

# Summerslam Count-Up – Summerslam 2004 (2013 Redo): HHH Has Had Better Stories

## Summerslam 2004

Date: August 15, 2004

Location: Air Canada Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Attendance: 17,640

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

A year has passed but not a lot has really changed. Evolution still runs Raw but Benoit has jumped shows and is the World Champion. Over on Smackdown we have Angle in another rematch from Wrestlemania against Eddie Guerrero, although not for the title this time. John Bradshaw Layfield, now a businessman instead of a bar fighter, beat Guerrero for the title over the summer and gets to defend against Undertaker tonight. HHH on the other hand is fighting a mentally slow guy named Eugene at the second biggest show of the year. Let's get to it.

The theme this year is the WWE Olympic Games. It's definitely more on the cute side than serious, but that could be said about a lot of Summerslams.

The theme song is Summertime Blues by Rush so we get some good music. The video focuses on almost all of the big matches but doesn't give a ton of backstory.

## Dudleys vs. Paul London/Rey Mysterio/Billy Kidman

This was when the Dudley Boyz were under Spike's (Cruiserweight Champion) leadership and going to war with the Cruiserweight division for lack of regular sized tag teams to feud against. Spike recently beat Rey for the title so this is technically two feuds combined into one since London and Kidman are Smackdown tag champions. Kidman fires off forearms to D-Von to start before taking him down via an armdrag. Off to London with some more forearms and a nice dropkick for two.

Bubba cheats like a true Bully was and the bad guys take over. Spike comes in off the top with a double stomp to the ribs as the fans want tables. Bubba comes in and suplexes London down while calling him a piece of crap and threatening to beat his face in. You can't go wrong with a loudmouthed New Yorker who can fight. Off to D-Von for a chinlock as Cole is already at two vintages less than four minutes into the match. London ducks a Bubba clothesline to knock D-Von to the floor.

An enziguri puts Bubba down and there's the hot tag to Mysterio. Rey gets two beat on Spike in an attempt to get revenge for being put through a table. Dropping the Dime gets two on Spike and a top rope rana gets the same. Rey hits a springboard seated senton to Rey and a big facejam to D-Von. Kidman tags himself in and hits a jumping back elbow off the top (love that move) to Spike.

The BK Bomb (Sky High) gets two on Spike and everything breaks down. London dives off the top to the floor to take out Bubba as Rey and Kidman hit a Hart Attack on Spike. 619 to Spike sets up the Shooting Star for two but D-Von makes the save. Rey dives at D-Von but only hits barricade before Ray kills London with a clothesline. Kidman tries to fight off both big Dudleys on his own but walks into 3D with Spike getting the pin.

**Rating:** C. Good choice for an opener here but it might have been better to split this up and give us two title matches instead. Still though, starting things off with a fast paced tag match is always a good idea as it sets the pace for the rest of the show. The good guys' high spots were more than enough to fire up the crowd and the show is off to a fast start, which is the goal of an opener.

We recap Matt Hardy vs. Kane. Matt's girlfriend Lita slept with Kane to keep him from destroying Matt but got pregnant as a result. The solution? A match to determine who Lita has to marry of course. What else would it have been?

### Matt Hardy vs. Kane

We get to see Lita in something resembling a dress which is a rare visual. This is called a Til Death Do Us Part match which I guess is similar to the Love Her Or Leave Her match in 1999, but I'm pretty sure

it's a standard one on one match. Matt jumps Kane from the opening bell and hits a running clothesline in the corner. The Side Effect gets two and Kane is sent to the apron. A middle rope Fameasser brings Kane back inside and a nearly botched tornado DDT gets two.

Matt pounds on Kane in the corner as this is completely one sided so far. As soon as I say that, Kane comes back with a huge uppercut to lay Matt out. Kane chokes away both on the mat and in the corner before staring at Lita. Kane misses a charge and gets low bridged to the floor so Matt can hit a big dive. A Twist of Fate on the floor has Kane in trouble but there's no count on the floor. Kane sits up and gets back in at nine so Matt goes back to the stomping.

Lita slides in the ring bell and distracts the referee long enough for Matt to knock Kane silly for two. Back up and Hardy has to fight out of a chokeslam bid but gets caught by a big boot to the face. Kane goes up top but gets crotched, sending Matt up for a top rope DDT. You don't go up top with Kane though as he grabs Matt by the throat and a top rope chokeslam is good for the pin.

**Rating:** C. This was short but fun while it lasted. Matt was working hard out there but he was just up against too much. The top rope chokeslam looked good too with Matt bouncing off the canvas. Kane was good as a ruthless monster like this and the evil smiles helped a lot. Lita's early days as a slut were fun give what was coming for her in the coming years.

Randy Ortno says tonight is about the rise of a new star, but someone stops him in his tracks. John Cena shows up and takes the spotlight from Orton and offers to hook Orton up with his own merchandise. Cena polls the audience and they don't think he's winning the title tonight. He's still in the full on rapper mode but he's clearly working as hard as he can at it which is what gets you noticed. Orton doesn't care what the people think because he's winning the title tonight.

### Booker T. vs. John Cena

Booker is US Champion but this is the first match in a best of 5 series for the title, meaning the belt isn't on the line here. Cena won the title at Wrestlemania but was stripped of it by then GM Kurt Angle with

Booker winning it a few weeks later. They slug it out in the middle of the ring to start until Cena gets two off a hard clothesline. Booker elbows out of a hammerlock and chops away but another clothesline puts him down.

Cena hits the Throwback for two but Booker crotches him on the top and knocks Cena out to the floor to take over. Back in and Booker fires off a hook kick to the jaw and drops a knee to the head. The side kick (called a spin kick by Cole despite a lack of spinning) puts Cena down and it's off to a quickly broken camel clutch. Booker stops Cena's comeback and it's off to a chinlock. Cena fights up and gets two off a quick small package before avoiding the ax kick. John makes his comeback with his usual array of strikes, only to get caught in a facejam, setting up the Spinarooni....but Booker walks into the FU for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. This wasn't much and it's kind of stupid to have the first match of a best of five series here. The whole thing wouldn't end until October, dragging the idea out WAY too long. It wasn't bad but this felt like it could have been on any given episode of Smackdown. Also did we really need to have the champion lose clean in less than seven minutes?

Teddy Long, still the Smackdown GM, brags about the best of 5 series idea to himself. Eric Bischoff comes in (Teddy: "Hey it's the head cracker that runs Raw.") and laughs at Smackdown for having so many GM's. He thinks Teddy will be out of a job by Survivor Series. This is being written nearly nine years later and Teddy is still kicking around on Smackdown and has been GM on and off the entire time. Anyway Long says he'd love to take Bischoff's nephew Eugene to Smackdown and making him a huge star. Apparently that offer is good for anyone sick of Bischoff's nonsense.

#### Intercontinental Title: Edge vs. Chris Jericho vs. Batista

Edge is defending and Batista has been destroying everyone left and right leading up to this with a big running clothesline. Batista jumps Edge during his entrance but Jericho is quickly on Big Dave. The fans are surprisingly behind Jericho despite us being in Edge's hometown. Batista starts firing off the shoulder blocks in the corner and catches a cross

body in a powerslam to put Jericho down. Edge comes in just in time to break up the Batista Bomb with Jericho going to the floor.

Batista drops Edge face first on the buckle with snake eyes but Jericho breaks up the big clothesline. Edge dropkicks Batista to the floor.....and is booed out of the building. Odd indeed. He joins the challengers on the floor and sends Batista shoulder first into the steps as the fans say they want Christian. Instead they get a battle of the Canadians in the ring with Jericho being the HUGE favorite. Edge takes over and the booing begins again.

Jericho counters the Edgecution into a Walls attempt but Edge counters that into a small package for two. Edge rolls through a cross body for two but now the Walls go on full. Jericho pulls him away from the ropes and Edge is in big trouble but Batista makes the last second save. He sends Jericho into the post but gets caught by a tornado DDT from Edge for two.

Chris is back up just in time to break up the spear to Batista, because why would you want the monster taken down? Batista hits the spinebuster on Jericho for two as Edge saves. He escapes a spinebuster from Batista as well before getting two on a rollup to Jericho. Jericho makes another comeback on Edge with the fans entirely behind him. The bulldog takes Edge down but he has to dropkick Batista down, allowing Edge to spear his fellow Canadian down to retain.

**Rating:** C-. This came off like a forced heel turn for Edge and the full turn would be coming very soon. Jericho being the big favorite was only somewhat surprising as he was a native countryman but you would expect Edge to have been a bit popular there. The match was nothing special but the idea was to keep Batista down which is a nice rub for him and his time was coming soon.

We recap Eddie Guerrero vs. Kurt Angle. Eddie beat Angle at Wrestlemania to retain the title and then Angle's neck legitimately gave out so he was made GM. Angle then made the decision that cost Eddie the title (the right call actually) and then screwed him over in the rematch, setting up the second match here.

## Eddie Guerrero vs. Kurt Angle

Technical stuff to start with Eddie actually surviving on the mat. The fans are almost entirely behind Angle but it's Eddie going for the ankle. When that gets him nowhere it's off to a headlock instead but you know Angle isn't going to stand for that very long. He hooks a keylock on Eddie's arm but Eddie gets out with a fireman's carry. Off to an armbars by Guerrero but Angle spins out, only to be caught in the ankle lock in the middle of the ring.

Kurt finally rolls over and rakes the eyes to escape before hooking an Angle Slam for two. There go the straps and the ankle lock is locked on Eddie, only to have him counter into another one of his own. Kurt counters THAT into his second ankle lock but Guerrero makes it to the ropes. Angle's heavy Luther Reigns gets in a cheap shot and Kurt goes right back to the hold but Eddie makes another rope.

Back in the middle of the ring and Angle hooks a very modified STF as the mat work continues nonstop. Kurt goes to a regular leg lock and starts taking off Eddie's boot which is what cost him the Wrestlemania match. Off to a chinlock with a leg trap but Eddie fights up and gets a jawbreaker and an Angle Slam of his own. Yeah Kurt LOVED the whole stealing finishers bit.

Back up and Eddie fires away as his boot is almost off. The Three Amigos put Angle down but he pops up and runs the corner to suplex Guerrero down before the frog splash. The Angle Slam is countered into a DDT but the frog splash misses. Now the Angle Slam connects for two (duh) and the fans are behind Guerrero. Angle rips Eddie's boot off and the ankle lock goes on again, but this time Eddie rolls through, sending Kurt into the referee.

A boot shot to the head puts down both Angle and Reigns but Eddie throws the boot down and drops to the mat like a good cheater. The frog splash gets two and the fans changes sides again. Eddie complains to the referee and the ankle lock goes on again, this time forcing the tap out.

**Rating:** B. This was entertaining but it felt like it skipped a few gears. The seven straight minutes of mat work were good but when you go from

that into the traditional main event style it's kind of a big jump. Angle looked good out there but Eddie really didn't do much. It felt like we were just waiting on Angle to finally catch him and then he did to end the match.

We recap HHH vs. Eugene. Rock saved Eugene from an attack but Eugene said HHH was his favorite wrestler. HHH used this to his advantage and made Eugene an honorary member of Evolution. Flair: "It'll kill our gimmick!" HHH said it was just to get the title back but Eugene wound up costing HHH his rematch against Benoit, leading to the Evolution beatdown. This led to HHH destroying Eugene's friend William Regal, setting up HHH vs. Eugene tonight. You know, HHH, the multi-time world champion against a guy who learned to wrestle watching TV.

### HHH vs. Eugene

They slug it out to start and HHH stomps him into the corner. Eugene comes back with an elbow to the face and a backdrop, sending HHH rolling to the floor. An ax handle off the apron puts HHH down and the booing begins. As in people are booing Eugene. This sounds like a good time for a sidebar.

For those of you that weren't around in 2004, Eugene was easily the most over guy on the roster for a few weeks. I mean his music would play and the crowd would just explode, no matter what city they were in. Even I was a big fan of the guy. He was such a fun and innocent character that it was almost impossible to not like him. It was so goofy to see him doing Stunners and Rock Bottoms and stuff Junk Yard Dog did back in the day because it was like watching a five year old wrestle. Then one night he was shown in a gym beating William Regal in a chain wrestling contest, making him even more popular.

In other words, the Eugene character was a full on success. This is where WWE screwed everything up. Instead of just letting Eugene be what he was and make occasional appearances to pop the crowd (or open house show matches beating some annoying heel), they pushed it too far. The minute they put him in a story about the world title with main event level guys, it was all over.

At the end of the day, that's just not what the people wanted Eugene to be. They wanted it to be fun and silly so they could have a good time with it, but WWE tried to make it serious, completely killing the joke. As soon as you tell fans that Eugene's character has a problem, you're no longer laughing at a guy who does goofy things but rather you're laughing at a guy like Eugene, which no one wants to do.

This led to the fans not wanting to watch Eugene anymore, because he really was just a guy doing a bunch of random wrestling moves and had no business being at this level (Note that Nick Dinsmore, the guy that portrayed Eugene is a very talented wrestler. His character was what didn't belong here, not Dinsmore himself. BIG difference). When you try to force the fans to like something in a way they don't want to, it's going to blow up in a hurry. The lesson to be learned: don't make the audience go somewhere they don't want to go, because at the end of the day they make the decisions, not the company.

So anyway HHH hides behind Lillian to get the advantage and rams Eugene into the barricade before heading back inside for some stomping. He loads up the announce table but Eugene suplexes him back in to block. Eugene pounds away back inside but HHH sends him to the floor. Back in and HHH hits some backbreakers after suckering Eugene in after faking an injury. Eugene comes back so HHH begs off again, only to be pulled into a Rock Bottom and a People's Elbow, with the latter being pulled into a spinebuster from HHH.

They head outside again with HHH sending him into the steps, busting Eugene's shoulder open. Back inside and HHH continues toying with him before hooking a sleeper. Eugene shakes his finger at two arm drops before powering up and pounding away. He Hulks Up, catches the boot and does the Austin version of the finger in the face before hitting a Stunner. Back to the floor (again?) and here's Flair.

Eugene hits the big boot and legdrop for two but has to deck Flair. A Pedigree is countered into a catapult and Eugene hits one of his own but it's Flair making the save. Flair trips Eugene and gets ejected, drawing out Regal to knock Flair out cold. The distraction lets HHH hit the Pedigree for the pin on Eugene.

**Rating:** D-. Let's recap: it took fourteen minutes and help from Flair for HHH to beat Eugene. On the other hand, we had to sit through fourteen minutes of HHH vs. Eugene and HHH had to sell most of the offense. AT SUMMERSLAM! This was the death of the Eugene character, even though he would win the tag titles with Regal soon after this. Somehow he went on THREE MORE YEARS, which is remarkable after how stupid this match was.

Now let's waste more time with Divas Dodgeball, which is exactly what it sounds like. This is taking place at a basketball practice facility so you know the live crowd is THRILLED. It's good looking girls basically in swimsuits and another team in uniforms. This is beneath me and that's all there is to it. It's the main roster Divas vs. the Diva Search girls and after about five minutes of intros we get to the two minute game. The Diva Search girls dominate and win.

#### Smackdown World Title: Undertaker vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

No real story here other than Taker has to get a title shot at one PPV a year. They quickly head to the floor and Taker has to glare JBL's goon Orlando Jordan down before punching the champion in the face. Back inside but JBL punches his way out of Old School. A neckbreaker puts Taker down and a side slam gets two. Jibbles hits a top rope shoulder for two more but Taker pulls him down with an armbar of all things.

Now Old School connects and a downward spiral gets two before Taker cranks on a triangle choke. Back up and they trade big boots but Taker has to knock Jordan off the apron. JBL takes him down and wraps the leg around the post before cracking the ankle with a chair. The bad knee is rammed into the announce table and we head back inside with JBL busting out a Robinsdale Crunch of all things.

Off to a side leg lock but Taker quickly counters into a half crab. Taker switches over to a knee bar and the fans are loudly booing. Back up and Taker punches him out to the floor with a big right hand going into JBL's jaw. The fans want the Spanish table but get the apron leg drop and more standing around. Back in and JBL gets punched off the top, setting up an Undertaker superplex but JBL goes right back to the knee to take over. He tries a spinning toehold but gets caught by the throat.

Taker hits a spinebuster of all things for two and the fans are counting down to something. The jumping clothesline puts JBL down but Taker's knee is bothering him. A Snake Eyes and big clothesline combination gets two on the champion. The chokeslam connects but JBL gets a shoulder up to surprise the crowd. Here comes the tombstone but Taker has to get rid of Jordan again, allowing the Clothesline to put the dead man down for two.

Now the fans are behind Undertaker as he pounds away in the corner. There goes the referee and a double big boot puts both guys down. Jordan throws in the title so JBL can knock Taker out but even with Jordan picking up the referee's hand it's only good for two. Another Jordan distraction lets JBL hit a second Clothesline for no cover. He pounds away in the corner and gets caught in the Last Ride but there's STILL no referee. A delayed cover gets two and here's Jordan for the 4<sup>th</sup> time but Taker knocks the title out of his hand, decks JBL with it, and gets caught for the LAME disqualification.

**Rating:** D. I've seen worse matches but the ending dragged it into the ground. This needed about five minutes taken away and added to the previous match to make the best out of everything. The match just went WAY too long and they had to repeat things so many times that the fans were chanting for the table instead of the match. This would be a repetitive pattern for JBL matches for the next eight months or so. Also what happened to Taker's leg injury after about ten minutes in?

Taker chokeslams JBL through the roof of his limousine for revenge and to fill in some time. JBL does a stretcher job.

Wrestlemania 21 is in LA.

Raw World Title: Randy Orton vs. Chris Benoit

Orton won a battle royal a month ago to set this up. It's weird to see Orton with hair, regular colored skin and few tattoos. The fans of course are more interested in telling Earl Hebner that he screwed Bret. Feeling out process to start with Benoit taking it into the corner for a clean break. Benoit takes it to the mat and puts on a hard chinlock which gets him nowhere. Off to a test of strength with the taller Orton taking over,

but Benoit comes back with pure leverage.

Benoit hooks an armbar as we reset a bit. Orton fights up and is armdragged right back down to the mat with Benoit cranking away on the arm. That goes nowhere so Benoit tries a Sharpshooter but Orton kicks him off and puts on one of his own. Benoit counters into his own Sharpshooter but it's not on full, allowing Orton to get to the ropes. The Crossface doesn't go on full either so they head to the floor where Benoit is whipped into the barricade.

There's the Spanish table chant again as Benoit is sent shoulder first into the post. Back in and Orton puts on an armbar of his own, showing some basic psychology. Orton drops him ribs first across the top rope and the fight moves to the outside with Benoit hitting a kind of DDT onto the apron to take over. Chris tries a suicide dive but rams his head into the barricade as Orton moves to the side. Back in and Orton wrenches the neck around before putting on something resembling a camel clutch.

Orton puts Benoit over his shoulder for a powerbomb but steps forward into a neckbreaker for two in a nice move. We hit the chinlock which is actually a smart move here. Back up and both guys hit cross bodies for a double knockout. They slug it out with the champion taking over via a series of forearm to the head. Orton blocks the rolling Germans but gets caught in a northern lights for two.

Randy fights off a superplex and hits a high cross body for two, crushing Benoit's head again in the process. Chris ducks a clothesline and hits a release German suplex before putting on the Sharpshooter. Two arm drops later and Orton gets to the ropes, only to be caught in a long series of rolling Germans for two. Benoit loads up the Swan Dive but Orton gets up the knee, driving it right into Benoit's jaw. That's hard to watch today. Orton's cover is countered into a bad looking Crossface but Orton rolls away to escape. Back up and another Crossface attempt is countered into the RK0 out of nowhere for the pin and the title.

**Rating:** B+. This took a bit to get going but I really liked the ending with the RK0 hitting from nowhere. It caught the technical master off guard which was the right idea given that Orton is younger and faster.

It's a good match and Benoit put Orton over clean right in the middle of the ring. You can't ask for more than that.

Orton celebrates as Benoit leaves but Chris comes back and demands that Orton be a man and shake his hand.

**Overall Rating:** D. This show really wasn't all that good. You have two good matches out of eight on the card (faces being 2-6 on this show didn't help things) with Angle vs. Guerrero having been done better at Wrestlemania and Benoit vs. Orton being done again the next night on Raw. Undertaker vs. JBL would go on for a few more months while Benoit would drop out of the title scene. Orton's push would be stopped cold as HHH would beat him for the title a month later and hold onto it until April because that's what HHH does. This isn't a good show though and is one of the worst Summerslams in a long time.

#### Ratings Comparison

Dudleys vs. Billy Kidman/Paul London/Rey Mysterio

Original: B-

Redo: C

Matt Hardy vs. Kane

Original: B

Redo: C

John Cena vs. Booker T

Original: D

Redo: D+

Chris Jericho vs. Edge vs. Batista

Original: C

Redo: C-

Eddie Guerrero vs. Kurt Angle

Original: C-

Redo: B

HHH vs. Eugene

Original: D

Redo: D-

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Undertaker

Original: B-

Redo: D

Chris Benoit vs. Randy Orton

Original: A

Redo: B+

Overall Rating

Original: C+

Redo: D

What was I thinking on that Undertaker match?

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