

# Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2000: The New Game

## Royal Rumble 2000

Date: January 23, 2000

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 19,231

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross

After sitting through 1998 and 1999, this is my reward. What we have here might be the best Rumble show of them all with one of the best matches ever and a great Rumble on top of it. 2000 is the best in ring year the company ever had and this was a great way to kick that year off. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about Cactus Jack challenging HHH for the world title in a street fight. This is that "one of the best matches ever" that I was talking about. The idea is simple: Cactus wants the title back and he's facing HHH in a street fight, which means HHH is in WAY over his head. We're in Foley's hometown in Foley's match with Foley's most hardcore character. How can this not be a masterpiece?

## Kurt Angle vs. ???

Angle is undefeated at this point. Kurt says he's a real winner here, unlike the New York Knicks. This is goofy Kurt, which means he's hilarious. He says that the mystery opponent must be scared to come face him, but the opponent needs to take a deep breath, come out here, and face Angle like a man. The self-help thing here is hilarious. The fans chant WE WANT TAZ....and here he is!

## Kurt Angle vs. Tazz

Tazz pounds away on Angle and hits a HUGE backdrop to send him to the floor. Angle escapes a suplex in the aisle (painted like a street with a big cab hanging above the entrance, which looks like an alley. It's really cool) and takes over. Back in and Kurt hits a forearm for two and

chokes away in the corner. A belly to belly puts Tazz down but Angle goes up and gets crotched. Tazz hits a super Tazplex for two before getting rolled up for two. Angle gets two more off a bridging German before walking into a release German from Tazz. We unleash the suplexes on Kurt before the Tazmission ends Angle's undefeated streak.

**Rating:** C+. This was short, but to say it was an effective debut is an understatement. The place ERUPTED when Tazz won which is exactly the point of the opening match. See, this is what you call LISTENING to the audience. WWF knew they had to appeal to the ECW fans and what better way than to have Tazz debut here? Today, Tazz would be in some comedy match and would likely lose, because Heaven forbid that the fans get what they want in one city for one night.

Angle does a stretcher job.

We go to the Hardys in the back and get a clip of them and the Dudleys putting each other through tables. Terri, the Hardys' manager here, is told to stay in the back. She would be gone from the team soon, thank goodness.

Tazz says Angle is just the first victim.

#### Dudley Boyz vs. Hardy Boyz

I believe match #1 or #2 in a series of roughly 8000 and it's an elimination tables match. Bubba praises John Rucker of the Braves who had recently gone on a massive anti-New York rant in Sports Illustrated. The Hardys hit the ring and the match starts fast with Bubba hitting the Bubba Bomb on Jeff. No tags here thank goodness. Bubba sets up a table in the ring but before he can get another one, Jeff takes him out with a HUGE flip dive.

Jeff gets sent into the steps as Matt escapes a powerbomb through the table. D-Von suplexes Matt as Jeff CRACKS Bubba in the head with a chair. In a SICK spot, Jeff tries to run the railing but Bubba throws the table at Jeff, knocking him out of the air. That sounded GREAT. The pairings trade off and Bubba loads up the backsplash through the table, only for Jeff to come back and try a double superplex. D-Von moves the table but

doesn't stop the suplex.

Matt brings in a ladder because this might as well be a TLC style match. We head to the floor where the ladder is set up in front of a table with Bubba on it. Matt dives through Bubba through the table just as Jeff dives in from off camera with a splash, sending Bubba through the table in another awesome looking spot. So it's 2-1 now with Jeff leaning a table up against the barricade. The steps are set up on their end and a table is set up like a bridge between the steps and the apron.

D-Von is placed on the bridged table but moves before Matt dives through him. He moves AGAIN to avoid a diving Jeff, sending him through the leaning table. Cool sequence there by Ninja D-Von. Apparently Bubba doesn't have to leave. Ok that makes things more interesting. The Dudleys set up two steps in the ring and put a table across them before hitting a HUGE powerbomb on Matt to eliminate (in a sense) him. The tables are LOUD tonight too. Jeff gets beaten into the aisle but Matt quickly follows, only to get WHACKED in the head with a chair.

The Dudleys stack up four tables in front of the entrance (it's the MSG setup where the entrance is opposite the cameras). Matt gets put on the tables and Jeff is CRACKED in the head again to break up the save attempt. Bubba climbs onto the taxi over the aisle to splash Matt, but remember that wouldn't win the match. Jeff climbs up after him (I'm not sure where D-Von went) and blasts him with a chair, knocking him through two of the tables (still doesn't win). Matt puts D-Von on the table and Jeff dives off the taxi with the Swanton through D-Von through the table for the win.

**Rating:** B+. This was AWESOME with all four guys being young and hungry here. The Dudleys were out to prove themselves and the Hardys were out to show they could hang in a fight. They had already proven they could fight in a violent match like the ladder match, but this was a brawl instead of a high flying match. REALLY fun stuff here though and well worth a look if you haven't seen it. The Dudleys would get the titles next month, setting up the first triangle ladder match at Mania.

Angle gets a concussion test and complains that being choked out is

illegal.

It's time for the Miss Rumble Bikini contest with Sgt. Slaughter, Tony Garea, Moolah, Johnny V, FREDDY FREAKING BLASSIE and Andy Richter from Late Night with Conan O'Brien as judges. Jerry gets to emcee of course. The contestants are Ivory, Terri, Kat, Jackie, BB (You shouldn't remember her) and Luna. The idea here is that Kat legitimately took her top off (full exposure too, the only intentional female nudity in WWF history) at Armageddon and more nudity was promised here.

Ivory doesn't want to do it but eventually does. Terri does her usual skin colored one which we've seen before. Lawler freaks out over her bending over the ropes. Jackie...no one cares. BB isn't bad but again, the whole point of this is for Kat to win. Luna won't show. Kat is in a bikini made of bubble wrap. Creative if nothing else. The judges start tallying their scores but here's Mae Young to enter as well. She takes off her robe, and THERE is the nudity (it was fake). Mae wins to complete the joke. Lawler's reaction of "OH MY GOD I SAW THEM" is priceless. Mark Henry comes in to save our collective retinas.

The recently hired Coach doesn't have much to say from WWF New York.

Chyna and Jericho, the co-IC Champions, argue over who gets to wear the belt to the ring. There was a double pin in a title match and they became co-champions as a result, which is a pretty creative idea.

Angle says he's still undefeated. Rock would pin him on Smackdown a few weeks later.

#### Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. Chyna vs. Hardcore Holly

You know Jericho is fired up to be in MSG. He talks about how awesome his championship celebration will be, as it will make the millennium celebration look like his sister's seventh birthday party. Holly piefaces Chyna down to start before getting in a slap fight with Jericho. Chyna gets sent to the floor for the Slaughter fall, leaving the blondes to fight for a bit. Holly hits that perfect dropkick of his but Jericho comes back with the forearm.

They slug it out until Holly tries a rana (huh?), only to get caught in the Walls. Chyna makes the save, basically turning heel at the same time. Chyna sends Holly to the floor and gets drilled by Jericho. Holly and Chyna go to the floor where Jericho tries a dive but slips and only hits Holly. Back in and there's the handspring elbow and DDT from Chyna to the Canadian for two. Everyone heads to the floor where Jericho saves Chyna from a chair shot. Back in and both champions go up for a kind of double splash for two.

They both tried for a cover and a fight breaks out as a result. Chyna escapes a belly to back suplex and hits Jericho low, followed by a Pedigree for two on Holly. Chyna goes up but gets caught in a modified Doomsday Device (cross body instead of a clothesline) for a very close two. That probably should have been the finish. Now Jericho loads up a superplex but gets crotched for his efforts. Holly gets superplexed by Chyna but gets two on her off the bounce. Chyna chairs Holly in the head and puts on the Walls, only to have Jericho break it up and hit the Lionsault for the undisputed title and a BIG pop.

**Rating:** C+. This was pretty good and too short to get bad. It could have been on Raw but see, back in 2000, there was this crazy idea of finishing angles on PPV. I know that's insane now and everything ends in a big match on Raw or rather just stops happening one day, but back in the old days, they ended like this. Match was fine.

Rock is worried about two and only two men in the Rumble: Crash Holly and Headbanger Mosh. Cole (minus facial hair) suggests maybe Rock should be worried about, say, Big Show. Rock says go make a glass of shut up juice (not one of his better catchphrases) and tells Big Show he doesn't care what he thinks. He guarantees to win the Rumble right here in New York City and the place eats it up. I want one of those jerseys he's wearing.

Jericho says he said he'd win and he'll lead the Jerichoholics like a pied piper.

Tag Titles: Acolytes vs. New Age Outlaws

The Outlaws are defending and there's a backstory that doesn't deserve to be listed. Who would have thought that THIRTEEN YEARS LATER the Outlaws

would be on house shows for the WWE again? The Outlaws are heels here but they're over like free beer in a frat house here in New York. The APA storms the ring and the beating is on quickly. Bradshaw and Billy officially get us started with Billy taking a fast beating. Both guys tag as the referee is adjusting his ear piece.

Faarooq imitates Dogg's dance before getting double teamed a bit. Bradshaw breaks up the shaky knee drop and everything breaks down. The Clothesline kills Billy and there's the spinebuster to Roadie...but Billy pulls the referee out. The ref is bumped and Road Dogg is hit with a double powerbomb. X-Pac runs in and kicks Bradshaw's head off. The Fameasser to the future JBL retains the titles in like two and a half minutes. This had to be cut for time. The Outlaws would lose the titles to the Dudleys next month and that would be the end of the team.

Dogg rhymes about keeping the titles.

We recap HHH vs. Cactus Jack. HHH won the title the night after Summerslam from Mankind via cheating. Big Show got the title at Survivor Series but lost it back to HHH in January. Mankind stood up to the newly formed McMahon-Helmsley Era and got beaten down for his efforts. Foley got fired and we had a fake Mankind get humiliated. Rock then said that every single wrestler would walk out and form the Rock Wrestling Federation if Foley wasn't rehired. See how different storylines could be back then? Mankind got HHH to agree to a street fight at the Rumble but got beaten up for his efforts.

This led to an AWESOME promo on Smackdown, where Mankind said he wasn't ready to face HHH in a street fight, but he knew someone who did. He took off his mask and ripped open his shirt to reveal Cactus Jack, scaring HHH to death. These two, as in Cactus Jack and HHH, had fought in 1997 in the match that basically brought hardcore to the WWF and they did it in MSG, with Cactus winning clean. This was an excellent story and there was a VERY real feeling that Cactus could pull this off, because HHH was in WAY over his head. Check out the build to this match as it's some of the best stuff you'll EVER see.

WWF World Title: Cactus Jack vs. HHH

Street fight. It should also be noted that Foley lost about 30 pounds inside of a month and a half and is by far the slimmest you'll ever see him look here. HHH does the long slow walk to the ring which makes things feel even more epic. Stephanie heads to the back which is probably a good thing. Dang I miss that big title. It's SO much better looking than the stupid spinner version. Even now when it doesn't spin it doesn't look like something special but rather something like a toy. The belt on HHH looks classy.

Cactus looks like an animal and HHH looks terrified. Jack wins a quick slugout and pounds HHH down into the corner. We head to the floor for a swinging neckbreaker on HHH and a legdrop onto the apron knocks the Game back to the floor. HHH is rammed into various metal objects but comes back with a bell shot to take over. NOW we get to the fun part as the first chair is brought in.

Back in and Jack charges right into a chair shot like an idiot. Granted for him, that's playing the character right. HHH goes to unhook the buckle instead of covering for some reason and Jack pops up to clothesline the champ down. There's a legdrop onto a chair onto HHH's head for two and we head outside again. HHH gets backdropped into the crowd and the beating begins again. JR: "They're out in the sea of humanity." Jerry: "Humanity? JR we're in New York."

HHH gets rammed into something made of metal that we can't see and they head into the aisle. Cactus sets up a wooden pallet and suplexes HHH onto it before screaming in his face. This isn't falls count anywhere mind you. There's a trashcan to the head and HHH gets rammed into the steel doors. The fans chant for Foley as he gets suplexed onto the trashcan. The crowd is just RUTHLESS against HHH here as they head back to the ring. The aisle is really short so it's not a long walk.

Jack rams a knee into HHH's head to drive it into the steps and it's back inside now. This is almost all Jack so far. There's the 2x4 in barbed wire but HHH hits him low to get the board away. Some shots to Cactus' ribs and back have him in trouble and HHH looks at the board as if to say "did I just do that?" Cactus blocks a shot to the head and hits HHH in the balls with the board. The double arm DDT puts HHH down as the referee

takes the board out of the ring, drawing the loudest booing of the night.

Cactus wants the board back and beats up the Spanish announce team who the board was left with. He gets a board (clearly not the same one but that's likely for safety reasons) and after the referee is crushed, HHH gets hit in the forehead with the wire. The board is driven into HHH's forehead and he's busted something fierce now. The referee is back up now and we get the most famous spot of the match with Jack ripping the wire across HHH's cut to make him scream.

Cactus tries to piledrive HHH through the announce table (same thing he won the 97 match with) but HHH counters with a backdrop. JR: "The champion is bleeding like a horse." When does a horse bleed? HHH is bleeding from his leg which is a rare sight to see. The place LOUDLY cheers for Foley and we head back inside. The Pedigree is countered into a slingshot into the post and a bulldog on the wire gets two.

HHH has a spot called to him about the steps before the Cactus Clothesline takes them both to the floor. Cactus charges but gets hiptossed into the steps, banging his knee in the process. You know a Flair disciple like HHH knows how to work on a knee. Back inside and HHH clips him down before picking up the barbed wire for another shot to the knee. HHH pulls out some handcuffs in a flashback to last year.

Cactus fights back and hits HHH in the head with the cuffs in a smart move. The cuffs are locked up a few seconds later though and HHH starts pounding away. The steps are brought in but Foley comes out of nowhere with a drop toehold to send HHH face first into the steel. A low blow keeps HHH down and Cactus bites away. HHH gets back up and grabs a chair which he literally BREAKS over the back of Cactus. They head outside again and Cactus takes some shots to the head from the chair.

Cactus says hit me again but before HHH can crush the skull, Rock pops out of nowhere and blasts HHH in the head with a chair of his own. A cop comes in and unlocks the cuffs, freeing Cactus. HHH starts backpedaling fast but gets caught on the Spanish Announce Table. The piledriver hits this time but the table DOESN'T BREAK.

We haven't gotten violent enough yet, so here's a bag of thumbtacks.



Stephanie comes out (complete with snakeskin choker in a nod to Cactus) and HHH comes back with a backdrop onto the tacks. There's the Pedigree but Cactus kicks out at two to blow the roof off the place. It doesn't last long though as a Pedigree ONTO THE TACKS finally ends Cactus.

**Rating:** A+. FREAKING OW MAN! If there's a match that made a guy into a legitimate force better than this one made HHH, I'd love to see it. This was an absolute war with both guys destroying each other for about 27 minutes. The place never gave up on Foley and it's easily one of his best matches ever. This is one of the best brawls ever and yet again it's well worth checking out.

HHH is taken out on a stretcher but Cactus pulls him back into the arena. There's a barbed wire shot to the head and the place cheers like crazy for Mick some more.

Linda is at WWF New York to talk about HHH's title reign. Wait no she's not. She would NEVER be involved with something involving bloodshed. And Stephanie is oh so precious and does SO much work for charity don't you know.

### Royal Rumble

The intervals are "two minutes or less" according to the Fink. We get a quick look at Shawn's miracle save in 95 which would play a role in the coming weeks. D'Lo Brown is #1 and Grandmaster Sexay is #2. Feeling out process to start with Sexay countering Brown's running powerbomb into a rana. A middle rope missile dropkick puts Brown down and Mosh, complete with cones on his chest, is #3.

Kai En Tai, two guys ticked off about not being in the Rumble, runs in and are immediately thrown out. Nothing else happens for a minute or so until Christian (with his AWESOME solo theme called Blood Brother. Look it up) is #4. Nothing happens again so here's Rikishi to a POP at #5. Mosh, Christian and Brown are quickly dispatched, leaving Grandmaster and Rikishi.

Scotty 2 Hotty is #6 to complete the trio...and it's time to DANCE! The place absolutely loses it over this until Rikishi clotheslines and

eliminates them both. Note that it is NOT a heel turn and just business, which Too Cool is ok with. Rikishi dances a bit more on his own and the place is still erupting.

The company took notice of those eruptions too, and the three of them wound up feuding with the Radicalz for the next four months or so, resulting in Too Cool getting the tag titles and Rikishi getting the IC Title. In other words, they were given a stupid gimmick, got it over, and were rewarded. Today, you get to lose the US Title to Jack Swagger and become a jobber to the stars if you get yourselves over. As I typed that, Steve Blackman came in at #7 and was eliminated.

Viscera is #8 and you know New York loves itself a fat boy battle. Big Visc rams into him a few times but misses a charge and three straight superkicks put him. Big Boss Man is #9 and won't get in, drawing some good heel heat. He stays out on the floor until Test is #10. Test pounds away on Boss Man to finally get all three guys in there. Boss Man hits Test low but Rikishi hits Test low to put both guys down.

British Bulldog is #11 as things slow down a bit. There's a low blow for Rikishi as well and Bulldog tries to get him out until Gangrel is #12. Kai En Tai comes out again and Taka is thrown over the top into a 360, landing face first on the floor. FREAKING OW MAN. This would be played multiple times over the rest of the match, much to Lawler's amusement. Edge (starting to mean something and over in New York) is #13.

Boss Man takes a Banzai Drop and Bob freaking Backlund is #14. He comes out to Hail to the Chief as he's legitimately running for Congress in Connecticut at this point. You would think that would have been a tip for Linda's future but alas no. Everyone goes after Rikishi and dumps him out to get us to the second part of the match. To recap, we've got Boss Man, Bulldog, Test, Gangrel, Backlund and Edge in there at the moment. Jericho is #15 to his third or fourth big pop of the night.

Jericho goes right for Edge in a match that would be for the world title eventually. That doesn't last long though as Jericho dumps Backlund, who yells at some fans before leaving. Actually he goes into the crowd to look for Connecticut registered voters. For a guy as bland as he was back

in the day, Crazy Backlund is one of the best performances I've ever seen.

Crash is #16 and gets a double spanking from Edge and Bulldog. Ok then. Edge is sent to the apron by Bulldog so he punches the British Boy in the balls. Chyna is #17 in the far less remembered Rumble appearance. She goes right for Jericho and suplexes him out in about 30 seconds but gets knocked out by Boss Man almost immediately. Faarooq is #18 and here's the Mean Street Posse who is also out of the Rumble. Those three and Kai En Tai were all thrown out of the Rumble on Heat so five more guys could be added in.

Anyway Faarooq is quickly dumped and Road Dogg is #19. The crowd does his entrance for him but he runs right into a low blow. The fans want Puppies, a term Road Dogg invented. Crash survives an elimination and Al Snow is #20. Roadie throws out the Bulldog and Val Venis is #21. Funaki runs in on his own and is thrown out almost immediately again. Prince Albert (Tensai) is #22 and there goes Edge.

The ring is getting too full now with Boss Man, Test, Gangrel, Crash, Road Dogg, Snow, Venis and Albert. Dogg continues his strategy: hide in the corner and wrap all four limbs around the bottom rope. I've heard worse ideas. Hardcore Holly is #23 and we're getting down to almost only big names left. Crash gets knocked to the apron but gets back in AGAIN.

Now we get to the final part of the match as The Rock is #24 to bring everyone to their feet. Boss Man is the first victim, being eliminated by a spit punch. Venis and Test double team him but Rock hangs on in the corner. He beats up Hardcore for a bit as Billy Gunn is #25. He goes right for Rocky but since no one believes Billy Gunn is going to eliminate Rock, the Great One throws out Crash to give himself something to do instead. Dogg has shifted over to another corner now.

Big Show, Rock's opponent for this match, is #26. Rocky pounds on him immediately but Albert sticks his fat head in Rock's business. Show dumps Gangrel and Test before going to stomp on Rocky. Bradshaw is #27 and is out in about 30 seconds at the hands of the Outlaws and the Mean Street Posse. Kane is #28 complete with the still sexy Tori. Venis gets thrown

out almost immediately and Show stupidly gorilla presses Gunn down instead of out. Kane knocks Albert out as Godfather is #29. The Ho's are especially good looking tonight.

Funaki comes out for the fourth time. JR: "For the love of Pete." Jerry: "No that's Funaki." X-Pac is #30 which was announced in advance. The final group is Road Dogg, Al Snow, Hardcore Holly, Rock, Gunn, Show, Kane, Godfather and X-Pac. Snow dumps Holly and Show puts Godfather out. Rock dumps Snow to get us to six. Billy dumps a talking too much Roadie just before getting dumped by Show.

We've got X-Pac, Kane, Big Show and Rock as the final four. I've seen far worse. Rock throws out X-Pac but the referee is with Kane who is fighting the Outlaws on the floor. Pac gets back in and the guys pair off. Show sends Rock into Kane for a big boot as the giants choke each other. Pac kicks Rock down and Kane hits a pretty good enziguri and an even better slam on Big Show. Pac kicks Kane out and a Bronco Buster on Big Show.

Rock dumps X-Pac and we're down to two. The spinebuster sets up the Elbow but since IT'S JUST A FREAKING ELBOW DROP, Show gets up and chokeslams Rock down. Show takes WAY too much time though and Rock holds onto the top rope, sending Big Show out to go to Wrestlemania. Awesome ending to an awesome match.

**Rating:** A. AWESOME Rumble here with the absolute right ending. This was the Rock's Rumble and there was no other person who should have won it. The only part that was a little dull here was the middle but it's certainly not bad. This followed the three part structure as all great Rumbles do and as usual, it worked like a charm. Great Rumble and one that might have a claim to best ever.

Rock says he's going to Wrestlemania when Big Show comes in and knocks him to the floor. Show stands in the ring as Rock leaves to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** A+. This is one of the best shows the WWF has ever put on. Period. There isn't a bad match on the whole card, the crowd is ON FIRE all night and you have two excellent matches to round out the show. I can't imagine anything in the next 12 years surpassing this one and I can't recommend it highly enough. Outstanding show.

## Ratings Comparison

Tazz vs. Kurt Angle

Original: A-

Redo: C+

Hardy Boyz vs. Dudley Boyz

Original: A

Redo: B+

Chris Jericho vs. Chyna vs. Hardcore Holly

Original: C

Redo: C+

New Age Outlaws vs. Acolytes

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

HHH vs. Cactus Jack

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Royal Rumble

Original: A-

Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: A

Redo: A

Still great and still the best Rumble ever.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/19/royal-rumble-count-up-2000-match-of-the-decade-maybe-yeah/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on the History of the Royal Rumble at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00PZ1GR7E>

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

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# On This Day: May 16, 1999 – Hardcore Heaven 1999: Heaven Is Heck

## Hardcore Heaven 1999

Date: May 16, 1999

Location: Mid-Hudson Civic Center, Poughkeepsie, New York

Attendance: 2,600

Commentator: Joey Styles

So we're still in the Taz Dominates Everyone era here which is boring as all goodness but whatever. He has Chris Candido tonight which I'm sure will be riveting. Also we have Lynn vs. RVD II which should be solid enough I suppose. Other than that though the card looks pretty bland. Let's get to it.

Joey tries to introduce us to the show but gets interrupted by

Chris Candido and Sunny, who looks AMAZING in a gray dress. Apparently he's hired the Dudleys for tonight as insurance. This is a really long time ago since they're only six time tag champions at this point. Once they come out, Candido calls out Taz...and it's main event time! Sure, why not?

#### ECW World Title: Taz vs. Chris Candido

Three suplexes, a powerbomb by Candido, a missed headbutt and the Tazmission. The match lasts maybe a minute from bell to bell. I kid you not. 3D to Taz follows.

**Rating:** F. No. No way. This show was based around two matches and 6 and a half minutes into the show one of them is over? No way. That simply does not work whatsoever. Seriously what is Paul thinking here? Why advertise this if that's how you're going to book it?

The Dudleys issue an open challenge after their very boring stuff. They ask for anyone with the balls to come face them. Take a wild guess.

#### ECW World Tag Titles: Dudley Boys vs. Balls Mahoney/???

So apparently this is a match, but also for the titles. Sure why not? Balls botches an elbow from the top, somehow managing to hit Bubba in the leg with it. Think about that for a minute. I mean it's not like Bubba is a small target or something like that right? The fans are chanting for Sabu. Now they want New Jack.

They get Spike Dudley. Sure, I mean it's not like we've had Spike with a random partner on three straight PPVs now or anything like that. He manages to miss a low blow on D-Von too so there we are. Dang Heyman loved him some AC/DC. In a cool spot, they throw Spike back and forth like a ball. Spike gets thrown over the rope and it looks awesome to say the least.

I'll give Spike this: he can sell like few others can. Table time, but Bubba gets blocked. Ah never mind: Spike went through it anyway via a nice Bubba Bomb. Spike gets a 3D but Balls saves. Gertner throws matches at Balls which does nothing. Balls of course has lighter fluid in his pocket so as you would expect, Gertner gets a fireball thrown at him. It misses completely but Gertner sells it anyway. 3D ends it.

**Rating:** D. At least this was a match...I think. I'm fed up with Spike and the Dudleys but whatever. This was a big mess but Spike's bumping made it work better than nothing I guess.

Roll the theme song, as I guess that was a really long opening segment? Sure why not.

### Super Crazy vs. Taka Michinoku

Crazy is introduced in kilos and Taka in pounds. Why? That makes no sense but whatever. Taka is heel here as he's cocky from being in the WWF. Alright then. Well at least it's not Tajiri and Taka again I guess. If Taka hadn't been so annoying he would have been bearable. And there's a sleeper from Crazy. I mean it's not like we've got two high flying guys in there that can move very well or anything? Let's get to the rest holds before they do something cool!

They speed it up again and Crazy gets LAUNCHED over the ropes in a great looking spot. He was up there. Crazy dives over the ropes to land on Taka. At least I think he did. The camera wasn't on it. That sums up ECW fairly well: something happened, but no one saw it other than those that were there. Crazy hits the triple moonsault which is fairly cool. The Michinoku Driver hits but Taka doesn't cover and a totally random sitout powerbomb ends it. Weird ending.

**Rating:** D+. This didn't do it for me. It's not really bad but the flow just wasn't there at all if that makes sense. The



high spots were decent and even good at times but this just wasn't hitting on all cylinders. It's hard to describe but if you saw it I think you would get what I was saying. Not bad but just an odd match.

We recap Lynn vs. RVD from the last PPV which I guess is the main event now. That should be good at least. I never got how the cradle part of the cradle piledriver really helped all that much.

In the back, rather than getting medical help, Gertner sends the Dudleys after Nova for no apparent reason. During the beatdown, Bubba says he doesn't know what this is for. Ok then.

### Little Guido vs. Tajiri

It's still weird seeing Tajiri clean shaven. Good night Big Sal is a very fat man. Dang Tajiri could do some freaky stuff in the ring. Guido...not so much. Guido is working the arm so there's your psychology, even though Tajiri was a kicker so his arms meant little to his offense. On the floor, Guido takes a loud post shot. It sounded great if nothing else. There's your tarantula in case you wanted one.

Apparently the crowd thinks Tajiri is a fat duck. That must be it right? I mean they couldn't be chanting at anyone else right? Sal interferes for two. In a funny bit, Joey won't say balls but Cyrus nags him until he does. Cyrus of course then complains about him saying it. We get the Tree of Woe baseball slide which always looks awesome and a brainbuster ends it.

**Rating:** C-. Better than the last one but not by much. Guido was never someone that I liked that much at all. Tajiri got a solid push but was still the innocent yet rapidly becoming violent guy you know him as. Not a bad little match, but zero point to it being on the PPV other than to fill fifteen

minutes of air time.

And here's a Tommy Dreamer music video. Ok then.

The Dudleys have a hit list and 3,000 dollars to beat up some guy named Rod Price. Ok then.

### Lance Storm vs. Tommy Dreamer

Joey and Cyrus argue for no apparent reason and Dawn Marie is insanely hot. There you are. And apparently she's not wearing underwear so Storm stands in front of the camera while she puts them on. Ok then. This is a weapons match apparently. Oh and Dreamer wants to beat up Dawn Marie apparently over Beulah. Dreamer gets one heck of a reaction if nothing else. And Francine is here with Tommy for no apparent reason.

Storm is a guy I like the more I see of him. I wonder how long it's going to take to get into the ring for a change. Ah there we go. Storm is very crisp in there and I love it. This of course turns into a bunch of weapons shots and contrived spots that make little sense but look good if nothing else. I've always wondered what the deal was with the hitch in Storm's kicks. Dreamer is bleeding. Dreamer busts out a stunner of all things.

It's mainly just weapons shots now which is fine I guess. It's table time again. Storm takes a Death Valley Driver through the table. You might notice that I'm just listing off spots and moves as there's just nothing more to this match. Cyrus runs in and that goes nowhere. There's your catfight. Dreamer hits the INCREDIBLY protected piledriver on Dawn. A SWEET spinwheel kick from the top to Dreamer ends it for Storm. Francine looks good here which is odd.

**Rating:** C-. Not terrible but just not interesting at all. It's ok, but that's all. Dreamer had a ton of these random fights and while they were decent, they get very repetitive after

awhile. I mean, how many people does he annoy over the years? Not bad, but nothing to write home about at all.

The Dudleys beat up Jack Victory, this time for \$5000. Bubba, why beat up Victory when you could own the company for that much? We're at the halfway point of the show with Van Dam/Lynn and a Justin match to go. That's not a good sign.

Taz says he can beat the Dudleys...tonight. Oh no. Oh dear cheese NO.

Joey recaps everything for the night. Oh and he says the wrong name for the TV Title. A man that shouts and says the wrong name. You know where I'm going with it. Yep. I'm going to Branson, Missouri. Good town. You can see cheap dinner theater there I hear.

TV Title: Jerry Lynnvvs. Rob Van Dam

Crowd is WAY behind Van Dam here. No time limit here after what happened at Living Dangerously. Hear those cheers Paul? They're the ones drowning out the music. I think they're chanting "Heyman push this freaking man you freaking idiot!" Lynn is another guy I like more every time I see him so this should be solid. They do a decent mat wrestling sequence to start but not as good as last time.

NICE there as Lynn goes for a counter he used at Living Dangerously and RVD gets out of the way of it this time. THAT is psychology people. They're doing a start and stop thing here where they do a sequence and then walk around for awhile. The action is good but it's like pausing it and watching a match in pieces which isn't good. Good night wrestle already! Yeah they're wrestling, but only in pieces.. We've had maybe 2 and a half minutes of action out of five minutes gone by.

Sweet springboard dropkick from Lynn. See what I mean by when they

actually do stuff it's good? Fonzie is yelling about how this is what the 19.95 the fans paid for is all about. Creative line if nothing else. Van Daminator misses. And Lynn might be hurt so we can kill more time. Something tells me this had about 20 minutes planned rather than the 27 it wound up getting due to the amount of stalling here. Lynn does the corner rollup that Booker T used for a long time.

I think this is the match that aired on the debut of ECW on TNN. On the floor we get a Van Daminator with Lynn making sure to hold the chair up so it hits. Hey look: more stalling! Did Larry Zbyszko book this or something? Half of this has been on the floor too. Lynn hits a sunset powerbomb through a table which more or less explodes. Ok stalling after big spots at least makes sense. Fonzie has a chair pelted at him and down he goes.

They botch the heck out of something and the fans let them know about it. Lynn hits a Van Daminator for two. Van Dam hits Starship Pain minus the twisting. There's your five star but Lynn rolls him up for two. Van Dam hits his third Van Daminator out of about 7 tried. Another Five Star ends it. Good but not great. They high five after the match which is always a good sign.

**Rating:** B. This is a good match, but not a classic like everyone says it is. There are some major holes in it, with the main one being the standing around. The Van Daminators got OLD fast. We get it. You can kick someone holding a chair. We'll ignore how stupid the move is (hey he handed me a chair. I wonder what I should do with it.) for now.

The drama is there but it's not epic. Solid though. Just far too much brawling and stalling for my taste, but it's entertaining which is the main idea. Would have been way better with five to seven less minutes. Good match, but there was no shock or anything like that to make it

great.

We're at an hour and 58 minutes and Justin is all that's left. That can't be a good sign.

The Dudleys are mad at Taz. Oh dear. I think I can see it coming. And here's Big Dick with Chris Chetti, who is Taz's cousin. Guess what happens.

Justin Credible hype video. He hits a lot of people with canes and talks a lot. Yeah, really a guy to push huge Paul. He even sent Mikey and Sandman to WCW. Yeah such a terrible thing to do to them man.

Joey says Shane vs. Justin isn't happening, which they knew weeks before this but advertised him through the pre show.

Here's Justin with no opponent. He says what was shown in the video and it's open challenge time.

#### Justin Credible vs. Sid

Oh dear. Good NIGHT how over is Sid? I have never gotten that once, but this guy got epic pops everywhere. I don't think I get the idea of a squash on your heel that has been pushed like this but whatever. When someone is in the position for the powerbomb, why don't they, maybe, move? You know, instead of holding the other guy's legs, why not move?

This is ALL Sid here as he's beating up the entourage too. Lance Storm runs in too. Crowd is WAY into Sid. Justin throws powder in Sid's eyes...FOR A DISQUALIFICATION??? Or was this even a match? And here's Sabu for the save, and he puts Sid through a table by mistake (don't ask). Is there a point to any of this? And Sid powerbombs his manager for no apparent reason. Sid would be gone after this I believe.

**Rating:** F. A DQ. In ECW. THAT MAKES NO FREAKING SENSE!!!!!!!

Apparently it was just thrown out. Ok then.

**Rating:** F. A match being thrown out. In ECW. THAT MAKES NO FREAKING SENSE!!!!!!!

And at two hours and 15 minutes into the show, we're out of matches. Joey says this too and here's Bubba Ray. You cannot be serious.

Apparently D-Von broke his hand beating up Chetti, so instead of D-Von vs. Taz we get Bubba vs. Taz. It's not April is it? Wow. They're really doing this.

ECW World Title: Taz vs. Bubba Ray Dudley

Yes. With Candido healthy, THIS is what Heyman decided to close a PAY PER VIEW WITH. ARE YOU FREAKING KIDDING ME??? BUBBA FREAKING DUDLEY is main eventing a PPV in a world title match. I do not know what to say. They're really doing this nonsense. I can't believe it. And hey, it's falls count anywhere. Catchphrase ahoy as we start the match. And we're outside already.

Could that have anything to do with Bubba not being able to wrestle a standard match for more than a minute? Seriously, what did I do to deserve this? We hit the crowd now to waste more time. The falls counting anywhere helps here but not that much really. Taz is bleeding as we hit the concourse. Will someone pop that stupid beach ball? Back in the ring now. Taz hits a second rope Tazplex to start his comeback and there's D-Von.

And we have tables. It's ECW. Why not just hit 3D and get the title? Hmm let's see. I can spend a few minutes setting up tables while the toughest guy in the company gets up. Sure why not? And they both throw the referee through a table. Bubba Bomb gets two as a new referee comes in. D-Von comes in again and STILL they don't go for 3D. This is like a Wile E.

Coyote cartoon. 3D is finally attempted and countered. Tazmission ends it.

**Rating:** F+. Bubba Ray Dudley was in the main event. Do I need to explain why this was awful? In case you're wondering, there was no drama, the match made no sense, Taz was always going to win, and D-Von and Bubba just lost to Taz in a glorified handicap match. That's why it sucked. Oh and did I mention: BUBBA RAY DUDLEY WAS IN THE MAIN EVENT??? Taz's blood looked good though.

A music video ends this at a little over two and a half hours.

**Overall Rating:** F. No. No way. This show was unacceptable, period. People want to talk about how much of a genius Heyman is. People want to talk about how good for the business he is. This show is proof that even he isn't as great as everyone says he is. This is what you call screwing the audience over. He advertised Shane up until five minutes to airtime and knew he wouldn't be there.

He advertised Candido and Taz as the big match and gave it maybe a minute. He had BUBBA RAY DUDLEY main event the show in a one night angle. I can find no evidence ANYWHERE that suggests Candido was injured. Not a single thing. Let's say for argument's sake though that he was injured and the minute was all he can go. Ok, fine. Stuff like that happens. I understand that. Are you telling me that Bubba Ray Dudley was the best replacement they had? Are you out of your freaking minds? Take a look at the rest of the card.

Other than RVD/Lynn, what here is worth paying to see? Running down the card, we have the main event so there's one thing worth paying to see, an unannounced tag match that had been done for the last two PPVs, back to back matches that were ok but I doubt anyone bought the show to see them, a brawl that could have been on any PPV but was bearable I guess, a good

match, a match that didn't have the billed people in it and was 2 minutes long, and Bubba Ray Dudley main eventing a show. Lynn and RVD keep this from being the worst ECW show ever, but not by much.

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## Impact Wrestling – January 24, 2013: Aces And 8's Looks Strong. You Read That Right.

### Impact Wrestling

Date: January 24, 2013

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Todd Keneley, Tazz

So the wedding was last week and as most weddings do, it drew a good audience. The main surprise from last week's events though was that Tazz was introduced as the newest member of Aces and 8's. While shocking, it doesn't address the main issues the team has. Kennedy is their biggest star I guess, but that doesn't really make them intimidating. This stable is almost eight months old. Don't you think it's time we got a bit more out of them? Oh and Hardy defends against Daniels tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap from last week.

Keneley and Tenay are disturbed by Tazz's actions.



There's kind of an opening sequence now.

Here are Aces and 8's to open things up with Tazz leading the way. Tazz immediately gives us more about the team than we've gotten in the time they've been around: they're out for revenge and redemption and they have a higher power. Last week was the wedding and there was a chance to step on the Hogans' faces. They were just another victim and nothing more. As for Dixie Carter, Tazz signed a contract that says if anyone puts a hand on him that says he'll make a fortune. Fast promo here.

Jesse hypes up Tara while bragging about himself.

Video on Daniels being around since the dawn of TNA.

Daniels says this is a turning point for his career tonight.

Tazz is back on commentary.

Knockouts Title: Tara vs. Velvet Sky

Velvet is back in the classic outfit instead of the catsuit which is a downgrade for me. Tara poses as the bell rings so Velvet grabs a quick rollup for two. Tara fights her back but stops to pose again and gets kicked out to the floor as we take a break. Back with Tara in control as Tazz won't answer questions about why he turned because it's club business. Translation: it isn't important enough/the writers haven't figured out the answer yet.

The shaky moonsault gets two for Tara but she goes up top for no apparent reason and gets slammed down accordingly. Velvet comes back with a headscissors and a spinning faceplant but Jesse has the referee's attention. Tara knocks Jesse down and a rollup gets two for Velvet. Sky loads up a suplex but Jesse hooks her foot ala Bobby Heenan and Ultimate Warrior at Wrestlemania 5 to give Tara the win at 9:42.

**Rating:** C-. This wasn't horrible but the first part of the match was pretty sloppy. The division is at a standstill at this point as nothing has really changed for awhile. It's the same set of girls having the same matches that we've seen for years now. Velvet's big return basically means nothing at this point and hasn't changed anything. Also, can more

than two Knockouts appear on screen at once or is that against the rules?

Open Fight Night is back next week.

Sting has something to say later on.

Kenny King talks to himself in the mirror when Zema Ion comes up to talk strategy. Tension is teased and I can't bring myself to be interested.

Here's Joseph Park to say that his place is here on Impact instead of in the courtroom. He never got that win though, or that W as the boys call it. He's here to be the best he can be and holds up a passport, saying he'll be here next week in Manchester to compete in Open Fight Night. He doesn't know who he's facing but he's going to spend the week watching film. Next week he'll deliver his verdict and then hold his own court and get that W.

#### Zema Ion/Kenny King vs. Rob Van Dam/Christian York

York and Ion start things off as Tazz talks about which of these guys would be a good addition to the team. Off to Van Dam who goes after King on the apron and gets in trouble for his efforts. King comes in legally and hits a nice snap suplex for two. Back to Ion for his usual lame stuff as we hear about Bellator for the 100<sup>th</sup> time in two weeks.

Ion misses a 450 and everything breaks down. Rob loads up the split legged moonsault on Zema but King crotches him, only to get elbowed back down. Rob gets kicked off the top and Ion tags himself in. A tornado DDT is countered but King hits a springboard Blockbuster to give Ion the pin at 5:09.

**Rating:** C. I'm trying to care about Ion and it's just not working at all. The guy just isn't that good but he of all the people that have been brought in to the division over the last few years, they pick HIM to stick around and push? York and King looked fine here while Van Dam was Van Dam. I'm hoping King wins the title soon as it would shake the division up a bit while also being logical progression.

Tazz leaves to take a phone call.

Bully and Brooke arrive and will do their talking in the ring.

Joe tells Garrett and Wes that they can't suck up to him like they do to Angle. Kurt pops up and says he's still hurt but he can fight.

We recap the wedding. Again.

Here are Bully and Brooke to the ring. Bully says that he expected this from D-Von but not Tazz. Last week Aces and 8's hurt Sting who is the only person that has trusted Ray. They also hurt Hogan who it took forever to get to accept Ray, but more importantly they hurt Brooke. Ray tells Aces and 8's to sleep with their eyes open until he takes care of all of them. However he needs the absent Hulk to lift his suspension to do that. Cue Sting who begs Hulk to take this all the way like he does with everything else. He believes that Hogan will do the right thing next week in Manchester.

Aries and Roode praise each other to try to get out of a match with Hernandez. Aries: "You were the longest reigning champion ever." Roode: "Then you beat me." Aries: "Well yeah but..." Eventually Roode is tricked into taking the match because he's the power guy and Aries should clean up. Roode is confused but Aries leaves before Bobby can complain.

Video on Hardy before Hardy says (out loud!) that he'll win.

#### Hernandez vs. Bobby Roode

Roode tries to pound away a bit but gets backdropped for his efforts. Tenay thinks Roode is a better singles wrestler than Hernandez. The PROFESSOR ladies and gentlemen. There's the delayed vertical suplex to Roode but he immediately comes back with a guillotine on the top rope. Tazz says he could see either of these guys joining Aces and 8's in the future. Roode hooks a chinlock but SuperMex fights out of it and hits the slingshot shoulder to take over.

There's the corner splash and the over the shoulder backbreaker for no cover. Roode comes back with a chop but gets sent to the floor. Hernandez loads up a dive but Aries runs out for the save. He and Chavo get in a fight on the floor as Roode hits a bulldog on Hernandez for the clean pin

at 5:41.

**Rating:** C-. A bulldog is enough for a pin? The problem here is that Hernandez is completely uninteresting and Chavo doesn't help much. They're very dull champions as they don't really do anything other than hold the titles and have decent matches. Roode and Aries are hilarious but I don't really care to see them as tag champions. The match was ok at best.

Here's Angle to say that next week he's calling out Anderson on Open Fight Night. Cue Anderson in full Aces and 8's gear to say that he wants to fight right now. After the brawl erupts, Angle clears the ring and says that it's going to be in a cage next week.

Post break Anderson is panicking over the cage match but D-Von says drink beer and calm down. He has a plan apparently.

#### TNA World Title: Jeff Hardy vs. Christopher Daniels

Daniels is challenging here and literally dances to the ring. Tazz predicts that Hardy is going to have trouble in the year 2013. Feeling out process to start with Hardy taking over, only to miss a charge in the corner and fall to the floor. Kaz comes in to celebrate and we take a break. Back with Daniels hitting a clothesline and choking away on Hardy for a bit. A modified neckbreaker hits for two on Hardy and it's off to the chinlock.

Hardy comes back with a clothesline and speeds things way up before getting two off the mule kick. A middle rope splash gets two but Hardy jumps into a Death Valley Driver for two. Daniels busts out the Koji Clutch which we haven't seen in years and that no one seems to know the name of. Christopher loads up something like a superplex but gets caught in the front suplex from the top for two. The Twist is countered into the Angel's Wings for two but the BME and Swanton both miss, the latter of which gives Hardy two. Hardy counters Angel's Wings into a rana and it's double Twist and Swanton to retain at 14:10.

**Rating:** B. Good match here with both guys looking great. Daniels is SO much more fun to watch when he's not against AJ all the time and his

latest run has been all kinds of entertaining. The promos are way better than the matches, which is saying a lot as the match here was solid stuff. Hardy winning was pretty clear but that's not always a bad thing. Good main event here.

Post match Tazz distracts Hardy and a masked biker hits Jeff in the knee with a hammer to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. This was ok but not much better than that. At the end of the day not a lot was really explained that we didn't know already and there wasn't much followup at all to the wedding stuff from last week. The main event was solid and the post match stuff is likely due to Hardy not being able to appear in the UK due to his legal issues over the years. Pretty decent stuff here but the wrestling wasn't all that great save for one match.

### Results

Tara b. Velvet Sky – Tara pinned Sky after Jesse tripped her

Zema Ion/Kenny King b. Rob Van Dam/Christian York – Ion pinned York after a springboard Blockbuster from King

Bobby Roode b. Hernandez – Bulldog

Jeff Hardy b. Christopher Daniels – Swanton Bomb

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