

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2005 (2019 Redo): The Future Is Now



IMG Credit: WWE

Royal Rumble 2005

Date: January 30, 2005

Location: Save Mart Center, Fresno, California

Attendance: 12,000

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

We're finally to one of the more important shows ever and the main event is a two horse race. This is clearly the year of John Cena or Batista and either one is a great option to win. They're owning their shows right now and both of them seem to be locks to walk out of Wrestlemania with the World Titles. Predictable does not mean bad though and that seems to be the case here. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at great Rumble endings as a clock counts down. After it reaches zero, we see...well more of the same actually but there are so many historic Rumble moments that it works just fine.

Edge vs. Shawn Michaels

Nothing wrong with a grudge match. Edge blames Shawn for him not winning

the World Title and has taken out some aggression on him. They get started fast with Shawn clotheslining him to the floor and skinning the cat so the vest can come off. Back in and the announcers argue over whether or not Shawn is a champion hog. Edge gets in a swinging neckbreaker and the fans are all over him early on.

A Thesz press and right hands let Shawn throw him over the top for a nice mini moment. Shawn's baseball slide misses though and it's the Edge-0-Matic on the floor to knock him silly. Back in again and the fans stay behind Shawn as they're certainly loyal. Edge gets two off a sitout powerbomb so it's off to a rear naked choke. Well a chinlock with a bodyscissors because it's Edge but close enough.

It's switched to a regular chinlock and a slam, allowing Edge to strike Shawn's pose. Shawn is annoyed but walking into a big boot makes it even worse. A clothesline takes Shawn down again as he can't get anything going here. Another chinlock is broken up in a hurry and Shawn scores with a knee lift and some atomic drops. Ten right hands in the corner set up the catapult for two but Shawn has to stop Edge from walking out. It's either a ruse or bad timing though as Edge gets in the spear on the floor.

Shawn beats the count back in and Edge....dances? That's certainly a new one. What isn't a new one is the spear (complete with tuning up the band, though JR insists that Edge has no band), which only gets two. A superplex is broken up though and Shawn drops the big elbow. Sweet Chin Music is countered into an electric chair drop (nice counter) and the Edgecator goes on. Shawn makes the long and slow crawl to the rope (Lawler: "He was going to tap and the rope happened to be there!") but Edge grabs a rollup and a rope for the cheating pin.

Rating: B. It's a nice mixture of action and storytelling here as the match was good and edge cheated to win, which is what makes perfect sense for him. Edge hit everything he had on Shawn to try and win clean and then went with the cheating to put him away. That's exactly what Edge would do because he's so obsessed with getting a win so well done on the opener.

Eric Bischoff and Theodore Long argue over which brand will win the Rumble. With that out of the way, we get Torrie Wilson and Christy Hemme to stand there while wrestlers come in to draw their numbers. Ric Flair and Eddie Guerrero come in first with Flair dancing and having the girls blow on his ball (make your own jokes). Flair is thrilled with his number so Eddie hugs him without drawing his own number. For the sake of convenience, Flair checks his number again and finds a bad one. The chase is on.

Heidenreich is freaking out over caskets when Gene Snitsky comes in. They like each other and Snitsky has an idea. The tone of voices sound like....never mind.

We recap Heidenreich vs. Undertaker. Heidenreich is the latest monster and Undertaker has beaten him a few times but since WWE can't just let him go, we get a casket match. As luck would have it, Heidenreich is terrified of caskets so he's been running around in panic for weeks now. What a great way to present a monster.

Heidenreich vs. Undertaker

Casket match of course with druids bringing the casket out. Undertaker grabs a headlock and starts dragging Heidenreich towards the casket so at least he's going smart early on. An armdrag into an armbar has Heidenreich close to the casket again as you can see a lot of empty seats popping up. Undertaker switches to the leg with a half crab so Heidenreich crawls to the rope, which is in front of the casket. No one ever accused him of making sense.

They head outside with Undertaker going face first into the casket as Heidenreich still isn't coming off as interesting. Back in and Heidenreich hammers away in the corner while shouting that this is his world. Undertaker seems to disagree by grabbing a triangle choke on the top rope. Cue the taped up Snitsky to make the save and the double teaming is on. The casket is opened and Kane wakes up from his nap to pop out and make the second save.

Kane and Snitsky fight into the crowd as Heidenreich kicks the casket up the aisle. Undertaker goes knees first into the steps and it's time to

peel back the mats so we can get more violent. Heidenreich crushes him with the casket and it's a cobra clutch to knock Undertaker out. Undertaker goes into the casket but keeps an arm out so the comeback can start.

The apron legdrop onto the casket onto Heidenreich gets the fans back into things but Undertaker walks into the swinging Boss Man Slam. Heidenreich covers due to general numbskulledness and Undertaker makes another comeback, this time with a bad looking running DDT. The chokeslam and Tombstone finish Heidenreich.

Rating: D. It's not good, but this could have been a lot worse. Heidenreich got in some offense and didn't feel as much like a chore to watch this time around, but this feud was done a month ago. The Kane and Snitsky stuff was pretty early on so the match was almost divided in half with a short piece in the middle. Somehow, we'll call this better than expected, though that's not the highest expectation.

Long demands Eddie give Flair's number back and Evolution comes in to make it happen. Eddie gives it back and almost gets away with Flair's wallet. With Eddie gone, HHH wants to talk to Batista about the Randy Orton match but Batista wants to go get his number first. HHH says NOW and Flair has to intervene.

Long comes back in to see Bischoff as Christian and Tyson Tomko are ready to draw their numbers. Christian and Tomko say they both signed a petition to get rid of Long and then draw. As Christian is happy, here's John Cena to interrupt. Cena to Bischoff: "Loved you in Boogie Nights." Christian wants a battle rap of all things and tells Tomko to give him a beat. Tomko: "No." Christian manages to rhyme Transylvania with Wrestlemania but Cena goes with the gay jokes to win the audience's approval.

Smackdown World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Big Show vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

JBL is defending. Angle chills on the floor to start and JBL actually starts swinging at Show. That's quite courageous of him. Stupid as it works as well as you would expect, but courageous. Show catches him with a slam out of the corner and the legdrop gets two with Angle making a

fast save. That's fine with Show, who is right back up and knocks the two of them outside.

JBL gets posted and the power of the big hips knock Angle away as it's all Show in the early going. Show sets up the steps next to the announcers' and I don't see this ending well. The super chokeslam is loaded up but Angle hits him low, setting up a monitor shot to knock Show through the table. Angle and JBL get back in with Angle grabbing an armbar, which feels a little out of place a giant just fell off the steps and through a table.

Some German suplexes fit the bill a bit better but the Angle Slam is escaped. JBL's big boot gets two but Show is back in with a double clothesline. Show starts throwing the two of them around and another double clothesline connects for good measure. A double chokeslam is broken up though and it's a Clothesline From JBL/chop block from Angle to put the giant down again. Angle is smart enough to hit a quick German suplex to drop the champ, followed by an Angle Slam to Show for no cover as Angle's back is hurt.

Show is back up with a chokeslam for two, followed by a tackle to put JBL through the barricade. That leaves Angle in the ring with a chair but a charge lets Show flapjack him onto it. Cue Jindrak and Reigns to go after Show as the Cabinet is here to put JBL on a stretcher. Show fights the two of them up the aisle, leaving Jordan to throw JBL back inside. The Clothesline From JBL puts Angle down to retain the title.

Rating: B. Another rather good match here and that's not a surprise whatsoever after what has been a really good story. These three had an odd chemistry together and the match was a lot better than it probably should have been. If nothing else it was nice to not have the goons get involved until the end, and even then it was just for a distraction. JBL's title reign continues to be far better than he's given credit for with a match that was actually a lot of fun to watch.

Carlito tries to get Batista to sign his petition but a threat of violence gets rid of that. Batista goes in to draw his number as Bischoff and Long argue over World Title matches. Long says there is going to be a

bunch of interference so Bischoff bans Evolution from ringside. Batista wants to tell HHH himself and seems very happy.

Wrestlemania XXI trailer featuring Eugene as Forrest Gump. I loved these things and most of them were rather clever.

We recap HHH vs. Randy Orton. HHH won the World Title back inside the Elimination Chamber, including pinning Orton. It took Batista's help though so Orton beat Batista in a #1 contenders match to earn the shot. Orton is a complete lame duck challenger as the fans have moved on to Batista and everyone but Orton seems to know it.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Randy Orton

HHH is defending and Evolution is barred from ringside. Orton slaps him in the face to get things going and a backslide gets an early two. A rather high backdrop looks to set up a very early RK0 so HHH bails to the floor, allowing Orton to take him down out there instead. Back in and Orton grabs Snake Eyes but the RK0 is countered with a toss over the top and what could have been a scary looking landing.

A ram into the steps makes it worse for Orton and the RANDY SUCKS chants are just downright mean. HHH goes after the knee, which was attacked on Raw and not brought up until now. We go to the Ric Flair knee work package, including the Figure Four. The hold stays on for over a minute until HHH slaps him in the face, causing Orton to turn it over, albeit right into the ropes.

They head outside again with HHH being thrown over the announcers' table, which isn't exactly a big deal this time. Instead Orton takes him back inside for the backbreaker and the assorted punches in the corner. The high crossbody gets two but HHH gets in a knee. The Pedigree is countered so HHH hits the jumping knee to the face for two. Another Pedigree attempt doesn't work so Orton blasts him with a clothesline. Orton slugs away in the corner but a grab of the rope blocks a DDT.

That's enough to send Orton outside and the referee threatens to stop the match because Orton looks out of it. Instead Orton gets back in but HHH crashes into both of them for the ref bump. The sledgehammer is brought

out but Orton trips him face first into the post. Orton can't follow up though and it's a hard clothesline to take him down again. The Pedigree retains the title in a finish that sums up Orton's entire face run.

Rating: C-. That ending was terrible as Orton never even got in the big hope spot. Instead it was Orton getting knocked silly, not being able to do anything but keep himself from getting hit by the sledgehammer and then falling to the Pedigree anyway. These two seem incapable of having a really good match together and that was the case again here. As mentioned, Orton had no chance so it's far from some miscarriage of justice, but it was disappointing.

Kurt Angle steals Nunzio's Rumble spot under the threat of violence.

The drunken Cabinet comes in to Long/Bischoff's office. Long isn't happy and makes JBL vs. Big Show in a barbed wire cage match for No Way Out. That's quite the escalation and JBL sobers up in a hurry.

Royal Rumble

Since this is the main event, here's your trivia for the night: this is the first pay per view since the Wrestling Classic (and therefore the second ever to this point) to not have a tag team match. In case you were worried about a slow start, Eddie Guerrero is in at #1 and Chris Benoit is in at #2 with ninety second intervals. Eddie starts on the floor before coming in for the feeling out process, which doesn't get anyone anywhere. They start striking it out and Daniel Puder is in at #3. He gets in but goes straight back to the floor to grab a mic, saying everyone here is about to witness history.

Puder gets inside and it's time for Benoit and Eddie to chop the heck out of him, which might be Benoit's specialty. Some suplexes make it even worse and it's Hardcore Holly in at #4. Benoit and Eddie are willing to stand back and let Holly chop him as the point is becoming clear in a hurry. Holly hangs him over the rope for the kick to the gut and there's an Alabama Slam.

Hurricane is in at #5 as Puder is tossed. This was WWE's way of punishing/initiating Puder for being successful in Tough Enough, because

WWE feels the need to torment people for getting over. Puder would never wrestle on the main roster again and I'd be surprised if he had a major appearance. Eddie throws Holly out during Hurricane's entrance and Hurricane is thrown out a few seconds later, just as Kenzo Suzuki is in at #6. Eddie and Benoit double team him as well but Benoit throws Eddie to the apron in a smart move.

Edge is in at #7 and this should make things more interesting. Chops and right hands abound until Benoit knocks Edge back a bit. Rey Mysterio is in at #8 and as soon as we get rid of Suzuki, a heck of a tag match could break out (with any combination of teams). Rey's headscissors gets rid of Suzuki but walks into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker from Eddie to put everyone down. Shelton Benjamin is in at #9 and goes after Rey, who snaps off a headscissors.

Booker T. is in at #10, giving us Booker, Eddie, Benoit, Benjamin, Edge and Mysterio (get one or two more and you have a month's worth of quality stuff). Rey can't headscissor Shelton out but here's Bischoff to watch. Benoit gets the Sharpshooter on Eddie, which Rey breaks up with a springboard dropkick. Just in case we don't have enough awesome talent in the ring, Chris Jericho is in at #11. Jericho goes after Edge with right hands and a belly to back suplex before switching over to Eddie in the corner.

Theodore Long comes out to cheer as well and it's Luther Reigns in at #12. The kicking and punching continues until we get the showdown between the Raw and Smackdown guys because WWE REALLY likes pushing that concept. With everyone fighting by the ropes, it's Muhammad Hassan in at #13. Everyone stops to look at him as Hassan posses...and the big beatdown is on. The fans like this quite a bit and Rey hits a 619. Everyone gets together and tosses Hassan at the same time as Orlando Jordan is in at #14.

That means a lot more punching and not very close eliminations by the ropes until Scotty 2 Hotty is in at #15. Hang on though as Hassan and Daivari jump him in the aisle and Scotty can't get in. Oh well. If we can drop every man for himself, we can drop 30 to 29. The beatdown takes long enough that it's Charlie Haas in at #16. Booker kicks him in the face

though and then tosses Reigns and Jordan in a row. He stops for a Spinarooni though and that's enough for Eddie to get the elimination.

The eliminations slow for a bit as Rene Dupree is in at #17. Haas and Benjamin get back together for the jump over onto Rene's back. Shelton misses a Stinger Splash though and Edge gets the elimination. Simon Dean is in at #18 but before he gets in, we need some Hindu squats. The distraction lets Edge get rid of Eddie and Dean finally gets in....so Shawn Michaels, in at #19, can superkick him out. Things slow down a bit until Shawn dumps Haas.

Kurt Angle is in at #20 and it's suplexes a go-go until Shawn superkicks him out. To recap, we now have Benoit, Edge, Mysterio, Jericho, Dupree and Michaels. Coach is in at #21 and immediately starts grabbing the rope to save himself. Mark Jindrak is in at #22 but Angle gets back in and throws Shawn out, followed by a step shot to the head for some blood. Angle is finally dragged off and it's Viscera in at #23.

Rey saves himself from elimination so Viscera slams him in the middle. With nothing else going on, Paul London is in at #24, nearly sliding all the way outside as he comes in. Dupree slams him down and we get the French Tickler. Jericho is smart enough to use the delay to toss Dupree (Tazz: "His tickler just got Frenched!"). No one can get rid of Viscera so here's John Cena in at #25 to pick things way up.

Cena backdrops Viscera out on his own because WWE knows how to make someone look like a star in the Rumble. Gene Snitsky, who can run pretty well when he's all taped up, is in at #26 to shoulder people down. Snitsky sends London to the apron and BLASTS him with a clothesline, sending London inside out for a highlight reel elimination. That gives us the Cena vs. Snitsky showdown with Snitsky hitting the big boot.

Kane is in at #27 and it's chokeslams all around, with the one armed version to Mysterio looking great. Jindrak is out but Snitsky saves Coach of all people. The pumphandle slam drops Kane but none of that matters because Batista is in at #28 to bring the fans back to full strength (everyone knows it's coming now and they're fully on board the Batista train). Snitsky is out first and it's time for the Kane showdown, with

the full on BATISTA chants as background noise.

The Batista Bomb plants Kane and Batista throws Jericho out. Christian is in at #29 and gets beaten down by Cena as Rey hits the 619 on Kane. That's enough for the FU to get rid of Kane (because Cena is smart enough to use a move like that next to the ropes). Rey and Cena set up an alliance and it's Ric Flair in at #30, giving us a final field of Benoit, Edge, Mysterio, Coach, Cena, Batista, Christian and Flair. That's quite the talent pool. Flair is smart enough to feed Coach into the spinebuster from Batista for the elimination and the same concept gets rid of Christian.

Benoit chops Flair in the corner but takes the big spinebuster as well. That's it for Benoit but Flair makes the mistake of trying to toss Batista as well. Edge and Mysterio are smart enough to dropkick Batista at the same time with Edge getting rid of Flair (makes sense). That leaves us with Edge, Mysterio, Batista and Cena. Edge hits the spear on Batista and Cena but gets caught by the 619. Rey tries one too many runs off the ropes though and gets sent to the apron for a spear to the floor. Cena and Batista toss Edge and we're down to the only two people who ever had a shot to win this thing in the first place.

Neither can hit their finisher and the fall out to the floor in the unplanned finish. With the referees split, cue Vince McMahon, who made the mistake of trying to get up from the Gorilla Position in a hurry after three hours. He tries to slide in under the bottom rope and there goes his quad (must be a family trait).

Vince tries to get up and just goes down, so the referees plead their cases as Vince sits down next to the bottom rope. With all of the confusion, they take turns throwing each one over the top (Batista threw Cena first, which makes sense. Cena throwing Batista out after and thinking that would count is just kind of dumb.). Vince says restart the match (and then goes to the back, where he put too much weight on his good leg and tore that quad as well), but for some reason Eddie and Benoit are nowhere to be seen. Batista throws Cena out in about ten seconds to officially win.

Rating: B+. If they could have nailed the ending, this is an all time classic. As it is, it's just shy of great and that's a pretty awesome place to be. Cena and Batista were all that mattered here and that was where they went for the ending, but the stuff before that was more than very good as well. They stacked the first half with talent and then had the very well done Angle vs. Shawn segment, which sets up a major match at Wrestlemania. By the time they were done, Cena showed up to bridge things to the ending. All in all, it's a second tier Rumble at worst and just makes the end of the all time best list at best.

Overall Rating: A-. The Rumble is such a unique show as the one match can carry the rest of the card either up or down. In this case that's very helpful as the four undercard matches nearly cancel each other out, with a pair of good ones, the bad casket match and the not very good Raw World Title match. What matters here though is they didn't play any games with the ending and went with their strongest options at the finish. It was the right play and the only thing they could have done. Batista and Cena's rockets are being attached to their backs and that's what they have to do. Very good show and bordering on classic.

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