

WWE Vintage Collection TV report featuring the 1988 Royal Rumble

WWE Vintage Collection TV Report #31 – January 4th, 2009 Shown on Sky Sports in the U.K. By Stephen Lyon. This Week: The first ever ‘WWE Vintage Collection’ one match show: the 1988 Royal Rumble match, shown in its’ entirety. Introduction: This week’s show opened with a Royal Rumble ‘By the Numbers’ promotional video from last year, where they air classic Rumble clips and the voiceover describes various numerical statistics pertaining to the Rumble, such ’36 – Austin’s record for total number of eliminations in Rumbles’ and ’11 – Shawn Michaels will be appearing in his 11th Rumble match’. I’m presuming they aired this because of the theme of the show. If it’s hype for this year’ ppv, which I suppose it is as well, then it’s now out of date, as Michaels will (presumably) be appearing in his 12th Rumble this year. In the studio, Mean Gene Okerlund announced that this week, the show would focus on the first ever Royal Rumble match, that took place on January 24th, 1988, from Copps Coliseum, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Okerlund mentioned that this first ever Rumble was a 20 man affair, and that the match was the brainchild of WWE Hall of Famer, Pat Patterson. The announcers for the match were Vince McMahon and Jesse Ventura. 1) Hacksaw Jim Duggan won the 20 man Royal Rumble match in 33:26. Bret Hart (as a heel, with Jimmy Hart at ringside) and Tito Santana (one half of WWF Tag Team Champions, Strike Force, at the time) started the match. Butch Reed was #3. Wrestlers seemed to enter between 90 second and 2 minute intervals. Reed teamed with Jim Neidhart (#4) to help Hart triple-team Santana, until Jake Roberts (#5) made the save and eliminated Butch Reed straight away. Roberts attempted to DDT Hart (and the crowd were screaming for the DDT throughout this match), but Neidhart made the save. Harley Race (#6) was next in and worked over Roberts. Race & Neidhart combined to try to throw out Roberts, but the Snake held on to the ropes. Jim Brunzell (#7) and Sam Houston (#8, and Jake Roberts’ half-brother in real life) made the save and evened the odds slightly. As we went into the first commercial break, Hart eliminated Santana. Danny Davis (#9) was next in, with Roberts dominating him with punches and a back suplex. Boris Zhukov (#10) entered and attacked Houston. In a funny moment, Don Muraco (#11), closely followed by Nikolai Volkoff (#12), ran down the aisle to the ring at the same time. The referees allowed Muraco into the ring, but stopped Volkoff as he had ran down too early, and kept him at ringside until the buzzer sounded again. In the ring, Brunzell and Roberts teamed up to eliminate Zhukov. Another funny moment came on commentary, when Ventura yelled, “McMahon, I’m tired of your barbs towards me. If you don’t smarten up, you’ll be hearing from Barry Bloom (Ventura’s real life agent).” McMahon replied, “Who?”, with Ventura exclaiming, “You know who!” Vince then mumbled something about Barry Bloom not being one of the superstars in the Rumble. The referees finally let Volkoff into the ring, with Vince chastising Jesse on commentary for his use of the word ‘ain’t’. Hacksaw Jim Duggan (#13) was in next, and had a brief confrontation with the eliminated Harley Race in the aisle. Ron Bass (#14) entered as Volkoff eliminated Brunzell. After another commercial, B. Brian Blair (#15) came out and ran into the cameraman as he made his entrance. Hillbilly Jim (#16) ran in and immediately eliminated Jim Neidhart. ‘The World’s Strongest Man’ Dino Bravo (#17) came in as Houston was eliminated by Ron Bass. The Ultimate Warrior made a very rare appearance on this show (in fact, his first ever appearance on this show) as entrant #18, as Muraco eliminated Bret Hart. Last two men entering were One Man Gang (#19), who eliminated Jake Roberts, and Junk Yard Dog (#20), who Vince predicted would go on to win the Rumble. It soon became ‘jump-ship’ time, as Duggan eliminated Volkoff and Davis, One Man Gang eliminated Hillbilly Jim, and Dino Bravo eliminated the Ultimate Warrior. The final four remaining were Hacksaw Jim Duggan, Dino Bravo, Don Muraco and One Man Gang. Muraco dropkicked Bravo’s manager, Frenchy Martin off the ring apron, but was then eliminated by One Man Gang. The Gang then accidentally eliminated Dino Bravo, leading to Duggan winning the match by pulling down the top rope as Gang charged at him, and over he went in the final elimination. Closing thoughts: Well, if you’re going to do a show on past Rumbles, you might as well show them in their entirety. Whilst not the greatest ever Rumble (that will always be 1992 in my opinion), this was an entertaining match and good nostalgia. I hope that they show the 1992 Rumble in its’ entirety at some point. Happy New Year, everyone. Match Result:

1) Hacksaw Jim Duggan wins the 20 man Royal Rumble match, featuring Bret Hart, Tito Santana, Butch Reed, Jim Neidhart, Jake Roberts, Harley Race, Jim Brunzell, Sam Houston, Danny Davis, Boris Zhukov, Don Muraco, Nikolai Volkoff, Ron Bass, B. Brian Blair, Hillbilly Jim, Dino Bravo, Ultimate Warrior, One Man Gang, Junk Yard Dog. (Hamilton, Ontario, Canada: 24/01/88). Please note: I DO NOT sell DVDs or tapes of any of these shows. Sorry!

I hope you enjoyed this week’s report. For other reports like this one, be sure to check it out my website archive at <http://www.classicwrestlingreports.com>. It’s no longer updated, but this website carries all of my previous WWE Classics tv reports that have been featured on the old WrestlingObserver.com website. As always your questions, comments and thoughts are always welcomed, and you can contact me at slyon10yearsago@hotmail.com.

Until next week, have a good week.

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