

More In Depth Thoughts On The Rumble

So I've had a night to sleep on one of the most controversial shows I've ever seen. I didn't have the chance to go as in depth as I wanted to with some of my thoughts last night because the Rumble is such a fast paced match. Let's take a closer look the whole show in more of a rapid fire format.

First of all, the New Age Outlaws are the new Tag Team Champions. The more I think about this, the less I care for the idea. Yeah the Outlaws are on a nice reunion tour, but so were the Rhodes Brothers. Cody has the potential to become something important in the future, while the Outlaws are here for nostalgia and not much more. I get the idea of the Authority being corrupt and giving their friends title shots, but it doesn't come off as cronyism when they won the title match clean.

Moving on to the actual show, the opening match was outstanding. That's the kind of a win that Bray Wyatt needed because he's the kind of character that is going to take a big hit when he loses his first big match. The win was good but the fact that it was one of the best openers in company history helped a lot.

Brock Lesnar is a terrifying human being. Seriously, the guy is just a beast and that F5 to Big Show had me screaming at my screen.

That brings us to what I thought was the bigger insult to the wrestlers of the night. John Cena vs. Randy Orton was a good match last night, but the fans treated it horribly. I understand that they wanted Daniel Bryan to be in the title picture, but it was incredibly rude to go off on those

two because he wasn't in there.

The worst part of it all: it was a good match. It's true that Orton vs. Cena has been done several times and no one wanted to see this rematch, but the fans were chanting BORING less than 20 seconds in. If the match is actually boring then chant that, but don't go off on it from the beginning. The stealing finishers stuff was good and thankfully it calmed the crowd down a bit, even though Orton went nuts several times out there.

One last thing about the match: John Cena continues to be an absolute master at working a crowd. Look back to the show in Portland (somewhere in the northwest at least) right before TLC when the fans chanted for Bryan throughout the Championship Celebration. Cena was smart enough to bring Bryan into his promo. Last night the fans were chanting for Y2J and Cena tried a Liontamer. The crowd immediately calmed down because they knew that someone was listening to them and that's all they wanted. It was still a very good match though.

That brings us to the ending of the match and its post match antics. It would seem that Cena's Wrestlemania program is with the Wyatts and that's good news all around. If there's a better way to give Wyatt a big rub, I certainly can't think of it. This is what the fans have been asking for: getting new stars to the top of the roster. Bray got the biggest win of his career last night and will now have the biggest match of his life ten weeks. It helps that Bray has shown he can have great matches and is more than just a great worker.

Now hopefully it's just a singles match instead of turning it into a rumored tag match with Cena and Bryan teaming up against the Wyatts. Daniel is at the point where he doesn't need a rub like that and we don't

want the Cena vs. Wyatt match stolen by fans who want to see something completely different from Bryan.

So that brings us to the big one of the evening and we'll start from the beginning.

CM Punk was the Rumble's Iron Man and I don't think most people noticed. Punk spent a long stretch of the match laying around and waiting to get to the final four before Kane eliminated him in a very quick scene that didn't have the impact they were hoping for. Kane vs. Punk at Elimination Chamber should be good but it felt like they were rushing to get to that moment last night and it took away from Punk's Rumble performance. Good, but not memorable night for Punk last night.

The same can be said for Rollins and Ambrose. Both guys were in the Rumble for a long time but neither did anything all that special. The most interesting thing was Dean trying to throw out Reigns, but you could easily write that off by just saying it was trying to win the Rumble. I'd be fine if that's what they did, but it feels like another seed being planted for the big Reigns face turn.

Alexander Rusev had a good debut and looked like a monster. I wish he had gotten to throw some people out, but having five or so people combine to eliminate him was a nice touch. He's the kind of guy that would have been headlining house shows against Hogan back in 1986 and his NXT matches have all been good. He'll be a force if given some time and it looks like his first program is with Kofi, who he's traded wins with in NXT.

As for Kofi, his running jump back to the apron last night was a nice change of pace from the last few years worth of saves. More often than

not they've been creative or clever, but this one was all about Kofi showing off how athletic he is. It was awesome looking and that's all it was supposed to be.

Dolph Ziggler returned. It's over.

Kevin Nash was a surprise so let's look at all of the legends/comedy characters at once. It was a lighter year for these guys this time with only a handful of appearances. Nash was Nash, El Torito was there as a comedy segment (for the love of all things good and holy, don't let this start Horny vs. Chavo II with Torito and Fandango), and then there's JBL. While it was a fine idea, Cole saying "this is the first time the JBL character has appeared in the Rumble" made me groan. I know kayfabe is dead, but don't pummel its corpse. Also the lack of Jake Roberts surprised me.

I'll save Reigns and Batista for later.

Sheamus also returned last night and you can see the same problems that plagued him during his last year: he's in severe need for a story. At the moment, Sheamus is just a strong guy who kicks people in the head. He hasn't had the slightest bit of adversity or problems since he was World Heavyweight Champion. That makes for a very uninteresting character and not something that is going to carry Sheamus much further. Give us a reason to care about Sheamus the person, not Sheamus the fighter.

On a more positive note: that's three straight final threes in the Rumble for Sheamus. Him being successful in the Rumble fits his fighter character really well, just like it did with Austin. Little things like that are when you can tell the writers are actually paying attention and

it's very nice to see.

Miz had a nice showing last night as well. If you let him show some aggression and stop with the stupid Figure Four stuff (that's been going on for over a year now), there's still hope for that guy.

Del Rio was just there and thankfully it doesn't look like he'll be doing anything of note for awhile.

I watched last year's Rumble for the redos and it's astounding how far Ryback has fallen in just a year. He came in at #30 in 2013 and destroyed the world before being in a showdown with Cena. Now he's a midcard comedy act and little more. There's still hope for him, but it's not as a heel.

Big E. Langston was the worst disappointment to me last night. He came in, eliminated no one, and basically did nothing in his entire time in the Rumble. I'm still very high on the guy but he needs to have a good night soon to make up for that. Obviously it's not all on him, but the Usos had better performances in the Rumble than Langston did.

I feel very sorry for Rey Mysterio. He could have been Santa Claus with a bag full of Corvettes for the crowd and would have been the biggest disappointment of the entire night. Anybody in that spot not named Bryan was going to be booed last night and it's not Mysterio's fault at all.

That brings us to the important stuff of the match last night. First off, Roman Reigns is getting the push that people have been expecting him to get for a long time (time for a little bragging: I've said he would be the biggest star out of the three since the beginning) and breaking

Kane's record was a big step towards that. Keep in mind that Reigns came in at #15 and Kane came in at #6 when he set the old record and the twelve eliminations last night are even more impressive. More on Reigns later.

Now it's time to get to the most controversial guy in the Rumble: Big Dave Batista. I think I'm one of the few who sees it this way, but Batista was found as the Rumble winner. Yeah he's been back for six days, but he was a big deal when he left and it's not like he pinned someone to win the thing. Batista came back at the wrong time due to the whole Bryan fiasco. If this was any other year, people wouldn't mind nearly as much. No he's not in the same shape as he was in before, but give him more than ten minutes in the Rumble to get back to form. Also for people criticizing his spear, he was never good at that move. Why should he be now?

And now, for the Daniel Bryan situation. I don't think people were saying he had to win or else. It wasn't that Bryan didn't win the Rumble, but that he wasn't even in it. If Bryan was in the Rumble, got down to say the final three or even four before being screwed out of the match, it would have been a FAR better reaction. As a very smart guy named Barbosa said on WrestleZone last night:

"Pardon me and the thousands of others for having some expectation of the hottest act being put in a position to win the Royal Rumble."

That sums it up as well as anything else could. Bryan didn't need to win, but he needed to place or show. The crowd knew what they wanted last night and did not care what else they were going to get as a consolation. As I said in the review, I've never seen a crowd just turn on a match as fast as they did when Mysterio's music hit. They did not care to see anyone but Bryan and they made that very clear in a few seconds.

This brings me to the reception the show received. I've seen people calling it the worst show the company ever produced and that just makes me laugh. First and foremost, Wyatt vs. Bryan was more than enough to make it an acceptable show. Also listen to the crowd for the entire Rumble up to Mysterio's music hitting. They're totally into the match and care about everything going on, but that one moment changes everything. It's a great show with a bad last fifteen minutes, not a horrible show at all.

Oh and one more thing which unfortunately I can't take credit for. Picture this:

#30 hits and Daniel Bryan's music plays.

"I'm afraid I've got some BAD NEWS for you all. Daniel Bryan isn't in the Royal Rumble but BAD NEWS BARRETT IS!"

He would be a made man for years.

So now let's look at what we should have on tap for Mania.

Punk vs. HHH. Obvious before the Rumble and even more confirmed now.

It would seem that we're getting Orton vs. Batista, but for the life of me I can't picture that being the main event or even for the title. I'm not sure what replaces it yet, but if that's for the title then they'll be lucky if the fans don't set the ring on fire.

Cena vs. Bray Wyatt. Should be awesome, though there's a chance it'll be Cena/Bryan vs. the Wyatt Family, which doesn't blow my skirt up.

That leaves us with four men who now need Wrestlemania matches and I think we get the following matches out of it:

Daniel Bryan vs. Brock Lesnar and the Undertaker vs. Roman Reigns.

Can you imagine the David vs. Goliath story with Bryan fighting back against Lesnar's power? Punk made a great match out of it and Bryan can do the same. That would placate the audience well enough in New Orleans I believe.

Roman Reigns is as perfect of a Wrestlemania opponent as you could have for Undertaker. He's been built up as a record breaker with the Survivor Series (he tied it there but it's the same idea) and then last night with Kane's Rumble record, so why not go after the biggest record of them all? Picture Reigns hitting the spear and Undertaker kicking out at the last second or Reigns Superman Punching his way out of the chokeslam. It would be an epic showdown.

Overall it was a very good show but the booking was questionable at best and horrendous at worst. The good thing coming out of it is the number ten, as in how many weeks we have until Wrestlemania. There's a lot of time to fix the problems shown last night and I have confidence that they'll fix things instead of letting Wrestlemania be hijacked by the fans. Bryan doesn't have to be in the title match, but if they put him out there with Cena or against Sheamus, there's going to be a very big problem that they brought entirely on themselves.

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