

# Royal Rumble 2018 Preview

The big day is here. We're less than twenty four hours away from the "2018 Royal Rumble" and that means we're in for one of the biggest nights of the wrestling year. In this case we have two Royal Rumble matches to go with two far less interesting World Title matches, but the double Rumble on its own should be enough to carry the show as far as it needs to go. Besides, even if the Rumbles are terrible, they're still Royal Rumbles and that makes them entertaining by definition.

## Kickoff Show: US Title: Bobby Roode(c) vs. ???

This is an open challenge with new champion Roode defending against an opponent to be named. In this case, that could be anyone and that makes this a little more interesting. It also opens the door for another Rumble name if a surprise shows up as there's always the chance that someone will work two matches on the show, though that tends to not be the case most of the time.

I'll take Jinder Mahal to answer the challenge and Roode to retain. The other options would likely be Tye Dillinger and Dolph Ziggler, though I would need therapy to get my head around the idea of Ziggler vacating the title and then coming back to try and win it in a regular match. Roode should of course retain and sadly enough, he has to do it on the pre-show.

## Kickoff Show: Revival vs. Anderson and Gallows

You know, I'm already more optimistic about this match than I was when they fought Monday on "Raw". Really, it can't get any worse for the Revival than what happened to them there so it's a nice relief to know we might actually get an interesting match. At the very least there isn't likely to be a completely unnecessary legends beatdown, so things are looking up.

Unfortunately I'll take Anderson and Gallows to win here. Not that they need it more (though a win would be nice for them) but more along the lines of WWE seems to like the idea of throwing someone out there and having them lose in a short match before having them lose in a longer match. This should be fine though, and if Revival can pull off the win, even better.

### **Kickoff Show: Kalisto/Lince Dorado/Gran Metalik vs. TJP/Jack Gallagher/Drew Gulak**

Watch them put this on the pre-show second, leaving one of the other matches to get the empty arena treatment. This feels like any other six man tag you might see on "205 Live" and as luck would have it, the same three good guys fought TJP and two other partners on this week's show. For WWE, this is impressive progress.

I'll take the luchadors to win because really, it's not like it matters one way or another. We're still waiting on the new General Manager to take over "205 Live" and reset things (again) so there's no way of telling what to expect at the moment. You'll get some nice dives and flips, but really there's not much to this one. It'll serve its purpose of warming up the crowd, but that purpose is low when there are so many other matches on the card.

### **Raw Tag Team Titles: Seth Rollins/Jason Jordan(c) vs. The Bar**

Jordan and Rollins have only been champions for a month now and it already feels like they've had them for a year. I'm not sure why I'm supposed to be interested in Jordan's heel turn and move into a feud with Rollins in the injured Dean Ambrose's place but that might suggest that WWE has to come up with something that fits instead of just writing a new story two months out.

I'll take Rollins and Jordan to retain for now but you know they're going to lose the titles in the near future. Sheamus'

injury issues would suggest that they're not the best options in the world to take the titles so I'll wait on Anderson and Gallows to win the titles, probably at "Elimination Chamber 2018" For now though, it's more miscommunication as we wait on the heel turn.

### **Smackdown World Title: AJ Styles(c) vs. Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn**

What a weird title match. Does anyone believe we're going to have co-champions? I get that the idea is something about Shane McMahon vs. Daniel Bryan in their ridiculous power struggle story because WWE for some reason thinks that's more important than the World Title situation, but for now we're getting this match for the title on one of the biggest pay per views of the year.

I'm not sure how, but Styles retains here, possibly through interference from the two bosses. I mean, it's hard to imagine that they're not at ringside to keep the focus where it needs to be, but other than that we're likely watching a lot of double teaming from some great heels while they try to make the match work. Styles can be great against either of them, but for some reason they've gone with the least appealing match they could choose. But yeah, Styles retains.

### **Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Usos(c) vs. Chad Gable/Shelton Benjamin**

This is a 2/3 falls match, which seems like a smart idea on a show with so much time to fill. If they spend their time right, they can put together something very entertaining here as they all know how to fly around the ring and be very entertaining. The Usos have been the best team in the company for a very long time and that could make for a fun match, especially given the amount of time they should have.

I'll take the Usos to retain here as their feud against the Bludgeon Brothers seems to be set in stone from here. Benjamin and Gable are almost guaranteed to win one fall and then we

can move on to the teams going crazy in the third fall. The Usos are more than capable of rocking the house with good challengers and that's what they have here. This should be a lot of fun.

### **Raw World Title: Brock Lesnar(c) vs. Kane vs. Braun Strowman**

This is being written a few hours after Johnny Gargano and Andrade Cien Almas rocked the house for the NXT Title. Now why do I have a feeling that this one might not have the same level of emotion? The Universal Title has continued to be a thing that exists while we wait until New Orleans and there's just no hiding that.

I'd like to say Braun Strowman wins here just for the sake of some false hope but it's going to be Brock Lesnar pinning Kane (though pinning Strowman wouldn't shock me) to retain the title and head on to the big title match with Roman Reigns. Hopefully this approaches the intensity of the hoss fights from late last year but I'm not exactly buying the idea of Kane being able to do that. Hopefully he doesn't slow things down too badly, but he should just be there to take the pin.

### **Men's Royal Rumble**

The more I think about it, the more drama I think there might be in this. That's a little bit of a change of pace as WWE has done next to nothing to hype this match. It's really just been "hey it's the Rumble" and we'll worry about the rest later. There are a few potential winners and while some of them are more interesting than others, as usual, it's going to boil down to just a few options.

I'm torn on this one but I think I'm going to go with Roman Reigns. It's either going to be him or Shinsuke Nakamura (or maybe John Cena) but it would be better if they didn't waste our time with the false hope of Reigns not going to the title match in New Orleans. Of course they could use this to make a new star but that doesn't seem to be their cup of tea lately.

Hopefully it happens here though, as they REALLY need that at the moment.

### Women's Royal Rumble

I'm starting to get more interested in this one as I'm curious to see what they might throw in here to fill in the spots. That being said, EGADS WHY MUST STEPHANIE MCMAHON BE ON COMMENTARY DURING THE ENTIRE THING??? I really could go without the announcers cowering in fear of her hatred of all things pronouns and trying to be all casual and funny while speaks the corporate line all match.

The more I think about it, the more I think Nia Jax takes this. Asuka seems to be a little too easy and hopefully it sets up Asuka vs. Charlotte. Asuka vs. Alexa Bliss II isn't a Wrestlemania caliber match and they would be crazy to go there when Charlotte is an option. Go with Jax and see who she gets to face for the title while FINALLY giving her a big win at the same time. It's a better story, but none of the options are really great.

### Overall Thoughts

Like I said, they've done a pretty pathetic job of setting up this show. They've focused on the two World Title matches without realizing that there's not much to either of them in the first place. The "Raw" match is the most obvious ending in the world and the "Smackdown" match is more about the bosses being passive aggressive to each other than the title match or the wrestlers involved. That's not lost on the fans and it hasn't helped make me interested in the show.

Other than that we have the two Rumbles themselves, which haven't built up anyone but Asuka as a real threat to win either match. You could go for Nakamura or Reigns, but other than the two of them the thing feels like it could be anyone winning, even though almost no one has been built up for either match. Hopefully the matches do better than they seem

on paper, which should be the case given that it's the Rumble.

Oh and for surprise picks: Kaitlyn, Michelle McCool, Tommy Dreamer and for some reason, Ryback.

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