

Summerslam Count-Up – Summerslam 1994 (2018 Redo): The Great Blue Cage

Summerslam 1994

Date: August 29, 1994

Location: United Center, Chicago, Illinois

Attendance: 23,000

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

This is the old review of the year and that's an interesting choice. The show has a double main event of WWF World Champion Bret Hart defending against his brother Owen to continue their awesome feud, plus the wholly unawesome Undertaker vs. Fake Undertaker match. It's the best of both worlds you see. Let's get to it.

Here's Randy Savage to welcome us to the show, held in the brand new United Center. Somehow, this is the only pay per view the company has ever run from the arena.

Jerry Lawler has some breaking news: Shawn Michaels and Diesel have become the new Tag Team Champions after defeating the Headshrinkers last night. What an odd time to do a title change, but 1994 was an odd time.

IRS/Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Headshrinkers

IRS and Bigelow have Ted DiBiase in their corner and this was originally going to be a title match. The Headshrinkers (Samu/Fatu) have Afa and Lou Albano with them, just to crank up the bizarre state of the show so far. Bigelow runs Fatu (not Samu Vince, though to be fair it's a pretty easy mistake to make) over with a shoulder but eats the superkick for two. Fatu avoids a very early top rope headbutt and a double superkick puts Bigelow down again. Samu comes in, so Vince says Samu is now in, after saying Samu started.

Vince really wasn't great at this whole thing. Samu starts cleaning house

and ducks an IRS charge to send him outside. Back in and Bigelow low bridges Fatu to the floor but it's a double clothesline for a double knockdown. The hot(ish) tag brings Samu back in for a BAAAACK body drop and a headbutt to Bigelow, which works because Samoans have hard heads. The middle rope headbutt gets two on IRS with Bigelow making a save. With Bigelow being knocked to the floor, the double Stroke sets up the Superfly Splash but Bigelow goes after Albano. That's enough to draw Afa in for the DQ at 7:18.

Rating: D+. Pretty lame opener here with the lack of the titles taking away the little interest this match had. The Headshrinkers are good in their roles but Bigelow and IRS are a pretty generic team who don't have much to do here. I'm still not sure what the point is in having the titles change early. Why not just do it the next night on Raw?

They brawl to the back.

And now, for your comedy of the show. The detectives from the Naked Gun movies are trying to find the Undertaker, complete with a bunch of puns and sight gags. Such gems include "we're both on the case" as they stand on a briefcase.

Women's Title: Bull Nakano vs. Alundra Blayze

Blayze is defending and Nakano has Luna Vachon in her corner. For those of you of a younger age, Nakano is a rather terrifying Japanese monster and Blayze's archnemesis. We get the ceremonial flower presentation but Vachon throws hers at Blayze to really be a jerk. Nakano kicks her in the ribs instead of shaking hands but it's too early for a powerbomb. A knee to the ribs cuts the champ off and Nakano throws her down by the hair.

We hit the chinlock (with Nakano's back to the camera because she doesn't know how to work) until Blayze makes the rope, which isn't an escape you see that often. The yet to be named hurricanrana gives Blayze two but Nakano pulls her down into a Boston crab with both legs under one arm. With that broken up, Nakano puts on what would become Paige's Scorpion Crosslock.

Since Blayze hasn't been tortured enough yet, Nakano switches to a cross

armbreaker. Back up and three straight running sleeper drops have Nakano in trouble but she powers out of a piledriver attempt. A powerbomb gets two on the champ as the pace has picked WAY up out of nowhere. Blayze avoids the guillotine legdrop though, kicks Vachon down and grabs the German suplex to retain at 8:17.

Rating: B. For 1994, this was some insane stuff in America, especially for a women's match. Blayze really was good but Nakano was one of the best of the era. She was big, strong, could wrestle on the mat and had the submission skills to be that dominant. Unfortunately these two pretty much the entire division for a long time so it could only go so far.

Shawn Michaels and Diesel brag about winning the titles because the Heartbreak Hotel needed some more gold. Diesel says Razor Ramon isn't taking one of his two titles tonight. Razor has had a bunch of chances and tonight isn't going to change anything.

Intercontinental Title: Razor Ramon vs. Diesel

Razor is challenging and has NFL Hall of Famer Walter Payton in his corner to balance out Shawn. The white boots are a weird look for Razor. Shawn talks trash to Payton to start and Razor fires off the right hands, which look very good against someone Diesel's size. Back in after a quick trip to the floor and Diesel gets in his own punches to take over. A sleeper slows Razor down even more and Diesel throws him outside.

Shawn goes for the turnbuckle pad but Payton chases him off, allowing Shawn to forearm Razor behind the referee's back. I could watch Shawn outsmart people for days. Back in again and the referee stands in front of the exposed buckle but Shawn's second distraction allows Razor to be whipped in. Diesel hits Snake Eyes onto an unexposed buckle as Lawler thinks the pad fell off the other one. A chinlock with a knee to the back keeps Razor in trouble and a big boot knocks his head off.

We hit the abdominal stretch, which at least looks more painful than a chinlock with a knee in the back. Diesel grabs the rope, making me wish we had Bobby Heenan there to explain why it's more to avoid a hiptoss counter than to add more leverage. Razor gets out and sends Diesel ribs first into the exposed buckle, sending Lawler into hysterics as it

should.

The middle rope bulldog (the Hall Buster) gets two and there's a right hand to knock Shawn off the apron for a great over the top sell. A flying shoulder gives Diesel a breather so Shawn goes after the belt. Payton goes after him again and of course the referee yells, allowing Shawn to superkick Diesel by mistake. Shawn gets pulled outside and Razor finally crawls over for the pin to get the title back at 15:01.

Rating: B-. I've always had a mixed reaction to this one as the match itself is pretty good but Payton being out there was just a celebrity cameo that could have been anyone. Razor getting the title back was the right call as Shawn and Diesel are already having issues. They could have cut a few minutes out here, but what we got was still good enough and didn't get sunk by the extra time.

Diesel yells at Shawn all the way to the back.

Savage talks about what we just saw.

Lex Luger and Tatanka are in the back. A fan poll has 54% saying that Luger sold out to Ted DiBiase and Tatanka is tired of hearing Luger deny it. We see a montage of DiBiase and Luger getting very close, but Luger still swears there's nothing going on because DiBiase is lying. Tatanka is going to prove his story in the ring tonight.

Lex Luger vs. Tatanka

There's no DiBiase to start. Feeling out process to start with Luger running him over but not following up. Tatanka's armbars has no effect so Luger puts him down again, only to miss the jumping elbow (as always). That means we get more of Tatanka's lame offense, including the top rope chop to the head. The second attempt gets punched out of the air and Luger starts in with the clotheslines. Cue DiBiase with a gym bag as Luger hits a powerslam. DiBiase pulls money out of the bag as Luger yells at him, allowing Tatanka to grab a rollup for the pin at 6:02.

Rating: D. This was all about the storyline instead of the wrestling and that's not surprising. Neither Luger nor Tatanka were going to have a

good match at this point so the story was the only way this was going to work. Tatanka was a fine midcard hand but if he had even a slightly better offense, he could have been a much bigger deal. There comes a point where you need the wrestling to back up the character and that just wasn't the case for him.

Post match Luger kicks the money out of DiBiase's hands so Tatanka jumps him from behind, revealing that he sold out. I've always liked that story, as bad as the match was. What I don't like is how long this goes on, as Tatanka beats him up three different times, capped off by the Million Dollar Dream. We get the money in Luger's mouth for a little old school touch.

Gorilla Monsoon is aghast at what we just saw. Agreed. That money must be filthy.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Mabel

This is going to be a disaster. During the entrances, Vince and Jerry debate the detectives' skills and if Lawler has any rhythm. Mabel tosses away a wristlock attempt (Jarrett's sell is quite good) and drops the big elbow when Jarrett tries a drop down. A clothesline puts Jarrett on the floor so he shoves the rapping Oscar. That's not going to get him booed as Oscar isn't very good. Back in and Jeff scores with some middle rope ax handles but Mabel crushes him in the corner.

The spinwheel kick (the one good thing that Mabel could do) gets two as Abe Knuckleball Schwartz (the Brooklyn Brawler as a baseball player) is on strike in the crowd. This adds nothing and isn't funny or interesting, but it's a thing that happens. Sounds like 1994 as a whole. They head outside with Oscar getting in a slap and Mabel splashing Jeff against the post. Back in and the middle rope splash misses, followed by a missed sitdown splash to give Jeff the pin at 5:57.

Rating: F. Oh what were you expecting here? Mabel was fat and useless while Jarrett wasn't exactly someone who was going to carry anyone at this point, especially someone that big. This should have been on Raw at best and comes off as terrible filler here. Mainly because that's what it was.

Vince introduces the detectives in the aisle, blowing their cover. Undertaker's silhouette appears in the entrance but they don't see him. Because they're bad at their jobs you see.

We recap Bret Hart vs. Owen Hart. This started way back in 1993 when Owen was the only Hart eliminated at the Survivor Series, which he blamed on Bret. Owen and Bret then teamed up to try and win the Tag Team Titles, but Bret wouldn't tag out when injured, leading to a referee stoppage.

They went on to have a classic at Wrestlemania X with Owen pinning Bret clean. Bret won the WWF World Title later in the night and the feud was on for the rest of the summer. Owen even won the King of the Ring (just like his brother the previous year) to earn another title shot. Tonight is the big blowoff inside a cage. This really was a great feud as you could see Owen's point all along and it built up perfectly over time.

Earlier today, Owen and crony Jim Neidhart (Bret's former partner) were in the cage and promised to destroy Bret once and for all tonight.

Bret is going to forget they're family tonight because Owen will be crying a river of tears, just like he did when he was a baby.

The Hart Family, including Davey Boy Smith, is at ringside and Helen can't believe this is happening. Stu hopes the best wrestler wins and sounds as only he can. Lawler accuses both of them of causing all of this and thinks Smith will turn on Bret again. Lawler: "Wouldn't you love to be in there with Bret again tonight?" Smith: "Uh, not really." Neidhart is behind Smith and says we'll see Owen prove that he's the better man once and for all. Bruce Hart spins around and says stay out of this.

Bret, recovering from strep throat, says his condition won't change anything tonight. What we're going to see tonight is barbaric and nothing like what they did when they were kids. Everyone wants things to end tonight and Bret is going to finish it to heal his family.

WWF World Title: Bret Hart vs. Owen Hart

Bret is defending in a cage with escape only to win. Owen goes right at him to start and hammers away during the entrances, followed by some hard

right hands to the head. You can see Helen panicking over the whole thing and a DDT by Bret makes things even worse. It's too early to escape though and Owen scores with some headbutts, followed by an enziguri to really rock Bret. He's fine enough to suplex Owen off the cage and it's a double knockdown.

Owen goes for the door so Bret bends him around the ropes for a save and drags him right back in. They're setting up a good feel here with both of them going for the escape and being pulled back for more punishment. That ties in the idea of wanting to hurt each other but wanting to be the better man even more, which is really what this is all about. They both wind up on the top rope and slug it out with Owen knocking him down.

Instead of getting the easy climb out though, Owen comes back with a missile dropkick into a nipup. Both make some fast climbs up the cage but get pulled down for a crash each. A collision gives us another double knockdown as they're taking their time building the drama, mainly because they've got the time to do so. It's still too early for Owen to get out the door as Bret pulls him out, only to get pulled back down from the top for a hard crotching.

Bret is up fast enough for the headbutt between the legs but Owen pulls him down again. Owen gets closer to getting out than any other attempt yet, even getting his feet and legs out of the cage. Bret pulls him back in and sends Owen face first into the cage for a big knockdown. This time the climb is cut off by a belly to back superplex as the crashes and falls are getting bigger and bigger. A good piledriver plants Bret but he's fine enough to catch a tired Owen again.

They both fall off the ropes this time for a breather until Bret catapults him face first into the cage. Owen has to literally dive over for a save and sends Bret into the cage, with the champ coming up holding his knee. The knee is fine enough to climb up and kick Owen away but he gets pulled back down by the arm.

Owen gets out again and you can feel the fans quiet down as he gets close. He's pulled back in yet again and Bret kicks him down to the mat but it's Owen's turn for a last second save. Bret catches him in the

corner and pulls Owen back down with a huge superplex (Bret always had a great one) and they're both down again. Owen is up first with a Sharpshooter but Bret reverses into one of his own.

A little cranking has Owen down but, say it with me, he lunges over for the save by pulling Bret down hair first. They both climb and this time make it over the top, leaving them hanging on the side. Bret hits him in the ribs, causing Owen to slip and get tied up in the cage wall. That's enough for Bret to drop down and retain at 32:18.

Rating: A+. I've had to say this about several Bret matches before but the wrestling isn't the point here. This was all about telling a great story and that's what we got. The thing to remember here is that they don't hate each other but rather Owen wants to prove he's better and Bret wants to shut Owen up. It explains why they weren't trying to kill each other in what is usually a violent match. Instead, they were trying to win, which should be the case in most matches and especially one like this. Notice how the match ends: not with a big spot, but with Bret being one step better than Owen, which is the point of the feud.

It is slower paced and it does feel like they're doing the same things over and over, but it's a case of WHY they're doing the same things over and over. They're not trying to destroy each other and it really is about being the better man. Owen has gone off the deep end with trying to beat Bret, but it never felt like he wanted to hurt him. That might not make for the most exciting match, but it's how things should have gone when you think about it.

Post match Neidhart jumps the barricade and clotheslines Davey, knocking him into his wife. Neidhart locks himself inside the cage and the double beatdown is on as Owen has completely snapped. The Hart Brothers storm the cage (always cool) but Owen keeps knocking them off. Davey finally punches Owen down (for a great bump) and gets in, sending Owen and Neidhart running as the rest of the brothers get inside as well.

In the back, Owen and Neidhart yell about how Owen should be the winner and Davey isn't family. Owen: "Let's go celebrate my victory!"

Survivor Series ad, making fun of football. Considering how meh that show

was, I wouldn't go that way.

We recap the Undertaker vs. Undertaker. Back in January, Undertaker was destroyed by about a dozen guys and put in a casket. Not to worry as he ascended out of the casket in one of the most ridiculous things you'll ever see in wrestling. After being gone for several months (aside from some sightings, including by a young child in school), Ted DiBiase said he had seen Undertaker. Paul Bearer said no way but DiBiase brought him back, only to reveal that it was a fake Undertaker (played by Brian Adams, better known as Chainz). The lack of about three inches was a, ahem, dead giveaway.

With Undertaker succumbing to the power of money, Bearer went to the graveyard and said he had the real Undertaker again. After the lights went out one night on the King's Court (Todd Pettengill: "Look at that brain surgeon Jerry Lawler."), the real Undertaker said he was back and not with DiBiase. He would be around this coming Monday (at Summerslam) against whatever DiBiase had with him. This video gets well over five minutes as we need to get rid of the cage.

Undertaker vs. Undertaker

For the sake of simplicity, I'll identify them by the colors of their gloves: gray for the fake one and purple for the real. DiBiase brings his man to the ring but Bearer comes out with just a casket. There's nothing inside though and the casket is wheeled to the back. Instead Bearer opens the Urn to reveal a light...and here's the real Undertaker. That certainly seems to be worth the wait for the fans.

Purple shrugs off some forearms to the back and leapfrogs (!) gray, who falls to the floor. Gray stalks Bearer and gets suplexed back inside for his troubles, only to be sent right back to the floor. A Stunner over the top staggers Purple but Old School just isn't happening. The real Old School connects and now Lawler believes Bearer has the real thing.

Purple misses a charge and falls to the floor as Vince defends the silent crowd. More right hands from gray don't have much effect but a good looking chokeslam gets...no cover. Gray goes with a Tombstone for no cover again as he spends too long pointing at DiBiase. Purple hits a Tombstone

of his own, followed by a second for good measure. A third finally gives purple the pin at 9:10.

Rating: F. Well what was that supposed to be? The biggest problem here is the match was really, really bad with the Tombstone being the only thing worthwhile from the fake Undertaker. That leaves you with about eight minutes of lumbering forearms and right hands as the fans had no idea what to make of anything because there was nothing to get excited about. This would have been much easier to sit through if it didn't come after twenty minutes of build and a great cage match. For the life of me I'm not sure how they thought this was going to work, but it failed miserably.

Gray gets put in the casket and purple poses before the Urn's flashlight.

Savage wraps the show up but throws it to the detectives, who find a briefcase. "The case is closed." That ends the show. Summerslam mind you, ends on a sight gag. I remember watching this live and my dad tried to explain the joke to me because at six years old, this went flying over my head. What a great way to end a show.

Overall Rating: D+. It's certainly not the worst show as there's enough good stuff to carry it past horrible, but my goodness they didn't do themselves any favors here. There's a reason that 1994 was one of the worst years in company history and this show was a good example. With the fake main event being such a mess, they're lucky to have an instant classic in the real main event to bail it out. It's watchable, but be ready to fast forward a lot.

Ratings Comparison

IRS/Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Headshrinkers

Original: C+

2013 Redo: D+

2018 Redo: D+

Alundra Blayze vs. Bull Nakano

Original: D+

2013 Redo: C

2018 Redo: B

Razor Ramon vs. Diesel

Original: B-

2013 Redo: C+

2018 Redo: B-

Lex Luger vs. Tatanka

Original: C-

2013 Redo: D

2018 Redo: D

Jeff Jarrett vs. Mabel

Original: D-

2013 Redo: D-

2018 Redo: F

Bret Hart vs. Owen Hart

Original: A

2013 Redo: A+

2018 Redo: A+

Undertaker vs. Undertaker

Original: B

2013 Redo: F

2018 Redo: F

Overall Rating

Original: C-

2013 Redo: D+

2018 Redo: D+

I still don't know how I got a B out of the main event before and I really liked the women's match more this time around. Other than that, it's about the same all around.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/07/28/history-of-summerslam-count-up-summerslam-1994-from-great-matches-to-leslie-nielsen/>

And the 2013 Redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/07/30/summerslam-count-up-1994-the-last-great-cage-match/>

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