

History of Summerslam Count-Up – Summerslam 1994: From Great Matches To Leslie Nielsen

Summerslam 1994

Date: August 29, 1994

Location: United Center, Chicago, Illinois

Attendance: 23,000

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Vince McMahon

Well, where to begin with the changes? For one, Bret is the WWF Champion and is in the middle of his epic reign with it which would end two months later at the hands of...technically Owen Hart but Backlund got the title in one of the oddest choices ever. Your double main event here is Hart vs. Hart and Taker vs. Taker. Yeah, Taker got...he got...well he got something at the Rumble and hasn't been seen since.

This became a comedy storyline to an extent with Leslie Nielsen from the Naked Gun movies being brought in because there had been Taker sightings. A new Undertaker had been brought in by DiBiase and of course was evil. Aside from those two matches, I remember nothing at all about this show. It's these two matches or nothing here, so let's get to them, and hopefully some other stuff that's worth watching on the card as well.

Macho Man opens the show. Wait what? How long was he there anyway? I know he was at Starrcade 94 and had a bit of a build up to his appearance there, so this must have been one of his very last appearances. He uses a line from All About Eve which makes me smile. He throws it to Vince and Jerry so this was really just to get the crowd into the show.

Ah apparently this is his last WWF appearance. We're told that there are new tag champions which I guess happened at a house show. Might help if I told you who the new champions are. It's Shawn and Diesel. We run down the card and mention that Davey Boy is there in the crowd. Remember that as it plays a roll later one.

Bam Bam Bigelow/IRS vs. Headshrinkers

The Headshrinkers are the team that lost the tag belts, so I guess this was going to be a title match coming into this show? We're getting more towards the modern look of the arena here as we have the lights in the shapes of dollar signs and the opening doors to the arena. This is part of the Million Dollar Team which is the original Cabinet but much better. Vince confirms that this was supposed to be a title match but now is non title which sucks for the heels.

I always like the Headshrinkers for some reason. When they were being built up as the top face team they worked like few others. Lou Albano is managing them now as this guy is the king of tag champions for some reason. They're wearing crowns that look like Native American headdresses for some reason. Bigelow of course would soon be starting up the feud with LT that would just suck so heavily, making the 11th Mania perhaps the worst of all time. The Samoans are quite over here.

Fatu would of course later become known as Rikishi, the thong wearing, dancing Samoan. Faces are completely dominating for the majority of this match, which leads me to believe they'll wind up losing. Of course as soon as I type that the Corporation takes over.

This lasts about a minute as the faces are in control again. Eventually they hit their double stroke and top rope splash move but it turns into a big fight with Afa beating up Bam Bam. It's a DQ win for the heels (called it) and all four brawl up the aisle. Vince doesn't understand why that's the

decision.

Rating: C+. It's not bad, but it felt like it was in fast forward. Nothing was given time to develop which I guess is what an opener should be. This was fun I'd say, although me liking the Headshrinkers has a lot to do with that more than likely.

We go to the back where Leslie Nielsen is on the Undertaker's Trail. There's even a sign saying Undertaker's Trail and an arrow. We can also hear his thoughts as he narrates. He runs into one of his co-stars who looks like Taker in the dark and they stand on a case, followed by them arguing over which of them is on the case. This is dumber than it sounds.

Razor says he's getting the IC title back from Diesel. Walter Payton is going to be with him for no apparent reason.

Women's Title: Alundra Blaze vs. Bull Nakano

Ok, Blaze is more commonly known as Madusa so that's what I'll be referring to her as partially. Nakano is a Japanese wrestler who is apparently a big deal over there. She comes out with Luna to Orient Express' old music. This is the original women's title, which is one of the biggest jokes in the history of wrestling, but in a way caused the Montreal Screwjob.

The division was a flat out waste as Blaze was the only woman that ever did anything with it, mainly as she was one of the few American women that could wrestle in the company. Anyway, she was champion for just about ever until she bailed for WCW. She's the one that dropped the belt in the trash on live TV and made Vince paranoid to the point that he was afraid Bret would do the same thing with the WWF Title.

Anyway, you know the rest and here we are with the title match that no one cared about and most won't today. Nakano just wasn't someone that Americans cared about and got the

same treatment that Chono and Muta got in WCW: Great workers, but no one cared at all. Nakano probably weighs about 200 pounds or so. Her hair is about a foot tall. There's a Y in Blaze but I'm sick of the red lines under it.

This match is pretty bad. The problem simply was that women's wrestling was somehow less serious back then than it is now. Blaze would be barely above an average worker in today's product, but back then she was Trish and Lita rolled into one.

This is just not that interesting as it's sloppy and your stereotypical women's match in a lot of ways, from hair throws to poor execution. It's ok I guess, but it's really not that great. Blaze hits some bad looking takedowns before dodging the top rope leg and hitting the German suplex for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was just there. It wasn't that great but it wasn't that terrible. The women's division was just horrid back then and part of the reason was there wasn't enough talent to warrant a whole division. Blaze was a pioneer for the division but there were far more talented workers later on.

Diesel and Shawn are with Todd, talking about their title win and then the IC Title match tonight. Diesel was actually quite good on the mic.

Intercontinental Title: Diesel vs. Razor Ramon

Diesel is champion here which is a very forgotten reign, especially since he'd get the world title in about three months. For some reason Shawn is introduced after Diesel is, despite him accompanying Diesel to the ring. Crowd pops like a coconut for Razor, as I still don't get why he never got a short run with the world title. Yet again, a face befriends a local sports legend. Razor is wearing sky blue boots, which he can actually work I think.

The good thing about Razor here is that he's a big guy so he

can wrestle with big guys but he has the speed tactics here to counter Diesel, which makes this a very interesting match in my eyes. This is pretty standard yet solid fare here as Razor starts out hot and fast with Diesel eventually taking over with slower power moves which work very well for him. I still don't get the point in Walter being there but that's just me.

Shawn gets involved and helps beat on Razor as the football legend is still rather worthless in this match other than for moral support which is worthless of course. Shawn and Diesel combine to get the buckle exposed and ram Razor's back into it. Jerry asks why Payton is there and is ignored. That's a funny thing to me as even Vince has no idea but just won't admit it. Walter has of course done nothing to counter Shawn this whole time.

We get a short comeback from Razor but it's nothing of note really, which makes me wonder why I'm noting it here. Correction it's a decent one as he throws those great right hands of his. After Shawn keeps getting involved and the referee keeps going after Walter, Shawn goes for the IC belt and he and Walter fight over it. Shawn loses the tug of war and goes for the kick. Of course it misses and Razor pins Diesel for the belt.

This would happen again and would result in Diesel and Shawn splitting, leading to Diesel taking the world title in November. Payton joins in celebrating despite doing jack. Diesel stalks Shawn up the ramp. Oh good grief Walter's son is there too. Why not his old roommate while we're at it?

Rating: B-. I'm sorry Chicago residents/Bears fans, but Payton was worthless in this. He's an amazing running back and a great man, but there was no need to have him here. Put 1-2-3 Kid there or something, but not a football player with no connection to the match at all. Match itself was fine though as these two have that natural chemistry together. Fun match but Payton hurt things in my eyes.

We go to Macho who says nothing of note at all.

Vince recaps what we just saw, which shows Walter talking to the referee while Shawn is getting ready to kick Razor. Ok, that means one of two things. Razor slipping out was pre-planned or Walter is a freaking moron that will let his buddy get kicked. Yeah, great move there.

We go to the back with Diesel saying he's mad at Shawn for costing him the belt and saying that Payton wasn't even an issue. Shawn says it's ok and he'll get Diesel out of this.

Lex Luger vs. Tatanka

Oh I had forgotten about this. This was actually a really well done story in my eyes. Here's the idea: Luger and Tatanka are feuding with DiBiase's team. Luger is constantly being offered a spot on the team for a big amount of money but he always turns it down. Things of course start looking like he took the money but never completely. Tatanka and everyone else is convinced that Luger is guilty, so the two of them are having this match here in which Luger allegedly will show that he sold out.

This was drawn out and really well built up to the point that we were believing Lex was evil now, when I think the real answer is pretty obvious. DiBiase keeps doing all kinds of things to imply that Luger has sold out including helping him win a match and DiBiase going into Luger's locker room. Luger continues saying that DiBiase can do all kinds of things but Luger has never done anything wrong, which is very true.

Luger gets a somewhat mixed reaction, being about 70-30 for the face pop. The cheers are louder, but the booing is there. DiBiase isn't there either, which is a point of interest I guess. He hits the corner and the boos are MUCH louder now. Bell rings and they're arguing over whether or not he sold out. The whole point of this is waiting on DiBiase to come out and help Lex and the match is just kind of meandering along

which isn't good at all as it makes the match boring. You need a good match to go with a good story to make something really successful and this isn't doing it. It's ok, but just ok.

Finally DiBiase comes out with a big bag full of money. As Luger is looking at him and the money, Tatanka rolls him up for the pin. Post match, Luger goes after DiBiase and Tatanka attacks him, turning heel and legitimately surprising a lot of the fans. The heels hug and the fans are TICKED.

Tatanka beats the tar out of Lex and leaves with Ted, but turns around to beat on Lex some more. He puts the Million Dollar Dream on him to put Luger to sleep and follows with the ultimate humiliation of putting the money in his mouth. Why that is humiliating I have no idea but it looks awesome.

Rating: C-. This is a great example of the angle being far better than the match. The match was pretty bad but the angle was excellent. This was a total swerve and while it's clear it was going to happen now, it was really well done at the time. The match sucked but the angle makes up for it.

We've only got three matches left, so this one is yours. Why this took place is beyond me. At the end you get a sample of the brilliant comedy that the company had going for it at the time.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Mabel

This is filler on the second biggest show of the year. This was a rather bad time if you didn't get that. Well that's not really fair as there was filler at almost any show back in the day. Vince says he's a fan of good rap. Therefore he's not a fan of Oscar and Mabel. Jarrett won't shake his hand to start us off. Nice old school heel work there.

Mabel does Jarrett's strut which isn't bad. Basic story here as Jarrett can't fight him at all due to the gravitational force of Mabel's gut sucking the good out of this match.

Jarrett shoves Oscar into the steps and then Mable eats post. Jarrett just tries to get Mabel down and of course nothing works until Jarrett gets pulled out of the air when attempting a top rope double axe.

Sleeper goes on and Mabel does his stupid falling kick thing. Knuckleball Schwartz (and mine is bigger than his) is on strike. Ok then. Jarrett, like an idiot, goes after Oscar for fun and gets crushed for his troubles. Middle rope splash misses Jeff. Mabel misses a sit down drop and Jeff actually gets the pin. I'm at a loss for words to describe how much of a waste of time this was.

Rating: D-. Just a totally pointless match here as they made no secret at all of there being no need for this match. Basic big vs. little guy here as nothing of note was going on here at all. Get on to something else please.

The detectives are in the arena and Taker's silhouette is behind them. I really hate this show.

We get a long buildup package on Bret vs. Owen which was very well done, especially the masterful jobs from Survivor Series and Mania, which was the absolute classic that was Bret vs. Owen. Owen's heel work in this was absolutely masterful. This was built up for nearly a year and is one of the best feuds that I can ever remember. I'm enjoying looking back at this as it really was well done and you could feel the tension here.

Owen pinning Bret clean at Mania was mind blowing at the time and still is to this day. Bret's old partner Neidhart has joined up with Owen as well which makes thing even more amazing. The beauty in having Owen win was that it made you believe he could do it for the title here tonight. That's a great bonus and it makes matches better and more believable. Bruce, their brother, went off on him, while wearing a leather jacket.

Did Stu make his fortune as a leather tanner or something?

Owen did a promo in the cage about a week before which was great. I know this is long but the recap is about 10 minutes long. Stu and Helen are interviewed at ringside which I don't think I've ever heard before. Helen sounds typical but Stu sounds very odd indeed. Not how I imagined it, but the man is an absolute legend and one of the few people who played a big role in shaping the business into what it is today.

I can't think of anyone that's trained more stars than he has. Davey says that he wouldn't want to be in the ring with Bret tonight. Neidhart is there too and he's an Owen supporter. This is really intricate and intense and is one heck of a story if I do say so myself. I'm hyped for this match and I've seen it probably 8 times.

Bret is apparently getting over strep throat. I've had that about 30 times and if you've never had it, consider yourself lucky. It's misery. Bret says he doesn't hate Owen but he does hate Neidhart because Jim made Owen jealous in the first place. He says this ends tonight.

WWF Title: Cage Match-Bret Hart vs. Owen Hart

Since I've explained the story pretty well, I'll spare you another retelling of it. Owen's heel music owned. Bret's face music owned. Sweet goodness this match rocks in all areas. Never marked out for a Bret match before but I am on this one. In a nice touch, Owen's name graphic doesn't show up until he's in the cage and Bret's music is playing, almost like he's a jobber. The bell rings and we're off immediately.

For some reason we have no commentary at the beginning. Ah there it is. I'm watching this on my laptop and the audio is the kind where half is in one ear and the rest is in the other on my headphones. The referee is outside which is a good thing to me. That enziguri from Owen just never gets old. They're starting out really slowly which is also good as they're not going for broke immediately but rather telling a story out

there.

Both go for the quick exit very early on which is a nice touch. Owen wants to beat Bret and Bret just wants to end this as the title is secondary to him. We get a really good camera shot from over the corner of the cage. That's a unique shot that's cool looking. Owen lands a dropkick and then a nip up before literally diving at the cage wall, desperate to get out. This is just hilarious looking but at the same time you can see how desperate Owen is to win here.

That's yet another nice little touch. It's the little things like that which can make a match great as they show that the workers are thinking and not just wrestling. They've been going about 10 minutes so far and it's pretty even at this point. Pretty sure this is escape only which is what a cage match should be. Screw that pinning and submission nonsense.

Lawler keeps trying to play up Bulldog vs. Hart from 92 but Vince says that it means nothing, which is true as they were friendly afterwards, especially since Davey was gone for a long period of that. The good thing about this match is that it's not about the cage but about the wrestlers and the cage is more of a prop. That's always better. This is a ton of last second saves and close calls which keeps the fans on their toes.

They trade sharpshooters as I'm very close to the end of the match and I have nothing to make fun of here as it's a great match. They chase each other up the cage but Owen's leg gets tied up and Bret drops down to keep the title. Post match, Neidhart jumps the rail and beats on Bret for a bit before taking him back inside the cage and locking the door.

We then get the siege of the cage as all of the Harts try to get in before Smith goes up the cage and knocks Owen off. This takes like 4 minutes to finally accomplish which actually is kind of a cool looking sight. Finally Smith runs the heels

off. They help Bret to his feet before we go to the back to talk to Owen.

Rating: A. This was a great cage match as there's the natural chemistry and rivalry there, and if you give these two thirty plus minutes, are you expecting anything less than greatness?

Owen and Neidhart are in the back as Owen talks about how only Bret ever got cared about and how Jim was his best friend. It's better than it sounds.

Recap of Taker vs. Taker. Short version, Taker disappeared after the Rumble to heal an injury and hadn't been seen since. He returned but he was different, controlled by DiBiase. This was actually Brian Lee who was Chainz in the DOA in a few years. We get testimonials from regular people, making this seem like Elvis sightings. I refuse to believe that these people are wrestling fans.

Undertaker vs. Undertaker

DiBiase brings out the fake one and then Fink says that his opponent is the one and only Undertaker. We get a casket rolled out as well as this entrance is just taking too long. The casket is opened and inside is a huge urn. Bearer takes it into the ring and actually opens it, revealing...a really powerful flashlight. This goes on for several minutes as I'm pretty bored. This somehow triggers Taker to appear and walk down the ramp.

When I say walk, I mean move....kind of. Fake Taker looks to weigh about 340. While this is kind of a cool moment, Bret and Owen should have closed the show. It's not that bad though and it could have gone over far worse. Real Taker is in purple and fake is in gray. Real even throws out a leap frog that is amazing to see when you think about it.

The crowd is still popping but so much of their emotion was taken out of them by the previous match that it's just hard

for them to get hyped here, and I can't blame them. This is a cool idea, but it just shouldn't have gone last. This is pretty basic for the most part. Real leads for the early part, fake takes over and dominates the majority, standard Taker comeback with three tombstones to get the emphatic win for the real Deadman.

The count is slower than the walk that got him there though which is odd. Ted is ran off as Taker poses like crazy to end the show. Actually it doesn't as we throw it to Macho to end the show. Actually it doesn't as we go to the detectives in the back who open Taker's casket to find nothing. Then one finds a briefcase which is closed. "The case is closed!" We go off the air like that. When I was a kid I never got that joke and it's still awful today.

Rating: B. The match was fine, but it shouldn't have gone last. At least we got a decent moment to end on with the real Taker standing tall, or in his case kneeling moderate. The comedy thing was just a waste as they never even interact with Taker, but that's a good thing.

Overall Rating: C-. This really is just a one match show as the rest is just pretty silly. Luger and Tatanka's angle is great, the cage match is excellent, and that's about it. The comedy thing with the detectives was just flat out stupid on all levels and I certainly could have done without it.

They're on screen all of 3 minutes and they have nothing but sight gags and dumb moments. I didn't get the point back then and I don't now. There's nothing much to this show other than the cage, so I'd say find a copy of that and the buildup and other than that, go watch a better show as this isn't that good.