

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 1993: The Japanese Invasion

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 armbars 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/>

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