofi Kingston, R-Truth
Orton, Rhodes, Shelton Benjamin, Regal, Mark Henry

No recap here, which more or less is the case because there's

very little story. The main thing here is about Orton and Batista. Orton put Batista out with a punt a few months earlier and is ticked off about it, leading to this. Punk and Kofi are tag champions here in the middle of their completely forgotten title reign that would end at the hands of Miz and Morrison soon after this. Matt is the ECW Champion here, in the middle of a pretty good feud with Mark Henry.

As for the other guys, there's really nothing here. The Draft would change a lot around in 5-6 months, but until then there was just not a lot going on in the midcard. This match really was just kind of thrown together and there wasn't a lot there for it. Rhodes has Manu with him here. The two of them and DiBiase had been trying to get Orton to join them but that wouldn't happen for about two more months, forming Legacy.

Oh and Regal is IC Champion here, but he would lose it to Punk very soon. Speaking of Punk, he hits the GTS on Regal inside of 15 seconds to take him out. I'm assuming an injury or something like that there, but whatever. Kofi and Shelton get in there and just tear the place up for a few seconds. Truth really does have a cool look to him. Striker says that he's making a killing here, which is amusing. The crowd is more or less dead here.

The announcers make sure to let us know that Orton vs. Batista is about Evolution. How can the feuds that came from a stable last longer than the stable itself did? I've never gotten that. Oh I think Shelton and R-Truth are having a mini feud here but no one really cared about it.

Like I said the feuds here were more or less thrown together and meant nothing at all. Oh I do remember R-Truth and Shelton. I watched them at a house show for the US Title. It more or less sucked. Shelton is US Champion here in case I forgot to mention that.

Truth is just sloppy. He walks into Paydirt though and it's

tied at 4. Kofi comes in off the top and Striker says the Jamaican is getting high. That's just amusing. MVP would soon turn face and take the belt from Shelton, although not until just before Mania. Orton comes in and the match just slows down so much it's insane. The second rope DDT takes out Kofi.

I would have thought the hair would absorb a lot of the impact there. Punk and Orton never got the match or angle that they should have after Orton cost him the world title at Unforgiven. That's a shame as they would have had a great feud I think, or at least a great match or two. Naturally Punk was given a big thing of nothing like the tag titles. Granted he won the IC Title very soon, breathing some life back into it.

He would also get the MITB and world title again, so maybe I have no idea what I'm talking about. In what can only be called a shocker, Rhodes hits a DDT on Punk for the clean pin which has to be the biggest win of his career. I get the potential in him, but eventually he has to actually do something with it, and the same is true of DiBiase. We're on to Henry vs. Hardy with the former slamming the heck out of Hardy to take him out.

Less than ten seconds later Henry is speared out by Batista. It's 3-1 now in case you were wondering. We have Batista against Shelton, Rhodes and Orton. The Batista Bomb on Shelton makes is what would become Legacy vs. Batista. Dave runs through Rhodes but a quick tag from Orton saves him.

Despite Orton gyrating and jumping up and down waiting on Batista to turn around, the Animal doesn't hear him. The RKO ends this, setting up the complete throw away match between Batista and Orton at Armageddon. Remember that match? I didn't think so.

Rating: C-. I didn't really like it. I liked Orton winning the way he did, but the whole thing went too fast. It wasn't bad for sure, but it certainly wasn't anything great. The complete

lack of feuds hurt things a lot here too. Having so many people that had nothing to do with the main feud or anything like it hurt things. It was ok, but not great.

Kozlov says something that was supposed to be English I think. Never mind it's Russian.

We recap the three way feud, despite Hardy not being here tonight. I would recap it, but it means nothing since Jeff isn't wrestling and he's the focus of the package.

WWE Title: Vladamir Kozlov vs. HHH

We get a bell for the introductions and a bell for the actual match, so technically the match was paused for the majority of the action. That joke has long since passed being funny. Naturally the USA chants start up. Within seconds the fans are chanting boring. More on that later. They're doing a very mat based technical style here with some submission stuff. The we want Hardy chant is going strong for about 12 seconds.

A TNA chant starts up as they speed up the pace a bit. It's not bad, but it's a different style that I don't think a lot of the people are into at all. It's really not that bad. HHH is fighting a guy that's never lost so he's afraid to use his best stuff. He's feeling out Kozlov at first to avoid making mistakes. What's so weird about that? It's a thinking man style from the Cerebral Assassin.

Why is that bad? I really don't like the way Scott Armstrong counts. He's the blonde referee that has that hitch in his count. It's so annoying. This goes on for awhile, and while it's kind of boring, it's certainly not bad. From out of nowhere, HHH gets a Pedigree. He gets ready to cover him, but Vickie appears on the stage, saying that it will be a triple threat and that he's here!

Naturally it's not Jeff but rather the returning Edge. He hits a spear on HHH but Jeff runs out and beats up Edge. Ok wait,

hang on a second. Jeff was ok to do the run in (this if from kayfabe mind you) but couldn't wrestle? I thought he was supposed to be extreme or whatever. That makes little sense. Anyway, Jeff hits HHH and Kozlov with a chair but gets speared. Edge covers HHH and wins the freaking title again.

Rating: D+. This is going to be a long rating. Ok, so the match was pretty boring. Was it bad though? Not really. There was indeed a story there though as I outlined earlier on. Kozlov is supposed to be this master fighter and grappler, so what did he do you ask? He used a bunch of grapples and submission holds to wear down HHH. In other words, he did what his gimmick called for him to do.

HHH was wrestling smart, so he did what his gimmick called for him to do. The Edge twist felt cheap, but it's nothing that he hasn't done a dozen times or so already. However, Dave Meltzer of the Wrestling Observer Newsletter called this the worst match of the year. That my friends, is nonsense. The Divas match earlier was light years worse than this.

I would say that's Meltzer simply continuing his quest to make WWE and Vince seem like the scum of the earth because for some reason he hates them both. He also called the Hardy angle the most tasteless of the year. This is one that I just do not get. Ok, let's see. The reason the angle was considered in poor taste was Jeff's past drug issues.

Tell me two things: when was it ever mentioned on WWE television that Jeff had drug issues, and when was it ever mentioned that this incident was drug related? Dang on the freaking broadcast they said he was hit on the head and attacked. It was an angle, nothing more. The drug thing was never mentioned once other than by people on the internet, but of course this is just so tasteless.

We'll have Vickie Guerrero live off of Eddie's name and make out with every guy under the freaking sun, but an angle that

for all of 16 hours came close to hinting that Jeff might have had a relapse without ever saying it and clearing it up later that night was tasteless? Give me a break. It can be implied that Vince has slept with everything on the face of the earth and has a bastard midget son, but that's not tasteless.

Women are flat out sex objects and nothing more, but that's not tasteless. So it's ok to do all that stuff, but having Jeff Hardy be found unconscious without ever saying what might have happened until on the show where they say he was attacked by a person and not an illegal substance is reprehensible? That's the most hypocritical thing I've ever heard. If Jeff had another relapse, they wouldn't have mentioned him being found out cold. Vince isn't that stupid.

This reeked of angle the minute it broke at like 2:30 am the night before a PPV, but of course, it was tasteless right? Give me a freaking break. This is what gives the IWC a bad name: people making a huge deal about absolutely nothing at all when it was so clearly an angle. I said that the night it happened. I said it because it was obvious, but apparently Dave "he is risen again" Meltzer thinks otherwise, so it must be true right?

It doesn't matter though as he's barely a wrestling reporter anymore. Sorry I really can't stand that guy. He does what all of us do and makes a fortune off of it. I'm sure someone will yell at me and tell me how brilliant he is, but no, not really. He's good, but overrated. Ok, rant over for now at least.

Oh and it was revealed that Matt, Jeff's brother, was behind everything. Jeff would win the title the next month in a freaking shocker anyway.

We jump from that to a recap of Jericho and Cena, which wasn't really a feud but WWE kept trying to convince us of that anyway. Jericho had stolen the title at Unforgiven but as soon

as Cena was announced as returning, the inevitable was clear. Oh and Batista got the world title for a week for no apparent reason in between. That's about it.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Chris Jericho

The ending here is about as obvious as you could imagine. Cena's pop is massive here. They try to make it sound like Cena has been out for a year when it's been about three months or less. Jericho works on the neck, which here at least makes sense. I get it three months after an injury, but when they reference it a year and a half later, it loses its effect quite a bit. This is really formula based stuff but it's working ok.

Cena has an early flurry and then Jericho takes over for the majority of the match, working the neck as much as he can. There's nothing wrong with that as it's the same thing that worked for Hogan for years if not decades. Jericho's three finishers all hit and of course none of them work. This is the longest match of the night but it's likely going to have the least amount said about it. There's little drama here and after that initial pop, the crowd has been ok at best.

This crowd has completely sucked all night long. Naturally, Cena survives everything and hits the massive FU to get the title back despite Jericho hitting everything he could on him. That closes the show, which is exactly what it should have been.

Rating: B. This was good enough. There was zero drama, but they didn't bury Jericho. Cena certainly should have won as Jericho was just keeping the title warm for him for awhile anyway. There's nothing wrong with that. Jericho was a horrible champion anyway and always has been, so this wasn't a big deal at all. Cena was clearly going to win, and sometimes that's how shows should end.

Overall Rating: C-. This had its moments, but overall it's

just not that great. With six matches you run the risk of messing up on one or two of them and screwing the whole show up which I think is what this show did. Having Hardy be pulled probably wasn't the smartest thing in the world as I guess they didn't want to take the spotlight away from Cena. I get that, but it's still a good bit of a bait and switch which is the most annoying thing that a promoter can do.

It's not as bad as Randy vs. Jake in 91, but it's far from good. Anyway, this wasn't a great show at all and it pales in comparison to 07. Still, it's not awful, but it's certainly not worth going out of your way to see. Not really recommended.

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