

Summerslam Count-Up – Summerslam 2003 (2018 Redo): The Second One

Summerslam 2003

Date: August 24, 2003

Location: America West Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Attendance: 16,113

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

It's one of the biggest shows of the year and I can't bring myself to get excited over it. This show really hasn't been built up very well with only the Smackdown World Title match with Kurt Angle defending against Brock Lesnar offering much interest. The rest of the show feels very flat, especially the Raw World Title match which should have been Goldberg vs. HHH. Let's get to it.

The United States Marine Corps Color Guard presents the flag and Lillian Garcia sings the National Anthem. As always, it's an outstanding performance.

The opening video shows a beach but the sun goes behind a cloud and the shot shifts to the Elimination Chamber. The narration basically makes it sounds like the Chamber is poisoning everyone's souls and turning them all evil, including Kane, who isn't even in the thing. I'd bet money that Jim Ross wrote that, thinking it sounded even more dramatic than when he gives the Cell human characteristics.

Raw Tag Team Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. La Resistance

La Resistance is defending and Bubba brings out the American flag. The Dudleys jump them in the aisle and the beatdown is on with D-Von choking Dupree with the robe. An armdrag into an armbar (FEEL THE HATRED!) doesn't go very well as Dupree takes D-Von into the corner so the champs can take over. D-Von is right back with the shots to the head, allowing the tag off to the very loud Bubba. It might be annoying, but I can

always go for a partner making noise and being active on the apron instead of just standing there.

Grenier gets tied in the Tree of Woe so Bubba can stand between his legs for a loud scream. It's not quite table time, allowing Grenier to get in a cheap shot so the champs can really take over. Dupree grabs a bearhug, which is quite the odd visual on someone as big as Bubba. A Bubba Bomb gets him out of trouble though and the not very hot tag brings in D-Von for the house cleaning.

Dupree gets powerslammed for two but the champs clear the ring again. The double spinebuster gets two on D-Von (there's the crowd reaction, and all it took was kicking out of the champs' finisher). Bubba comes back in for the Flip, Flop and Fly, followed by What's Up on Grenier. 3D connects but Grenier pulls the referee out, allowing a cameraman to deck D-Von with his camera, giving Dupree the pin. It's the serviceman from Raw of course.

Rating: C-. The match was ok, but not exactly the hottest choice in the world for an opener. Having the Americans lose to the EVIL Frenchmen doesn't quite get the show off on the right foot and now we're likely to see another rematch between these teams as this feud to show off THE POWERS OF AMERICA continues. La Resistance is fine to hold the titles, but they need something more than "we are French and therefore evil".

Post match Spike Dudley comes in and gets beaten down as well. So after the big American military opening and carrying the flag, the Dudleys lose to the heatless champions again. The Dudleys would get the belts back a month later, but instead we need to see them lose here. Of course we also needed this match instead of the World's Greatest Tag Team, Rey Mysterio, John Cena or Christian.

Coach tries to talk to the Dudleys but makes the mistake of praising La Resistance's success. Bubba declares that people who hate America suck and promises to get the belts back.

Christian asks Eric Bischoff why he's not on the show but Eric blames Steve Austin. Since he can't wrestle, he offers to be Bischoff's backup tonight. Bischoff has a plan though and promises to tell the world what

happened with Linda on Monday.

We recap A-Train running Stephanie McMahon over last month and costing her a match against Sable. This turned into A-Train vs. Undertaker and WWE actually expects us to believe that this isn't going to turn into Sable vs. Stephanie again.

A-Train vs. Undertaker

Sable is with A-Train in a rather nice outfit. Undertaker has bad ribs so he dodges a bit to start instead of going in full steam ahead. Instead of staying on the ribs, A-Train tries a headlock, allowing Undertaker to knee him in the ribs and take over. The running DDT gets two on A-Train and Old School connects early on. A shot to the ribs finally cuts Undertaker off (thanks for finally getting the idea Train) and some forearms to the ribs are good for two.

A-Train stays on the ribs with a vertical suplex, followed by a headbutt. Cole: "It's like being hit in the head with a typewriter." Normally I would question that, but Cole is the kind of dolt who would do that for fun. Undertaker manages Snake Eyes and a double clothesline puts both guys down for a quick rest.

A slugout goes to Undertaker (well duh) and a big legdrop gets two. For some reason Undertaker tries the Last Ride but a shove gives us a ref bump. The Derailer of course gets a delayed two and the referee gets bumped again. That is way, WAY too popular of a booking trope these days. A-Train hits the bicycle kick to take Undertaker down but gets a chair kicked into his face for two. The chokeslam gives Undertaker the pin.

Rating: D. Matches against power guys like this can be Undertaker's bread and butter but there's only so much you can do to make A-Train interesting. The match wasn't terrible and they kept it slow enough, but this Undertaker stands up for Stephanie thing is about as forced as you can get. There's only so much you can do as a surrogate for Vince vs. Stephanie, especially when the best villain available for the spot is A-Train.

Post match Undertaker loads up the Last Ride but Sable comes in and rubs

his chest. Undertaker grabs her by the throat and STEPHANIE IS BACK!!! WE CAN LIVE HAPPY LIVES AGAIN!!! Stephanie gets to do some catfighting until A-Train pulls Sable out. I guess this is what passes for a big moment around here.

Some fans in the front row think Goldberg is going to win the Chamber. Uh, thanks for that.

We recap Shane McMahon vs. Eric Bischoff, which starts off looking a lot like Shane vs. Kane. Bischoff then decided that he hated Shane for stealing WCW from him back in 2001. You know, because that's a story people were thinking about. Eric went after Shane, including having Kane attack him and cost him a match against Eric.

Then Eric went to Connecticut and may have forced himself on Linda McMahon. It came out of almost nowhere and really was more of a complicated way to get to Kane vs. Shane. It's more of WWE thinking you could just toss a McMahon into a story and everything would be fine, which doesn't work as well when you do it in two straight matches.

Shane McMahon vs. Eric Bischoff

Before the match, Bischoff addresses what happened with Linda, saying it happened again and again and again. Now he knows where Shane gets all of his energy, so here's Shane in a...complete non hurry actually. Shane pounds him down in the corner with reckless abandon (Or is it still Ruthless Aggression?), followed by some forearm to the ear (called crossfaces by JR).

Eric can't make it up the aisle as Christian might be coming off like a good idea right about now. A baseball slide sends Eric into the barricade as this has been one sided so far. Shane's dancing punches take Bischoff down again but the Coach of all people comes in to chair Shane down. Let me make sure I've got this straight: Bischoff thought COACH was a better option than the Intercontinental Champion? I get that they want to protect Christian from having to get beaten up by Shane but that makes no sense from Bischoff's perspective.

Eric says he's restarting the match as falls count anywhere with no

disqualifications so Coach sends Shane into the steps for two. They head inside where Bischoff tells the production staff to cut JR and King's microphones so Coach can do live commentary in the ring. Bischoff throws kicks as Coach does the traditional job of mocking JR. Shane finally gets in a kick of his own and scores with a DDT, only to have Coach hit him low.

That's enough to make the glass shatter, as everyone knew was coming. Coach does the "I'm not touching you" thing until Shane shoves him into Austin, meaning the beatdown can be on. The dispatching doesn't take long and Austin orders JR and King's mics be turned on again. Austin is about to leave but Shane grabs Bischoff's hand and slaps Austin in the jaw, meaning a Stunner is perfectly acceptable. Shane pulls him up at two though, as the big elbow drives Bischoff through the announcers' table for the pin.

Rating: F. What did this accomplish? There's no reason this couldn't have been the end of Monday Night Raw as the big deal was Coach turning heel. Use this valuable pay per view time (some of the biggest pay per view time of the year) on the people who matter, not for the sake of making Kane look good because he never gets to do that otherwise. This was really annoying, especially when you consider everything that was left off the show so this could get a lot of time.

Beer is consumed post match because this hasn't eaten up enough time yet.

HHH and Ric Flair get very serious with Randy Orton, telling him that he needs to focus on keeping the title on HHH and nothing more. Orton: "What? I got it."

US Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Benoit vs. Tajiri vs. Rhyno

Eddie is defending under tornado rules and one fall to a finish. Tony Chimmel tells us that this is the four way for the US Title before telling us that this is the four way for the US Title. It's a brawl to start with Eddie staying on the floor, which might not be the smartest move in the world here. With Tajiri sent outside, Benoit snaps the Crossface onto Rhyno, drawing Eddie in for the save. Rhyno clotheslines Tajiri for two and Eddie is there for the save again. Eddie gets triple

teamed but Rhyno shifts over to Benoit for some reason.

A powerslam gives Rhyno two on Eddie as it's still all over the place, albeit not at the fastest pace. Rhyno and Benoit are sent outside, leaving Tajiri to monkey flip Eddie for two. All four are back in with Rhyno superplexing Eddie for two with Tajiri making the save. Tajiri gets the same by kicking Benoit in the head but the champ saves this time. A headscissors puts Rhyno on the floor and Eddie's rope walk hurricanrana gets two on Benoit.

Tajiri comes back in and gets caught in the Lasso From El Paso but Benoit quickly follows with a Crossface on Rhyno. Eddie isn't sure what to do but Tajiri making the ropes makes his decision much easier. That earns Eddie a Crossface of his own until Rhyno and Tajiri break it up. Rhyno busts up Tajiri's spine for two and it's Benoit rolling some German suplexes to make Tajiri feel even worse.

Tajiri manages to get in one of his own though and bridges back for a close two, leaving everyone down at once. Back up and Tajiri gets Benoit in the Tarantula, leaving Rhyno to Gore Eddie. The problem is Eddie had the US Title in his hands to bust up Rhyno's shoulder, leaving him down in pain. Benoit's Swan Dive gets two as Tajiri dives in for a save, only to have both of them fall outside. Eddie sneaks in with a frog splash to pin Rhyno and retain the title.

Rating: B-. This was a good match that was trying hard to be great. There were a few too many dead spots in there though and they never hit a higher gear that they were capable of, but at least they did well with what they did. Eddie stealing the pin after cheating with the belt makes perfect sense for him and it's the right idea to keep the title on him with the roll he's currently on.

We look at Brock Lesnar destroying Zach Gowen, who will be out for a good while as a result.

Earlier tonight on Heat, Matt Hardy accepted a forfeit win over Gowen.

We recap Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle. Brock beat Angle for the title at Wrestlemania and Angle went on the shelf. While he was out, Angle and

Lesnar became friends, which lead them to Vengeance where Angle won the title back in a triple threat. A few weeks later, Lesnar turned on Angle to join forces with Vince in the name of being the REAL Brock Lesnar. Brock attacked Angle in a cage and left him laying, which has only ticked Angle off coming in to the title match.

Smackdown World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Brock Lesnar

Brock is challenging and we actually get an old school rules explanation from the referee. They hit the mat to start with Angle getting the better of it (not exactly shocking) and frustrating Lesnar early on. Another takedown looks to set up the ankle lock but Kurt goes to a headlock that Brock can break far more easily. Odd thinking there. Back up and Brock shoves him away without too much effort so Angle armdrags Lesnar outside, frustrating Brock all over again.

Kurt follows him outside and starts in on Brock's knee before sending him into the barricade. Back in and the first suplex gets two on Brock, who responds by gorilla pressing him out to the floor in a big crash (great visual with Angle just falling to the floor). Now it's Brock's turn for a suplex as he's starting to look all surly. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two on Kurt and we hit the rear naked choke before that meant much to a lot of fans. It's off to a regular bodyscissors instead, followed by a chinlock.

Of course Angle fights up (after Brock let go of two better holds), this time being cut down by a hard knee to the ribs. A hard clothesline drops Angle again and the move that would become known as Shell Shock (complete with walking around the ring) gives Brock two. Some shoulders in the corner stay on Angle's ribs so Kurt hits him in the face. You don't do that to Lesnar though and Angle gets more shoulders to his ribs for his efforts.

Brock's big running charge goes into the post though and Kurt's running shoulder block staggers Lesnar. A dropkick to the knee has Brock in more trouble and it's time to roll the German suplexes (with Lesnar holding the shoulder off each one). The Angle Slam doesn't work and Brock goes back to the ribs with a spinebuster. Since one finisher is countered, the

other has to be as well so Kurt reverses the F5 into a good looking DDT for two of his own. Now the Angle Slam is good for two and Angle is even more fired up.

In my favorite Angle spot, he puts the straps back up so he can take them down all over again. The ankle lock goes on but Brock rolls forward, sending Angle into the referee. Kurt charges at him for what looks like a sunset flip but stops halfway, wrapping his legs around Brock's neck and arm (almost in an upside down triangle choke). Since that's not the easiest hold to maintain, Angle switches over to the ankle lock for the tap but there's no referee.

Cue Vince to chair Angle in the back, setting up the F5 for a delayed two. Another F5 is reversed into the ankle lock to put Brock in real trouble. He grabs all four bottom ropes but the hold isn't broken for absolutely no apparent reasons, meaning Brock has to tap to retain Angle's title.

Rating: B+. It's not quite their Wrestlemania match but Angle getting his win back makes sense...in theory. They've been building Lesnar up as the unstoppable monster for the last few weeks so it would have made sense to have him win here (with Vince's help) before losing the rematch down the line. That being said, I'm fine with Angle retaining here as it makes sense from the long term. In other words, this one depends on how you look at it, but it's a rather strong match either way.

Vince gets an Angle Slam through a chair to wish him a happy birthday.

We recap Kane vs. Rob Van Dam. Kane lost his mask and despite Van Dam trying to calm him down and say that he didn't need the mask, Kane went crazy and started destroying everything in his path. This included beating up Van Dam, Shane McMahon and Linda McMahon and setting Jim Ross on fire. This seems to be setting up Kane vs. Shane, but first Van Dam gets his shot tonight.

Kane vs. Rob Van Dam

No Holds Barred, which is added right before the match. JR refers to Kane as the "byproduct of an inbred mongrel dog". As I so often wonder of both

JR and Jim Cornette: WHERE DO THEY COME UP WITH THIS STUFF??? Van Dam tries to start fast but gets clotheslined down in short order. They head outside with Kane sending him into the barricade but charging into a boot, allowing Rob to follow up with another kick to the face.

Van Dam gets posted though and it's time for a ladder. Rob is smart enough to kick it into his face, followed by a top rope kick to the chest. A crossbody puts them both on the floor and of course Kane takes over again. The announcers talk about what Kane did to Linda, which is both a good and bad idea. It's good in that it shows you what Kane is capable of and how evil he is, but it also shows you how unimportant this match is because it's all about Shane vs. Kane down the line.

Back in and another kick to Kane's face knocks him into the corner (there's certainly a pattern here) as JR deems Kane smelly. Kane shoves Rob off the top and down onto the barricade as the violence starts to go the monster's way again. The ladder to the face drops Rob again and it's time for some simple choking. Thankfully the referee doesn't break it up because that comes off as barring a hold, which might get a lawyer involved with his life.

Rob gets kicked outside again and this time Kane follows by going to the top, only to dive into the barricade by mistake (that looked bad on replay as Kane seemed to slip, leaving him without enough distance and sending him head first into the barricade). Now it's Rob getting in a ladder shot, which Kane of course shrugs off.

A DDT on the floor knocks Rob silly but he's able to drop toehold Kane into the steps. The spinning kick from the apron drops Kane again, followed by Rolling Thunder onto the chair. Kane sits up so Rob dropkicks the chair into his face for good measure. The Van Terminator misses though and a Tombstone onto the steps is enough to end Rob.

Rating: B. Nice brawl here but I couldn't shake the feeling that it didn't mean anything given the story they've already told us is coming. Rob was trying here though and made the match fun, especially with the story of the wrestling going to Van Dam and the hardcore stuff going to Kane, but we're heading for Kane vs. Shane and everyone knows it.

Bischoff is banged up and doesn't want to talk about his loss but Linda McMahon comes in. Eric starts stammering and gets slapped in the face as the billionaire gets revenge. I can totally relate.

Flair gives HHH a final pep talk.

The Chamber is lowered.

Long recap on the main event, which also features a look at the Chamber. HHH was scheduled to defend against Goldberg one on one but a torn groin necessitated a multi-person match because Heaven forbid HHH take a spear and Jackhammer and lose in a short match with the excuse that he wasn't ready or was wrestling hurt or any other idea they had. Somehow we get Kevin Nash in another main event though, because that's what the world was waiting for. There have been some personal issues added after the match announcement but it still feels a little thrown together.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Goldberg vs. Shawn Michaels vs. Randy Orton vs. Chris Jericho vs. Kevin Nash

The intervals are three minutes this year because we need to move this along. Goldberg slips during his entrance, which is edited out of the Network version (though he goes from standing in the middle of the stage to a few steps to the right off a camera cut). Shawn and Jericho start us off as the fans chant for Goldberg. They hit the mat to start for the Flair pinfall reversal sequence before trading slaps.

Shawn backdrops him but has to switch to a small package to escape the Walls attempt. Jericho can't hit the Lionsault so instead we'll listen to JR mess up history by saying this title has only changed hands once before in Arizona. That's some nice sounding trivia, but remember that this title isn't even a year old yet and has its own lineage. Sure that doesn't mean much, but this is the way WWE has set things up and they can't keep it straight. Anyway, Orton is in third with a high crossbody for two on Shawn, followed by the signature backbreaker gets the same on Jericho.

The RKO is broken up though and Jericho backdrops Orton onto the steel. Now the Walls work just fine on Shawn but it's Kevin Nash in fourth.

That's enough for Jericho to break it up and go after Nash, who isn't happy with his new haircut. I find it rather spiffy, even as Nash throws Jericho into the Chamber wall. Nash's side slam gets two on Orton and Jericho is busted open. Nash goes over for a Jackknife, only to get superkicked down, allowing Jericho to roll him up for the pin, meaning Nash was in there for all of two minutes.

HHH is in fifth....and Shawn superkicks him right back into the pod. Nash isn't done yet though and Jackknifes Jericho and Orton as a parting gift. Shawn, who is down off throwing a superkick, covers both villains for two each. Everyone punches it out until Goldberg is in to complete the field. Right hands and forearms abound and it's the spear to get rid of Orton in short order. Jericho gets launched onto the cage floor again and another spear sends him through the Plexiglas.

As Goldberg gets back in, Shawn scores with a forearm followed by the top rope elbow. Sweet Chin Music misses though and it's a spear and Jackhammer to get us down to three. The same thing gets rid of Jericho and it's HHH (who still hasn't gotten out of the pod) vs. Goldberg for the title.

Flair shuts the pod again and holds it shut as well as he can, only to have Goldberg break the "unbreakable Plexiglas". Some right hands keep HHH in trouble and Goldberg sends him into the Chamber walls a few times. A clothesline takes him down again and HHH is busted open. Goldberg loads up the spear but Flair slips HHH the sledgehammer to knock Goldberg cold and the title is retained.

Rating: D. This wasn't even twenty minutes long. The best way to describe this match would be a middle finger to the fans who are nearly dying to see HHH lose that freaking title already but we need to make sure he's ready to give Goldberg the rub or something. I'm not sure how WWE can validate keeping the title on HHH when they have Goldberg right there and HHH can barely move, but I'm sure it's just the right thing to do, at least according to HHH. That's 2003 in a nutshell: cheer for whomever you want, but you get HHH.

The rest of the match was of course nothing because Goldberg was the only

person who could conceivably win the thing. Instead of something competitive and compelling, it was fifteen minutes of waiting around on Goldberg, then Goldberg crushing people for a few minutes, and then HAHA IT'S THE SLEDGEHAMMER AGAIN! The ending was so deflating that there's not

Evolution beats Goldberg down and handcuffs him to the Chamber because WWE needs to demonstrate how to book Goldberg.

Overall Rating: D. The show isn't even that bad, but rather almost completely flat. There are a few good matches with Brock vs. Angle being a highlight but that just made me want to watch the Wrestlemania match again. The TV coming into this show has been really dull due to a lot of McMahons and while they were used more sparingly here, you could still feel them throughout the whole show. That main event really took the life out of the whole thing though and there was nothing else that was going to fix things. Not a good show, but it could have been worse.

Ratings Comparison

La Resistance vs. Dudley Boys

Original: C

2013 Redo: D+

2018 Redo: C-

A-Train vs. Undertaker

Original: D

2013 Redo: D

2018 Redo: D

Eric Bischoff vs. Shane McMahon

Original: D

2013 Redo: N/A

2018 Redo: F

Rhyno vs. Tajiri vs. Chris Benoit vs. Eddie Guerrero

Original: B-

2013 Redo: B+

2018 Redo: B-

Kurt Angle vs. Brock Lesnar

Original: A-

2013 Redo: B

2018 Redo: B+

Kane vs. Rob Van Dam

Original: C-

2013 Redo: C-

2018 Redo: B

HHH vs. Goldberg vs. Shawn Michaels vs. Chris Jericho vs. Kevin Nash vs.
Randy Orton

Original: D

2013 Redo: C-

2018 Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: D+

2013 Redo: C

2018 Redo: D

That's one of the hardest swings I've ever had on a show but you can see a little consistency in there somewhere.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/08/06/history-of-summerslam-count-up-2003-brock-vs-angle-ii/>

And the 2013 Redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/08/08/summerslam-count-up-2003-meet-the-old-hhh-same-as-the-new-hhh/>

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