

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania IX (2015 Redo): I Guess It Could Be Worse

Wrestlemania IX

Date: April 4, 1993

Location: Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada

Attendance: 16,891

Commentators: Jim Ross, Bobby Heenan, Randy Savage

This is one of the weakest cards the series has ever seen. Nothing on the show feels important with the main event of Bret Hart defending the WWF World Title against Royal Rumble winner Yokozuna feeling lukewarm at best. The second biggest match is Hulk Hogan/Brutus Beefcake challenging Money Inc. for the Tag Team Titles. Like I said: not the strongest card. Let's get to it.

Gorilla Monsoon is the host this year, meaning he'll be on screen for less than five minutes. Like everyone else, Monsoon is in a toga because it's a toga party. I'm still not sure who thought this was a good idea.

In one of the major moments of the show, Jim Ross (JR) makes his WWF debut and talks about the main events before taking his place as lead commentator. I really could have gone through life without ever seeing him in a toga.

Finkus Maximus (just go with it) introduces Caesar and Cleopatra on an elephant while JR gives a history of elephants and Rome. This is kind of missing the point of a wrestling show but Randy Savage is brought out on a sedan to make things a bit better. To really cap it off, Heenan comes out riding a camel backwards.

Intercontinental Title: Shawn Michaels vs. Tatanka

Shawn is defending after winning the title in November and has Luna Vachon, a rather scary woman with several tattoos on her face, trailing

behind him. Tatanka is still undefeated and Sherri follows him out but it's not clear if they're associated. Heenan: "She's here to beg Shawn Michaels to take her back!" Savage: "Wrong again camel breath." Shawn goes for the leg to start but Tatanka kicks him away a few times as Heenan recaps the history here, roughly three minutes after JR did so.

The champ grabs a headlock for a bit before going up top, only to dive into an armdrag. More weak armdrags send Shawn to the mat before he channels his inner Nature Boy with a Flair Flip in the corner. A Tatanka chop knocks him off the apron so Shawn has to go to the eyes (another Flair standard) to get a breather. Things speed up until Shawn charges into an atomic drop and gets caught in a DDT.

Off to an armbar from Tatanka as Shawn apparently came into this with a bad shoulder. Back up and Shawn tries a clothesline but hurts his own arm in the process and it's right back to the armbar. A charge sends Shawn's shoulder into the post again and we hit the third armbar in a row. There's a shoulder breaker but Tatanka doesn't know how to follow up (Savage: "I would have covered him right there!") so he goes to the top and dives into a superkick (still not a finish).

Shawn throws him to the floor and hits a great looking clothesline from the apron. It's time to focus on the women for a bit with Shawn yelling at Sherri, only to turn around and get two off a swinging neckbreaker. Things settle down with a chinlock before Shawn starts firing off left hands as the arm is suddenly fine. Shawn tries a bad looking victory roll for two before going up top again for another victory roll which is countered into an electric chair (they just repeated the spot which always exposes too much).

Tatanka goes on the warpath (his version of HULKING UP) and starts the chops, followed by a catapult into the post as Shawn is now channeling Mr. Perfect. Shawn dives into a powerslam for two and they roll to the floor as the fans chant for Sherri. Heenan doesn't understand why they're doing that but his questioning gets cut off as Shawn pulls the referee to the floor. The Papoose To Go (fall away slam) knocks Shawn silly but he's been disqualified at 18:08.

Rating: B. That's a very frustrating ending but it makes sense as they wanted to keep the title on Shawn but didn't want to end Tatanka's undefeated streak, leaving them with few alternatives. Still though, this was one heck of a match though a bit longer than it needed to be. The shoulder stopped being a thing about halfway through, even though Shawn stopped selling as he was known to do. Tatanka just didn't have anything past the basics but the fans got behind him due to his charisma, which is all you need most of the time.

Shawn leaves and Luna slams Sherri on the floor.

Recent arrivals the Steiner Brothers say this is their first Wrestlemania but it's going to be one to be remembered and they'll make Julius Caesar proud.

Headshrinkers vs. Steiner Brothers

The Headshrinkers are Samu and Fatu (later known as Rikishi) and the Steiners are Rick and Scott, a pair of hard hitting amateur wrestling brothers. At the bell, JR debuts the term slobberknocker to make this one historic. Scott and Fatu get things going with Scott easily taking him down via a nice amateur double leg. Fatu tries to make it into a slugout but Scott just takes his head off with a clothesline. The Headshrinkers double team Scott down so he and Rick get up on the same buckle for stereo top rope clotheslines. That looked awesome.

Things settle down as JR breaks some news about Luna attacking Sherri in the first aid station. Heenan won't go back to check for an update because the camel is back there. Heenan: "Luna probably worked over the camel too." Samu's head cracks off the post and Scott dropkicks Fatu for good measure. Back up and Samu tries a hot shot but drops Scott face first over the top in a sick looking landing.

The Headshrinkers' manager Afa CRACKS Scott in the back with his staff to keep him in trouble. Fatu's middle rope headbutt gets two and Scott is almost out of it. The bad beating continues as Fatu sends him into the post, FINALLY drawing Rick over to check on his brother. Back in and Scott makes the eternal mistake of hitting a Samoan in the head, earning him a superkick. Yeah there's really no defending that. You don't hit a

Samoan in the head.

Samu comes in and rakes the eyes as JR tries to call the match while Heenan argues with Savage. The fans chant for the Steiners as something like the Demolition Decapitator gets two on Scott. Back up and it's a double clothesline as the announcers argue over what states border Oklahoma. Samu misses a headbutt and Scott finally tags off to Rick for some house cleaning and Samoan suplexing.

JR calls him Dog Face (short for Dog Face Gremlin, Rick's nickname. That brings up a good sign for Ross. Back in 1993, not everyone would watch both companies, meaning some fans might not realize that JR has called Steiner Brothers matches before. On his first match he knows Rick's nickname, making him look like he's done his homework) as he beats up both Headshrinkers but a double headbutt drops Rick with ease.

A double Stroke of all things sets up what looks to be a Doomsday Device but Rick belly to bellys Fatu out of the air for an INSANE counter. I've never seen that before or since and it still looked great. Scott tags himself in but eats another superkick, only to come back with a bad Frankensteiner for the pin at 14:22.

Rating: A-. I like this match more every time I watch it as they were beating the fire out of each other here with some of the stiffest shots you'll find. The Steiners always worked stiff and the Headshrinkers could go step for step with them. Some of the spots here were amazing with that suplex from the shoulders being a major highlight. Awesome, hard hitting match here which never broke down into a brawl.

Call the Hotline!

Doink the Clown (very evil) has desecrated a bust of Julius Caesar but calls it art. We see Doink attacking Crush with a false arm (with Vince shouting that he took his own arm out of the socket until Savage point out that it's obviously a cast to shut him up) to set up their match tonight. Doink thinks Crush will be seeing double vision.

Crush vs. Doink the Clown

Crush is a now big power guy from Hawaii in bright purple and orange. Doink has an umbrella with him but Crush knocks it out of his hands and rams the clown face first into the post. Some right hands to the face have no effect on Crush so he grabs a neckbreaker and keeps up the beating. Doink finally gets a break by guillotining him across the top rope. A piledriver gets no cover so Doink rams him into the post. Heenan: "Break the pineapple head!"

The Clown makes the eternal mistake of going up top and jumping straight down feet first, allowing Crush to raise a boot and take over again. Crush clotheslines him to the floor and Doink tries to hide under the ring. Amazingly enough a clown isn't very good at keeping out of sight. Crush drags him back inside but the referee gets bumped.

It's time for the head vice (Crush's finisher where he squeezes his opponent's head like a vice, making it a very appropriate name) but a second Doink pops up with the arm cast to knock Crush silly. The second Doink hides under the ring and the referee wakes up just in time to count the pin on Crush at 8:27.

Rating: D. And the really good match streak ends at two. This was a bizarre choice for a story as Crush would seem to be ready for a big push but he loses to Doink at Wrestlemania. Now to be fair, Doink is a very interesting character when he's still all evil. Once he turned face as he was destined to do, there was no way he could be anything more than a joke. There's certainly something interesting about an evil clown (see the Joker) but unfortunately that wasn't going to last in 1993.

Another referee comes out and looks under the ring but can't find anyone.

Some Japanese photographers don't know about Doink but love Yokozuna.

Razor Ramon vs. Bob Backlund

Ramon debuted late last year but the crowd is rapidly turning him face. Backlund is an old veteran who is making a nostalgia run and having some good matches despite being in his early 40s and being out of the ring for years. Ever the good sport, Backlund offers a handshake but gets a toothpick to the chest for his efforts. A LOUD Razor chant starts us off

as JR hypes up the Hotline. Backlund starts fast by sweeping the leg a few times so Razor punches him in the jaw.

As the match goes on, Savage casually brings up Lex Luger knocking Bret Hart out cold earlier today. So this information has been known all day and it's just NOW being brought up, an hour into the show? Backlund forearms him down and hooks a nice butterfly suplex, followed by an atomic drop, a high spot for him back in the day. Back up and Bob tries a slam, only to get small packaged for the pin at 3:45.

Rating: D. I guess they haven't gotten all the filler matches out of their system yet. This was a decent way to showcase Razor but it wasn't the most interesting thing in the world. Backlund was quite the return story but that's the best they can do to make Razor look like a big star?

Ad for King of the Ring.

Money Inc. isn't worried about the Mega Maniacs (Hulk Hogan/Brutus Beefcake with Jimmy Hart, who jumped to yet another team) after crushing Beefcake's face with their metal briefcase. Hogan has threatened to bankrupt Money Inc. but how do you bankrupt a company with an unlimited credit line? I.R.S. promises to make Beefcake's face look like a jigsaw puzzle with some missing pieces.

Tag Team Titles: Mega Maniacs vs. Money Inc.

Money Inc is defending and Hogan comes in with a black eye, with explanations ranging from a jet-ski accident (official and most likely story), DiBiase hiring a bunch of people to attack him (storyline story) and Randy Savage punching him in the face over accusations that Hogan was sleeping with Elizabeth when she and Savage were still married (possibly true). Beefcake has a metal mask to protect his face and the team gets a decent but certainly not great reaction.

I.R.S. and Beefcake get things going but the champs are quickly double teaming. DiBiase tries an ax handle to the metal mask and hurts his hand as you would expect. Some rams into the buckle have no effect either. Come on Ted you're smarter than this. Now we get the tag to Hogan for his first match in a year. He hammers down right hands in the corner, despite

having FAR smaller muscles than he did the last time we saw him.

Hogan finally mixes up the offense with a big boot before going back to the right hands. A Piper style poke to the eye is enough to send Money Inc. walking but the referee says if they walk out, the titles change hands. As usual, Hogan has some corrupt official helping him out. Back in again and Heenan gets very close to accusing Savage of having something to do with the black eye.

DiBiase gets in a cheap shot to take over on Hulk, allowing I.R.S. to choke with a tag rope. More choking ensues until we hit the Million Dollar Dream but Hogan seems moderately annoyed by it instead of in any kind of trouble. It's basically a chinlock with the arm trapped but Savage takes the attention off of it with this gem: "They're hanging from the rafters.....if they had rafters.....but I'll tell you what they have columns and they're hanging from them!"

Beefcake comes in with his own sleeper to DiBiase for the save as Hogan is actually out from the hold. That's certainly a new one. Hogan gets up at about nine and the hot tag brings in Beefcake. Well hot is a stretch as the fans don't seem to care but it's been a pretty dull match so far. Beefcake cleans house until DiBiase hits him in the back with the metal briefcase.

DiBiase gets smart by taking off Brutus' mask so Heenan makes face off jokes. A double clothesline puts the champs down but Beefcake puts I.R.S. in the sleeper instead of tagging. DiBiase makes a quick save but the referee gets bumped. The tag brings in Hogan but there's no one to see it. Hulk comes in anyway and hits both guys with the mask. Jimmy Hart tries to wake up the referee but when that doesn't work, he turns his jacket inside out to reveal referee stripes and counts the pin to end the match at 18:43.

Rating: D. This was much more long than anything else and the whole thing got stupid at the end. Hogan was WAY past his expiration date at this point and it was pretty clear based on this match. Beefcake wouldn't wrestle for the company again but naturally Hogan brought him in for the main event of WCW's biggest show the next year.

Hogan and Beefcake hold up the titles, making them the only two people in the arena stupid enough to think that counts. Another referee comes out and says not quite as Money Inc. wins by DQ. Ever the good losers, Hogan poses to limited cheering but then cracks open the briefcase and gives away the money inside (along with a brick. Why you would need a brick when you have a METAL BRIEFCASE?). So now he's stealing in addition to looking like a moron with that ending. Hogan is a four time WWF World Champion and now he thinks his manager counting a pin is supposed to change a title? What a hero: a cheating moron.

Singer Natalie Cole gets a nothing interview to say she's having fun. The CEO of the casino is happy with everything that's going on.

Mr. Perfect isn't worried about Lex Luger being a knockout artist with that forearm (which contains a steel plate). He's been on a roll this week with a hole in one playing golf and he's been hot at the tables so let's make it one more win tonight.

Lex Luger vs. Mr. Perfect

Luger is still the Narcissist and comes out with some barely clothed women that have the announcers drooling. They trade wristlocks to start and Perfect shoves the much stronger Luger into the corner. A big running knee lift knocks Luger down and a dropkick sends him to the floor as this is almost all Perfect so far.

Back in and Luger sends him into the buckle but Perfect just kind of staggers around. After that awkward selling, Perfect starts going after the knee and slaps on a spinning toehold. Back up and Perfect's bad back is sent hard into the buckle as this isn't exactly taking off. A backbreaker keeps Perfect in trouble and Luger rolls him up in the corner for two but gets caught with his feet on the ropes.

Perfect comes back with a sleeper but gets driven back first into the buckle. At least Luger is focusing on a body part and sticking with it. Perfect finally tries his own worst enemy and catapults Luger into the buckle. It doesn't quite work the same but maybe the idea scared him. A missile dropkick gets two on Luger but he counters a backslide and shoves Perfect's feet into the ropes for the surprise pin at 10:56.

Rating: D+. And that's being generous. This really didn't work as neither guy could get anything going. Perfect was in a weird place here as he was still talented but didn't really have a character. Luger was just that forearm but would somehow wind up being the co-top hero in the company in just a few months. It didn't work for either guy here though and the match was pretty boring.

Luger knocks Perfect out and walks off. Perfect slowly gets up and goes after him but gets jumped by Shawn Michaels to start their summer long feud. This triggers a big argument between Savage and Heenan with Macho Man getting up and pointing his finger in Heenan's face. Believe it or not, Heenan actually doesn't run away.

Gorilla previews the rest of the show.

Giant Gonzalez vs. Undertaker

Gonzalez is a 7'8 monster (wearing a full body skin colored spandex suit with muscles drawn on and fur at the shoulders) who was brought in by Harvey Wippleman to replace Kamala, who Undertaker dispatched to end 1992. This is the same story that would be used about thirteen years later when Undertaker feuded with Daivari's lineup of monsters.

Undertaker comes out in a funeral chariot complete with a vulture for his first cool Wrestlemania entrance. Undertaker, a legitimate 6'10, comes up to Gonzalez's chest. Some big forearms have little effect but Gonzalez is nice enough to sell an uppercut that clearly missed.

A low blow doesn't have much effect on Undertaker so he comes back with Old School. Undertaker gets thrown around and we hit a standing chinlock. Gonzalez gets bored and throws Undertaker to the floor and then into the steps. The power of the urn gets Undertaker back to his feet and inside but Gonzalez headbutts him right back down. Some awkward strikes stagger the Giant and he goes down to one knee so Harvey throws in a towel with chloroform to knock Undertaker out but it's an obvious DQ at 7:34.

Rating: F. This was awful and maybe Undertaker's worst Wrestlemania match ever. Gonzalez was just terrible and made everyone else look bad too because no one could do anything with someone so big and awkward. On top

of that, the ending sets up a rematch instead of just ending this lame feud once and for all here like they should have.

Undertaker is stretchered out and Gonzalez lumbers around the ring. Eventually Undertaker's music plays and he staggers to the ring to clean house.

Call the Hotline!

Gene, after talking about Heenan going to buy new underwear, shows us a clip of Yokozuna crushing Jim Duggan's ribs. Yokozuna followed it up by winning the Royal Rumble and then crushing WWF World Champion Bret Hart's ribs at the contract signing. Enough of that though as Gene brings in Hulk Hogan, who has been talking to Bret and assuring him that all the Hulkamaniacs are in his corner. Since he was attacked last night, Hogan wants Bret to make sure he's watching everyone around him.

Oh and one more thing: Hogan wants the first shot either at Bret or at "the Jap" if he wins the title. As for a prediction, he thinks the title is staying in the USA in the match between a Canadian and a Polynesian wrestler billed from Japan. As usual, Hulk never was one for the most in depth thinking in the world.

Todd Pettengill (a very stupid interviewer) interviews some frat boys.

WWF World Title: Yokozuna vs. Bret Hart

The 505lb Yokozuna is challenging and has Mr. Fuji in his corner. The announcers have spent most of the show talking about how Bret is the huge underdog after being knocked out by Luger, sat on by Yokozuna and then just being in trouble against the monster in general. Bret charges across the ring for a running dropkick and some right hands, only to have Yokozuna shove him down and shoulder him out to the floor.

Yokozuna tries to kick the champ while he's down but Bret grabs the foot and ties him up in the ropes to get the big man down. Bret fires off more right hands and drops a middle rope elbow until the referee breaks Yokozuna free. The big man is up and slams Bret with ease before dropping a huge leg/various other parts on Bret's face for no cover. The fans

chant USA to support the Canadian so Yokozuna chokes him down before switching to a nerve hold.

Back up and Bret gets his feet up in the corner, setting up something like a middle rope bulldog for two. That earns the champ a superkick and another nerve hold to continue boring the crowd. Heenan points out the stupidity of the USA chants as Bret fights up and gets a better middle rope bulldog for another two.

A pair of clotheslines put Yokozuna down for half a second so Bret punches away in the corner. Yokozuna shoves him so hard that the turnbuckle pad is pulled off, only to have Bret ram the monster face first into it. The Sharpshooter actually goes on but Fuji throws salt in his eyes, giving Yokozuna the pin and the title at 8:56.

Rating: D+. They did what they could do here but the story of "Bret is going to get killed" is about as lame of a way to set up a title match as you can get. Bret was hammering away with everything he had but like Gonzalez (albeit a much better version), there's only so much that could be done here, especially when you're an average size guy like Hart. This could have been much worse but it still wasn't much to see.

Hogan is here IMMEDIATELY after the match to plead Bret's case. You know, like all the other times Bret and Hogan have been such great friends. Due to reasons of extreme overconfidence and stupidity, Fuji is willing to give Hogan a shot RIGHT NOW. Bret gives his blind blessing and we're off.

WWF World Title: Hulk Hogan vs. Yokozuna

Fuji throws salt in Yokozuna's face by mistake (with the referee just watching) and it's a clothesline and the legdrop to give Hogan the pin and the title at 28 seconds.

Hogan celebrates as Bret is completely forgotten to end the show. That would be Hogan's last singles match until early June because he took seven weeks off before coming back to do tag matches with Beefcake against Money Inc. But hey, it's another title win.

Overall Rating: D. This is actually a tricky one to grade. The show only

runs about two hours and forty five minutes and the first fifty minutes are excellent stuff with two good to very good opening matches. I can't call a show with an opening third that solid a failure by any means so the show gets some big points there.

That being said, the rest of the show goes off a cliff with the best match being the main event, which really isn't any good and clocks in as the shortest announced Wrestlemania main event in history. Couple that with Hogan sneaking in to take the title in an ending that wasn't the most popular in the world and you don't have a great title picture going forward.

The word picture is appropriate here as well as this show doesn't look like a Wrestlemania is supposed to. Instead of the biggest show of the year, this felt like a random pay per view in the mid to late summer, which actually would have helped it a lot. The outside venue is cool but it feels like a fun show rather than something big and epic like the show at Madison Square Garden or the shows in big stadiums.

Overall this show has too many problems working against it. The atmosphere was a failed experiment but the card didn't do it any favors. Yokozuna was fine as a monster to be slayed but Hogan wasn't the choice to do it, at least not two minutes after Yokozuna won the title at Wrestlemania. I'm supposed to be impressed that Hogan beat a tired Yokozuna and had to have salt in Yokozuna's eyes to do it? That's not a good end to any show but the fact that it was the end of Wrestlemania made it even worse.

Ratings Comparison

Tatanka vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: B+

2013 Redo: B

2015 Redo: B

Steiner Brothers vs. Headshrinkers

Original: B+

2013 Redo: B

2015 Redo: A-

Doink the Clown vs. Crush

Original: D

2013 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D

Razor Ramon vs. Bob Backlund

Original: C-

2013 Redo: D

2015 Redo: D

Money Inc. vs. Mega Maniacs

Original: C+

2013 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D

Lex Luger vs. Mr. Perfect

Original: C-

2013 Redo: C

2015 Redo: D+

Undertaker vs. Giant Gonzalez

Original: F+

2013 Redo: D-

2015 Redo: F

Yokozuna vs. Bret Hart

Original: D+

2013 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D+

Yokozuna vs. Hulk Hogan

Original: N/A

2013 Redo: N/A

2015 Redo: N/A

Overall Rating

Original: F+

2013 Redo: D

2015 Redo: D

How is this a Wrestlemania?

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/16/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-9-wrestlemania-goes-outside/>

And the 2013 Redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/03/18/wrestlemania-count-up-wrestlemania-ix-why-would-fuji-do-that/>

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<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2018/01/26/new-book-kbs-history-of-the-wwe-championship-2018-updated-version/>

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