

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2009 (Original): He Wasn't That Bad

Royal Rumble 2009

Date: January 25, 2009

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Attendance: 16,685

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

There are really no differences at all between this and what you see today other than a few face and heel changes. Everyone is here for the most part other than Christian I think. Yeah there's just not much that's changed since then other than DX reuniting. We have five matches tonight, one of which is the new Smackdown Champion Jeff Hardy in his first title defense against Edge, although someone has been trying to get him lately.

Also we have Cena defending against JBL in the token title match of the year. Other than that it's just the Rumble which more or less was the most predictable match in history as all of one person was mentioned at all in the buildup to it. That being said, let's get to it.

The opening video is the standard thing of all the Rumble winners and all of the logos but it's cut off by Orton's music and clips of him being a bastard to the insanely hot Stephanie. Vince gets kicked in the head to stun the crowd. Yeah, they're not making it obvious at all who was going to win here.

The slow motion replay of the kick shows that it's INSANE. There's no pyro for the opening as it's all serious and stuff.

In other words, the fans get cheated to a special part of the show for Vince. Oh never mind there's the pyro. Still kind of stupid though.

ECW Title: Matt Hardy vs. Jack Swagger

Jack was the undefeated rookie here, having won the title two and a half weeks ago. This is the mostly pointless rematch. Matt gets a great pop and I wonder why he's never been pushed harder than he has been yet. It's a shame that Swagger is being depushed, but to be fair tonight for the Little People Court Raw he had a good match with Cena so maybe the push is back. He has no pyro yet so that sucks. We even get the big match intros here.

Since it's 2009, Swagger is a cowardly heel at the beginning. Hardy brawls for the most part as Striker points out that he can't out wrestle him so why try? That's a great point at least. We get a replay of a great right hand from Matt. That was sweet. Hardy is doing really well so you know how it's going to end in case it wasn't clear yet. Swagger works on the arm which is the one he uses for the Twist of Fate. I know because Striker told me.

See why he's the best in the world today? Swagger is working the shoulder really hard here and uses some unique stuff, including a boot to the shoulder. That's something I've seen a few times but rarely enough that it's effective. I'm not sure if I like or dislike the big 2 signs in the front row for counts. They always disappear after the first match so I'm guessing someone takes it from them or they get tired of it.

Striker goes way too insane by saying who the last North Carolinian to win a world title in Detroit (Steamboat in 87). That's saying a lot. This is a good match with a lot of close calls. They're getting some time too so that helps a lot. Hardy goes into the post as it was already hurt. Swagger hits the powerbomb for the pin to retain and let us hear his

awesome music. Hardy sits on the steps with his head in his hands. Remember that for later.

Rating: B. I really liked this. It was a decent length of about ten minutes and had a ton of close calls and near falls. The arm stuff was good and it played into the ending to give it some psychology. That gives it most of what makes a great match so this is easily solid for an opener.

Orton is here and no one is talking to him. They're making this seem like the big deal that it's supposed to be.

Raw Women's Title: Melina vs. Beth Phoenix

Melina is gyrating like there's no tomorrow and it's working very well. Beth is with Santino here but it's getting close to the end. Santina would be debuting soon enough to suck the life out of everything again. Beth is just freaking gorgeous. I love that backflip she does to get into the ring. Santino gets a massive chant, proving that no one cares about the women and care about comedy.

Thank you Vince for crippling wrestling and making the comedy more important. Beth very clearly calls a spot to Melina and then whips her in. Beth shows off her power by lifting Melina up with one arm. That's just freaking scary. Beth's thong is sticking out which is of course awesome. She gets a leg lock on Melina that's in so deep that her foot is touching her head. That can't feel good. Beth actually pulls the leg back to ram it into her head. FREAKING OW MAN!

They botch the heck out of something as Melina is trying to come back. Melina hits an INSANE move where she spins around Beth's side to get the rollup for the title. That was awesome looking.

Rating: C-. There were far too many botches in there but the submission thing and the ending were both cool. It was your standard Diva match so that's not saying a lot. Melina's

selling of her back was great here though and it helped the match a lot. Not bad, but still far from great due to the sloppiness. They had a submission match soon after this.

We recap the JBL vs. Cena feud, which is mainly about the JBL and HBK feud over the money or whatever. It was stupid and one of those "real" angles that never work for me. It's like saying Shawn makes no money from wrestling or anything like that which is just ridiculous. Being conservative, let's say Shawn makes a quarter million a year. That's FAR more than enough to live a decent life, but he needs to be sold to JBL to make ends meet?

Shawn more or less lays down for JBL to get the pin. The problem that plagued this at the end was that it ended way too fast. It should have been at Mania instead of No Way Out. To be fair though, that wound up being the wrong choice as Shawn and JBL did what they should have done at Mania.

We see JBL and Shawn in the back and JBL says that if he wins tonight, Shawn is a free man and paid in full and can be in the Rumble. JBL leaves and Shawn looks in a mirror for awhile and then turns around to have Taker staring down at him. He says that sometimes you have to go through a lot to get to Heaven. Yeah they did the right thing.

Ad for Mania.

Raw World Title: JBL vs. John Cena

Cena was kind of casually mentioned in the package. Until the Taker cameo, I would have believed a title change here. The crowd is split on Cena as always. I would have actually believed them going with JBL vs. Shawn, but Taker switched me to reality. The idea here is that Cena is off his game because he has to keep his eye on Shawn. For instance, they're on the floor and Cena ducks a clothesline but Shawn is in front of him and Cena gets ready to duck the superkick and JBL gets a shot in.

Never mind that the kick would have cost JBL the match but whatever. JBL had lost a bunch of weight at this point and actually looked like he was in very good shape. He lost probably 40 or 50 pounds and actually had a stomach. Shawn is more or less stoic on the floor. There's a Ram Jam sign in the crowd, which is the finisher of the main character in The Wrestler.

We cut to a shot of Shawn about once every 30 seconds as Cena is more or less a pawn in this, which is ok I guess as this was just another title match for him. Cena has the STFU but due to Shawn standing there he gets nervous and JBL can get out. The Clothesline hits but it just gets two. There goes the referee and we have a bad looking double clothesline spot. Oddly enough we can see the ECW announce table over Shawn's shoulder and there's no Todd Grisham. That's most odd.

Shawn gets in the ring and starts tuning up the band. He kicks Cena and JBL begins his second world title reign. Yeah I don't buy that either. Oh of course he kicks JBL. Ok he kicks Cena too. He lays JBL on top of Cena as Cole says he doesn't get it. That might be because Cole is freaking stupid. Yeah it must be. Shawn leaves and shakes his head as Cole tries to figure out the complexity of this.

Have fun Mikey boy as it doesn't exist. Another referee comes out and we get two. Both guys are out as Cena kicks out so it looks like he's spooning JBL. DANG that first referee has been out for a long time. He got ran into not freaking shot. Cena gets an easy FU for the pin. Oddly enough it has no name here and was called his move by Lawler in the replay.

Rating: C. Usual stuff from these two with the focus on JBL and Shawn like it should have been. That's ok here though as it set up the big blowoff with them next month. Like I said Cena was more or less a pawn here and that's all he should have been. This got JBL and Shawn much further along and it worked well. The match wasn't that good but it rarely was with

these two so what are you going to do.

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We recap Edge vs. Hardy which was the result of the Stairwell "Atrocity". Basically, it seemed like someone wanted to hurt Jeff. There was that, plus him and his girlfriend being run off the road, and him having his face burned by pyro. I went to a house show a few weeks after that and he didn't appear because of it. I've never seen so many kids look so sad. Anyway, Edge denied everything as he was the obvious most likely suspect. This is Jeff's first title defense.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Jeff Hardy

Wow. Back in 2000 or 2001 who would have thought that would be realistic? Jeff is WAY over. The celebration for him winning the title was absolutely perfect. My goodness I want to freaking shoot Vickie. Oh she's Edge's wife at the moment. It's no DQ now also. Edge is flanked by Chavo. Edge gets speared as the bell rings, which is stupid as he didn't need to since there's no DQ. The WE WANT CHRISTIAN chant starts in about 10 seconds.

Christian would debut again in 16 days and he was already done with TNA and had made it known that he was coming back to WWE. You know the more I watch these shows, the more spots I see called by guys. I wonder if that's just because I've seen a lot or if it's because it's becoming more of an issue with these young guys. After Jeff dominates for a bit, Chavo's interference gives Edge the advantage.

Now we get some stupid hockey jokes after Edge slams his head into the table three times. Geez there's another called spot. And now it's weapons time as Edge brings in a chair which doesn't work. While both are on the apron, Jeff hits a Twist of Fate which pretty much sucked. And there's the ladder because Jeff is the Sabu of the WWE. Chavo makes a save but gets thrown off and jumped on. Jeff jumps off onto Edge.

I use the term jump loosely as he more or less falls and the splash turns into a headbutt. It looked ok but sloppy. Passable at least. This is the referee with the hitch in his count which is so annoying. Edge counters the Twist of Fate into a DDT which impresses JR. Why? It's not like that move has never been countered before. That's why it never worked as a big time move. Think of the leg drop or the Sharpshooter or the Stunner in the earlier days of it or the tombstone.

When one of those connected, it was OVER. Jeff and Edge never had one of those, which is what makes them look weak. Vickie comes out and breaks up the pin off the Swanton. Here's Matt with a chair and you can feel it coming. The crowd just goes silent over the chair shot and the look from Matt is GREAT.

This was an awesome moment with Edge looking back and forth with an awesome what the heck just happened look on his face. The complete lack of commentary here helps a lot. Matt walks away stoically. This would lead to their two match series that sucked because they didn't go anywhere near as insane as they could have.

Rating: B-. Not bad but not great here. They had their standard good match that went about 20 minutes. That's all you need really at the end of the day. The real story here was of course Matt vs. Jeff which is fine as it was a great story that the matches couldn't live up to. They went fine though here and that's fine.

Ad for No Way Out, which is now just called Elimination Chamber.

Orton says he's not worried about Vince. This was the start of the STUPID mental disorder or whatever it was. That could have worked if he never said he didn't have it or whatever but the whole thing was just stupid. Jericho shows up and says good job on kicking Vince in the head.

We get a recap of all of the Rumbles which never gets old.

This is the really cool one with the following stats, accurate as of coming into the 09 Rumble:

22 winners (in 21 matches, but remember Luger and Hart were co-winners)

598 competitors (this is odd as there was one match with only 20 entrants and I don't think there are enough to knock out twelve people over the years, unless they're counting all the times where a guy gets beaten up on the way to the ring)

36 people that Austin eliminated, a record that Kane will likely break someday.

11 people that Kane threw out in 2001 which is insane

11 consecutive Rumbles for Kane, which is awesome

1 woman ever for Chyna

62 minutes 12 seconds which is the official record I guess, even though if you listen to the commentary for the 92 Rumble Flair was in for about 70 or so, which was false.

2 seconds that the Warlord lasted.

3 times that Austin won, which is also a record

1, the number with the same amount of winners as number 30, which is insane when you think about it. Note that in the video for this they only show Shawn when talking about the number one spot.

27, which has had 4 winners (Studd, Yoko, Hart, Austin in 2001)

70 which is the percent that since 1993 that the winner has won the world title at Mania.

This was an AWESOME package that got me completely in the mood for a great Rumble.

Royal Rumble

90 second intervals this year. Rey has number one and Morrison number two. If they had any idea what kind of a classic they would have in the fall they would be amazed. Rey's mask makes him looking like a member of the Klan. Ross and Lawler are doing the commentary which just makes this feel right. One thing I like that they've got going here is they have a big Mania 25 logo in the corner of the arena and everyone keeps pointing to it.

Miz and Morrison are of course tag champions here. Rey does an awesome spinning move around John to get to an arm drag. Number three is Carlito. He's a face here as he's part of the Smackdown tag champions which would be unified at Mania. Oh no wait it was before Mania because we had to have a Kid Rock medley. MVP, just having turned face is 4th. Khali is 5th as not a lot is happening. He of course dominates the whole thing and chops the heck out of them all.

I hated the match he had with Rey when Rey was world champion. It completely killed Rey's credibility for months. Kozlov, still undefeated and with a decent amount of heat is 6th. He drops Khali in about 5 seconds. MVP and Carlito are both out now so it's Rey, Morrison who has been hiding and Vlady. It's HHH at number 7 to a roar. After a facebuster, HHH throws him out with ease. Orton is 8th and it's on.

The clock came up very fast for him as I'm assuming HHH was afraid of being in there with two good workers like Morrison and Rey. Morrison gets a 619 and Cryme Tyme come out and flip a coin to decide who gets in and it's JTG. The clock is going WAY too fast here as DiBiase is 10th. Morrison and JTG both go over but hang on and kick at each other in a cool looking spot and then DiBiase and Rey do it and then HHH and Orton do it. That's either cool or stupid.

Jericho is 11th. Well no one can say that they're sticking

with small stars in the opening. Despite the star power, not a lot of interesting anything is going on, mainly because it's so clear Orton will win. Mike Knox and the beard of awesome is 12th. Knox would somehow manage to get into the Elimination Chamber next month which blew my mind and sucked at the same time. Miz is 13th.

He was about to start making fun of Cena and becoming the awesome character that he still is to this day. Morrison takes a sweet RKO and then so does Miz and JTG. He gets stopped by a Pedigree as HHH throws out Morrison and Miz while Finlay is 14th.

In a SWEET spot, Rey goes over the top to the floor but walks on Miz and Morrison to stay alive. That was awesome. How in the world are we almost halfway done with this? Rhodes is number 15. Rey gets a springboard and Orton takes him down with an RKO. The lights go out and Taker is sixteenth. Taker is on one side of the ring and everyone else is on the other. He beats them all up and throws out JTG with ease of course.

The crowd is way into him. That's why he's still getting pushed. Gold freaking Dust is 17th. WHY does he still have a job? He has no gimmick and is slipping in the ring. He and Cody have a showdown and Goldie beats him up. This is being written on December 23rd. My wish for Cody: that he makes 1/10 of the impact Goldust made. He's got a long way to go. Rhodes puts out Rhodes and Orton is very proud. Punk gets number 18.

That pop doesn't exist according to Vince as he deserves to be jobbed to Cena in less than two minutes. He won the IC Title about two weeks prior to this and the Triple Crown in less than a year. That's amazing. Vince disagrees apparently. Yeah I'm a Punk mark, get over it. He hits GTS on HHH which surprises me. Henry, still a heel and not yet the Kool Aid Man is 19th.

The ring is WAY too full here with twelve or thirteen people

in there. Shelton, the US Champion, is 20th. Punk and Jericho are on the top for some reason and Shelton does a running double Downward Spiral to them, which is called a reverse DDT by JR because he's an idiot. Regal is 21st and he's the guy that Punk beat for the IC Title.

Mysterio puts Henry out which is of course perfectly fine. Kofi, still not a big deal at all but getting very popular very fast, is 22nd. Taker is bleeding which I'd assume is hardway and he throws out Shelton. Kane is 23rd. Rey is upside down and hanging on in a weird looking position. Lawler counts 12 or 13 people in there. Kane and Taker hook up for awhile for a double chokeslam on DiBiase. Punk puts Regal out. R-Truth is 24th.

There are WAY too many people in there and even more just laying around and doing absolutely nothing at the moment. That's the problem with having people last a long time in there. They're used to ten to twenty minute matches at most so this is the equivalent of a rest hold. Rob Van Dam is 25th to an EPIC pop. The whole match stops to watch.

Something that would crack me up is if they didn't know he was coming. He does his top rope kick to Kane who just watches it happen. I know there's no point in having him in there as there's no way he'll win, but he's a WRESTLER and a former world champion. There's his validation. Kendrick is 26th. He manages to put Kofi out and then be thrown out in 15 seconds. Van Dam is just so ridiculously over it's scary.

Dolph Ziggler, still meaning nothing, is 27th. He runs into Kane resulting in a quick elimination. There are at least 14 people in there and most of them are doing nothing with maybe 4 really working in there. Ross actually says they're trying to keep up with the action. Santino is 28 and breaks Warlord's record by being clotheslined out in 1 second by Kane who was right there. Hogan got a running start to put out Warlord which explains the time lapse.

HHH and Taker go at it which is always awesome. Jim Freaking Duggan is 29th. REALLY? This is what ticks people off about the modern WWE. Shad can't get in there? Primo can't? Instead we put a 50 year old jobber in there instead. Yes he's won before but we don't wheel Luger out to be in there also.

Big Show is number 30, so here's your final group. You may need a pillow as this might last into the night. The group is Rey, HHH, DiBiase, Jericho, Knox, Finlay, Rhodes, Taker, Punk, Kane, R-Truth, RVD, Duggan and Show. That's 14 people. DO YOU THINK THAT'S ENOUGH? Well since they're all in here let's get rid of them. Everyone stops except Duggan who keeps punching someone while everyone else stops to watch which looks really stupid.

He and Taker have their requited showdown and Kane does the required run in to stop it. Show puts out Duggan. Jericho jumps on Show which is amusing now. Truth gets thrown out by Show after a beating. Show throws Punk over three times and then knocks him out with a right hand. Punk's selling is masterful. You know, the selling he demonstrated when he tapped to Cena in 2 minutes at the Slammies because that made SO much sense right?

Show puts out Knox and Rey as Horny comes in for no apparent reason and then Kane eliminates Finlay. Van Dam nods at a referee which I'd assume means something. Show and Taker go at it of course because that has to happen at least once every six months. Yeah Van Dam goes out soon after so I'm assuming a referee signaled that he was next out or something. I've always wondered how they knew when to do that.

Taker puts out Jericho and we're down to seven. We've got Legacy, the big trio and HHH. There goes Kane, shocking no one as he jobs first. Legacy goes after Taker which is surprising. Taker counters with a double clothesline and a chokeslam for Orton. He doesn't throw him over because he has to win though. Taker and Show have a boxing match or something resembling

one. Taker has somehow shrunk from 7'0 to 6'11 to 6'10 to now 6'9 over the years.

Orton tries and RKO but just gets shoved off which never gets old. Taker and Show fight on the apron and Orton puts Show out who then pulls Taker out. Priceless being caught in a double choke by Taker made me imagine them in the locker room and Taker saying boys I've got cups older than you so sit down. That leaves us with Legacy and HHH as it's all about him again.

This is a step down from HHH, Batista, Cena and Kane from last year. You ever notice how HHH is ALWAYS around near the end of these things? He was close in 98, won in 2002, 3rd in 2006, 2nd in 2008 and 2nd in 2009. That's most interesting isn't it? He of course throws out Legacy and then Orton dumps him for the completely inevitable win. Massive posing takes us out.

Rating: D. This just wasn't that good. WAY too many people and WAY too much laying around just drained the life out of it. Van Dam coming in was great but Orton was so clearly the winner here that it sucked the life out of it. That's something I burned Sly on once as he said that this was one of the best Rumbles ever and then slipped and said that the way you determine a good Rumble is by saying anyone could win.

I asked who else could have won in 09. I'm waiting on a reply to that and it's been nearly a year boss. Anyway, this wasn't interesting to me back then or now as it was just about HHH vs. the world and that's simply not interesting. Of course, they would feud for the majority of the year and kill Raw in the process, but Vince is in love with Orton despite what ratings say so there we go.

Overall Rating: B+. Rumble aside, this is a great show. You have four solid matches with drama and title changes and storyline advancement. What more could you ask for out of this thing? I really liked it and it came out very well. The Rumble

itself was pretty bad but then again so was Raw as a whole this year. As for the show, watch it but stop the DVD before the Rumble but after the Rumble package.

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