

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania VIII (2015 Redo): Say It Ain't So Hulk

Wrestlemania VIII

Date: April 5, 1992

Location: Hoosier Dome, Indianapolis, Indiana

Attendance: 62,167

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Bobby Heenan

In addition to the new names, another major change here is the length. This show runs about fifty minutes shorter than the last three years and has nine matches compared to 12-14 at recent Wrestlemanias. It should take away a lot of the filler and time wasting, which have been among the biggest problems in most of the shows. Let's get to it.

The opening video focuses on the double main event and is much brighter and colorful than videos of years past.

Heenan is looking for the centerfolds of Elizabeth that Flair (who Heenan was advising at this point) had promised. Monsoon: "DON'T START!"

Reba McEntire singe America the Beautiful.

El Matador vs. Shawn Michaels

Matador is Tito Santana as a bullfighter, and he's introduced as El Matador Tito Santana. Shawn broke up the Rockers at the end of 1991 and gone solo (while taking Sherri with him), turning into the Heartbreak Kid. That means we get Sexy Boy, as sung by Sherri, for the first time here. Gorilla and Heenan argue over Sherri's looks as she spends the first minute taking off Shawn's jacket. A quick high cross body gets two for Tito and he slaps on a headlock as Gorilla plugs a hotline.

Shawn bails from the threat of a right hand so Tito clotheslines him to the floor. Fan: "YOU GOT WHAT YOU DESERVED SHAWN!" Back in and a headlock slows things down as we get into the technical sequence. Santana gets a

few near falls off the headlock and the crowd is already losing interest. A small package for two gets them back into it a bit and we're right back to the headlock.

Shawn finally shoves him off and gets in a right hand to take over. We hit a chinlock for a bit until Tito elbows his way out, only to walk into a superkick (not yet a finisher). Shawn's real finisher (a teardrop suplex, something like an Angle Slam) is broken up and Tito hits the flying forearm, followed by an atomic drop so Shawn can do his nutty bumping. Tito's Paso Del Muerte (a forearm to the back of the head. Heenan: "Extra hot pace picante???") sends Shawn to the floor so Santana tries to suplex him back in. Shawn grabs the top rope though and for some reason Santana falls over, giving Shawn the pin at 10:38.

Rating: C. This took its time and was starting to pick up near the end but they ran out of time. It could have been something special if you add another three minutes or so to the end and cut off about a minute of the headlocks. Still a good enough match but it spent too much time building and not enough time on the execution.

Gene brings out the Legion of Doom with their old manager Paul Ellering, a kind of maniacal genius. Ellering talks about how he's back to bring the team back to their excellence. Animal promises revenge on Jimmy Hart for cheating them out of the Tag Team Titles and to get the belts back. Hawk says the team has been a runaway train with no one driving, but look who's driving now.

Ellering wants to know if going up worth the coming down for the other teams. They earn everything they have the old fashioned way: they beat people up for it. They're coming for the titles and don't care who it is. This was just a lengthy way to say "we're back and Ellering is here." He hadn't been in the WWF before so this is new to most fans. The team would be gone by the fall when Hawk went insane in England.

Jake Roberts talks about laying a trap for Undertaker at the Funeral Parlor (interview segment) where he trapped Undertaker's hand in a coffin and beat the heck out of him with a chair. The key here is Jake hyping up the DDT as the one thing that can keep Undertaker down. Undertaker turned

face by preventing Jake from hitting Elizabeth with a chair after Jake's match with Randy Savage and this is about revenge for both guys.

Jake Roberts vs. Undertaker

Right hands have little effect, including a running right hand to put Undertaker over the top but he lands on his feet. Back in and more right hands actually stagger Undertaker as Heenan thinks he has two brilliant minds. Undertaker is tired of getting punched in the face so he grabs Jake by the throat. A big jumping clothesline wakes the crowd up a bit but Jake slips out of the tombstone and plants him with the DDT.

Jake gets up...and so does Undertaker. Heenan: "Oh my God he's not human." The short arm clothesline sets up an even better DDT but Jake goes after Bearer instead, allowing Undertaker to sit up again. A tombstone on the floor (with Jake's head a good six inches from actually connecting) is enough for the academic pin at 6:41.

Rating: D+. They didn't have a great match but it told the right story of Undertaker being unstoppable. No one kicked out of the DDT and the idea of someone getting up from two of them, especially after Jake promising that it would be enough to take him out, makes Undertaker look like an unstoppable monster and that's the right idea. Jake was gone to WCW after this.

Roddy Piper, the Intercontinental Champion, jokingly talks about growing up with Bret Hart but Bret doesn't want to have fun today. All he wants is the Intercontinental Title back but Piper doesn't like his tone.

Intercontinental Title: Bret Hart vs. Roddy Piper

Hart lost the title to the Mountie in January when he was sick so Piper took the rematch at the Royal Rumble and won, setting up Bret's rematch here. No contact for the first minute. They keep up the slow start with Piper armdragging him down. The champ rides him on the mat until Bret rolls him out to the floor. Piper is ticked off at being shown up so he slaps Bret in the face to make things serious.

Heenan and Monsoon start agreeing about strategy and their mutual

panicking is funny stuff. A running dropkick puts Piper down but Bret hurts his shoulder on the landing. Heenan sees through the goldbricking and is thrilled when a healthy Bret small packages Piper for two.

A cross body puts both guys on the floor in a crash and Bret is busted open, which is a very rare thing to see in this era. It was so rare that he had to lie about being busted open hard way to avoid being fired. Back inside it's Piper getting in a sucker punch to do a mid match heel turn. A bulldog gets two for Piper and Bret's sunset flip gets the same. You can hear the fans getting into this more and more by the second. Piper hammers away until Bret forearms him to the floor.

Back in and a double clothesline puts both guys down and Heenan has no idea why there's no count since Piper's head is on Bret's stomach. Good point actually. Roddy gets pulled off the top and it's time for the Five Moves of Doom. The middle rope elbow lands right on Piper's raised boot (that looked great and it was clear what Bret was going for instead of intentionally diving into the boot) but the referee gets bumped.

Piper sends him into the steps and grabs the ring bell. The fans don't want to see Piper go full on evil though and Piper has second thoughts. Heenan: "GIVE IT TO ME! I'LL HIT HIM!" Piper doesn't give in to the demons though and puts on a sleeper, only to have Bret climb the ropes and flip backwards onto him for the pin and the title at 13:50.

Rating: A-. This is a great match and pretty easily Piper's best in the company, possibly even in his career. It's also Piper's first clean loss in the company as he was very protective about his statue. The match itself was a classic too with both guys matching each other step by step. It was a great idea to have Piper tease going full on heel but stopping himself, which would actually be brought back at a later Wrestlemania. This still holds up incredibly well and it's an awesome match with both guys coming off looking great.

Post match Piper hands the title to Bret and remains on the good side.

Heenan has a major surprise by introducing the future World Bodybuilding Federation (yes that was a real thing) Champion: Lex Luger. Lex calls Gorilla fat, takes off his shirt to show off his muscles, and drinks some

milk.

The Mountie, the Nasty Boys and the Repo Man (formerly Smash) are ready for their eight man tag.

Sgt. Slaughter, Big Boss Man, Jim Duggan and Virgil (with a broken nose) are ready too. These are your basic old school hype promos and work fine.

Sgt. Slaughter/Big Boss Man/Jim Duggan/Virgil vs. The Mountie/Repo Man/Nasty Boys

Neither team gets an entrance but we do have time for some jokes by guest ring announcer Ray Combs, the host of Family Feud. Combs has taken a survey of 100 people here today (the gimmick of Family Feud) and gotten some opinions of the villains. Apparently Mountie is dumb and does the work of three men: Larry, Curly and Moe. As for Repo Man, no one can call him two faced because if he had another face he would certainly be wearing it right now. Combs' suggestion that the Nasty Boys are only successful due to luck is enough to get him chased to the floor and we're ready to go.

House is cleaned to start but Heenan has a special announcement: Shawn Michaels has left the building! Monsoon: "WHO CARES???" Duggan and Sags get things going with Jim taking over via some clotheslines. It's off to Slaughter vs. Knobbs and Slaughter, who has gone from bad to good and from main eventing last year to this, elbows him in the ribs. Boss Man misses a corner splash and it's off to Repo who jumps into a low blow.

Virgil's cross body gets two as Heenan thinks the protective mask makes Virgil look like a spotted owl. The bad guys take over until Mountie dives into a spinebuster from the illegal Boss Man. Some law enforcement. Everything breaks down and Sags removes Virgil's mask, only to knock Knobbs out with it by mistake, giving Virgil the pin at 6:31. Minor note: Danny Davis was referee despite being banned for life plus ten years back in 1987.

Rating: D. Total mess here but that was kind of the point. This was a good example of how far you can fall in just a year as the Nasty Boys, Slaughter and Boss Man were all in title matches last year and now

they're just filling in spots in a multi-man match to make sure they're all on the show.

Flair and manager Mr. Perfect (out of the ring due to a back injury) look at the centerfold of Elizabeth and say she's as close to perfect as you can be. Flair says this is Elizabeth's last chance at Space Mountain. Perfect: "Can I come with you?"

Savage isn't giving interviews and Gene thinks it might be because he's getting ready for his WWF World Title shot.

WWF World Title: Ric Flair vs. Randy Savage

Flair is defending and Heenan is practically worshipping him on commentary. Elizabeth is nowhere in sight and Savage is wrestling in full body attire instead of just tights. Savage goes after Flair in the aisle but Perfect pulls him off to draw away Savage's attention. They get inside with Randy hammering away until Flair backdrops him over the top in a great looking crash.

Back in and a suplex gets two for the champ as Heenan wants to stand up for a better view. Heenan: "SHOW ME THE PICTURES! I WANT TO SEE IT ON THE BIG SCREEN!" That sounded dirty even by Heenan's standards. Ric sends him to the floor and drives Savage's back into the barricade, followed by another suplex for two more. A neckbreaker puts the champ down and a simple move like that freaks the fans out.

Flair goes up but Savage slams him down, even going to the bottom rope (you don't see that very often) for some extra impact. Heenan is losing his mind as Savage gets two off a clothesline. The champ is knocked to the floor and the top rope ax handle drives him into the barricade, drawing blood (via an obvious blade job from Flair, earning him a lot of heat backstage). The Flair Flop on the floor leaves blood on the mats and Heenan is on the verge of tears.

Back in and another top rope ax handle gets two. There's the elbow but Perfect comes in and pulls Savage off, which still isn't a DQ. As the referee throws him out, Perfect throws Flair a foreign object (how did the referee not see that?) to knock Savage silly. It's still only good

for two and you can see the fans going crazy at every move. The referee yells at Flair, allowing Perfect to hit Savage in the knee with a chair.

Cue Elizabeth to come down despite a bunch of backstage people (including Shane McMahon) trying to hold her back. Flair starts in on the knee with a knee crusher and the Figure Four as the agents are still trying to get Elizabeth out of here. Perfect gets caught helping Ric though and the hold is broken. Savage's small package gets two and Flair kicks at the leg even more, saying this one is for Elizabeth. Flair picks up the leg but Savage punches him in the face, knocking the champ into a rollup (with Savage grabbing the trunks) for the pin and the title at 18:01.

Rating: A. Oh yeah it's awesome. This was more proof that a different style could work in the main event and title scene as this was as far away from the Hogan style than you could get. It's an excellent match with Flair working over the knee as much as he could until Savage used the same tactics Flair used against him to win with all the heart carrying him to the finish. Great stuff here and well worth seeing.

Flair goes after Elizabeth again and kisses her, earning a slap in the face. Savage is right on top of him but Perfect gets in another shot at the leg to put the new champion down. Flair works him over a bit more until agents get the bad guys out of the ring, leaving Savage and Elizabeth to celebrate under the fireworks.

Perfect and Heenan rant about Savage stealing the trunks and argue over whether there's anything to worry about. Flair is the only calm one (when will you ever see that again?) and claims that Savage is a false champion. Elizabeth is a Jezebel too. Flair and company are going to reassemble the team and dare Savage to do it again. Savage is going to be damaged goods just like his old lady. It was Savage out there taking shortcuts and Heenan freaks out over the trunks. This was a great delusional heel promo with the three of them ignoring every question from Mooney about all their cheating and only focusing on Savage.

Savage says he doesn't care what anyone says because he has what makes Flair tick. That was just a piece of what he wants to do to Flair. Ric hasn't been beaten up properly yet and it's going to happen soon. These

promos are excellent and make the feud even better, which is quite the task.

We're in intermission now as we recap Sid vs. Hogan with Sid freaking out over Hogan getting the title shot at Wrestlemania. He has a point here as Hogan was eliminated from the Royal Rumble first and had no real claim to being #1 contender. Sid went full on psycho by destroying the injured Brutus Beefcake's Barber Shop (ANOTHER interview segment which everyone seemed to have back then) with a chair. This is most memorable due to Sid winding up with shampoo all over his face and chest.

Some Lumbee Indians (from Tatanka's tribe) are dancing in the ring.

Rick Martel thinks there might not be a match with Tatanka tonight because Tatanka is still outside scalping tickets. That joke hurt my soul.

Tatanka vs. Rick Martel

Tatanka is undefeated at this point and only debuted about two months ago. Heenan explains his stance on the Flair match and promises that the team will be back. Gorilla: "YOU'RE A LIAR!" Heenan: "You're not going to get me upset!" Gorilla: "YOU'RE A LIAR!" Heenan: "PUT EM UP!" Tatanka sends Martel out to the floor and then into the post as the announcers argue over where the Lumbee Indians are from. Martel throws Tatanka to the floor and starts hammering away as this is already getting dull. Tatanka crotches him on the top and hits a quick cross body for the pin at 4:31.

Rating: D. This was just your cool down match after the big title change. Tatanka would settle in to a good midcard spot while Martel is in the same place that Snuka was in last year. Nothing to see here but it gave the crowd a chance to breathe so it's kind of a necessary evil.

Money Inc. (Ted DiBiase and I.R.S., Irwin R. Schyster, formerly known as Mike Rotundo and now an evil accountant) are ready for the Natural Disasters (Earthquake and Typhoon, a fellow 400lb monster) because they have Jimmy Hart in their corner. Hart used to manage the Disasters so he knows all their secrets.

The Disasters are ready too.

Gorilla gives us the Hotline number. That's very WCW of him.

Tag Team Titles: Natural Disasters vs. Money Inc.

I.R.S. runs away from Earthquake to start so it's off to DiBiase after no contact. Gorilla needles Heenan about Flair's loss as Earthquake shoves DiBiase around with ease. The champs bail to the floor until it's back to I.R.S., who has as much luck as his partner did. Typhoon comes in and steps on I.R.S.' tie to keep him from escaping.

DiBiase's right hands work a bit better and Typhoon misses a charge to fall out to the floor. A double back elbow drops Typhoon and it's off to a front facelock from I.R.S. Back to DiBiase for a double clothesline as Gorilla is running out of ways to bring up Flair's loss. Earthquake gets the tag and the fans just do not care. I.R.S. gets crushed by Typhoon's splash but DiBiase pulls him to the floor and they take the countout at 8:36.

Rating: F+. It was dull, it was longer than it needed to be, the fans were bored out of their minds, and this changes nothing. This felt like a house show match that somehow got onto the pay per view. Allegedly this was supposed to be the Legion of Doom getting the shot but Hawk wasn't really capable of being sane at this point.

Brutus Beefcake is here to support Hogan.

Owen Hart vs. Skinner

Owen's baggy purple pants with checkered suspenders deserve a mention. Skinner is an alligator wrestler from Florida who chews a lot of tobacco. Owen is in early trouble and a quick reverse DDT gives Skinner too. Not that it matters as Owen skins the cat and rolls Skinner up for the pin at 1:10. Now that's a filler match.

Sid doesn't want to hear from Gene, calling him a stupid fat little oaf. He'll prove that he's the master and the ruler of the world. Sid looks at a clip of Hogan saying he's not sure if this is going to be his retirement match. If it is, Vince thanks him for the memories over the

years. Sid doesn't care about the memories and curses Hogan because he can.

Sid Justice vs. Hulk Hogan

Sid's squirrely manager Dr. Harvey Wippleman (complete with a medical bag) handles Sid's introduction. Sid tries to jump Hogan during the entrance but Hogan punches him down and clotheslines Sid out to the floor before the music even stops playing. Justice gets back inside for the staredown and a knee to the ribs has Hogan in trouble. Some more right hands send Sid outside again and the slow start continues.

We get the test of strength and Hogan goes down (he's really kind of bad at these things), followed by a bad looking chokeslam. Sid poses instead of covering and starts hammering on the back to set up the powerbomb. We hit the nerve hold on Hogan and this match needs to die already.

The powerbomb gets two and it's Hulk Up time. Hogan gets the slam and drops the leg...for two. This was supposed to be Papa Shango running in for the DQ but, depending on who you ask, Shango either missed his run-in or the company screwed Hogan over in case he was leaving. Wippleman comes in after the two instead and it's a DQ at 12:26.

Rating: F. If this is the best Hogan can do, he needs to leave already. This was a horrible match with neither guy looking interested in trying anything out there. The ending makes it even worse and while you can't blame the wrestlers for it, you can hold it against the match as a whole. Horrible match and one of the worst main events in the show's history.

Hogan gets beaten down by both guys but the Ultimate Warrior returns from an eight month hiatus (read as firing) and makes the save. The traditional posing ends the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Much like last year, there's some great stuff on the show but at the same time there's a lot of stuff holding it back. The main event in particular this year was a disaster but Warrior's return was a big surprise and a great moment. They're starting to get the Wrestlemania formula down but there are still a lot of bugs they need to work out, including a lot of the worthless filler.

That being said, this show was by far and away easier to sit through than the previous years with about fifty minutes cut off. It gives things a better flow and stops spending so much time on unimportant stuff, such as a way too long celebrity segment. This was good enough, but still not a great show.

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