

# Royal Rumble Count-Up – 1994: ...The Heck Was That?

## Royal Rumble 1994

Date: January 22, 1994

Location: Providence Civic Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Attendance: 14,500

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Ted DiBiase

This is one of those shows where the good stuff is good but the bad stuff is REALLY bad. The main idea here is that someone has to stop Yokozuna, and it's going to be one of three people: Bret Hart or Lex Luger who could get the shot by winning the Rumble, or the Undertaker who has a casket match against Yoko tonight for the title. Oh...this is going to be a long night. Let's get to it.

Vince is on commentary here and gets to do his carnival barker stuff. The guy knows how to make a show sound exciting, I have to give him that. DiBiase comes out to do commentary with McMahon due to having to retire late in 1993 due to a bunch of injuries.

## Tatanka vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Bigelow is in Ludvig Borga's spot because Borga broke his ankle. Bigelow pounds on Tatanka to start and dropkicks him into the corner. Tatanka literally bounces off of Bigelow before coming back with a chop to take Bigelow down. A DDT puts Bam Bam down again but Tatanka goes up for a cross body, missing Bigelow by a mile. This is a REALLY hot start so far. Bigelow crushes Tatanka in the corner with a splash and things slow down somewhat.

Tatanka gets in a shot to the head and tries a top rope sunset flip, only to have Bam Bam sit on him. When all else fails, sit on the other guy. Off to a bearhug for about two minutes before Bigelow drops him with a shoulder block. Tatanka starts his war path thing so Bam Bam decks him in the head with an enziguri to drop him. The moonsault misses though and Tatanka goes up again, this time hitting the cross body for the pin.

**Rating:** C+. Shockingly hot opener here and if you cut the bear hug in half or so, this is a really solid match. They stuck to the formula really well here and the match was good as a result. This is one of the nice surprises in wrestling: on paper this sounded horrible but it turned out to be a pretty nice match. Good opener.

We recap the tag title match, which is a rare instance where it's all about the challengers rather than the champions. Owen Hart was the only Hart Brother eliminated in the Survivor Series match against Shawn and his Knights, which ticked him off. Owen had been whipped into Bret on the apron and the distraction let Shawn roll Owen up for the pin.

This caused Owen to cut a heel promo, talking about how he was tired of being in Bret's shadow and wanting a match with him to escape it. Bret of course said no, but instead offered to team up with Owen to get his brother his first championship. Owen talked about leading the team but seemed genuinely ok at this point. For some reason we also see the Quebecers losing the tag titles to the 1-2-3 Kid and Marty Jannetty for a single week for some reason.

The Harts talk about all the teams they're going to give title shots to once they win the belts tonight.

#### Tag Titles: Bret Hart/Owen Hart vs. Quebecers

The Quebecers are managed by Johnny Polo, who would change his name to Raven in ECW. Pierre and Bret start things off with the challenger taking over. Off to Owen to work on the arm with his signature spinning counter to a wristlock. Off to Jacques and they botch something, but Owen hits a quick suplex to keep things on track. An enziguri gets two for Owen and it's back to Bret.

After a bunch of rollups by Bret, everything breaks down and the Quebecers take over. Actually scratch that as Owen hits a kind of spear into a rollup for two and the Harts stand tall. It's Bret vs. Jacques with Hart in control until it's back to Owen for a gutwrench suplex for two. Bret comes back in, only to get powerslammed down by Pierre. A pair of knees to the back gets two and it's back to Jacques.

That goes nowhere so Pierre comes in to jump into a boot. Owen comes back in and belly to bellies Jacques down before hooking the Sharpshooter. Pierre bulldogs Owen down for a fast save of course and it's back to Pierre legally. Owen dropkicks both Quebecers down and it's off to Bret again. For some reason both champions are allowed to stay in the ring for way too long. Pierre is atomic dropped to the floor, and now we get to the turning point of the match: Johnny Polo holds the ropes open to send Bret to the floor. Bret comes up holding his knee and he's in big trouble.

Pierre rams the knee into the barricade to further the damage and the match turns into a kind of sloppy brawl on the floor. Owen finally throws Bret back into the ring and the leg work begins. Jacques puts on a half crab but Owen makes a fast save. The champions load up the Cannonball (kind of an aided Swanton) but Bret rolls away. Instead of tagging though, Bret tries the Sharpshooter...and the referee stops the match for the knee injury.

**Rating:** B-. This is one of those matches where you can look at it in multiple ways. From a match standpoint, it's a standard tag match with the faces and heels doing exactly what they would be expected to do. On the other hand, the idea here was about setting up Owen's heel turn, and the ending does that perfectly. There was no reason for Bret to not tag at the end and it sets Owen off as it should.

Post match Owen glares at Bret and paces back and forth. Bret manages to pull himself up but can barely stand up. Owen kicks the leg out, officially turning heel to HUGE booing. He leaves so here are some officials to come check on Bret. Ray Rougeau, a reporter for WWF at this point, comes out to interview Bret while he's on his back in agony. For some reason that cracks me up.

Owen is in the back and goes on a huge tirade about how selfish Bret is and how Bret cost him the biggest match of his career. Bret is being carried to the back and has to watch this promo on the video screen. Owen's face here is great as he unleashes all this pent up anger and frustration on Bret, saying he'll win the Rumble because he doesn't have to count on Bret. This would be the top feud for the next eight months or

so.

### Intercontinental Title: IRS vs. Razor Ramon

Guess who is defending here. JR and Gorilla Monsoon do commentary for this match. IRS goes on a big rant about how evil the crowd here is for not paying their taxes, even though they have about three months left to file. Razor goes off on IRS to start, knocking him out to the floor. IRS comes back with some forearms but Razor punches him right back down to take over again.

Ramon hits a bunch of basic stuff like atomic drops and clotheslines for some two counts, but IRS ducks under a clothesline to send Razor out to the floor. Back in and IRS goes up but jumps into a boot. For one of the only times I can EVER remember this happening, IRS avoids the foot and drops an elbow for two instead. WHY IS THAT SO HARD FOR PEOPLE TO DO???

We hit the chinlock for well over a minute before Razor fights up and hits the fallaway slam. The referee gets knocked out in the corner and IRS grabs his briefcase, only for Razor to take it back and clock him in the head with it. No referee though, so Razor loads up a belly to back superplex. There's still no referee, so Razor sets for the Edge, only to have Shawn run out and clock him with the fake IC Title. IRS finally wakes up and pins Razor for the title.

**Rating:** D+. This wasn't bad but the overbooking hurt it a lot. This should have lasted about three minutes less and it would have been a lot better. Oddly enough I don't remember IRS being champion at all, but then again this is the remastered version so maybe they really cleaned things up.

Or maybe another referee comes out to explain the interference and the match is restarted. Razor hits the Edge to retain.

Bearer and Undertaker are making a coffin for Yoko.

We recap the world title match, which is Yoko being scared of Taker and Taker being one of the last hopes to stop the monster. Apparently the contract was signed before Yoko and company knew it was a casket match.

Taker I believe debuted his popping out of the casket spot in this feud.

### WWF World Title: The Undertaker vs. Yokozuna

They stare each other down to start and Taker fires off his uppercuts to stagger the champion. A clothesline puts Yoko down and another uppercut puts Yoko on the floor. Taker is sent into the steps and it's immediately no sold, scaring Yoko to death again. There's Old School but the jumping clothesline misses as Yoko ducks. Why does no one else ever think of doing that?

They fight over a chair on the floor which winds up going upside Yoko's head. There's a plastic chair to the back of the champion but Yoko grabs the trusty salt to blind Taker. Now it's Taker's back getting hit with the chair and we head back inside. A clothesline puts Taker down but he fights out of the casket. Taker wins a slugout in the middle of the ring but Yoko belly to belly suplexes him down. Come on. You know that's not holding him down. Taker pops up and grabs Yoko by the throat and hits a DDT to put the champion down again.

Yoko is placed in the casket but here's Crush to block Taker from closing it. Taker slugs him down so here's Great Kabuki and Tenryu but Taker beats them down as well. Yoko is still out cold in the casket. Bam Bam Bigelow comes in now and it's 4-1 in the ring. One has to wonder why Paul Bearer doesn't go over and close the casket but this match doesn't seem to be the most logical one. Fuji and Cornette have stolen the Urn.

Yoko finally gets out of the casket as Bearer beats up Fuji and Cornette, stealing the Urn back. He uses it to recharge Taker, who fights off all four mercenaries. Now it's Adam Bomb to make it technically 8-1 but Taker fights everyone off with the salt bucket. Jeff Jarrett comes in as well, as do the Headshrinkers. That makes it NINE wrestlers (Yoko, Crush, Kabuki, Tenryu, Bigelow, Jarrett, Samu, Fatu, Adam Bomb) against Undertaker.

AND HE GETS UP. Diesel comes out and they get Taker in the coffin but he fights ALL OF THEM OFF. Yoko steals the Urn and hits Taker in the head with it before opening the Urn. Green smoke comes out of it and Taker now is powerless. Everyone hits a bunch of moves on him as this goes on WAY

too long. After ALL THAT, Taker is put in the coffin and Yoko retains the title.

**Rating:** F. On a major wrestling show, The Undertaker just fought off ten men until green smoke was released to drain him of his power. I've seen Japanese anime that makes more sense than this. Oh and the match itself, as in the one on one part, might have gone about six minutes.

BUT IT GETS WORSE!

The heels all push the coffin away when a gong goes off. Smoke comes out of the casket....and a FREAKING CAMERA FEED FROM INSIDE THE CASKET POPS UP ON THE SCREEN. Taker says his soul lives in everyone and he can't be extinguished. He says there's going to be a rebirth of the Undertaker and he won't rest in peace. Then electrical noises go off and we get something like an inverse camera shot (as in it's all in black and white but what is white is black and what is black is white).

Then, to REALLY hammer home the point, the image on the screen starts to rise up through the top of the screen (which should be the top of the casket, meaning it should be ramming into the people that put him in the freaking casket) and A FREAKING BODY RISES OUT OF THE TOP OF THE SCREEN. AS IN A TANGIBLE BODY (which might have been played by Marty Jannetty).

In other words, WWF just said Taker is something like Jesus. Oh and one other thing to really make sure this is stupid: YOU CAN'T SEE IT. All I can see are some quick shots of it when flashes go off. This is one of those things that embarrasses me as a wrestling fan. I mean....WOW.

The usual Rumble interviews eat up some time.

### Royal Rumble

Scott Steiner is #1 and Samu is #2. Also the intervals are every 90 seconds this year so the entrances will come in faster than ever. Scott pounds away to start and hits a butterfly suplex as Samu tries to hang on. He does indeed survive and kills Scott with a clothesline. Rick Steiner is #3 and Samu is in BIG trouble. After some suplexes he's out very quickly (but not before getting his head caught in the top and

middle rope which is always kind of scary looking), giving us the Battle of the Steiners.

That battle literally lasts six seconds as Kwang (Savio Vega in a mask, allegedly Asian here) is #4. Scott suplexes Kwang down and Owen Hart is #5 to BIG heel heat. The heels take over and Owen actually dumps Rick out. That's one of the rare times where the constant pushing against the ropes worked. Bart Gunn is #6 and things speed up a bit. No one really does anything so here's Diesel at #7. This is where things pick up as this match is without a doubt Diesel's coming out party.

He beats on everyone and throws out Bart, Scott, Owen and Kwang inside of 45 seconds. Bob Backlund is #8 and immediately goes for the leg. He actually gets Diesel up against the ropes and upside down, but Diesel will have none of that. Who would believe these two would have a world title match in Madison Square Garden later in the year? Backlund is gone quickly. Billy Gunn is #9 and doesn't even last fifteen seconds.

We cut to the back where Kabuki and Tenryu are destroying Lex Luger. After Diesel stands around for a bit, he has to throw out Virgil who is #10 in about thirty seconds (causing DiBiase to laugh loudly and get in some good verbal jabs). Note that the fans are LOUDLY chanting for Diesel here, who had NEVER gotten a reaction until this point. No one has been able to stand up to Diesel at all so far. #11 is Randy Savage. This should be a bit better challenge I'd think.

Savage goes right for him and pounds away on the big man in the corner before peppering him with jabs. He has Diesel in trouble but Jeff Jarrett is #12 to save the not yet Big Daddy Cool. We hear about Jarrett wanting to become WWF Champion so he'll be a famous country singer in Nashville. And people wonder why he never got over until he completely changed everything about his character.

Savage is thrown to the apron by Jarrett but Randy comes back and eliminates Jeff with ease. Crush, who Savage HATES at this point, is #13. Diesel just kind of chills in the corner as Savage beats up Crush. The numbers finally catch up with Savage though until Crush eliminates him with ease. Doink is #14 and he gets beaten up as well but not tossed.

Here's his big rival Bam Bam Bigelow at #15 and it's 3-1 now. Bigelow easily thows the clown out ala the Spike Dudley throw from ECW.

Mabel is #16 and dang there are some big guys in there. He goes right for Diesel in a terrifying preview of Summerslam 95. Mabel cleans house until Sparky Plugg (Bob Holly as a racecar driver and debuting here as a replacement for the 1-2-3 Kid) is #17. Shawn Michaels is #18 and stares down Diesel to start. Everyone gets on Diesel and Shawn gives the final push to eliminate him. Diesel gets a VERY audible ovation and chant as he leaves.

Mo, Mabel's totally useless partner, is #19. Nothing of note happens so here's Greg Valentine in a one night only appearance at #20. Mabel misses a charge in the corner and Shawn is gorilla pressed by Crush but not eliminated for some reason. Tatanka comes in at #21. To recap we've got Plugg, Valentine, Tatanka, Mabel, Bigelow, Crush, Michaels and Mo in there. Valentine puts Michaels on the apron but can't get him out.

Kabuki is #22 and almost everyone gangs up on Mabel to dump him out. It's amazing how much easier it is to see with the big fat purple tub of goo out of there. Lex Luger (looking FINE after that attack like 15 minutes ago) is #23 and he cleans house. There are ten people in the ring right now but there goes Kabuki at the hands of Lex. Luger clotheslines Bigelow down and here's Tenryu at #24.

There are WAY too many people in there right now. Like seriously, do we need FREAKING MO in there? Or Valentine? Those are bodies you could dump out and no one would care. Luger and Tenryu go at it as Shawn is almost dumped out. Bastion Booger is supposed to be #25 but he's not here for some reason (Vince says it was supposed to be Bret Hart but more on that in a bit). I believe there are nine people in there at the moment so Booger not coming in was a good thing. Granted it was a good thing either way but you get the idea. Rick Martel is #26 and nothing happens.

For your big face pop of the match (other than Diesel): Bret Hart is #27 and limping very badly. Today, people would have a bandage on the knee and charge to the ring because modern wrestling is stupid. Fatu is #28 and DEAR FREAKING GOODNESS THROW SOMEONE OUT ALREADY! A bunch of guys

team up and FINALLY throw Crush out as Marty Jannetty is #29. Naturally he goes right for Shawn and punches Shawn to the apron.

Adam Bomb is #30, giving us a ridiculous THIRTEEN FINAL PEOPLE in the Rumble. The final group is Bigelow, Sparky, Shawn, Mo (seriously, FREAKING MO?), Valentine, Tatanka, Luger, Tenryu, Martel, Hart, Fatu, Jannetty and Bomb. Bret saves Shawn (shocking I know) to dump out Sparky, thank goodness. Bret beats on everyone as we still need to get rid of more people. Everyone beats on everyone for awhile and nothing is happening. DiBiase: "The smart thing to do is go after Bret Hart's knee." Vince: "The smart thing to do is throw people out of the ring." Did...did Vince just burn Ted Dibiase?

Martel dumps Valentine but is quickly dumped out by Tatanka. Luger throws out Bomb and Mo is FINALLY put out as well. Bigelow tosses Tatanka and Lex forearm Bam Bam out. Jannetty goes out to get us down to Luger, Hart, Fatu, Tenryu and Shawn. Tenryu rams Shawn and Fatu's heads together which only hurts Shawn of course. Luger and Bret put out Tenryu and it's Bret vs. Shawn (duh). Luger goes for Fatu's head and gets superkicked for being stupid.

The heels put Luger on the apron but he fights them both off and clotheslines Fatu into a 360. Bret dumps Fatu and Luger dumps Shawn and we're down to two. They slug it out and Luger picks up Bret, but they both fall out at the same time, giving us a double elimination to end the Rumble.

**Rating:** C+. This is a hard one to grade. The pacing is TERRIBLE with guys like Sparky Plugg and Mo staying in for over twenty minutes each, but the action is solid for the most part. The stuff with Diesel is excellent and it truly made him a star. The ending stuff once they got rid of about seven guys in 90 seconds was good too, but stuff in the middle didn't work all that well.

Post match there's a disagreement over who wins but both guys have their music played. This would lead to a somewhat complicated decision where there was a coin toss and two world title matches at Mania. This goes on for about eight minutes or so but it's just the referees arguing and both

guys saying they won. Replays don't really show us anything either. They do a good job here of making it impossible to tell who won, unlike in 2005 when it was clear that one of them (I want to say Cena) hit first. They're finally declared co-winners to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This show is one where it's very hard to come up with an overall grade. I really liked the opener and the tag match and Rumble were both good, but when a show has what might be the dumbest moment in wrestling history (and that covers A LOT of stupid moments), it's brought down a lot. Early 1994 was not a good time for the WWF but once they finally picked Bret as the guy, things got a lot better.

### Ratings Comparison

Tatanka vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Original: B

Redo: C+

Quebecers vs. Bret Hart/Owen Hart

Original: A+

Redo: B-

Razor Ramon vs. IRS

Original: C+

Redo: D+

Yokozuna vs. Undertaker

Original: F

Redo: F

Royal Rumble

Original: B

Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: B

Redo: C-

DANG I liked this show a lot better on the first viewing.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/13/royal-rumble-count-up-1994/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the paperback edition of KB's Complete 1997 Monday Night Raw Reviews (also available as an e-book) from Amazon. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2018/11/20/new-paperback-complete-1997-monday-night-raw-reviews/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

---

# Smackdown – January 1, 2019: It's A Becky Thing



IMG Credit: WWE

## Smackdown

Date: January 1, 2019

Location: PPG Paints Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's the first show of the year and we're taped again, though for the last time here. The big story this week is the return of John Cena, who is making one of his regular stops here in between movies. It's not clear what he's going to be doing but there could be some interesting interactions with some of the people on the roster. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Here's New Day, with Big E. as the New Year's Baby, to open things up. They're happy to be on the first Smackdown of the new year and we'll start things off with an important announcement: all three of them will be in the Royal Rumble. Big E. goes into the Scott Steiner math promo, with Woods asking why he's doing Steiner Math. If they win, they might be able to challenge for the Universal Title but Brock Lesnar won't show up anyway. Kofi snaps about not being able to get a title shot so Big E. gives him some of the bottle.

On a sadder note, their doctors have told them to stop eating pancakes but Big E. pulls some out of the diaper. After Kofi freaks out, he and Woods have new year's resolutions...which are the plots to Bumblebee and Bird Box. Big E. gets us back on track by talking about the fatal five way for the WWE Title shot at the Royal Rumble, but first we need to have a regular match to fill in the fifth spot. Let's do that now.

## Jeff Hardy vs. Samoa Joe

Before the match, we get clips of their match last where Jeff snapped. See, why couldn't they just combine the two matches? Either have last week's match be for the spot in the five way or do something else and only have them do this match. That's a big reason why these feuds feel like they go on forever. Anyway Joe pulls him down into a kneebar to start and punches away in the corner. Jeff slips down to the floor and wraps Joe's knee around the post to keep things even. Joe gets mad and unloads the announcers' table to send us to a break.

Back with Joe hammering away in the corner, which is rather different than the expected chinlock. Joe ties him in the Tree of Woe to break up the Whisper in the Wind, setting up a sliding dropkick. Jeff makes his comeback with all of the usual, including the Twisting Stunner to set up the Swanton but Joe bails to the floor. Hardy goes with him but gets caught in the Koquina Clutch. That gives Joe a nine, so he slaps it on again back inside to knock Hardy out at 10:26 for a spot in the five way.

**Rating:** C. The match was the usual stuff they're capable of doing, but that doesn't make it that much more interesting. Joe's promos were great before the matches started but they've already done this match enough that it's hard to care about it again. Joe just won clean, so why would I want to see them fight again? I'm sure they will, and that's a problem.

We look back at Vince McMahon bringing out the animal in AJ Styles, who beat Vince down due to a slap.

Vince and Shane McMahon are in their office and explain the fatal five way in a fashion that they would never use. AJ comes in and asks if Vince is sure he wanted to see him. He's not apologizing for what happened last week so watch the real AJ tonight. AJ teases showing the real version to Vince right now and Vince has to hold Shane back. With AJ gone, Shane tells Vince to be careful what he wishes for. Better advice: make sure that HHH isn't doing the same storyline with Seth Rollins on Raw.

Here are Rusev and Lana for their celebration of winning the US Title last week. Rusev talks about how great he is, including his animal magnetism (Lana seems to approve) and smelling like a bacon flavored

Cinnabon. We get a RUSEV DAY USA chant but here's Nakamura to jump him from behind. Lana tried to jump on Nakamura's back and Rusev uses the distraction to superkick him down. That crushes Lana, who can handle wrestling matches but not having a 220lb man fall on her. Nakamura uses the distraction to kick Rusev in the face and then hit Kinshasa.

We look back at Mandy Rose trying to get Jimmy Uso under the mistletoe last week, which didn't sit well with Naomi.

#### Mandy Rose vs. Naomi

Mandy takes off the Mandy Rose shirt to reveal an Usos shirt...and apparently we have a change.

#### Sonya Deville vs. Naomi

Sonya uses the early distraction to hit a sliding knee for two and it's off to the chinlock. Naomi comes right back with a Disaster kick but Mandy grabs the mic. She was getting ready earlier today and sent Jimmy a picture of herself in a towel (which is covering her more than her gear). That's enough of a distraction for Sonya to hit a Hellevator (suplex into a Rock Bottom) for the pin at 2:23.

Randy Orton promises to make victims out of everyone else in the five way.

Rey Mysterio has shown that he can't be pushed around and he'll prove that he's not just here for nostalgia.

Mustafa Ali used to be known as the heart of the cruiserweights but now he wants to be known as the heart of Smackdown. He may be the underdog but he has hope and heart.

We get some new year's resolutions.

The IIconics want to be the first ever Women's Tag Team Champions.

The Good Brothers want to eradicate Smackdown of all the nerds.

Shelton Benjamin doesn't care because no one is going to live up to their promises, and pulls down the New Year's resolution curtains.

Samoa Joe promises to win the five way and then win the WWE Title because he wants to prove himself to people like Jeff Hardy.

Here's John Cena, bad hair and all, for a chat. Cena thanks the fans for the energy and talks about the year in review. He bought a ticket to Wrestlemania and probably shouldn't have had those beers before the match. His personal life was all over national television, he wrote a best selling children's book that he's very proud of and lived in China for six months. With all that though, he still thinks this hair is a good idea. On top of that though, he can still float like a butterfly and sting like a bumblebee, which is still certified fresh.

The question now is why is he here. Well he knows that someone is going to come out here right now and say Cena should leave WWE faster than Nikki Bella left him. That brings out Becky Lynch to some applause from Cena. Becky asks how it feels to expect a man to come out here but to get The Man instead. Things have gotten a bit more complicated since Cena left, because now Becky wants to take his place instead of Charlotte's. He's been THE star of WWE and now she wants to be on those posters and filling his shoes. If Cena has a problem with that, Nikki won't be the only woman to drop him this year.

This brings out Andrade Cien Almas and Zelina Vega, with the latter saying a fresh start was promised not too long ago. What she sees though is an old face in Cena and a still broken face in Becky. Vega introduces the two of them and promises that this will be the year of tranquilo. Cena: "Allow me to introduce myself. My name is John Cena and you may know me from being John Cena." The challenge is thrown out and the mixed tag starts after the break.

### John Cena/Becky Lynch vs. Zelina Vega/Andrade Cien Almas

The women start with a chop sending Vega bailing for a tag to Almas. That means Cena comes in as well and Andrade is rather pleased. The early tranquilo pose doesn't have Cena very impressed and Almas' headlock doesn't make things much better. The fans want Becky but have to settle for more headlocking instead. Almas kicks him down but gets his suplex reversed. A running clothesline takes Cena down though and we take a

break.

Back with Vega holding Cena on the ropes and Almas still in control. Cena fights up and avoids a charge, allowing the hot tag to Becky as the fans stay interested. Some kicks have Vega in trouble and the Bexploder makes things even worse. A top rope dropkick with almost no elevation (Becky might have slipped) gets two but Almas breaks up the Disarm-Her. Cena takes care of him with the usual, including the Lightning Fist. Becky shoves Cena out of the ring though and grabs the Disarm-Her for the win at 10:11.

**Rating:** C-. That ending was a great example of something that Becky would do and fitting her character. She didn't ask permission from Cena to do what she wanted and just took the spot herself. That fits her very well and was the right call. It's not going to mean anything, but it fit for the moment.

Post match Cena offers a handshake but Becky does You Can't See Me instead.

We look back at Shane finally agreeing to be Miz's tag partner.

Miz comes in to see Shane and has ideas for matching gear. That means Shane in Miz's coat, but Shane isn't thrilled. He doesn't seem that much happier with the red version with sunglasses either. Miz's last idea is Shane in Miz trunks, with Shane looking rather ripped. Shane suggests coming up with something brighter and leaves.

The same video on the coming NXT stars. Good grief WE GET IT ALREADY.

HHH comes up to see Asuka in the back and asks her who should get a title shot at the Royal Rumble. Asuka is up for anyone because no one is ready for her. Charlotte pops in to say Ronda Rousey is the only reason she's not champion. Carmella comes in to say she was champion for a long time, followed by Becky saying she's the only option. Advisement has been undertaken.

Rey Mysterio vs Mustafa Ali vs. Samoa Joe vs. Randy Orton vs. AJ Styles

One fall to a finish and the winner gets Bryan at the Rumble. Everyone is

in the ring at once so Ali goes right at Joe, who throws him down without much effort. AJ hits a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker on Rey before hammering away at Orton in the corner. Everyone but Orton heads outside with the aggressive AJ sending Ali face first into the post. Ali is fine enough to hit the rolling X Factor for two on Orton as Joe makes the save.

Rey dives in to take Joe down but AJ sends him hard into the corner. Mysterio is fine enough to hurricanrana AJ out to the floor, only to walk right into a powerslam. Joe suplexes Ali but charges into AJ's elbow in the corner, setting up the moonsault into the reverse DDT for two. Back from a break with AJ taking over again but not being able to launch the Phenomenal Forearm. Joe drops him through the announcers' table, only to have Ali take him down.

Rey does the same to Orton and we get an Ali vs Mysterio showdown. Ali flips out of a headscissors and catches Rey on top with a super Spanish Fly. That's good for a delayed two with Joe making a save this time and firing off knees to Ali. The Satellite DDT plans Joe but the 054 misses. Joe grabs the Koquina Clutch with Rey making a save off a 619. Another 619 hits Ali and there's the RKO to make it worse, with Rey coming off the top with a legdrop for the save. A hurricanrana on the floor takes care of Joe and AJ hits the springboard 450 to pin Orton for the title shot at 13:09.

**Rating:** B-. Not too bad here with the right call. You don't want to have AJ get that big moment last year and then lose his first match back. I don't think they'll put the title back on him but there's a good chance he'll get screwed out of the title, which is a fine enough way to set up a Rumble match. Ali got some nice offense in here as well and that's a good sign for his future.

**Overall Rating:** C. The show wasn't exactly great, but it set up things for the Rumble and advanced some stories without feeling long, which is a lot better than what you would see on the Monday counterpart. Things will pick way back up next week so this was little more than a filler, but at least we got a watchable show this time around. Hopefully we get more of the Rumble card next week, but what we've gotten so far isn't too bad.

## Results

Samoa Joe b. Jeff Hardy – Koquina Clutch

Sonya Deville b. Naomi – Hellevator

John Cena/Becky Lynch b. Andrade Cien Almas/Zelina Vega – Disarm-Her to Vega

AJ Styles b. Randy Orton, Samoa Joe, Rey Mysterio and Mustafa Ali – Springboard 450 to Orton

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the paperback edition of KB's Complete 1997 Monday Night Raw Reviews (also available as an e-book) from Amazon. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2018/11/20/new-paperback-complete-1997-monday-night-raw-reviews/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

---

# **Royal Rumble Count-Up – 1993: There's No One To Stop Him**



IMG Credit: WWE

### **Royal Rumble 1993**

Date: January 24, 1993

Location: ARCO Arena, Sacramento, California

Attendance: 16,000

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Bobby Heenan

This is a pretty forgotten show for reasons that should be obvious. First of all, this is 1993, one of the worst years in company history from a creative standpoint. Bret is defending the title against Razor Ramon (his only world title shot ever) and we've got the Rumble for the title shot at Wrestlemania for the first time. I don't know if that's official here, but the winner did indeed get the shot at the biggest show of the year. Let's get to it.

Historical note: this is 13 days after the debut of Monday Night Raw.

### **Steiner Brothers vs. Beverly Brothers**

For you ECW freaks, Bill Alfonso is the referee. Scott and I think Blake start things off. This is the Steiners' first major match and the fans seem to love them right off the bat. Scott immediately takes him to the

mat with a top wristlock, causing Blake to freak out with a claim of tights being pulled. That sequence worked so well that they do it again. Heenan is very excited about the debut of Narcissist, which is Lex Luger as a guy obsessed with his muscles. In other words, Lex Luger debuts tonight.

After Blake stalls some more, here's Beau to taunt the not legal Rick. There's the tag to Rick who chases Beau around and hits Blake in the process. A powerslam puts Rick down and I don't think Gorilla knows which Beverly is which. Since this is a Steiners match, it's time for suplexes! Scott nearly kills Beau with a belly to belly and everything breaks down for a bit, allowing the Beverlies to take over on Scotty.

We get into a standard formula with Scott having his back worked on by both villains. Blake chokes with a tag rope in the corner for two. Heenan: "Gotta hook the tights." Gorilla: "WHAT?" I love how shocked he sounds every time Heenan says something like that. Beau puts on a Boston Crab but Scott easily pushes out of it. Blake blocks a tag and let's make sure that we're LIVE still. What was WWF's obsession with that?

Scott avoids an elbow drop but Blake breaks up the hot tag again. The crowd is silent when the Beverlies are on offense. Scott comes back with a butterfly powerbomb to put Blake down and Scott actually dives through the ropes and tags at the same time. Rick cleans house and there are Steiner Lines for both Beverlies. Scott pounds on Blake in the corner and counters a Doomsday Device with a victory roll for two. The Frankensteiner to Beau gets the pin.

**Rating:** D+. Pretty dull match here as the Steiners were clearly going to dominate the entire time. The Beverlies never got above lower midcard status and their biggest feud was against the Bushwhackers. What were you going to expect them to do against the freaking STEINER BROTHERS? Nothing here but a squash.

We recap the Rockers' time together and their split. If my eyesight is correct, you can see Shane Douglas as a jobber. After the Barber Shop incident, Jannetty was out for months. He finally returned on Superstars, setting up the match tonight for Shawn's Intercontinental Title. During

his return, Jannetty accidentally hit Sheri with a mirror, which is important to know for the match.

### Intercontinental Title: Marty Jannetty vs. Shawn Michaels

Sherri is at ringside with the question being who would she side with? Why would she side with Marty anyway? I never got that. Apparently it's because Shawn never called her while she was in the hospital...which she was in because of Marty. So why would she ever go with Jannetty? Apparently Jannetty was drunk during this match. That might make things a bit funnier if nothing else.

Jannetty controls to start, sending Shawn to the floor twice with a knee lift and a clothesline. Marty punches Shawn down on the floor and poses in the ring. He tries a punch off the top but gets caught in the ribs on the way down. Shawn loads Marty up on his shoulder and in one of the only times I can ever remember it working, rams Marty shoulder first into the post.

The champ rams the other shoulder into the post because he hit the right one the first time, and you just don't do that. Back in and Shawn hits a shoulderbreaker before sending Marty to the floor again. Back in and the shoulder goes into the buckle, followed by a double ax right down onto it as well. We hit the armbar but Marty fights out quickly. He tries a comeback but walks into a DDT on the arm for two.

Quick sidebar: why is that move called a single arm DDT? It's a hold used on the arm, but the double arm DDT is used to hurt the head. Also a regular DDT uses just one arm, so why is this called a single arm DDT instead of the regular one? These are the kinds of things I think about when I'm bored by a match.

Anyway, Shawn does the always stupid looking jump into the boot spot. I mean he jumped RIGHT AT Marty's feet. What could he possibly have been trying there? Marty avoids a charge in the corner, sending Shawn's shoulder into the post instead. Marty speeds things up and pounds away, only to have Shawn slingshot him out to the floor. Shawn goes to pick him up but Marty suplexes him out to the floor.

Sherri finally does something by slapping Shawn, who gets belly to back suplexed into the ring. Shawn gets launched to the floor again as the pace picks up a bit. A powerslam puts the champ down but Shawn avoids the top rope punch. Marty stops himself before crashing and gets two off a DDT. Shawn misses a superkick and gets caught by one of his own for two. The crowd is getting into this.

Marty slingshots Shawn so he gets to do his big bump onto the post. There goes the referee via an elbow to the face and Sherri comes in. She swings her shoe but hits Marty by mistake of course. Shawn yells at her a lot and then superkicks Marty in the chest for the pin to retain.

**Rating:** C+. This started slow, picked up a good bit during Marty's comeback, and then had a horribly uninteresting ending. Seriously, that's it? These two would have a rematch soon after on Raw which won Match of the Year in a contest for least bad match of the year for all intents and purposes.

In the back, Gene yells at Sherri to calm down. Marty comes to the back for some more brawling.

Heenan and Gorilla argue a bit.

#### Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Big Boss Man

Bigelow jumps Boss Man in the corner to start and Boss is in trouble early. He gets whipped into the corner and a Bigelow forearm knocks him to the outside. This is one of those "do one move then stand around for awhile" matches. Boss Man comes back with some clotheslines and some punches to the "face" in the corner. Another right hand and a bulldog puts Bigelow down but Boss Man's charge is countered by a backdrop to the floor.

Off to a body vice by Bigelow which is a rather dull move as usual. A hot shot puts Boss Man down for two and some shots to his back keeps him down. We hit the body vice again but Boss Man comes back with a suplex. It hurts him more than Bigelow though, as Bam is up first. Boss Man starts his real comeback with a punch to the face and a running crotch attack to Bigelow's back. Bigelow gets a boot up in the corner and

clotheslines Boss Man down. The flying headbutt gets the pin.

**Rating:** D. This was pure filler and not even entertaining filler. Bigelow was on the rise at this point while Boss Man would be gone in less than two months. On top of that, the match was really dull with Bigelow laying around and working on Boss Man's back most of the time, which doesn't make for an interesting match at all.

We get a clip from WWF Mania (Saturday morning show) of Razor beating up Owen to hype the world title match.

Razor says he's got gold around his fingers and neck and now he wants it around his waist.

Bret says he's ready.

#### WWF World Title: Razor Ramon vs. Bret Hart

Feeling out process to start with Razor getting the early advantage with some right hands. A knee in the corner misses and Bret has on the Figure Four in less than 90 seconds. Razor gets the rope so Bret drops elbows on the knee instead. The leg gets wrapped around the post before Bret goes after the other leg in the corner for some reason. Ramon comes back with a whip to send Bret ribs first into the post.

Now we get to the best part of any Bret Hart match: him getting the tar beaten out of him. Some backbreakers on the floor keep Bret down and we head inside again. Razor pounds on the ribs some more and hits the fallaway slam for two. Helen Hart (Bret's mom) is in the front row. There's the chest first into the buckle bump from Bret for two more and it's off to the abdominal stretch, another Razor trademark.

As always, Bret reverses Hall's hold into one of his own before getting hiptossed over. Bret is sent to the floor on a kickout and gets two on a sunset flip. We hit the reverse chinlock by Razor, followed quickly by a bearhug. Bret bites his way out of it and sends Razor to the outside in a quick move. The champion follows it up with a suicide dive and the comeback is on.

Bret pounds away in the corner over and over as we hit the brawl. For a

guy known as a technical master, Bret brawled an awful lot. Not that he's bad at it or anything but it happens really often. There are the Five Moves of Doom but Razor gets to the rope before the Sharpshooter is on. The second attempt doesn't work either as Razor pulls the referee into a pile with the two of them.

Ramon goes right back to the ribs and Bret's momentum is stopped dead. A belly to back superplex is blocked by Bret into a belly to back suplex for two for the champ. Razor clotheslines Bret down but Bret escapes the Razor's Edge into a backslide for two. In a pretty awesome ending, Bret counters a test of strength into a sunset flip in a sweet flip counter, followed by grapevining the legs together on the mat and turning Razor over into the Sharpshooter for the submission.

**Rating:** B. Good match here and again, why did Razor never get more title matches? I know he wasn't the kind of guy to make the world champion, but are you telling me that when the company was falling apart at times they couldn't throw him in there as a token challenger? I would have bought him as legit threat to any champion, but it never happened. I've never gotten that. Anyway, solid match here as you would expect from these two.

Heenan unveils Narcissist, which is Lex Luger in front of a bunch of mirrors. Lots of posing commences and Heenan sounds like he's in love. Well at least extreme lust. Luger says he'll be dominant. Not much here. A curtain is lowered over Luger and Heenan actually gets on his knees, begging to see more. I've heard of overtones but this is ridiculous.

Here are Caesar and Cleopatra to hype up Wrestlemania. They read a proclamation about it and this is really stupid.

### Royal Rumble

Ric Flair is #1 and Bob Backlund, going through a career resurgence at the time, is #2. Backlund drops Flair with a shoulder and does his little dance. Flair pounds him into the corner but Bob backdrops him down. Papa Shango is #3 and is dumped out by Flair in less than thirty seconds. Backlund is sent to the apron and Flair stomps away. They chop it out until Ted DiBiase, I believe half of the tag champions here, is #4.

Heenan makes fun of Backlund as the double teaming ensues, prompting Gorilla to threaten to knock Bobby out. Backlund is beaten on even more until Brian Knobs is #5. The Nasties are good guys at this point and happen to be feuding with Money Inc. Guess who he starts swinging at. Knobs almost dumps Flair but only gets him to the apron. Things slow down for a bit until Virgil is #6. The faces team up to fight the heels as not a lot is going on at this point.

DiBiase tosses out Knobs and we're down to four in the ring again. Here's the pretty new Jerry Lawler at #7 in a HUGE cape. I think he's a heel here but Flair grabs him for some chops almost immediately. Flair goes to the floor through the middle ropes so Virgil goes after Lawler. Flair gets back in and Jerry immediately goes after him. Oh never mind as Heenan is praising Lawler. He's a heel alright.

Max Moon (presumably played by Konnan) is #8. He hits a few moves and is dumped by Lawler before anyone else shows up. Lawler's attire is really intricate here with lots of writing on it instead of the usual two color design. I kind of like it for a change. Japanese legend Genichiro Tenryu is #9 and he starts a chop-off with Flair as you would expect them to do.

Things slow down a bit until Mr. Perfect is #9 at a full sprint. Heenan: "OH NO! OH DEAR GOD NO!!!" Perfect immediately goes after Flair so Ric goes to the top. There's the slam off the top and the Hennig Neck Snap as Heenan is having a heart attack. We hear about the loser leaves the WWF match tomorrow on Raw between the two of them, which is a very rare match for some reason.

Skinner is #11 and he does nothing before Perfect shoves Flair out to a HUGE pop. Lawler (looking very different here for some reason that I can't place) pounds away on Hennig as we're back down to six people in there. That's usually the right amount so thankfully they've gotten through the first third without things getting too hectic. Koko B. Ware and those big green pants of his are #12. Heenan: "Koko B. Ware could go to Wrestlemania to face Bret Hart. Gorilla: "What's wrong with that?" Heenan: "IT SHOULD BE RIC FLAIR!!!"

Perfect dropkicks Skinner out and not a lot is going on again. Here's

Samu at #13, giving us a group of Backlund, DiBiase, Tenryu, Virgil, Perfect, DiBiase, Lawler and Ware. Lawler and Perfect keep going at it in a feud that could have been AMAZING in Memphis. Berzerker is #14 as we need to get rid of some people in there. Lawler misses a charging punch on Perfect and there he goes. With Perfect distracted, DiBiase and Ware team up (you'll NEVER hear that again) to kick him out with an assist from Lawler. Virgil was thrown out during that melee, getting us down to just six again.

The Undertaker is #15 to a BIG pop. Gorilla calls him the odds on favorite. I'm not sure I'd go that far but whatever. Berzerker goes to the floor and beats up Backlund (not eliminated) with a chair. Taker puts Samu out and no sells a lot of Tenryu's stuff before dumping him as well. We've got Backlund (mostly dead on the floor), Taker, Berzerker, DiBiase and Ware in at the moment. Terry Taylor (he still had a job at this point?) is in at #16 and he's gone in less than thirty seconds thanks to DiBiase, as is Ware.

There's a chokeslam to DiBiase and Taker dumps him, leaving Berzerker against Taker. In one of the biggest "oh great it's this guy" moments ever, Giant Gonzales debuts as Taker dumps Berzerker. Gonzales, a legit 7'7 tall, stares down at Taker as Damien Demento (don't ask) is #17. Gonzales chops Taker out for an illegal elimination. In case you're not familiar, Gonzales is a monster who makes Great Khali look like Lou Thesz. Speaking of Khali, he was literally the same character as Gonzales in a repeat of the same exact story the Undertaker was involved in in 1992. In short, both of them sucked and were really tall.

Gonzales destroys Taker for a bit as Demento still won't get in. IRS is #18 as the Giant is still beating up Taker. It's IRS, Backlund and Demento at the moment with Taker out cold in the corner. Tatanka is #19 as Paul Bearer uses the Urn to revive Taker. This of course is all the fans focus on, making the match in the ring look even less interesting than it already is, which is saying a lot when you think about it. Lots of choking ensues until Jerry Sags is #20.

There is NOTHING going on here and I don't think Typhoon at #21 is going to help things at all. Fatu is #22 and my goodness I have never heard

more silence for an entrance. NOTHING is going on here and Earthquake is #23. He immediately goes after...Typhoon, his partner. They have a fat man brawl for a bit until Quake dumps him out. Carlos Colon, aged 44 and called a youngster by Monsoon is #24.

Colon dumps Demento as the eliminations are keeping the crowd on life support. Quake can't put Backlund out as Tito Santana is #25. Fatu misses a charge at Backlund and eliminates himself. We've got Quake, Backlund, Santana, IRS, Tatanka, Colon and Sags in there at the moment. Rick Martel is #26 who is STILL feuding with Santana. Why did they never have a big match to blow off that feud? It went on for like four years or so.

Earthquake dumps IRS and now we get to the first interesting part of the match in WAY too long: Backlund is sent to the apron and the crowd collectively gasps until he gets back in. Gorilla actually swears at how big the reaction is. Yokozuna is #27 and it's time to clear some space. Yoko and Tatanka chop it out and there goes the guy with red hair (figure out which is which).

Colon is out and it's time for the fat man showdown with Quake vs. Yoko. They collide a few times and no one moves so Quake pounds him into the corner. Owen Hart is #28. Quake splashes Yoko in the corner but the second attempt misses. Yoko suplexes Quake out and that more or less seals the winner. Repo Man is #29 and is immediately dropped by Yoko. Everybody gangs up on Yoko and it doesn't work at all.

Randy Savage is #30, giving us a final group of Savage, Yokozuna, Repo Man, Owen, Martel, Santana, Sags and Backlund. They're not even trying to hide the winner at this point. Yoko dumps Tito as Owen dropkicks Sags out. Owen skins the cat to save himself before being dumped by Yoko and possibly injuring his knee. Repo is out and we're down to four. Backlund actually picks up Martel to sit him on top and punches him out. The place is WAY into Backlund here, so he goes after Yoko. A pair of dropkick put Yoko against the ropes but Backlund charges into the elimination, drawing a standing ovation.

So it's Savage vs. Yoko and the beating of the small man begins. Yoko flattens him over and over again until Savage fires off a bunch of kicks

out of the corner. The fans are trying to get behind Savage and there's a top rope ax handle. One to the back gets Yoko down to one knee. Uh...why would you want to knock a guy this big DOWN in a battle royal?

Either way he superkicks Savage to knock him down again and there's the belly to belly. The legdrop crushes Savage but the Banzai Drop misses. In one of the STUPIDEST endings ever to the Rumble, Savage hits the elbow and COVERS, getting launched over the top rope on the kickout to send Yoko to Las Vegas for the title shot.

**Rating:** D. This was one of the worst Rumbles of all time. The main problem here is the period after Taker, the only guy you could actually see eliminating Yoko, was eliminated. From then until the time Backlund got close to the longevity record (which he got), there's NOTHING. It's a bunch of lame midcarders standing around lifting each others' legs in the air. Why would I want to see that at all? Anyway, nothing to see here and a BAD Rumble.

**Overall Rating:** D+. There's a reason no one cares at all about 1993 WWF: it's really not very good. The title matches here aren't bad but other than that, this show is pretty freaking terrible. The Rumble sucks the life out of the show, as the highlights are a two minute segment between Flair and Perfect and the Backlund part at the end. When the whole match is 65 minutes long, that doesn't hold up. Weak show here.

### Ratings Comparison

Steiner Brothers vs. Beverly Brothers

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Shawn Michaels vs. Marty Jannetty

Original: C

Redo: C+

Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Big Boss Man

Original: D+

Redo: D

Bret Hart vs. Razor Ramon

Original: B

Redo: B

Royal Rumble

Original: D+

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: D

Redo: D+

Not much change here.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/12/royal-rumble-count-up-1993/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the paperback edition of KB's Complete 1997 Monday Night Raw Reviews (also available as an e-book) from Amazon. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2018/11/20/new-paperback-complete-1997-monday-night-raw-reviews/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

---

# All Elite Wrestling Officially Announced

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/breaking-elite-wrestling-officially-announced-plus-first-event/>

So...this could be interesting. Right now, all we know is the company's name, the main people involved (Cody, Young Bucks, Hangman Page and possibly SCU), and the name of their first show: Double Or Nothing.

First and foremost, don't get overly excited yet. We have a show announced without any talent or anything beyond that. Yes All In was great and a big hit, but that's one show, not a full promotion. New Japan's shows in southern California didn't draw nearly as well after a few times and that's with a lot of the same talent that is going to be here, plus a lot more. We still need to know a lot more about this, but there's serious potential.

Above all else, it's nice to have another place for the talent to go that is going to be a top level indy (Yes indy. Don't act like these guys are going to be anywhere near WWE for a long time, if ever.) on the level of ROH or TNA. This can get more talent in the ring and in front of people, which is always a great thing. Maybe this can motivate WWE a bit, as nothing else has for years.

I'm interested in where this goes and I'll be checking it out for sure, but we still need to know a lot more details, which I'm sure are coming soon enough. Still though, big deal at the moment and I want to see what they can do.

---

## **But WWE Is Dying Right?**

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/breaking-smackdown-live-moving-fox-2019-changing-nights/>

In the words of the butler from Mr. Deeds: "How about a billion dollars?"

Even if this is a bigger disaster than the XFL, just making it to such a major network is a huge accomplishment for WWE and shows what can happen when you stick with family friendly TV instead of going over the top. I'm not sure how long it's going to last there, but this is a big upgrade, at least for the time being.