

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 1999 (2016 Redo): WCW Flash Forwards

Royal Rumble 1999

Date: January 24, 1999

Location: Arrowhead Pond, Anaheim, California

Attendance: 14,816

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole

What did I ever do to you people? I try to give you all a variety of stuff and somehow I always wind up with freaking Russo. Isn't me freaking out over 2000 WCW enough for your bloody thirsty evildoers? Anyway, it's Austin vs. McMahon at #1 and #2, along with Rock being borderline criminal against Mankind in an I Quit match. Let's get to it.

The opening video makes no secret of the fact that this is all about Austin vs. McMahon. The World Title match isn't even mentioned.

Of note: the theme song here would become Vince's theme for pretty much ever.

Road Dogg vs. Big Boss Man

Road Dogg is Hardcore Champion after beating Boss Man (half of the Tag Team Champions and part of the Corporation) to win the title. Therefore the solution: let them have a regular singles match. Ah the powers of Russo. Even Cole is trying to figure out why the Corporation wouldn't want a chance to get a title. Boss Man is still one of the only people I've ever seen who stands on the bottom rope for his pre-match posing.

Dogg gets shoved down to start and we get an early hair pulling complaint. I hope he files the proper paperwork for that. Or he could just punch Boss Man in the face instead. Boss Man misses a charge in the corner and gets crotched as Lawler tries to explain why this isn't a title match. I'll give him points for trying but it really makes no

sense. Boss Man gets more aggressive but is told this isn't a hardcore match.

The distraction lets Dogg crotch Boss Man against the post but he punches and kicks Dogg down with ease. They're clearly trying really hard to have a regular match but neither guy seems to know how to do it. We hit a bearhug from....well from the person you would expect to use a bearhug in this match. Dogg actually raises the roof to get the crowd on his side but gets dropped with a knee to the ribs.

The referee checking on Dogg allows Boss Man to unhook the turnbuckle pad and we're just waiting on it to come back and cost him. Boss Man wins another slugout but gets caught in a sleeper. That goes nowhere so Dogg has to slam him off the top and it's slugout the fourth. A flying forearm and the shaky knee get two for Dogg but he walks into the Boss Man Slam for the fast pin.

Rating: D. So their big idea was to have one of their most popular acts wrestle a style out of his element against an opponent not capable of wrestling that style and then lose. I've said it before but it deserves repeating: Vince Russo is really not that bright when it comes to putting together shows.

We recap Billy Gunn vs. Ken Shamrock. Gunn had, ahem, exposed himself to to Shamrock's sister Ryan. Ken went psycho (again) and set this up with his Intercontinental Title on the line.

Intercontinental Title: Ken Shamrock vs. Billy Gunn

Gunn is challenging but has a bad ankle coming in. Shamrock is the part of the Corporation and the other half of the Tag Team Champions. It's actually Gunn being the aggressor to start by choking Ken down while Lawler is in full on heel mode here, completely supporting Shamrock for wanting to destroy Billy. A clothesline and delayed vertical get two for Gunn but he misses a charge and goes shoulder first into the post.

Shamrock slowly kicks away until he ducks his head and gets caught in a Fameasser for two. So what exactly is Gunn's finisher then, as that was treated like a nothing move. Gunn misses a charge and falls out to the

floor so Ken can send him hands first into the post. I say first falsely implying that any other part of his body hit the post as well.

Shamrock takes some time to jaw with the fans, allowing Billy to come back with something like a Stroke off the apron and onto the announcers' table. Well at least that looked good. Back in and Ken starts going after the ankle nearly ten minutes into the match. We get some very slow kicks to the ankle as Cole can't remember Gunn ever submitting. Uh, right. Anyway, Shamrock pulls him down by the hair and gets two off a fisherman's suplex.

The referee gets bumped and a double clothesline puts Gunn and Shamrock down as well. Cue Val Venis, who had recent issues with Shamrock, to take the champion down with a DDT. Gunn makes his comeback as there are fans in towels doing Val's gyrations in the crowd. Billy hurts his ankle again coming off the top and the ankle lock retains Ken's title.

Rating: D+. Off the top of my head, I can't remember a less necessary run in. It didn't change anything and they could have done the exact same finish without Venis coming out there. On top of that, the fans are actually pretty quiet. Believe it or not, there isn't a lot of interest in thirty five minutes of a thrown together nothing team beating one of the most popular teams of all time in back to back matches.

Shane McMahon tries to fire up his dad for tonight.

European Title: X-Pac vs. Gangrel

X-Pac is defending of course. Feeling out process to start, which isn't the smartest move in the world for a match that isn't likely to go more than six minutes. X-Pac quickly takes him down and drops a leg for two. It's already time for the rapid fire kicks in the corner but the Bronco Buster only hits corner. Gangrel is smart enough to follow up with a belly to belly for two and we hit a quick chinlock.

That goes nowhere so Gangrel throws him into the air and into a big crash, only to miss a top rope...we'll say elbow. X-Pac starts his comeback with a pair of spinwheel kicks because he's a man of limited awesome. The champ tries a high cross body but Gangrel rolls through for

a three but the referee says two anyway.

Lawler actually has a good explanation by saying the first count was for X-Pac's cover and the other two were for Gangrel. That's not what happened but it's as logical of an explanation as they were going to find. Back up and Gangrel tries to throw X-Pac into the air, only to get pulled down into the X Factor to retain the title.

Rating: C-. Actually not bad here with Gangrel being a totally serviceable worker most of the time. That being said, there's almost no story here as the announcers didn't have any reason for these two to be fighting. At least the fans finally had something to cheer for a change though as it's been a lot of energy killing losses so far.

DX says they're a family but tonight it's every man (and woman according to Chyna) for themselves.

Here's Shane McMahon to introduce Luna Vachon, who he says is winning the Women's Title due to Sable having a bad back. Sable comes out and says ring the bell. I have no idea what connection Shane has to this feud and the announcers didn't seem to bother explaining the story.

Women's Title: Luna Vachon vs. Sable

Sable is defending and this is a strap match. Luna bails to the floor to start but gets pulled face first into the post. Back in and Sable chokes away as Shane calls Luna hot. Sable can only get two buckles though until Luna pulls her down. That earns Sable a whipping and some kicks in the corner, only to have Luna hit a quick backbreaker.

Luna starts dragging her around to three buckles with Sable slapping them as they go. Of course Luna doesn't notice because wrestling logic is screwy. Sable flips over Luna and goes for the fourth buckle but Shane gets on the apron for a distraction, which somehow doesn't count as a break in the momentum. Not that it matters as Sable's insane fan jumps the barricade and decks Luna, allowing Sable to hit the fourth buckle and retain the title.

Rating: F+. I really can't stand these gimmick matches getting less than

five minutes but they're a Russo staple. The problem here is there's no real reason to have all these stories going on, along with no time to build up any drama and advance the story of the match. In other words, it's too little material in too little time and it drags the whole thing down.

The Corporation debates over who gets to eliminate Austin and win the \$100,000 bounty Vince has put on his head tonight.

We recap Mankind vs. the Rock. Mankind won the title on January 4 and Rock wanted a rematch. He offered various stipulations to Mankind before saying he quit trying. That was enough to get Mankind to agree because he knew he would never quit. Therefore it's time for an I Quit match for the title. Mankind summed it up very simply with a question to Rock: "How does it feel to be in a match you can't win and I can't lose?"

A fired up Rock guarantees to win because he's just that awesome. Watching Beyond the Mat has kind of ruined this for me as it showed Mankind standing about two feet away while Rock was talking here.

WWF World Title: The Rock vs. Mankind

Mankind is defending and this is an I Quit match. Also of note, Mankind had to face Mabel (Viscera) on Sunday Night Heat, resulting in a bad rib injury. Rock gets pounded into the corner to start and Mankind hits his running knee to the head. Some right hands won't make Rock quit yet though so Mankind hits him with the microphone. They head outside with Mankind going knees first into the steps in one of his trademark bumps. Is there any shock that he can barely walk around today?

Rock goes over to do commentary so Mankind blasts him in the head with a chair, only to draw another no. The Mandible Claw knocks Rock mostly out but he won't quit. Mankind tries to take him into the crowd but charges into a belly to belly right back over the barricade for a big crash. Back to ringside with Rock loading up a Rock Bottom through the Spanish announce table but it quickly breaks under their weight. Since it wasn't really worse for either guy, Mankind is right back up and sending Rock into the post.

The fight goes up the aisle with Rock shrugging off right hands and DDTing the champ on the floor. For some reason Rock thinks it's smart to bring in a ladder but a hard shot still won't make Mankind quit. Rock climbs the ladder next to the technical area and Mankind follows him up to a little catwalk. A low blow stops Mankind and Rock rams him off the stand and onto the equipment, causing an explosion and the loss of the arena lights.

The match basically stops as Shane comes out but Rock says there's not going to be a doctor because Mankind is going to quit. Mankind can barely move so Rock drags him back to the ring as this is now a much slower pace. With nothing else working, Rock handcuffs Mankind behind his back and it's about to get ugly.

Some right hands and rams into the buckle have Mankind bleeding but he kicks Rock low to get a breather. Another low blow has Rock in trouble (and the receding hairline doesn't do him much good either) but of course he won't quit. A clothesline puts Mankind down and now it's time to get scary.

Rock puts a chair over Mankind's face for a People's elbow but he still won't quit. Now we get the infamous part of the match as Rock hits him a ridiculous eleven straight times in the head with Mankind not being able to defend himself in the slightest. Even Lawler says that's enough after two shots. Mankind is completely out as Rock puts the mic to his mouth and a recording of Mankind's voice from weeks ago says he quits to give Rock the title back.

Rating: B-. That ending is too much to take and is almost more brutal than the Cell match against Undertaker. The beating just kept going and going with Mankind looking weaker and weaker every time. Apparently Rock hit him about three times as much as he was supposed to and Foley's family was terrified (justly so) over what they saw. The rest of the match is good enough but the ending is one of the scariest things you'll ever see in wrestling, or anywhere for that matter.

We recap Austin vs. Vince which just happens to be taking place in the Royal Rumble. There's no secret about the fact that this is all about

those two and to be fair that's the only thing anyone wanted to see. Austin is #1 and Vince is #2, meaning we're going to see them for at least ninety seconds. Vince has also put a \$100,000 bounty on Austin's head, in case you didn't have enough stories going on yet.

Also earlier tonight, Austin crushed some cars with his monster truck and then beat up the Stooges in the arena. I'm not sure what that adds to anything but it's a thing that happened. As usual, such is life in Russo's WWF.

Royal Rumble

Austin is in at #1 and Vince is in at #2 and the intervals are ninety seconds. Fink takes FOREVER to do the full rules and Lawler is telling him to shut up. Fair point too as he's explaining what does and does not constitute eliminations. Of note here, we get the debut of Vince's chiseled physique which was a real shock as no one had ever seen his arms before. Austin pounds away to start (shocking I know) but opts not to throw Vince out as Golga (Earthquake in a mask as part of the Oddities, which is one of the most bizarre character changes I've ever seen) is in at #3.

Golga goes after Austin but gets dumped in fifteen seconds. Vince bails under the ropes and goes into the crowd to give us a chase scene. They fight into the concourse as Droz is #4 and this is where the match starts to fall apart. If Austin and Vince are going to fight through the back, why have Golga get eliminated when you could do Golga vs. Droz? It's not much (save for a battle of really strange names) but at the moment, the fans in the arena are paying to see Droz stand around doing absolutely nothing.

This is even more proof that Russo is a good idea man but has no idea how to run an actual show. It's not even a complicated concept: you need to give the fans something to watch. I know there are more people on the other side of the camera but you can't forget the people who paid money to come see you. It's poor planning and shows a severe lack of thinking, which is Russo in part of a nutshell.

Speaking of Russo, we see Austin getting beaten down by the Corporation

until the camera cuts off. That means we cut back to Droz who is...standing there. Yeah this is really what you're paying to see: a guy standing in the ring doing nothing. Edge comes in at #5 to give us something but the fans are now dead because they've lost Austin and Vince (neither of whom were eliminated) but they're stuck with two uninteresting guys that have no chance of winning.

After nothing of note, here's Gillberg (with full Goldberg entrance) at #6 to keep this stupid. Gillberg is out in just a few seconds as we cut to Austin unconscious in the ladies room. Steve Blackman is in at #7 as Austin is stretchered out. The clock is flying by now as they need to get some action going to revive the crowd. Dan Severn is in at #8 as the lack of star power is already making this horrible.

We see Austin going into the ambulance, which to be fair is more interesting than four nothings (remember that Edge wasn't a big thing for a long time to come) wasting time in the ring. Tiger Ali Singh, one of the biggest misfires you'll ever seen, is in at #9. Blue Meanie is in at #10 and we're somehow a third of the way through this.

After Austin and Vince, the biggest name in the match so far has been....geez I guess Droz. What this match needed was a midcard act to clean out the deadwood (Shamrock perhaps) until some popular act (maybe the Outlaws) came in to balance him out. Put Shamrock in at about #8 and the Outlaws in at about #13 and #16 respectfully, then pick up the pace again later on. But no, let's have this huge bunch of nothing in the ring to kill the crowd until we get back to Austin vs. Vince at the end because Heaven forbid Russo come up with anything besides one idea.

There's no one at #11 but we cut to the back (again) to see Mabel destroying Mosh and taking his spot. Blackman and Severn are quickly put out with Singh following them a few seconds later. Road Dogg is in at #12 to FINALLY give the fans someone they care about. Meanie is dumped as well, leaving us Edge, Mabel and Road Dogg in the ring.

Edge is eliminated a few seconds later but there go the lights because we haven't had an angle in a few seconds. It's the Ministry of Darkness (is there a reason Undertaker isn't on this card?) to eliminate Mabel and

here's Undertaker to hypnotize him, leading to Mabel becoming Viscera. Therefore, we have ANOTHER lull as Dogg is all alone.

Gangrel is in at #13 and doesn't last thirty seconds, giving us the third lull of the first half of the match. Add that to the fact that save for Austin and McMahon who haven't been seen in twenty minutes, the first eleven entrants are already gone, making the first third of the match completely worthless. Kurrigan is in at #14 and beats on the Dogg until Al Snow is in at #15, only to be eliminated in less than a minute.

Goldust is in at #16 to interrupt Dogg vs. Kurrigan II. Dogg knocks both of them down and gets the fans breathing again with a SUCK IT. Here's Godfather at #17 as it occurs to me that three of these people will be Intercontinental Champion in less than three months. They go from boring everyone here to having a title in that span of time. Again, only Russo.

Kane is in at #18 to FINALLY give us someone who might have a prayer of a chance at winning this thing. He clears the ring in thirty seconds but here are people from the mental institution to reclaim Kane, who eliminates himself and runs through the crowd. So yeah, we now have NO ONE IN THE RING, meaning that when Shamrock comes in at #19, he has nothing to do but stand around as we wait for an opponent. Oh wait Vince comes back to do commentary as we're just sitting around.

As we wait, allow me to point out that save for the first two, the first eighteen entrants have all been eliminated, making nearly two thirds of the match completely worthless. Billy Gunn comes in at #20, wearing one boot. Heaven forbid we get anything going through as Shamrock takes him down with a kick to the bad ankle. Gunn throws him into the corner for a break but Ken goes after the ankle again.

Test is in at #21 but let's cut to Mabel being put in a hearse. As luck would have it, an ambulance pulls in with Austin driving, because he was able to wake up, commandeer the ambulance, and drive back here in the span of half an hour. We FINALLY go back to the ring where Gunn low blows both guys. Big Boss Man is in at #22 to line up the Corporation members for Austin, who comes down and chases Vince off. Shamrock is quickly dumped and Vince is back on commentary.

It's HHH at #23 as you can see the star power starting up because we couldn't have them in there earlier in the match because of whatever reasons. People start taking worthless shots at Austin, who blasts Gunn with a hard clothesline. Val Venis is in at #24 and Austin dumps Gunn, giving us Vince, Austin, Test, Venis, Boss Man and HHH. X-Pac is in at #25 as Lawler wants to know why no one is going after Austin. Fair point, but the answer would be "because the script says they shouldn't."

X-Pac kicks Austin in the face and it's Mark Henry at #26 to a far bigger reaction than you would expect. Jeff Jarrett is in at #27 as there's just nothing going on between these entrants. The stupidity continues as X-Pac is the only one going after Austin and it's likely not even due to the money. D'Lo Brown is #28, still feeling guilty for making Terri Runnels suffer a miscarriage. Austin easily dumps Test and Boss Man gets rid of X-Pac a few seconds later.

Henry clotheslines HHH and Jarrett goes after Austin, prompting Vince to praise him in something that sounds bizarre today. HHH gets rid of Jarrett and it's Owen Hart taking his place at #29. Owen and Brown double team Austin until HHH makes the save, presumably to get all the money for himself. Austin slips to the floor and throws water at Vince. Chyna is the first woman in the history of the Rumble at #30 and immediately dumps Henry. That earns her an elimination from Austin and we're down to Austin, Vince, HHH, Venis, Brown, Boss Man and Owen.

We get Austin vs. HHH in a fall preview but HHH has to eliminate Venis. Austin uses the distraction to Stun HHH and toss him, leaving us with four in the ring. Brown misses a dropkick on Austin (why are these two fighting in the final five of the Royal Rumble?) and everything slows down AGAIN. Owen enziguris Austin but gets backdropped out. Boss Man punches Austin down and D'Lo hits the Low Down, only to have Boss Man throw him out.

A Stunner is enough to get rid of Boss Man and we're down to Austin vs. Vince. Well of course we are. They fight on the floor (read as Austin beats him up even more) before Vince hits a quick low blow instead. That earns him a Stunner but Rock comes out for a distraction, allowing Vince to dump Austin and win the Rumble.

Rating: F. Do I even need to explain this one? You had Austin, possibly at the peak of his popularity, and even he couldn't get anything out of the fans. It's further proof that you can't just treat your fans like garbage the entire night and then expect them to pop for your one idea.

On top of that, these shows continue to not be able to hold up. Can you imagine if this happened today? No one would buy Vince as keeping the title shot because there was no way that could happen. This result was designed to get people to watch Raw the next night to see how Austin was going to get out of this one. That's fine at the time, but it really doesn't hold up on a second viewing in the slightest.

It really is amazing when you consider that Russo somehow put together the worst Royal Rumble ever, followed by maybe the worst Wrestlemania of all time just two months later. Why in the world would someone think that he should be given even more power and authority? This was one of the biggest disasters I've ever seen and it's almost painful to sit through all over again.

Shane and the Stooges come out to celebrate, meaning it's time for beers. This goes on for a bit until a two minute highlight package takes us out.

Overall Rating: F+. Let's recap here. On a six match card, you had two face wins with X-Pac and Gangrel. In other words, the face wins came in the most meaningless matches on the card. As I said in the redos of some WCW pay per views, you have to give the fans something to cheer for. This was one of the worst major shows I can remember in a long time and it's almost all because of Russo not knowing how to write a wrestling show. This is one of those rare shows with almost nothing positive going on and it's really amazing that they actually put this on and expected people to be entertained.

Ratings Comparison

Big Boss Man vs. Road Dogg

Original: C-

2013 Redo: C-

2016 Redo: D

Ken Shamrock vs. Billy Gunn

Original: D+

2013 Redo: C+

2016 Redo: D+

X-Pac vs. Gangrel

Original: B-

2013 Redo: C+

2016 Redo: C-

Sable vs. Luna Vachon

Original: F

2013 Redo: D

2016 Redo: F+

The Rock vs. Mankind

Original: B

2013 Redo: B

2016 Redo: B-

Royal Rumble

Original: F

2013 Redo: F

2016 Redo: F

Overall Rating

Original: D-

2013 Redo: D

2016 Redo: F+

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/18/royal-rumble-count-up-1999-please-make-it-stop/>

And the original redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/01/12/royal-rumble-count-up-2013-redo-1999-disturbing-to-watch-for-multiple-reasons/>

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