

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2018 (Original): She's Here

Royal Rumble 2018

Date: January 28, 2018

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Tom Phillips, Booker T.

The big night is finally here and for the first time ever we have two Royal Rumbles in one night. This time around we have a women's version to go with the standard men's version and that opens up the doors for a lot more surprise entrants. Of course it also opens the door for a lot more boring action if the last few Rumbles are any indication. Let's get to it.

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

Drew takes Kalisto down by the arm to start as the announcers talk about the upcoming 205 Live General Manager. That just earns a few chants from the crowd, which Gulak of course can't stand. It's off to Gallagher vs. Metalik with Gran working on the knee until Lince and TJP come in to complete each trio's ring time.

The announcers discuss dabbing until the villains are all sent outside. The three masked men hit stereo moonsaults from the same turnbuckle (very cool) to the floor as we take a break. Back with TJP kicking Lince in the ribs and handing it off to Gulak, who drops Dorado's partners off the apron. Now the announcers speculate on the next General Manager, which is much more focused than you would expect from these guys.

Jack cranks on Dorado's leg as about half of the HUGE group of empty seats opposite the hard camera is filled in. But hey, at least we have a meaningless match going on an hour and a half before the rest show starts. Gallagher goes to the middle rope, pauses to listen to Gulak telling him not to jump, and then misses a dive anyway. The hot tag

brings in Metalik for the rope walk into the dropkick to put Gulak down. The rope walk elbow works just as well for two as everything breaks down. Stereo dives take Gallagher and Gulak down, leaving the Salida Del Sol to finish TJP at 13:13.

Rating: C. Take any match between some combination of these guys that you might have seen on 205 Live and add five minutes to get this match. I'm not sure how that's supposed to entice me to watch a pay per view but I'm sure WWE is smarter than I am on that front. Nothing special here, outside of that triple moonsault that is. This would have been fine as the only dark match but with two more, it could have been cut.

Kickoff Show: Revival vs. Anderson and Gallows

Rematch from Monday where Anderson and Gallows won, followed by the Revival getting destroyed by DX and Scott Hall. The Brian Pillman style trunks don't really suit Revival but anything is better than Monday. Dawson gets sent outside to start for a breather before it's Gallows tossing both of them around. Back from a break with Dawson working on Anderson's knee with a string of elbow drops.

Wilder comes in to crank the knee even more but Anderson keeps kicking him away. Therefore, in a good tag team idea, Revival double teams him to keep the advantage. Now why is that so hard to figure out? Of course the hot tag goes through a few seconds later but at least they were trying. Everything breaks down and Gallows scores with a splash for two. Everything breaks down and the Magic Killer is broken up. Dawson sidesteps a charge to post Gallows and Dash's chop block is good for the pin on Anderson at 9:11.

Rating: C. Well, it was better than Monday. I'm glad Revival won and now of course we're likely to have the rubber match tomorrow night because WWE loves their trilogies. The leg stuff was fine here but the break in the middle didn't do it many favors. At least the right team won though and that helps a lot.

Kickoff Show: Bobby Roode vs. ???

Roode is defending in an Open Challenge answered by...Mojo Rawley. The

fans think Mojo sucks as he sends Roode into the corner and actually hammers him down as we take a break. Back with Mojo driving knees in the corner and grabbing a chinlock. Roode fights up and hits a running forearm, followed by a neckbreaker for two. There's the Blockbuster but the Glorious DDT is countered into a spinebuster. Back up and another Glorious DDT is countered into a backdrop but the running punch is blocked. Instead it's a regular DDT to retain the title at 7:37.

Rating: D. This could have been on any house show and that's not good as the Kickoff Show main event. Roode doesn't have a ton of challengers and a lot of that is due to how so few people were treated as important for the sake of Jinder Mahal. They need some kind of a feud going here and Rawley isn't the kind of person to do that.

The opening video doesn't say much out of the ordinary but it does a very good job of setting up the big matches while treating the Rumble win as a big deal. It's very nice that they gave the match some shine for once because they haven't exactly treated it like it matters up to this point.

Smackdown World Title: AJ Styles vs. Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn

AJ is defending in a handicap match. The challengers do have to tag and it's Sami starting for the team. No contact and it's off to Owens, who hangs on the ropes instead of going after the champ. Sami is already back in as there's almost no contact in the first minute and a half. AJ wrestles Sami down but it's already back to Owens, who takes AJ down, runs to the floor and tags Sami back in.

That means a drop down into a dropkick for Zayn as Byron and Graves have ANOTHER stupid argument that completely ignores the match. There's a backdrop for two on AJ as the fans aren't sure who to cheer for. Owens comes back in and unloads with right hands before sending AJ into the barricade. Almost all challengers so far. Owens gets in a double stomp and brings AJ into the corner for more right hands. An electric chair faceplant is good for two more and it's off to the chinlock.

AJ fights up again and gets in a shot to Owens' ankle, which was banged up on Smackdown in the first place. The Pele is enough to bring Sami back in but the Helluva Kick is blocked with a raised boot. Everything breaks

down and Owens monkey flips Styles, who hurricanranas Zayn to the floor instead of crashing to the mat. The Calf Crusher has Owens ready to tap until Sami dives back in for the save.

Owens kicks AJ in the back of the head to knock him into the Blue Thunder Bomb, which of course only gets two (once in a lifetime you see). Another kick to the head puts Sami down this time and the springboard 450 is good for another near fall. They slug it out with AJ throwing Sami to the floor, only to eat a superkick from Owens. The Pop Up Powerbomb is countered into a rollup though and AJ retains (pinning the illegal man) at 16:08.

Rating: B. About what was expected here as there's only so much you can do when the participants have been treated as background characters. I'm glad Bryan and Shane were left out but the match has been booked to make them the stars, meaning this is likely to continue. Some good action here, but it wasn't the most thrilling match in the world.

Wrestlemania XXXIV ad.

Sami and Kevin ask Shane what he's going to do. They can't have another referee screw Owens out of another title. Shane says that yep, he did indeed see that. Nothing else is said.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Shelton Benjamin/Chad Gable

The Usos are defending and this is 2/3 falls after Gable pinned the wrong Uso a few weeks back. In other words, the same ending as the previous match, again showing the limited creative abilities of WWE. Gable can't hit a German suplex on Jimmy to start so it's some chops to the chest in the corner. A distraction lets Chad get in a chop block though and Jimmy is in trouble early on.

Benjamin drives knees into the bad knee as the challengers start cutting the ring off for an old NWA feel. Shelton stops to yell at the crowd though and it's an enziguri to cut him off. The hot tag brings in Jey, who dives through the ropes to take out both challengers in a row. Back in and Gable gets two off a tiger suplex (I haven't seen that one in years), followed by a powerbomb to send Jey into Jimmy.

Pay Dirt gives Shelton two and the bug eyed look on the kickout is funnier than it should be. It's back to Gable who moonsaults onto both champions on the floor but Gable can't pin the illegal Uso. That means a superkick into the Superfly Splash for two in a surprise near fall. The double Superfly Splash is broken up so Gable loads up Rolling Chaos Theory.

That's broken up as well and four straight superkicks end Gable at 12:21. Gable and Benjamin beat the heck out of both champs to start the second fall. A rolling Liger Kick hits Jey and Chad goes up, leaving Shelton to get small packaged to retain the titles in two straight falls at 13:47.

Rating: B-. That was kind of a surprising ending but it's not like it really matters. The Bludgeon Brothers (who have kind of disappeared in recent weeks) are pretty clearly the next challengers and it should be a fun match when we get to it. I'm not sure what happens to Benjamin and Gable at this point but they've proven to be a good team who deserve more time.

Rumble by the Numbers video.

Jerry Lawler joins commentary for the Rumble.

Men's Royal Rumble

90 second intervals this year. Rusev is #1 (with Aiden English singing him to the ring) and Finn Balor (in red here) is in at #2 to a very strong reaction. Balor gets sent to the apron early on but gets back in without too much effort. Rhyno is in at #3 and gets in a showdown with Rusev that doesn't go much of anywhere. Balor is back up and it's Baron Corbin in at #4 to quickly eliminate Rhyno.

Finn is right behind Corbin though and gets rid of him as well, sending Corbin into a rage. That means Balor is pulled to the floor for a whip into the barricade (shoulder first) and End of Days on the floor to Rusev. Heath Slater is in at #5 and gets run over on the ramp. Everyone is down and it's Elias in at #6, playing the guitar (and kicking Slater in the head) on the way to the ring.

It's time for a song about spitting in the Rocky statue's face but the countdown clock cuts him off. NXT Champion Andrade Cien Almas is in at #7 (running Slater over again as we have a running joke) and a running elbow puts Elias into the corner. The running knees rock Elias again but the hammerlock DDT is broken up. A hard clothesline drops Almas and it's Bray Wyatt in at #8.

Naturally Slater gets laid out again and there's a release Rock Bottom to Elias. Balor comes back in to break up Sister Abigail (again, thank goodness). Big E. is in at #9 and gives Slater some pancakes instead of beating him up. Bray is waiting on him with Cole saying Bray has been so dominating since entering. IT'S BEEN LIKE TWO MINUTES!

Rusev is back in but can't get rid of Almas. Tye Dillinger is in at #10 (again), giving us Balor, Rusev, Slater (still not in the ring), Elias, Almas, Wyatt, Big E. and Dillinger. Actually hang on a second as we cut to the back to see Dillinger getting beaten down by Owens and Zayn. Sami is taking his place and continues the tradition by jumping Slater.

Sheamus is in at #11 and throws Slater in...who immediately eliminates Sheamus (on his BIRTHDAY). Bray dumps Slater almost immediately and it's Xavier Woods in at #12. Woods and Big E. double team Sami and a wheelbarrow slam into a splash hits Elias. Rusev can't get rid of Big E. and it's Apollo Crews in at #13. Apollo gets in a good looking jumping enziguri on Bray as Byron is now anti-Zayn as he tries to show a personality.

Balor escapes Sister Abigail and it's Shinsuke Nakamura in at #14. Sami is waiting on him in a Takeover: Dallas flashback as the fans sing Nakamura's song. There are WAY too many people in there and some eliminations are needed. Nakamura fires off some kicks and it's Good Vibrations for Elias. The running knee in the corner gets rid of Sami and Cesaro is in at #15, giving us Balor, Rusev, Elias, Almas, Wyatt, Big E., Woods, Crews, Nakamura and Cesaro.

Uppercuts abound without much happening and it's Kofi Kingston in at #16 to put New Day at full strength. Cesaro cuts him off with an uppercut but Crews gorilla presses Cesaro...to the apron at least but he gets back in.

Instead a shot to the back gets rid of Crews to thin the ring out a bit. Jinder Mahal is in at #17 and goes after Woods, who dropkicks him into the corner. Woods is dumped a few seconds later though and Mahal gets rid of Big E. as well.

Seth Rollins is in at #18 (now with flames on his tights) and gets rid of Cesaro in short order. Mahal sends Kofi over the top but he lands on Xavier...and then on a plate of pancakes. Big E. and Woods launch him from the floor over the ropes and over Mahal, who gets caught with Trouble in Paradise for the elimination. As the rest of New Day throws pancakes at Mahal, Almas hits the hammerlock DDT and eliminates Kofi in a pretty big upset.

Matt Hardy is in at #19 for a standoff with Bray, which is broken up by Rusev. Bray and Matt actually start working together and get rid of Rusev (the fans are NOT pleased) before fighting each other. They eliminate each other and it's John Cena at #20, giving us Balor, Elias, Almas, Nakamura, Rollins and Cena.

Everyone jumps Cena at the same time in a smart move but then let him up, allowing him to AA Elias out. The Hurricane of all people is in at #22 (which Cole calls a superhero persona which was a huge hit with kids years ago) and tries a chokeslam but gets tossed out by Cena. Hurricane lands on the pancakes, nearly slips, and then does his pose over and over again on the way to the back. Aiden English is in at #22 and goes after Rollins before switching to Balor.

Adam Cole (with taped ribs) from NXT is in at #23 to a very nice reaction. Balor kicks English off the ropes for an elimination and it's Randy Orton in at #24. An RK0 drops Almas and there he goes after a strong performance. Things settle down a bit and it's Titus O'Neil in at #25. Cole gets sent to the apron but slides back in, leaving Titus to chop Nakamura in the corner. Miz is in at #26 and starts fast with the YES Kicks, followed by a Skull Crushing Finale on Cena.

Lucky #27 is the returning Rey Mysterio to get rid of Cole in a hurry. The Miz takes 619 and it's Roman Reigns in at #28. You can feel the pain from the booing. Reigns goes after Miz and hits the jumping clothesline,

followed by the clotheslines in the corner. Titus gets eliminated but the Miztourage saves Miz from the same fate. Rollins Curb Stomps Miz but gets into a showdown with Reigns. A DoubleBomb gets rid of Miz but Reigns turns on Rollins to get rid of him as well.

Goldust is in at #29 and hurts himself headbutting Reigns. Cena gets beaten up as well and it's Dolph Ziggler (POP) in at #30, giving us a final group of Balor, Nakamura, Cena, Orton, Mysterio, Reigns, Goldust and Ziggler. Goldust is out in a hurry and Balor kicks Ziggler out, making him one of the most inconsequential #30s in recent memory. Rey, Cena and Orton get together in one corner, Nakamura and Balor are in another and Reigns is on his own (how appropriate).

Balor takes a quick AA followed by the 619 to Reigns. There's an RK0 to Nakamura but Cena blocks another attempt. A Superman Punch lets Reigns get rid of Orton and a double 619 hits Reigns and Cena (with Cena loudly talking to Reigns while they wait). Balor throws Mysterio out to get us down to four meaning everyone goes to a corner.

We get the big staredown as the fans are behind Nakamura. Cena throws a You Can't See Me at Balor and hammers on Nakamura while Reigns beats on Balor. That gives us the big showdown as the fans think they both suck. No one throws a punch as Balor and Nakamura get back up, giving us a much better received showdown. The running knees in the corner put Balor on the apron but he kicks a charging Nakamura in the head. Another kick to the head rocks Balor but he scores with a basement dropkick.

Reigns and Cena are back up again with Cena charging into a Samoa drop. The Superman Punch is countered with a ProtoBomb but the Shuffle is broken up with a Sling Blade. Balor hits the shotgun dropkick on Reigns but Nakamura kicks Balor in the face. Balor's standing double stomp cuts off Kinshasa and Cena tosses Balor to get us down to three. Reigns slips out of an AA and hits the Superman Punch on Cena. The spear is cut off by the AA and Nakamura puts Cena on the apron.

A running kick to the face gets rid of Cena and we're down to Nakamura vs. Reigns. That means COME ON and Reigns does so with a Superman Punch. Reigns sends him to the apron but gets kicked in the head but Nakamura

grabs a hanging triangle over the apron. A powerbomb brings Nakamura back in and they're both down again.

It's Reigns up first but the spear is cut off with a kick to the face. A middle rope knee to the face drops Reigns but Kinshasa is hit with a spear to put them both down again. Nakamura grabs the ropes to hang on and another running knee drops Roman, setting up the elimination to give Nakamura the win at 65:32.

Rating: A. Best Rumble in years, though that's not exactly saying much. The important thing here was they went with a popular name to win the Rumble, which has been lacking in recent years. Nakamura winning really surprised me as I never thought they would actually do it but I'll take what I can get.

They laid the match out nicely here as things took a little time to get going but the final ten to fifteen minutes were excellent with the final six all being solid options. I wasn't dreading this one at all and it made the match that much better. This was a lot of fun and the way the Rumble should go, with one of the best endings in a long time. Great match.

The Smackdown bosses are celebrating in the back when Stephanie McMahon and Kurt Angle come in to say Raw will win later. Daniel and Shane (buddies again) don't seem to care.

Post match Nakamura is asked who he wants to face at Wrestlemania. Fans: "PLEASE SAY STYLES!" Nakamura: "AJ STYLES!"

There was a Royal Rumble to determine the next Colonel Sanders with Ric Flair winning. He has the wrinkles for it.

Raw Tag Team Titles: The Bar vs. Jason Jordan/Seth Rollins

Rollins and Jordan are defending with Seth and Sheamus starting things off. Seth gets driven into the corner with Cesaro offering a distraction to keep Jordan away from interfering. Jordan is ready for the hot tag but Cesaro pulls him down (I thought that was the heel turn) and posts him into near unconsciousness. Back in and Sheamus' top rope clothesline gets

two as the double beatdown is on, made especially worse by Seth's long Rumble run.

Seth finally sends Sheamus into the post to get it back to even, followed by a Sling Blade and Blockbuster. Sheamus comes back in for the save but Rollins drops both of them for a double frog splash. As Seth gets up, Jordan is STILL sitting on the steps, leaving Sheamus to hit the Brogue Kick. The super White Noise gives us new champions at 13:03. Jordan was never in the match.

Rating: C-. This was an angle instead of a match and there's nothing wrong with that. For some reason we seem to be waiting on Jordan vs. Rollins at Wrestlemania, even though that doesn't quite blow my skirt up. The match was stuck in the cool down spot after the great Rumble and that was the right spot for it.

We recap the Raw World Title match. Basically you have three monsters fighting each other and breaking things to hurt each other, meaning it's time to get violent.

Raw World Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Kane vs. Braun Strowman

Brock is defending and it's one fall to a finish. Strowman wastes no time in cleaning house, including a hard knee to Brock's head. That's fine with Brock who starts throwing punches, only to have Kane score with a chokeslam. Brock grabs a chair but Braun punches it away and drops everyone.

Shots with the steps clean house and it's time for a pair of tables. Strowman chokeslams Kane for two with Brock making the save and it's time for Suplex City. Braun pops up like a daisy and powerslams Brock through a table with Kane making the save this time. Kane is tossed away again (it's almost like he's completely unnecessary in this match until the ending) and it's time for the announcers' table.

Braun takes too long though and it's an F5 to drive him through instead. Brock turns the other table over Braun (Corey: "I'm about to throw this German guy in front of me!") and F5's Kane through another. Braun gets up again and sends Brock into the steps, followed by the powerslam. Kane

makes the save and sends Braun outside, setting up an F5 onto the chair to retain Brock's title at 10:12.

Rating: B-. Well duh. The world knows that Braun is ready to be World Champion and should have been like six months ago but Vince McMahon and seemingly Vince McMahon alone wants to see Reigns take the title from Brock. Again, as has been the case many, many times: none of this is important because we're just sitting around waiting on Reigns to take the title like we've been waiting for for nearly a year now. After that, I have no idea where they go and I'm not sure WWE does either. This was fun, but exactly as expected.

Trailer for Andre the Giant's HBO documentary.

We get a video on the women's Royal Rumble with a focus on the Revolution (and Stephanie of course) with everyone talking about how important this is.

Maria Menunos is guest ring announcer and Stephanie McMahon is guest commentator, with Cole reading off her resume (and saying Stephanie will tell you about her trailblazing). Alexa Bliss and Charlotte come out to watch at ringside.

Women's Royal Rumble

Sasha Banks (in Wonder Woman gear) is in at #1 and Becky Lynch is in at #2 to give us a good start. Becky blocks an early elimination attempt and we talk about how nervous Stephanie is. The Bank Statement is broken up and it's a double clothesline as Sarah Logan is in at #3. Logan clotheslines Becky down but Sasha makes a questionable save. Becky gets stomped down in the corner and it's Mandy Rose in at #4. Mandy can't get rid of Sasha and it's LITA in at #5.

Sasha and Becky aren't sure what to do so they opt with kicking her in the stomach. Mandy jumps Lita from behind and gets placed on the apron, followed by a hard shot for the first elimination. Kairi Sane is in at #6 and chops Lita into the corner as Cole talks about her "yacht persona". She's not Ashley Remington (bet you didn't think I knew that one) because SHE'S A FREAKING PIRATE! Sane kicks Sasha down and drops the Insane

Elbow, followed by another to Becky as Tamina is in at #7.

Lita starts hitting the Twists of Fate and hits a double moonsault onto Sasha and Becky (more like her falling backwards instead of any kind of jump but give her a break). That means the YOU STILL GOT IT chant before she eliminates Tamina, only to get dumped by Becky. That's all this needed to be from Lita and it worked to perfection. Dana Brooke is in at #8 and actually dumps Kairi before stomping on Sasha in the corner.

Torrie Wilson is in at #9 (oh give me a break) and it's time to prove why she wasn't a wrestler. Logan dropkicks her down but Torrie pops up and eliminates Dana. Sonya Deville is in at #10, giving us Banks, Lynch, Logan, Wilson and Deville. Sonya starts firing off knees and gets rid of Torrie (thank goodness). Liv Morgan is in at #11 so the Squad can start getting together. No one is tossed though and it's Molly Holly in at #12.

Molly gets rid of Logan and hits the Molly Go Round on Sasha. Lana is in at #13 and is immediately taken down by Morgan and Deville. She actually gets fired up and slaps her way to freedom as Michelle McCool is in at #14. That means an UNDERTAKER chant as she gets rid of Logan, Morgan and Holly. Sasha and Becky are down on the floor (not eliminated) as Michelle gets rid of Lana as well. With Michelle alone, Becky and Sasha get back in and it's Ruby Riott at #15, giving us Michelle, Becky, Sasha and Ruby.

Vickie Guerrero is in at #16 and shouts EXCUSE ME over and over but everyone stares her down. She tries to bail and is tossed with ease (I guessed that as a comedy spot and it's as perfect as I thought it would be). Carmella is in at #17 but Vickie takes the Money in the Bank briefcase to knock her silly. Natalya is in at #18 and throws her gear on Carmella, who pulls Natalya off the apron. That's enough for Carmella to get in for some superkicks and it's Kelly Kelly in at #19. Kelly fends off an early elimination as Natalya gets rid of McCool.

Naomi is in at #20, giving us Banks, Lynch, Riott, Carmella, Natalya, Kelly and Naomi at the moment. Becky goes up for some reason and gets dumped by Riott. Jacqueline is in at #21 and goes after Kelly. Nia Jax is in at #22, meaning it's time to clear the ring. Jacqueline is out first, followed by Kelly with ease. Natalya is sent outside (through the ropes),

leaving Nia to press Riott onto the top turnbuckle and then out to the floor. Naomi goes after Nia's legs but tries a hurricanrana.

Nia knocks her off the apron but the pile catches her, allowing Naomi to land on the barricade. NXT Women's Champion (with a bad arm) is in at #23 with a springboard kick to Nia's face. Nia sends her flying as Naomi is walking across the barricade to steal Maria's chair on wheels. She then crawls across the floor using her hands and the wheels on the chair...only to have Nia catch her coming back in and toss her out. I smiled at the irony. Beth Phoenix is in at #24 and this could be a lot of fun.

Phoenix is a lot closer to Nia's size than I expected and manages a fireman's carry but can't eliminate Nia. Natalya's help doesn't work very well as they knock Nia through the ropes. That means a hug and of course Natalya turns on her and gets rid of Beth. Carmella (never eliminated) comes back in to jump Natalya from behind...and it's Asuka at #25. There's the hip attack to Carmella and it's time for the showdown with Ember Moon.

Ember actually hits a one armed Eclipse but Asuka goes after the bad arm and gets rid of her. Sasha (also never eliminated) gets back in and it's Mickie James in at #26. That goes nowhere and it's Nikki Bella getting lucky #27 (well duh). That means the JOHN CENA SUCKS song but Carmella takes Nikki into the corner for the Staten Island Shuffle (not the Moon Walk Stephanie). Nikki powers her up though and a neck snap across the top rope gets rid of Carmella.

Brie Bella is in at #28 to save her sister from a big beatdown. The Bellas get their big moment (their latest one for those of you who have lost track) and knock Nia off the apron. A double suplex puts Natalya down and it's Bayley in at #29. Asuka kicks Bayley in the head in short order but can't get rid of her. It's Trish Stratus in at #30 (not exactly shocking and that's not a bad thing) to give us a final group of Sasha, Natalya, Nia, Asuka, Mickie, Nikki, Brie, Bayley and Trish.

Stratus gets to clean house and hits a double Stratusfaction before getting into a showdown with Mickie. James misses a charge and gets tossed, meaning it's time for everyone to go after Nia. She shrugs them

all off but the Bellas choke her on the ropes, allowing everyone else to join in and get rid of Nia. Sasha of course turns on Bayley for the elimination and we're down to six.

Natalya puts Trish in the Sharpshooter for some reason and is broken up just as quickly. The Chick Kick eliminates Natalya but Trish mocks Sasha's Boss pose, meaning the Stratusfaction is broken up to get rid of Stratus. Sasha turns around to meet Asuka but they decide to get rid of the Bellas...for all of three seconds until Sasha decks Asuka from behind. Sasha calls the Bellas off so she can beat on Asuka in the corner but the Twins dump her out as she tries the double knees.

So we're down to the Bellas and Asuka and it's time for the YES Kicks to both Twins (there's a joke there that I'm not touching). Brie gets sent to the apron but Nikki decks Asuka, followed by the Rack Attack 2.0. Nikki decks Brie to get rid of her though and it's down to two. Asuka is on the apron and hits a missile dropkick but Nikki's spinning middle rope kick catches her in the face. Nikki puts her on the apron for the big forearm...which doesn't end it. Instead Asuka grabs a headscissors to put Nikki on the apron but Asuka kicks kicks her in the leg for the elimination to win at 58:47.

Rating: B. I know a lot of people are going to be annoyed about the amount of legends (and the amount of botches) in there but my goodness what else were you expecting? The women's division is about twenty people deep and I'd rather have people like McCool, Lita and Trish in there to give us either a good performance or appearances from people who are legitimate trailblazers (not McCool obviously but she did quite well). I was surprised by the lack of NXT names but what we got was fine, save for the Iconic Duo still not appearing.

The match itself was fine, albeit a bit predictable. You knew Asuka was the heavy favorite and really, it's not like there were many other solid options. Aside from Jax, who really else was there? Banks or Lynch? Well maybe, but Asuka getting the title needs to be a big deal and one of those two can take the other title. Either way...uh, back in a minute.

The champions get in the ring.....AND BAD REPUTATION HITS AS RONDA ROUSEY IS

HERE!!! Rousey, in a Roddy Piper shirt, points at the Wrestlemania sign and offers Asuka a handshake but Asuka slaps it away. Ronda also shakes Stephanie's hand and high fives fans to end the show.

Oh and Stephanie's commentary was annoying but acceptable. She didn't need to be there and added nothing at all but she could have been worse. Sounded very much like a fan who wasn't the most polished but it was fine.

Overall Rating: A-. I loved the heck out of this show as they made the Rumbles FUN. That's been sorely, sorely lacking in recent years and they made up for it tonight. The Rumbles are interesting by definition but above all else, these matches were a good time as I kept waiting to see who was coming out next. I was actually worried about Reigns and Nikki winning so well done on some false drama. This did everything it needed to do, including setting up a major Wrestlemania match. I had a great time with this show and that's what the Rumble is supposed to be. Well done all around and a great show.

Results

AJ Styles b. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens – Rollup to Owens

Usos b. Chad Gable/Jason Jordan – Small package to Benjamin

Shinsuke Nakamura won the Royal Rumble last eliminating Roman Reigns

The Bar b. Seth Rollins/Jason Jordan – Super White Noise to Rollins

Brock Lesnar b. Kane and Braun Strowman – F5 to Kane

Asuka won the Royal Rumble last eliminating Nikki Bella

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