

Blu-ray Review: Amazing ‘Battle Royale: The Complete Collection’ Timed with ‘The Hunger Games’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 27, 2012 - 9:58am

- [Anchor Bay](#) [2]
- [Battle Royale](#) [3]
- [Battle Royale II: Requiem](#) [4]
- [Blu-ray Review](#) [5]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [6]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [7]
- [Kinji Fukasaku](#) [8]
- [Quentin Tarantino](#) [9]
- [The Hunger Games](#) [10]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [11]

CHICAGO – A quick search of the web will reveal hundreds of articles and blog posts and message board rants about how the smash hit “The Hunger Games,” both the Suzanne Collins book and Gary Ross movie, wouldn’t exist without Kinji Fukasaku’s amazing 2000 film “Battle Royale” (itself based on a 1999 Japanese book). See for yourself what all the fuss is about with an amazing four-disc collection from Anchor Bay, “Battle Royale: The Complete Collection,” which brings the landmark film to the United States for the first time.



Blu-ray Rating: **5.0/5.0**

It’s amazing how a Hollywood version can lessen the controversy surrounding an international one. Although the theory that “Battle Royale” never earned a Blu-ray or DVD release in the States due purely to its violent nature and intense subject matter has been a bit overblown. The fact is that much-more-violent films get U.S. releases all the time but the Hollywood machine, which once looked to remake “BR,” held up this film’s release. In other words, they wanted to time it either to a remake or, in this case, to the release of “The Hunger Games,” a film that many feel was inspired by “Royale” (another aspect of this film that has been a bit overblown as Fukasaku clearly wasn’t the first one to conceive of hunting humans for sport...someone should introduce these kids to “The Most Dangerous Game.”)

Whatever held up the release of “Battle Royale” and the twist of Hollywood blockbuster fate that got it here aside, this is a fantastic Blu-ray release — a set that includes four discs, two movies, and hours of special features.



Battle Royale: The Complete Collection

Photo credit: Anchor Bay

The movie itself is still an unqualified masterpiece. It feels both older than 12 years and fresh at the same time. It has that timeless quality and is even better than I remembered (I picked up an international version on DVD from an online retailer years ago...as did most Americans who saw the film before now). If you’re unfamiliar, a reductive way to describe the film would be a VERY dark variation on “The Hunger Games.”

But there are no sponsors. No capitol opulence. And the whole thing is much more twisted. It's about a group of Junior High School students forced to hunt and kill each other and it's done with enough style and expertise that Quentin Tarantino named it the best film in the last twenty years.



Battle Royale: The Complete Collection was released on Blu-ray and DVD
on March 20th, 2012
Photo credit: Anchor Bay

The first two discs contain two versions of the hit film and, unlike most of these situations, the theatrical is the superior take on the film. The "Director's Cut" adds footage that was actually shot after the production of the movie and includes some bizarre endings. Stick with the theatrical, which is on the second disc. Sadly, only the Director's Cut includes a Dolby TrueHD 7.1 audio track and dubbed track. The theatrical version only includes a Japanese 5.1 track. Both are presented in 1.78:1 and look good but not great. They don't look notably better than the DVD release I bought on eBay a few years ago.

The third disc includes the pretty-bad 2003 sequel "Battle Royale II: Requiem" and the fourth disc includes all of the bonus material. The supplemental material is nice but a commentary would have been cool, especially from one of the people who idolizes the film like QT or another hip director. Most of the bonus material is pretty surface-level and one wishes that the producers had taken the chance to really put the film on the pedestal on which most of its fans have held it for years.

I was never sure that I'd have "Battle Royale" on a stateside DVD much less a four-disc Blu-ray box set. Movie miracles do happen.

Synopsis:

In 2000, director Kinji Fukasaku unleashed Battle Royale, his violently poetic epic about an innocent group of Junior High students forced by the government to hunt and kill their classmates for sport. It was nominated for 10 Japanese Academy Awards, launched a global phenomenon, and banned from screens by frightened civic groups and distributors across America. Three years later, the equally disturbing sequel - featuring a new class, new rules, and a brutal terrorist plot by the film's first young survivors - triggered its own tragic firestorm around the world. Now for the first time ever, you can see it all: Experience the entire Battle Royale on 4 discs - including more than 2 hours of definitive Special Features - that forever blasts open one of the most potent, shocking and savagely influential sagas in motion picture history.

Special Features:

- o The Making of Battle Royale
- o Battle Royale Press Conference
- o Instructional Video: Birthday Version
- o Audition & Rehearsal Footage
- o Special Effects Comparison Featurette
- o Tokyo International Film Festival 2000
- o Battle Royale Documentary
- o Basketball Scene Rehearsals
- o Behind-the-Scenes Featurette
- o Filming On-Set
- o Original Theatrical Trailer
- o Special Edition TV Spot
- o TV Spot: Tarantino Version

"Battle Royale: The Complete Collection" was released on Blu-ray and DVD on March 20th, 2012. It was also released as a one-disc version without the theatrical version, sequel or bonus disc.



[12]

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