

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2008 (2019 Redo): That's A Trio

Royal Rumble 2008

Date: January 27, 2008

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City New York

Attendance: 20,798

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole Jonathan Coachman, Joey Styles, Tazz

This was the other request so let's throw up a triple shot this year. The big story here is Jeff Hardy challenging Randy Orton for the Raw World Title. This was set up incredibly well with Hardy being set up as the ultimate underdog who might be able to pull off the miracle. The fans believe in him and it's an absolutely incredible build that had me dying to see what they did. Let's get to it.

The opening video features a bunch of wrestlers getting on a subway before going into a history of the Rumble. This year's show gets some time as well and we cut to a fight in the subway, because wrestlers are going to wrestle.

I love the MSG setup with the entrance opposite the hard camera. It's the only major arena to do that and it feels special.

Ric Flair vs. MVP

MVP's US Title isn't on the line. This was during the "if Flair loses he retires" period and MVP wanted to take him out for good, as did so many others. Before the match, Flair talks about how important this arena is and how he first wrestled here in March 1976. MVP's entrance cuts off a rather nice speech because MVP is a rather good jerk. MVP easily takes him down and strikes a pose but Flair just W00s at him.

Back up and Flair takes him into the corner for the chops and punches, including a big chop to put MVP down. That's about it for the offense though as MVP kicks him in the face and gets two off a neckbreaker. Cole

says he's sure that there are fans here who were here for Flair's first match. Really? A fan who is there for two shows 32 years apart? That's a bit of a stretch, but Cole never was all that logical. Flair comes back with a quick Figure Four attempt but gets small packaged for two instead.

Another running boot in the corner (Helluva Kick) gives MVP three...with Flair's foot on the rope. You know Little Naitch is thrilled to be able to say Flair gets to keep going. A superplex gives MVP two more but Flair gets in a clothesline out of the corner for a breather. Flair grabs a rollup and backslide for two each and it's time for stylin and profilin. The Playmaker is countered into the Figure Four and MVP taps out clean.

Rating: C. Perfectly watchable match here and I can even forgive the US Champion doing a clean job for the sake of what is likely Flair's last match in the Garden. I didn't care for this whole story at first but it's grown on me a bit over time. Flair deserves this kind of goodbye and his matches were still perfectly watchable at this point. Not too bad here, and a great feel good moment to ope the show.

Flair gets the big standing ovation that you knew was coming.

Hornswoggle, Vince McMahon's son at this point in a story that is still so bizarre and gets worse every time, is in Vince's office. Vince gives him a history of the McMahon Family in the Garden. Tonight it's every man for himself and you can't even trust your own family. Finlay comes in and Hornswoggle is rather happy to see him. Vince tells Finlay not to trust Hornswoggle, who jumps into Finlay's arms as they leave. I'm still not sure if they know how old Hornswoggle is supposed to be here. That was never quite clear.

We meet new correspondent Mike Adamle, who actually doesn't screw anything up! Yet.

We recap JBL vs. Chris Jericho. JBL had been doing commentary on Jericho's World Title shot and got knocked down so he cost Jericho the match. The feud ensued with JBL even yelling about Jericho's family. It's time for the fight as Jericho continues to try to click in his return.

Chris Jericho vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Ah the days of a ton of pyro for a midcard match entrance. They shove each other around to start with JBL hiding in the corner and the ropes. The second break is enough for JBL to get in a few right hands so Jericho takes him down for some of his own. The early Walls are broken up by a grab of the rope and JBL drops him throat first (the throat/neck that was damaged in the buildup) onto the top rope.

A standing Clothesline From JBL gets two and he catapults the throat into the middle rope to make it even worse. We hit the sleeper to stay on Jericho's neck until Jericho slips out and hits a clothesline of his own. JBL is fine enough to send him shoulder first into the post and Jericho is busted open. Back in and JBL stomps away as the blood is starting to flow. They fight to the floor again and Jericho BLASTS him with a chair to the head for the DQ. Kind of a sudden finish but that sounded amazing.

Rating: D+. This really didn't work as JBL can't do much and Jericho didn't exactly do much other than throw punches. Jericho is already in need of a heel turn as the face push isn't exactly working. Maybe it's the lack of hair or just rust but it's not exactly clicking here. Then again Jericho is known for being able to change things up at the drop of a hat so I'm sure he'll be fine.

Post match Jericho beats the heck out of JBL and chokes him with the television cable.

Ashley Massaro tries to go see Maria but boyfriend Santino cuts her off. See, Maria is NOT interested in posing for Playboy, though the magazine had probably already been shot by this point. For the sake of modesty, we'll move on.

We recap Edge vs. Rey Mysterio. Edge has used his relationship with Vickie Guerrero to become World Heavyweight Champion but Mysterio won a Beat the Clock Challenge (with the help of Batista and Undertaker) by pinning Edge on Smackdown. This earned Rey some beatings from Edge and the Edgeheads (Curt Hawkins and Zack Ryder), because you have to have some lackeys.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Rey Mysterio

Edge is defending and has Vickie (in a wheelchair) and the Edgeheads out here with him. The fans actually boo Mysterio a bit and cheer loudly for Edge. Feeling out process to start with Edge slipping out of the corner to continue the staredown. Rey takes him down and gets two off a basement dropkick as the fans are relentless with the booing. Back up and Edge sends him outside for the quick beating from the Edgeheads. For once the referee isn't an idiot and ejects him, allowing Rey to get two off a springboard seated senton.

Edge takes out the knee though in a smart move and Mysterio is right back in trouble. A kneeling half crab stays on the knee but Rey fights up and scores with an enziguri. The bad knee means the 619 is very slow though and Edge grabs a powerslam for two. Something close to an ankle lock keeps the leg in trouble and now it's time to get series as Edge loosens the knee brace. That's enough to wake Rey up for the sitout bulldog and another kick to the head (with the good leg) gets two.

Rey changes things up a bit with a top rope double stomp for two, followed by a hurricanrana to send Edge outside. The slide into the tornado DDT has Edge in even more trouble but he kicks Rey in the head to get a breather. Mysterio is right back with a drop toehold into the 619, which draws Vickie out of the wheelchair. The distraction means Rey has to hit another 619 so Vickie jumps up to take the blow. That's enough for Edge to get up and spear a springboarding Rey out of the air for the pin to retain.

Rating: B. This was good, though it never got up to the level you would expect from these two. Edge retaining is far from a surprise and the ending worked really well, with Vickie showing her love for Edge, who likely doesn't care because it's all about the title. That spear out of the air was awesome too, meaning this was perfectly fine for a Royal Rumble title defense.

Mr. Kennedy gives Flair, in a towel, a slow clap and sounds like he wants to face Flair next but here's Shawn Michaels to get rid of him. Shawn says a loud mouthed bleach blonde guy will never work as a gimmick today and Flair seems pleased. Batista and HHH come in with HHH telling Flair to put his pants on. Tensions are teased over who will win the Royal

Rumble so Shawn turns it into a merch plug.

Here's Maria for the Kiss Cam, which totally feels in place at the Royal Rumble. This is the excuse to bring out Ashley to ask about the Playboy shoot again. Cue Santino with someone under a blanket to say stop it. There will be no Playboy because no one wants to see Maria with no clothes on.

We hit the cheap New York sports teams suck heat and, after a LET'S GO GIANTS chant, the fans seem interested in having Maria in the magazine. Santino: "They would cheer for hepatitis if you asked them to!" Santino brings in the blanketed person and of course it's Big Dick Johnson in Patriots (Giants opponent in next week's Super Bowl) gear for some dancing. Ashley beats him up to conclude our comedy.

Wrestlemania ad with a Baywatch theme. Believe it or not, Kelly Kelly fits this perfectly.

Adamle throws us to the recap video for Randy Orton vs Jeff "Harvey" in a fairly infamous botch.

So this is the biggest match on the show, even bigger than the Royal Rumble. Apparently the buys went WAY up as a result of Hardy getting the shot and it's one of the best builds I've ever seen. You might remember me saying that Mysterio was the challenger that had no chance of winning. Well Jeff is the polar opposite, as WWE has done a masterful job at making you believe that Hardy could win.

The idea is that Orton is the perfect wrestler but Hardy is willing to do anything to win and could actually pull it off. This included one dive after another to Orton and sweet goodness did they ever work. I COMPLETELY bought Jeff as a real challenger and a lot of other people did too. It didn't make sense, but WWE managed to create something where you believed the impossible could happen and it was amazing. I still love the build to this and it's one of the handful of best jobs I've ever seen them do.

Raw World Title: Jeff Hardy vs. Randy Orton

Orton is defending and Jeff's Intercontinental Title isn't on the line. Dang I miss Burn In My Light as Orton's theme. The fans are behind Hardy for the early lockup exchange and Jeff takes him down with a headlock. The legdrop between the legs into the basement dropkick gives Jeff two but Orton is right back with some forearms to the back. Orton to the crowd: "WHO'S YOUR BOY NOW???"

Jeff clotheslines him right back down and hits a heck of a dropkick through the ropes, leaving Orton's head a bit crooked against the barricade. The first big dive takes Orton down and the fans believe it all over again. Back in and Orton hits a big dropkick to break up a springboard, which you had to know was coming sooner or later. There's a suplex on the floor to give Orton two and it's time to slowly stomp away. Back up and Jeff sends him over the top for a clothesline from the apron. Jeff takes him back inside but gets sent into the post, allowing Orton to throw on a chinlock.

Since it's a big match though, he adds a grapevine for a bonus. The powerslam gives Orton two and we hit the chinlock for the second time in a minute. Jeff fights up again and hits the Whisper in the Wind, followed by the slingshot dropkick in the corner. It's too early for the Swanton so Jeff settles for a missile dropkick to knock him off the apron instead. Jeff's moonsault to the floor barely makes contact and they're both down. Back in and Jeff tries the Twist of Fate but gets countered into the RK0 for the pin to retain.

Rating: B-. It was good, but without a title change (which didn't need to happen yet) there was no way they could live up to the hype that had been built. Hardy got in some dives but there was only so much you can do when you're not winning the title. They NAILED the build and the match itself was fine, but it was a little deflating. Jeff certainly moved up a few levels though and that's what matters most.

Jeff gets the standing ovation, but it's not the strongest in the world.

Rumble By The Numbers:

21 Winners

569 Wrestlers Eliminated

36 Eliminations for Steve Austin, the most ever

11 Royal Rumbles for Shawn Michaels, the most ever

11 Eliminations for Kane, the most in one match

10 Consecutive Royal Rumbles for Kane

3 Times Mick Foley entered in 1998

2 Feet that need to hit the ground for an elimination

1 Woman to have entered, with Chyna

62:12 for Rey Mysterio in 2006, the most ever

:02 For Warlord in 1990, the least ever

3 Wins for Steve Austin, the most ever

#1 Spot, which has produced more winners than #30

1 Winner from #30, the Undertaker in 2007

4 Winners from #27, the most of all time

73% Success rate for winners at Wrestlemania

1 Road to Wrestlemania

Royal Rumble

Michael Buffer of all people gets to do the intro, which is a very WCW thing to do, though that voice is hard to turn down. There are ninety second intervals this year so things are going to be moving. Undertaker is in at #1 and Shawn Michaels is in at #2, with Buffer just calling him the Heartbreak Kid and never mentioning his name. Shawn (or Heartbreak) chops away in the corner to start but gets grabbed by the throat and sent into the corner for his efforts. Undertaker misses a running boot though and gets sent out to the apron. He's fine enough to grab Shawn by the

throat and hit a big boot as Santino Marella is in at #3.

Death comes quickly as Shawn superkicks him and Undertaker gets the elimination in less than thirty seconds. Shawn goes to throw Undertaker out and that's just not bright. Old School is broken up with a pull off the top but Undertaker hits a chokeslam as Great Khali is in at #4. The fans immediately start the YOU CAN'T WRESTLE chants as Undertaker and Khali slug it out. The big chop is blocked though and Undertaker throws him out to get us back down to two. Hardcore Holly is in at #5 and might have some more staying power.

Undertaker and Shawn take turns knocking him down until Holly gets in a cheap shot on Undertaker to knock him into the ropes. Shawn and Holly chop it out in the corner until John Morrison is in at #6. As Coach talks about Morrison and Miz spending all night partying, Shawn throws Morrison off the top and hits the top rope elbow. It's too early for Sweet Chin Music and Tommy Dreamer is in at #7, because WE NEED TOMMY DREAMER!!!

The traditional brawling around the ring begins with Dreamer pretending he has a chance to eliminate Undertaker. Batista is in at #8 and that keeps the crowd going even more. That gives us the big showdown with Undertaker but Dreamer (OF COURSE) breaks it up, thankfully getting eliminated. Batista spears Morrison but gets punched down in the corner by Undertaker.

Hornswoggle is in at #9 and immediately hides underneath the ring. Another spear takes Undertaker down and the brawling continues. Angry biker Chuck Palumbo is in at #10, giving us Undertaker, Shawn, Holly, Morrison, Batista, Hornswoggle and Palumbo. Morrison pulls himself back in from the apron as we get to the standard operating procedure of people trying to save themselves on the ropes. Jamie Noble, currently feuding with Palumbo and rather banged up, is in at #11 and slugs it out with Palumbo.

That's good for an elimination in about thirty seconds to keep the ring from getting too full. CM Punk is in at #12 and you know the fans are going to be into him. A bunch of running knees have Punk on a roll and he throws Palumbo out. Cody Rhodes is in at #13 and a grand total of nothing

happens. Well unless you count basic brawling and no one being close to an elimination. Umaga is in at #14 and knocks Holly out in a hurry to keep things balanced.

Snitsky is in at #15 (He was still around in 2008?) and the Big Bald starts cleaning house. Cody takes him to the apron but Punk can't shove either of them out. As Cole says Morrison is like a young Shawn Michaels, Morrison's partner Miz is in at #16. Undertaker puts Umaga on the apron but can't stomp him out as Shelton Benjamin is in at #17. The jump to the top lets him knock Miz and Morrison to the apron, followed by Paydirt to Morrison.

That's enough from Shelton though as Sweet Chin Music is good for an elimination. Well that works. I loved the original Shelton run but he never recovered from that Gold Standard nonsense. Jimmy Snuka of all people is in at #18 and the fans literally get to their feet for that one. Undertaker tries a headbutt and hurts himself in a little payback from Wrestlemania VII. The old man abuse stops....and Roddy Piper is in at #19 to blow away Snuka's pop.

Piper and Snuka have the big showdown in slow motion (thankfully with Piper in shorts instead of trunks) and everyone stops to watch the fight. Things settle back down until Kane is in at #20 to get rid of Piper and Snuka, leaving us with Undertaker, Michaels, Morrison, Batista, Hornswoggle (still under the ring), Punk, Rhodes, Umaga, Snitsky, Miz and Kane. Undertaker loads up a chokeslam on Kane but goes after Michaels instead, with Kane making the save for some reason.

Carlito is in at #21 and spits the apple at Cody as there are too many people who have been around too long. A nice backflip gets Carlito out of trouble and it's Mick Foley in at #22 to a very long and positive reaction. Batista takes the Last Ride and Foley hits a double arm DDT on Kane. There's a Samoan drop from Umaga to Undertaker as the ring is way too full. Mr. Kennedy is in at #23 to make it even worse but Undertaker takes him down with a chokeslam. A lot of people are down as Undertaker starts hitting his running clotheslines in the corner.

Undertaker gets rid of Snitsky but walks into Sweet Chin Music for the

big surprise elimination. Kennedy gets rid of Shawn immediately thereafter, all while Big Daddy V is in at #24. Undertaker beats up Snitsky to blow off some steam before leaving. We get some near eliminations with Cody and Kennedy fighting to the apron and Mark Henry is in at #25. Hornswoggle returns from the dead and pulls Miz out before heading right back underneath the ring. As Snitsky finally gets up to leave, V can't get rid of Morrison or Kennedy. Chavo Guerrero is in at #26 and Kane kicks Morrison out.

Henry pulls the returning Hornswoggle inside so here's Finlay to jump the gun at #27 to swing the shillelagh. He and Hornswoggle leave, with the explanation being that Finlay was disqualified for using the club and Hornswoggle was, uh, short? Finlay holds Hornswoggle's hand on the way out, again acting like he's about five. Elijah Burke is in at #28 and MY GOODNESS get rid of some people already. The Samoan Spike sends Batista underneath the ropes and outside for a breather.

Chavo gets rid of Punk and it's HHH at #29 to hopefully eliminate half the field. Cody, Big Daddy V, Foley (nice slugout first) and Burke are all gone to make things way better. Umaga gets sent head first into the post and Pedigreed....and JOHN CENA is in at #30 to one of the all time great pops.

See, Cena had torn his pectoral muscle back in October and the word was he was going to miss Wrestlemania, if not the following Summerslam. WWE had this wild idea for Cena: use a combination of Cena's uncanny ability to heal and recover in a crazy hurry and, of course, LIE. This is one of the best shocking returns ever because Cena had been completely written off for at least the next six months. The fans, as in the MSG fans, are STUNNED and pop the roof off the place before realizing that it's Cena and they're supposed to boo at him.

Cena starts cleaning house and gets rid of Carlito, Chavo and Henry to get us down to Cena, HHH, Umaga, Kane, Batista and Kennedy. We get the big showdown with Cena and HHH as the right hands start fast. HHH hits a spinebuster but walks into an uppercut from Umaga. Kane and Kennedy are dispatched in a hurry and it's HHH and Batista teaming up to toss Umaga. That leaves us with three, which is a heck of a triple threat. Batista

gives both of them the thumbs down and the fight is on with a double clothesline putting HHH and Cena down.

There's the big spinebuster to both of them but Cena counters the Batista Bomb. A clothesline gets rid of Batista and we're down to the major showdown, which the fans certainly enjoy. That means POINTING AT THE SIGN (take that Ronda) and they slug it out with the fans being behind Cena. HHH gets caught with Cena's usual but it's a double clothesline for the double knockdown. A DDT takes Cena down again but he counters another Pedigree attempt into the AA over the top for the win.

Rating: C+. This was a bumpy road as they didn't pace things well, meaning the match was way too full for far too long. They had a nice balance of legends and modern stars though with those three New York pops being very well done. It's not a great match or anything, but what we got worked.

Now, with that out of the way, this is ALL about Cena's return with nothing else coming close. That's the kind of ovation and reaction you only get once in a long time and my goodness did it work here. Cena being back changed everything and it was a great moment all around. Just watching that crowd of smarks lose their minds because they were actually surprised is an all time favorite of mine and it still works eleven years later.

Overall Rating: C. Kind of an awkward show as the whole big moment at the end doesn't exactly make up for everything else. Now that being said, there's nothing too bad or even bad at all, but nothing that stands out either. The Hardy vs. Orton match was all hype but still entertaining, while I'm already having trouble remembering the rest of the card. Cena's return stole everything and that's fine, as it wasn't really a great show to start.

Ratings Comparison

Ric Flair vs. MVP

Original: B-

2013 Redo: C

2018 Redo: C

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Chris Jericho

Original: D+

2013 Redo: D+

2018 Redo: D+

Edge vs. Rey Mysterio

Original: A-

2013 Redo: C+

2018 Redo: B

Jeff Hardy vs. Randy Orton

Original: C-

2013 Redo: C+

2018 Redo: B-

Royal Rumble

Original: C-

2013 Redo: C+

2018 Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: C+

2013 Redo: C-

2018 Redo: C

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/27/royal-rumble-count-up-2008-screw-wwes-list-this-is-the-1-rumble-moment/>

And the 2013 Redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/01/22/royal-rumble-count-up-2013-redo-2008-the-biggest-surprise-in-rumble-history/>

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