

Royal Rumble 2015 Preview

If the Royal Rumble isn't my favorite show of the year, it beats anything else for second place. The namesake match is so insane and all over the place that it's hard not to love. In addition to that this year though, there's an interesting triple threat which could throw a major curve into the Wrestlemania picture. In other words, it's really hard to predict what's coming and it's making things that much more interesting. Let's get to it.

As usual we'll start with the pre-show match. I'll take the New Day to win the six man elimination tag over Rose/Cesaro/Kidd with Woods being the only elimination. There's no reason to have New Day lose yet, even though they're just not that interesting. I don't mind them as much as most people, but there's no reason to care about them yet. Cesaro and Kidd are a good option as a team but they're stuck in this role because that's how WWE works.

Ascension over the Outlaws of course. I like the story it seems they're going with as Ascension can defeat legendary teams to prove their statements right before they go after the belts, but at the end of the day they're just going to be beating old guys who barely ever wrestle. This is where you need the commentary team to step up and get the story over, but this commentary team isn't capable of stepping up and getting a lunch order over.

The worst part about Ascension is they're a fresh idea for a team, but they were ripped apart so fast coming out of the gate that they weren't given a fair shake. Look at what Ryback did just a few years ago squashing jobbers: he was challenging for the World Title in the main event of a pay per view just a few months later. The commentary team was in awe of him but they jumped all over Ascension and now the fans want the team gone already. Unless they get to prove the commentators wrong, it's a waste of their time in NXT and a way to get back to the boring tag division we've had for years.

Speaking of the Tag Team Titles, I see no reason for them to change hands

tonight. It's not that the Usos are the most interesting team in the world, but the imminent split of Miz and Mizdow would mean there's no reason to put the belts back on them. After that though, who else could go after them but the Ascension? Cody and Goldust vs. Usos has been done to death so there's....New Day? Is that the point we've reached already?

Again, I have to wonder why there's such a lame tag division when there's such a deep roster. Could it be that they treat tag teams like such jokes and people aren't interested in seeing two guys randomly paired together with each other without any effort being put in, ala Kidd and Cesaro? The short version of this way too long statement: bring back tag team names.

The other tag match is an unnecessary Total Divas match between the Bellas and Paige/Natalya. I'll actually go with Paige/Natalya here to set up the next challenger to Nikki's title, but it wouldn't shock me to see the Bellas win again to make sure we don't forget that they're the greatest, toughest, most dominant and interesting Divas in the history of the world. I mean, what other Divas go to brunch together and are so amazing that they can't even keep arguing with each other because they're so awesome they forget it happened and give us a lame explanation of "we're sisters"?

Now we get to the two main events, which are both wide open but the more I think about them, the more I think they're going with the most obvious winners. We'll start with the World Title match with Lesnar defending (yes really) against Rollins and Cena. The addition of Rollins has breathed new life into the long past done Lesnar vs. Cena feud. I really didn't need to see Cena dying and then leveling up again to fight the final boss one more time. It may not lead to a different ending, but at least it's something we haven't seen before.

On top of that, the buildup of Rollins into a main event guy was great, even though he stopped standing up to Lesnar and ran like anyone else would this past Monday. The image of the two of them staring each other down was awesome though and I totally bought Rollins as a top level player.

As for the pick, I'm taking Lesnar with no cash-in. Unfortunately I think

WWE is fine with having no title match from now until Wrestlemania with the thinking being they've gone this far with the idea so don't worry about it screwing up Wrestlemania either. My first reaction to this would be to point you to both the Network numbers as well as Wrestlemania XX and SuperBrawl II. Wrestlemania XX is of course Lesnar leaving and having a HORRIBLE match against Goldberg, but SuperBrawl II is a bit more interesting, as well as pertinent to what we're looking at here.

Back in 1991, it was clear that Sting was the top man in WCW and the uncrowned World Champion. His first run with the belt hadn't gone that well but now the people were ready to accept him as the star (that's quite the lesson: Just because a first reign doesn't work, the second can be much better. See also Bret Hart and Daniel Bryan) when he won the title at SuperBrawl II. Unfortunately it was Lex Luger's last match with the promotion and he hadn't been wrestling that much due to already fulfilling all of his contractually obligated dates. Is this ringing any bells?

Luger went out and put in the minimal effort imaginable for someone actually alive and dropped the belt to Sting in a horrible match. Now this was at SuperBrawl, which was an upper tier show but not the biggest. Can you imagine if this happened in the main event of Wrestlemania? I can accept that Bryan could save the match, but can you imagine Reigns in this spot with only his signature moves to save him? The word disaster isn't nearly strong enough.

That brings us to who Lesnar will be facing, and I think it's going to be Reigns. We've covered everything possibly wrong with Reigns getting this spot this early in his career, but if that's what WWE is going to force on us then so be it. I still think it could ruin whatever he has going for him, but it looks like that's what we're getting whether we like it or not. I'll take Reigns coming in around #25 or so and cleaning house to win, likely knocking out Big Show for the final elimination ala Shawn in 1996.

As for the other possible winner in Daniel Bryan, I'm guessing they have someone from the Authority take him out, setting up Bryan vs. Authority II with him facing.....Rollins I suppose at Wrestlemania. That would be one

heck of a match, but it's yet another reason why Lesnar vs. Reigns would be a disaster to have on top. Can you imagine those two trying to follow Bryan vs. Rollins if that's what we get?

As for surprise entrants, I'll go with Orton (should be obvious) and.....eh sure why not the Dudleys. It's in Philadelphia and they'll take some of the pressure off the fans who are going to explode if Bryan doesn't win again. Oh and Rob Van Dam and/or because you can't have a Royal Rumble without one of them making a SHOCKING return.

This show feels like it could be very entertaining, but man alive does it feel like it could explode in their faces. This show is going to set the stage for Wrestlemania and that could be the biggest disaster in years if they go with the wrong selections. Unfortunately it seems like that's where they're going with it and the fans could rip this show apart if they're not happy. I don't think it's going to be nearly as bad of a reaction as last year's (primarily due to Bryan at least having a chance), but they're walking a very tight rope.

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