

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2005 (Original): West Side Rumble

Royal Rumble 2005

Date: January 30, 2005

Location: Save Mart Center, Fresno, California

Attendance: 12,000

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

Before I get going, this is the Rumble where the promo was designed after West Side Story. The tag line was “All the rumbling, minus the dancing and singing.” Again I say, WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE THESE PEOPLE ON??? It’s not the scariest part that these people are agreeing to put this on, but that someone THOUGHT THIS UP and GOT PAID TO DO IT. I mean come on now. WEST SIDE STORY???

This is supposed to be one of the biggest fights of the year and it’s WEST FREAKING SIDE STORY??? ANYWAY, the rest of this show looks pretty weak other than the Rumble. Other than another year passing, we’ve seen the rise of Batista and Cena, who are all of a sudden the hottest guys in the company.

HHH is world champion in a stunning revelation and is facing Orton tonight, allegedly in his last title shot. Say it with me: HA! We also have JBL defending against Show and Angle in a match I completely don’t remember. Oh and Edge is back and an Achilles enthusiast now. Let’s get to this.

Our opening video talks about how the legacy of the Rumble continues tonight. That’s fine. We shift to an alley where we have Raw and Smackdown dressed like it’s the 1950s and singing about fighting each other, with one line being: “We’ll step into the ring and reach an understanding. When the smoke has cleared I’ll be the last man standing.” Please, I beg of you now, end my life so I don’t have to listen to this anymore!

Edge vs. Shawn Michaels

Edge has been using Metalingus for 5 years almost? Methinks this might be dubbed. Oddly enough the same band is doing the theme song for the PPV. At Taboo Tuesday, Shawn had gotten voted into the title match instead of Edge, so we get this as a result. Ross calls HBK a first ballot Hall of Famer. Who makes the ballots for that thing? I want that job. My first step: shorten the class size to like 5.

We start off fast, shocking no one. They already reference the 95 Rumble so at least they're starting it early. To kill some time we list of some of Shawn's accomplishments because we have to do that at least once a week. The heel heat that Edge is already drawing is really impressive. In a painful looking spot, Edge hits the Edge-O-Matic on the floor. That can't feel good, which I think is the point. The crowd is hot tonight so that's good.

Within maybe 30 seconds of each other, Lawler says that Edge has never gotten a world title shot and Ross says if Edge ever starts doing shampoo commercials he'll be perfect. For those that have no clue why this is interesting, both of those things not only happened, but they both happened in 2002. Yeah I need a life don't I? After Shawn comes back for a good while we hit the floor where Edge hits a spear.

For the love of mangoes he needs a new finisher. This is kind of an odd choice for an opening match. They're both big names, so why not save this for a bit later? I guess because with only five matches on the card there's no other place to put it. Edge tunes up the band but instead throws out the spear for two. Edge counters Sweet Chin Music into a SWEET electric chair that gets two. Edge is having a mental breakdown over this and his facials are still epic.

He counters a sunset flip into that weird kneeling Sharpshooter thing he would do that was always weird looking.

The hold looks just completely awful when you look at it for more than three seconds. Shawn is in it over a minute and doesn't tap which is fairly cool I suppose. Edge finishes with a reversed rollup and uses the ropes for a pin. I like that ending. Edge's reaction of completely freaking out and screaming I DID IT was just awesome.

Rating: B. It took me awhile to figure out if I liked this match or not. The ending made it for me though as Edge getting the win was a big deal. Shawn definitely didn't need a win here while this was Edge's biggest win of his career at this point. The ropes at the end helped a lot too to play up Edge as a heel. This was a very good match overall with the booking being especially good.

We go to the back where Bischoff and Long, who more or less is the same character that he is now. Torrie and Christy are running the number draw as Eddie and Flair come in, both dressed like kings. Eddie starts to reach in but Flair stops him. He dances a bit and says 16 times.

Eddie pulls his hand back and lets Ric go first. That was great to me for some reason. Ric is thrilled with his number and Eddie is upset. Ric brags and then Eddie hugs him. Flair shows the girls his number and realizes Eddie stole his and chases after him. That was a lot better than it sounds.

Heidenreich is in the back, talking about how he hates caskets. Snitsky comes up and says he knows Heidenreich hates caskets, but they like each other and Snitsky has an idea. There are more gay overtones here than there were with Piper and Bob Orton, and that's saying A LOT.

We recap Taker vs. Heidenreich (Jon, because that takes too long to type) which more or less was Heyman bringing Jon in and them fighting a bit. Jon was supposed to be some big tough fighter or something but he was bland as all goodness and it bombed badly.

Heidenreich vs. Undertaker

This is a casket match. They actually start with wrestling stuff, shocking the heck out of me. Taker keeps using headlocks to drag Jon to the casket. That's really smart as it freaks Jon out. Jon is kind of an MMA/street fighter kind of guy but he's just not that good at it. In an awesome spot, we're in the corner with Jon throwing punches at Taker. Taker grabs the ropes and throws his legs up to tie up Jon in a triangle choke while still up in the corner. That was awesome.

Tazz points out why Cole is messing up the names of the moves which Cole gets annoyed with. For some reason the fans start booing the heck out of the match. Oh Snitsky is here. They double team Taker with a double suplex and Jon somehow manages to botch that. Do you have any idea how hard it is to mess up a move like that? Kane is in the casket. This was supposed to be Taker's match at Mania. I'm glad they went with Taker vs. Orton instead aren't you?

The announcers are of course stunned at someone hiding in a casket, despite Taker having done it about a million times. Jon moves the casket away from the ring for no apparent reason. Taker is back to beat on him some more as we have a Christian Coalition sign in the front row. TNA is already spreading. They're on PPV at this point so I guess it's possible, even though Christian was still in WWE at this point so ignore me.

Apparently Taker's knee is hurt or something like that. Jon pulls back the mat as this match is a train wreck at this point. With Taker laying on the floor, Jon gets a running start with the casket to ram it into Taker. Granted he was almost under the ring so it actually would have been easy to get out of the way so there we go. Jon goes to his finisher: a cobra clutch. Are you starting to see why this guy was such an epic failure?

Naturally as Taker is put in the casket, he gets an arm out. This needs to end, like NOW. Jon uses a Boss Man Slam which Cole says Taker nailed him with. Yeah they botched that call something awful. The crowd really isn't that interested either. Jon rolls him to the casket and in the EXACT SAME SEQUENCE, Taker gets out. After a REALLY bad chokeslam, the tombstone finally ends this.

Rating: D-. This was just bad on a lot of levels. There were all kinds of blown spots and the Snitsky and Kane run in was completely pointless. What's the point in booking Taker in these matches if he never loses them? Jon was supposed to be Taker's arch rival. That's just funny. At least this finally ended this awful feud so we don't have to put up with it anymore. This was really bad.

Ad for Mania.

In the back, Long wants Eddie to give back the number. Eddie's face is priceless on this. Evolution shows up and demands it back, but Eddie gives it up. He's also made to give back Flair's wallet which Flair didn't know about. Why aren't these guys ever sued? Anyway, Batista says he needs to go get his number and he'll be right back. HHH says they have to plan something. Batista says it'll only take a minute and HHH orders him to stay. This doesn't go well. Well at least they didn't try to be subtle.

Christian and Tomko are ready to pick their numbers. He's happy with it until Cena comes in to a huge pop. They have a battle rap that goes nowhere. The best part is when Christian asks Tomko for a beat and Tomko just says no. Cena makes gay jokes and the crowd pops for no apparent reason.

JBL is champion. Angle wants to be champion. Show wants to be champion. If that's not validation for a triple threat I don't know what is.

Smackdown World Title: Big Show vs. Kurt Angle vs. JBL

Angle and JBL had a last man standing match on Smackdown apparently so they're both sore. JBL with the limo was always cool. Show is the odds on favorite apparently. They did a double knock out on Smackdown. This is in the middle of JBL's reign of doom where he held the belt for almost ten months. They need to get that belt back. It just looks awesome. Apparently there's a petition to get rid of Teddy Long.

Angle hides on the floor which is a smart idea. They're broadcasting in New Zealand apparently, so there you go Shadow! Show chops people quite a bit. Show is more or less dominating here. We have steps set up leading to the table which is a bit odd. Show sets for a chokeslam on JBL through it from on top of the steps, but Angle low blows him and a monitor shot puts Show through the table so it's Angle and JBL at the moment.

The two of them fight it out in the ring to kill some time for Big Show to get back. Geez Show is huge compared to when he was the Giant still. That guy could have carried a company but he had to get all big and fat and slow and it didn't work at all. Show gets back in and beats both guys up again and looks ready to win, more or less guaranteeing that he won't. Just as I say that, the others team up to put him down with a combination Clothesline and chop block.

Show hits a chokeslam but JBL gets the foot on the rope. Show is actually moving with something resembling speed. And there goes the barricade as Show puts JBL through it. We cue up the run ins as Jindrak and Reigns come in to take out Big Show while the Cabinet gets JBL up and gives him a chair.

It isn't used though as Angle walks into the Clothesline for the pin to keep the title as the fans boo the heck out of it. They don't have much to boo about as he got a clean pin. Show got robbed apparently and would get a barbed wire cage match the next month that had a cool ending.

Rating: B. While I hate triple threats, this was pretty good. There was a flow here that you don't often see in them as they kept one guy down for a good amount of the match in Big Show, which is definitely a good idea given how big he is and that he was the favorite. While it's no classic, I like this one I think. It's better than most I've seen if nothing else.

Batista won't get rid of Long via the petition. He threatens Carlito who swallows the apple. In a continuous camera shot we go to the place where numbers are drawn and the GMs are arguing. Apparently Evolution is barred from ringside in the next match and Batista wants to tell HHH. You can see the turn a mile away.

Promo for Mania. It's the Hollywood one this time.

Ross and Lawler talk about the PPV theme song and the Raw main event for no apparent reason.

We recap it as they had been feuding for months yet they kept going at it anyway. Who would have seen that? Orton allegedly wasn't allowed to have another shot but of course he's getting it again here. Orton got cheated out of the title at New Year's Revolution by Evolution so he gets the shot here. I love how these guys have been feuding for almost five years over a team that existed for all of two years.

Raw World Title: Randy Orton vs. HHH

Orton is the somewhat over face here. He was far more over about 4 months ago but because he was over, HHH was clearly the better choice for the belt than the young, over hotshot that was getting better and more popular every time he got in the ring. Orton goes for an RKO and HHH throws him over the ropes. Why couldn't it injure him like it did in I think their second last man standing match? Orton used to have this weird style of punches that he's using here.

I've never been able to get into it either. Oh and Orton has a

bad knee of course. He swears about 7 times in 5 seconds in a nice touch. Why does something tell me that this will be by far and away the longest match of the night outside of the Rumble? HHH is already using the figure four because he has to be the new Ric Flair in every single way he can be. So we start fast and now HHH has decided to slow things down.

Did I mention that I really hate this match and rivalry? If there's ever been a guy that has changed so completely over the years, it's Orton. He's almost unrecognizable both as far as looks go and the way he works in the ring. It's a total contrast. Orton is bleeding badly from the lip and looks a lot like Ted DiBiase in that shot. He counters a Pedigree as I just couldn't care less about this match.

There's just something that's always been missing between these two when they got at it and it's always hurt this match. Granted this is better than most of their future matches, but the problem is already coming clearly here: they want this to be some epic encounter but at the same time, nothing ever comes of it and that's not a good thing at all. Orton takes a shot to the head and looks like he has a concussion that I think is faked as they keep getting shots of it.

Dang it the referee went down. This match just needs to end and it needs to do so now. It's hammer time as I'd advise you to make your own jokes. We've hit the part of the match that always happens between these two. There comes a point where it's always about the hammer and not about the wrestling at all. This is where these matches lose it for me as I just freaking don't care anymore about them.

Why does everything have to follow the same formula of a long match leading up to one moment where the hammer is the key to the whole thing while the referee is down? It always comes to this and it's just boring to say the least. Also, get some referees that can take a freaking hit. HHH gets the Pedigree and the academic pin to thankfully end this with HHH STILL

having the belt.

Rating: D+. This was the same match you've seen from these guys a dozen times but with Orton as the face. HHH was clearly going to win and it was to have a title match on the show and nothing more. There was no point to this at all and it just wasn't interesting whatsoever. HHH and Orton simply can't have a great match and they need to stop trying like they seem to have done.

Nunzio gets a spot in the Rumble and Angle steals it from him and says it's his unless Nunzio wants to fight for it. Ok then.

JBL and the Cabinet come into the drawing room celebrating with champagne and Long says there's a barbed wire cage match at No Way Out. JBL's face is great here.

Ross and Tazz are doing the commentary for the Rumble again.

Royal Rumble

Eddie is number one and Benoit is number two. Not a bad way to start. Benoit is rocking the teal here. Dang Benoit has bad luck as he was first last year. This is borderline chilling when you think about it. Naturally, this is a technical showcase which is what it should be. Daniel Puder, perhaps the most worthless wrestler in a long time, is third. His theme song is Getting Away With Murder. Talk about chilling.

It should be noted that the runner up in the Tough Enough show that Puder won was the Miz. Talk about two different career paths. Geez. Puder gets on the mic and says he's great. Was there something in the water at that Tough Enough show? Naturally the two former world champions beat the living tar out of him. More or less they just spend the 90 seconds chopping and suplexing the heck out of him as Holly, the rookie hater, is 4th. This should be great.

He gets in and asks if he can have some fun with Puder too. He's had zero offense. This really is quite funny. Even Holly is over because of this. Think about that for a bit. Holly throws what's left of him out as Hurricane is 5th. Benoit and Guerrero throw out Holly since he's useless again to get us down to three. They team up and Eddie tries to throw Benoit out and they're at it again. Hurricane is out as Kenzo Suzuki, another completely worthless human being is number 6.

This Rumble feels like it hasn't even gotten started yet and since we're 1/5 of the way through, that's not good. Again they double team the other guy until Benoit tries to throw Eddie out. Edge is in at seven. Rey is eighth as nothing at all is happening. Kenzo is out almost immediately. It's not a good sign at all when you have four world champions in the ring and there's just nothing going on at all. I mean it's just boring for some reason.

The Guerrero vs. Mysterio feud was coming soon and it would be Eddie's next to last major one. Shelton Benjamin, the IC Champion, is number 9. He hadn't had his big match with Shawn yet to really get him over but it was coming. At this point he was just a guy with untapped potential rather than now as a guy that no one takes seriously with untapped potential. He would finally break out soon after this at MITB at Mania.

Booker takes us to ten as the least successful wrestler out of the 6 in there is Shelton Benjamin. They're blowing their load too fast here as Tazz messes up by saying that Booker vs. HHH was last year. Benjamin might have gone out but we're looking at Bischoff who just showed up for no apparent reason. We continue the insane star power in there with Jericho at 11th. He's WAY over with a huge Y2J chant.

Hey looks here's Teddy Long as Vince continues the theory of keep pushing the Brand Split until people accept it so you can say it was a good idea. Luther (for admin) Reigns comes in at 12 to break that streak. There are way too many people in

there right now. Now we throw every man for himself out the window as Raw and Smackdown get on different sides for four one on one matches that consist of Rey vs. Jericho, Benoit vs. Reigns, Booker vs. Edge and Eddie vs. Shelton.

This is kind of cool but kind of stupid as it's turning the Rumble into an even bigger gimmick match than it usually is. Muhammad Hassan, the most controversial wrestler perhaps of the millennium, is number 13. Everyone stops cold for this. His manager is more commonly known as Sheik Abdul Bashir in case you didn't know that. In a humorous bit, everyone jumps him at once to a great pop. Rey gets 619 and then almost everyone picks him up and throws him out as a group. That was great.

Orlando Jordan is number 14 as this needs to stop being so gimmicky. Tazz tries to compare Orlando Jordan to Shelton Benjamin. That's just amazing. In a TERRIBLE shot, Shelton is choking Jericho with his feet and Jericho has to grab the foot to move it to his throat. It looked terrible. Scotty is number 15, apparently returning from a tumor. Hassan keeps up a tradition of beating up Scotty on his way to the ring. That has to be what, three times?

So for another year, Scotty doesn't get into the match. Charlie Haas is 16th. How in the world did he get a chick like Jackie Gayda? Booker throws out Luther (for admin) and Orlando with ease. Booker goes for a spinaroonie but Eddie jumps him to put him out. We have Benoit, Guerrero, Shelton, Edge, Jericho, Haas and Rey in there at the moment. In yet another chilling line, Ross says Benoit and Guerrero are still alive.

Rene Dupree and the poodle is seventeenth to insane heat. The World's Greatest Tag Team reunites for all of a second with Shelton then going for a Stinger Splash, actually called that by Ross, and Edge dumps him. Simon Dean is 18th as the Rumble is legal. While he's warming up on the floor, Edge throws out Eddie to great heat. Shawn is 19th. He hammers Edge before

casually turning around to clothesline Dean out. Eddie gets a huge chant as he leaves.

Ross says that Edge is trying to corner Rey in a corner. Shawn throws out Haas which gets no recognition as Ross thinks it was Dupree. Angle is 20 and he comes in and stays insane since saying going insane wouldn't make a lot of sense. Shawn misses a superkick but hits the second to put Angle out in a shocker. Angle is TICKED. Currently we have Benoit, Edge, Rey, Jericho, Dupree and Shawn in there and they're joined by the Coach of all people at 21.

This is the thing I hate about rumbles like these: what's the point of putting him in there? Was there no one else on Raw that could have gone in there at all? I mean you couldn't throw Lawler in there who at least was a wrestler? Rey almost puts Jericho as Jindrak comes in at 22. Angle runs back in and beats up Shawn and throws him over the top. Shawn is bleeding and apparently is out now, setting up their Mania 21 classic.

Number 23 is Viscera who still has no one that cares about him. At least he's got a shirt on here. Paul London is 25th and he slides in so fast that he almost goes out the other side. Dupree does that stupid French Tickler dance and Jericho puts him out for it. Cena is 24th to a MASSIVE pop. Tazz likes him way too much.

He was just about to shatter the glass ceiling as he would win the world title at Mania from JBL. He manages to backdrop Viscera to eliminate him. I don't care if you like Cena or not: he has SCARY strength.

Snitsky is 26th. London jumps him and in a video that's become popular on the internet for obvious reasons, Gene clotheslines him so hard that London got spun backwards which I don't think was planned. Kane is 27th, causing Tazz to freak over the way that Ross has to put up with these explosions. As someone that's been surprised by his pyro, I feel his pain. Kane

cleans house of course and there goes Jindrak.

A shirtless Coach tries to jump him but Snitsky saves him. London goes out on a stretcher. Batista is 28th and the pop is epic. They were pushing him to the moon around this time and it clearly was the right decision at the end. There goes Snitsky. Kane continues his tradition of getting beaten up by Batista, this time taking the powerbomb. Batista puts out his third guy by throwing out Jericho.

Christian is 29th, finally with the Just Close Your Eyes theme whose current version I'm completely addicted to. Cena goes off on Edge to show off their future great feud. Cena gets a half F5 half FU to Kane to put him out. Flair is number 30, making the final group Benoit, Edge, Coach, Batista, Cena, Christian, Rey and Flair. So other than Coach, all world champions in some company. Not bad at all. Flair throws Coach to Batista for a spinebuster and Flair throws him out.

There goes Christian. He and Edge were both wearing purple. Benoit and Flair have a chop off. Flair and Batista do the same thing to Benoit that they did to Coach. Flair tries to throw out Batista and it doesn't go well. Rey and Edge knock Batista down with a double dropkick. Edge puts Flair out and your final four are Edge, Rey, Cena and Batista. Not bad at all. Edge hits a spear on Batista and Cena but Rey avoids it.

619 hits but Rey goes too fast and goes over and a spear puts him on the floor. Batista and Cena put Edge out to get the dream match for the final two. The crowd reacts to this in a great way. This has to headline Mania someday. Cena gets him up for the FU but Batista gets out. Cena is put up for the Batista Bomb but they go out at the same time in an homage to the 94 Rumble. Screw the homage part. It's the same finish, but to be fair that was 11 years ago so I think it's ok.

The referees argue over it until Vince comes out. He slides into the ring and hits his legs on the apron, ripping his

quads and knees apart. He tries to stand up and just crumples to the ground in agony. Instead of screaming in pain or whatever, he sits on the mat leaning against the ropes and does his thing. Batista clearly is about to lose it. Think about it from his perspective for a minute.

You're wrestling in the main event of the Royal Rumble, one of the biggest shows on the year and you're in an angle that's going to send you to Wrestlemania, and your boss, a billionaire, is sitting on the mat after collapsing and ripping his legs apart, not to mention the epic adrenaline rush you must have just been on. Think about that for a minute or two. Anyway, Fink says Vince ordered the match to be restarted.

This translates into Cena vs. Batista. Shouldn't that mean Benoit and Guerrero come out again and we do the whole Rumble over? That's what it sounds like to me. Anyway, Batista throws Cena over and then Cena throws Batista over before this is said which is just stupid, at least from Cena. FU is countered and after a spinebuster, Batista throws him out for the easy win.

Rating: B-. I've seen far worse I guess. This match never really seemed to get going for my tastes. Now to be fair while it was clear that Batista was the winner before the match even started, they did have Cena out there as a potential winner along with Edge who was a new main event guy, so at least they tried.

I just couldn't get into this as there were too many things where the match more or less stopped for something. Also having the huge rush of talent in the first third hurt later parts of the match where those guys could come out. It was good but it could have been a lot better.

Overall Rating: B-. There's some good stuff and there's some bad stuff here, but the good is more prolific than the bad

here. This was a lot more about changing the guard by launching Batista and Cena into the next level which makes it a bit awkward but that's ok I think. They were the right choices and this was a great way to do the change. I like the show overall, but the second and fourth matches leave a bit to be desired. Not bad, but don't expect to be blown away.

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