

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2016 (2017 Redo): Gold Rush Fever

Royal Rumble 2016

Date: January 24, 2016

Location: Amway Center, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 15,170

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

Now this one actually has my interest for a change. A year ago, WWE decided that the right idea was to have WWE World Champion Roman Reigns fight everyone in a single match for the title. This is completely different as now he fights everyone for the US Title. Anyway, the whole thing is about the main event, as it should be, so let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Mark Henry/Jack Swagger vs. Dudley Boyz vs. Darren Young/Damien Sandow vs. Ascension

One fall to a finish and the winners go to the Rumble. I can't help but call JBL cute for suggesting that any of these four have a chance to win the Rumble. The fans want Sandow and just EXPLODE when he actually gets the tag. The Wind-Up Elbow gets two on Swagger before it's off to Young so the crowd can die all over again. Konnor tags himself in and it's a big eight way standoff as we take a break.

Back with Swagger powerslamming Konnor as we hear about the fans wanting some Sandow. D-Von gets crotched against the post so the fans change up to wanting Sexual Chocolate. Henry obliges with a hip swivel, which will probably get him fined for not focusing enough or some jazz like that. A D-VON chant gets him back to his feet because we need a long chinlock in a match that doesn't break eight minutes and has eight participants. Bubba comes in off the hot tag and cleans house with Young taking Wazzup. 3D gets two on Viktor but Henry steals the pin at 7:58.

Rating: D. This wasn't great but it did everything it needed to do. At the end of the day, other than MAYBE the Dudleyz, Swagger and Henry were the only pairing that made sense here. Just let us have two former World

Champions in there to fill in a few spots. It's not like anyone wanted to see Young or Ascension (a sign in the crowd called them today's joke and I can't say I disagree) in there so go with what makes sense.

Vince and Stephanie McMahon show up in a limo (So they're good at this point. Got it.) and talk about how awesome tonight is going to be and how fair it is to Reigns. Vince loves the idea, almost as much as he loves himself.

The opening video recaps the only thing that matters here with the tagline of One vs. All. I liked that last year and I still do.

Intercontinental Title: Kevin Owens vs. Dean Ambrose

Ambrose is defending and this is last man standing. They go right after each other to start with Dean hammering away and biting Owens' head before scoring with the bulldog out of the corner. What looks like a tablet to the head gives Owens a breather and a superkick sets up the Cannonball through the barricade. A few chair shots keep Dean in trouble and Owens has a seat as the champ gets up.

Two chairs are set up in the middle of the ring but, just like putting a chair in the corner, whoever sets them up goes through them, meaning Ambrose backdrops him through the chairs. A suicide dive is countered into a ram into the apron followed by a whip into the steps for about a seven. With Ambrose getting up again, Owens loads up two tables on top of each other but the superplex is blocked, meaning we'll get back to the big crash later.

Dirty Deeds gets eight on Owens and another one onto a chair sends Owens rolling to the floor to land on his feet at nine. Eh that's kind of clever. The fans want Owens to fight (multiple times even) but Dean elbows him through a table. That's still not enough so Dean says he hates Owens. Kevin: "I hate you too!" Back in and Owens' swinging fisherman's superplex sends Dean through another table to give Kevin a nine count. Owens lays Dean on a set of chairs but the champ pops up and shoves him through the double tables to retain at 20:50.

Rating: B+. It's no masterpiece but this is the kind of show that only

needs one great match to be a classic, making this a bonus. The big spot at the end was a good choice and I kind of like that over a finisher onto something made of metal. It's a good match and a good way to open things up since the rest of the card is just a way to get to the main event.

We recap heel New Day (what a weird concept, though they're rapidly turning face here) vs. the Usos, which has involved Chris Jericho destroying Francesca to freak Woods out.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Usos

New Day is defending (of course) and there's no Woods. Kofi asks for a moment of silence for Francesca but here's Woods with a new trombone named Francesca II. See, he's in mourning but a man has, ahem, needs. This isn't it for them tonight though as New Day wants the World Title so 2016 can be all gold everything. Kofi: "GOLDEN UNICORNS!" Woods: "Stay golden pony boy."

The twins take over to start and the fans aren't all that thrilled. A jawbreaker puts Jimmy down and it's off to Big E. for some hip swiveling, only to have Jey dropkick him into the barricade. Woods proves his worth to the team by dropping Jey to take over again. Sometimes it's a bit harder to get rid of those old heel tendencies you see. The fans demand a Francesca performance but Woods plays when he wants to, which isn't while Kofi has Jey in a chinlock.

The Warrior Splash gives Big E. two as JBL talks about NFL coin flips. A spinning enziguri drops Kofi and there's the hot tag to Jimmy so house can be cleaned. Normally the fans are a bit more enthusiastic about that but New Day is just WAY too popular here for fans to get behind the Usos.

Everything breaks down and a Whisper in the Wind gets two on Big E. A belly to belly gets the same on Jey but the spear through the ropes is blocked by a raised knee. Why not just step to the side? The second attempt works a bit better but it's too early for the Midnight Hour. Jey superkicks Kofi into the Superfly Splash for two as a foot goes on the rope. Kofi eats another superkick but a blind tag brings in Big E. for the Big Ending to retain at 10:52.

Rating: B-. This took some time to get rolling but once everything broke down, it was as good as you would expect from these teams. New Day is clearly the future of the division despite being champs for nearly five months at this point. Catching a top rope splash out of the air is really impressive as the champs continue to show that they have the ring work to back up their charisma.

We look back at Brock Lesnar beating up the League of Nations, followed by Reigns spearing Brock. The Wyatts then beat Reigns and Brock up to make themselves a threat for later tonight.

The Wyatts say they'll win the title for Bray tonight. Singing ensues.

US Title: Kalisto vs. Alberto Del Rio

Kalisto is challenging and they've been trading the title for a few weeks now. Kalisto starts fast with the strikes to send him outside for a suicide dive. Now you might think this is competitive, but JBL is right there to hammer in the ideas that David NEVER beats Goliath and that Kalisto is going to get destroyed. You know, in case you're dumb enough to not get the idea here.

Back in and Del Rio kicks him down, followed by a top rope ax handle for two. That means JBL gets to talk about how fun it is to beat up luchadors. Two knees to the ribs have Kalisto in more trouble and it's time to go after the mask. There's some good heel psychology in there about someone with Del Rio knowing the tradition of the mask and going after it anyway but the announcers gloss over it.

Del Rio's low superkick gets two and Kalisto gets the same off a springboard tornado DDT. Kalisto goes up top but gets caught in a reverse superplex. They HORRIBLY botch a Code Red (the sunset bomb) so Kalisto goes straight to the Salida Del Sol for two. Del Rio unhooks a turnbuckle pad and of course he goes into it, setting up another Salida Del Sol for the pin and the title at 11:32.

Rating: C+. Not bad here but the commentary was driving me crazy here. JBL kept talking about how there was NO WAY the smaller guy could win and that's exactly what we saw happening. There's a difference between

setting up an idea and just hammering it into the ground, which is what we had here. The match itself was fine but I do wonder how they screwed up Kalisto. He might not have been a future World Champion but he's someone that could have been a fixture in the midcard. Instead, he's just a guy on the roster because we needed to feed him to Rusev down the line. You know, to feed him to Reigns.

Pre-show recap.

Paul Heyman comes up to Stephanie and says they can renegotiate Lesnar's contract after he wins the Rumble. Stephanie is cool with that as long as Reigns is taken to Suplex City. Why she hates Reigns isn't clear but I'd assume it's because she just feels like it at the moment.

Recap of Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch. They were best friends but Charlotte won the title and realized she didn't need Becky anymore. Becky talked Ric Flair into accepting the title shot for his daughter and we're ready to roll.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch

Charlotte is defending and has her dad with her. Feeling out process to start with Charlotte shouldering her down. Becky goes right for the arm and the fans are entirely behind her. The announcers explain the Figure Eight as Charlotte grabs an armbar of her own. Back up and a kick to the chest puts Charlotte on the floor where Ric gets in Becky's way. A clothesline drops the champ again so Flair kisses Becky for your weekly case of sexual assault (edited off the Network).

Charlotte takes over and grabs a cravate as the fans are WAY behind Becky here. Like moreso than usual. Thankfully Charlotte mocks the chants before doing the headscissor faceplants followed by the Figure Four necklock. Becky gets out and starts firing off dropkicks to take over but a neckbreaker puts Charlotte right back in control.

The Bexploder gets two and Charlotte's spear gets the same. You can hear Flair freaking out as only he can and it wouldn't be the same without that screaming. Becky gets a cross armbreaker out of the corner and the fans get right back into this, only to have a powerbomb break the hold to

give Charlotte two. The Disarm-Her goes on but Flair throws his jacket at Becky for the distraction, allowing Charlotte to get another spear to retain at 11:34.

Rating: B. Another good match between the two of them but I'm really starting to roll my eyes at Flair's interference. We get the concept already and there's no need to keep doing it over and over. At some point Charlotte needs to drop him and once that happens, she's going to go through the roof, which would turn out to be in a bigger way than anyone could have expected.

Charlotte beats on Becky post match but here's Sasha Banks for the save and Bank Statement on the champ. Cole: "Sasha Banks making a statement with the Bank Statement!" I bet he spent two weeks coming up with that one.

Some fans went to the Performance Center under the ruse of being part of a focus group. The wound up getting to meet a full tour of the facility and met most of the NXT roster. Note to self: sign up for focus groups.

Rumble By the Numbers video, which is still one of my favorite annual traditions. This is tied in with the stats that Reigns, who is entering at #1, has to overcome to retain the title.

WWE World Title: Royal Rumble

Reigns is defending and comes in at #1, making the tagline One vs. All. We have 90 second intervals here and that's rarely a good thing. I had forgotten about Reigns' through the crowd entrance and how unfitting it was. Can you imagine him trying to pull that today without getting pummeled? Anyway Reigns is in at #2 and Rusev is in at #2, which is smart as they had an awesome final section to a battle royal on Smackdown back in 2015. They start slugging it out and even JBL knows they can't keep up this pace. Rusev gets in a spinwheel kick but can't throw him out. Well not over the top at least as he sends Roman through the ropes instead. The spear however is enough to put Rusev out as the clock begins.

And then, in perhaps the dumbest production decision I've ever seen in WWE, the camera stays on Reigns' face as AJ STYLES makes his debut at #3.

Like literally, the camera just locks in on Reigns as the crowd freaks out. They even posted a different cut of this on the WWE YouTube page because it was such a stupid visual. Thanks to the entrance taking forever, we only have time for AJ to not be able to hit the Styles Clash and a Samoan drop planting AJ.

Tyler Breeze is in at #4 and the fans are COMPLETELY behind AJ, which isn't all that surprising. Breeze scores with a few right hands before a pretty unnecessary double team gets rid of him. Curtis Axel (with the WAY too over Social Outcasts) is in at #5 to send AJ into the buckle, earning himself some forearms to the face. Reigns gets back up and the Outcasts are beaten down until AJ clotheslines Axel out (JBL: "The chains are back on."). Chris Jericho is in at #6 and we've got a snappy triple threat going here.

AJ gets knocked down and Reigns is sent into the post, leaving Styles to have to fight out of the Walls. Kane is in at #7 and Cole is WAY too fast to call him the greatest performer in the Rumble's history. Wouldn't it have helped if he had actually WON THE THING a time or two Cole? Styles goes right after the monster but gets kicked down and all four head to a corner until Goldust is in at #8. Not a lot happens here other than the fans chanting for AJ even more because he debuted as a star, which only a handful of people get to do. Ryback is in at #9 and gets to clean house without eliminating anyone.

AJ clotheslines Reigns in the corner to another big pop and it's Kofi Kingston in at #10 (with New Day staying at ringside) so we can just start the clock for the big save. At the moment we have Reigns, Styles, Jericho, Kane, Goldust, Ryback and Kingston. AJ comes off the top to hit Jericho and it's Titus O'Neil in at #11. Styles and Jericho take backbreakers and Goldust is tossed. Kofi almost gets rid of Reigns and is somehow even more popular than he's been all night.

R-Truth is in at #12 and of course he pulls out a ladder and climbs up to retrieve...nothing. I forgot how much I enjoyed Truth's confused gimmick. Kane pulls him down and tosses him out before throwing the ladder out as a bonus. A clothesline puts Kofi over the top and right onto Big E.'s shoulders for the big save. Eh not as good as some I've seen but you

can't have a classic every year. Luke Harper is in at #13 and here are Vince and the League of Nations to pull Roman to the floor (under the ropes of course). The champ is sent into the steps and kicked in the face by multiple members of the team.

This goes on so long that Stardust comes in at #14. Rusev splashes Reigns through the table as we have NO IDEA what is going on in the ring during all this. While we were gone, Jericho eliminated Kingston which was of course ignored by the announcers. Now for the stupid part: Vince and the Nation JUST LEAVES.

Like, they don't throw him inside and then back out. They don't pay someone off to get rid of Reigns. They don't do anything but leave while Reigns is taken out on a stretcher. You would think Vince would have learned his lesson from Steve Austin in 1999 but he's a heel so this is just really stupid instead of head caving in stupid. Big Show comes in at #15 and eliminates Titus and Ryback, giving us a lineup of Reigns (being taken out), Styles, Jericho, Kane, Harper, Stardust and Show. Reigns is now walking in front of the stretcher, making this even less of a good idea.

Styles escapes a chokeslam and it's Neville in at #16. The rapid fire kicks stagger some people as Reigns is shown WALKING TO THE BACK UNDER HIS OWN POWER. What a hero he certainly is. Braun Strowman is in at #17 and hopefully some people are about to be tossed. Strowman casually eliminates Kane and has the showdown with Big Show. The standing choke (what a stupid move) knocks Show out and Strowman eliminates him a few seconds later.

A limping Kevin Owens is in at #18 and that's good for one heck of a pop. Styles is there to meet him and you know the fans are into that. Neville throws AJ to the apron and Kevin adds a superkick to get rid of Styles, making himself a full on heel once again. Dean Ambrose is in at #19 and Owens is waiting on him to keep up the brawl from earlier. Since there's nothing like a Royal Rumble for the World Title going on, let's look at the Reigns beatdown from earlier.

Sami Zayn is in at #20 for a main roster cameo and of course he goes

after Owens in a slugout. Kevin is gone in a hurry and we've got Reigns (not in the ring), Harper, Stardust, Jericho, Zayn, Ambrose, Neville and Strowman. Erick Rowan joins the field at #21 as the Wyatts are strong in this one. Harper and Rowan get together to get rid of Stardust and Neville as Strowman chokes Jericho out.

Mark Henry is in at #22 and is eliminated by the Wyatts in less than a minute. Strowman tosses Sami leaving Ambrose and Jericho to fight the monsters. Cole: "I don't see any help coming anytime soon." The clock is ticking down as he says this so you know it's going to be someone big. As you might expect, Brock Lesnar is in at #23 and the place just goes NUTS.

It's time for some suplexes with Harper and Rowan flying across the ring (not eliminated). It takes three clotheslines to drop Strowman and there goes Rowan. Harper takes a German suplex but Brock can't suplex Strowman. Now THAT is a rub. Braun goes shoulder first into the post and another clothesline puts him down. Jack Swagger is in at #24 and lasts about fifteen seconds before Lesnar gets rid of him. More suplexes abound as Lesnar is rapidly running out of things to do.

The Miz is in at #25, giving us Reigns (you know the drill by now), Jericho, Harper, Strowman, Ambrose, Lesnar and Miz, who walks around for a bit before going in to face Brock. He actually gets on commentary and threatens to turn Disney World into Mizney World. Harper takes another German suplex and Strowman gets shouldered in the corner. That's enough to get rid of Harper and Alberto Del Rio is in at #26. Alberto and Dean double team Lesnar in the corner and are promptly launched across the ring. Some clotheslines get rid of Strowman and the fans are VERY pleased.

Bray Wyatt gets lucky #27 and the other three Wyatts all get back in to pummel Brock. Brock tosses the three eliminated guys out again and suplexes Bray but Harper saves the F5 with a kick to the chest (or face if you're Cole). Unlike Vince and the League (who did almost the same thing earlier), Bray is smart enough to ELIMINATE BROCK, who responds by.....calmly walking away instead of, you know, breaking people in half and making a throw rug out of their entrails.

Dolph Ziggler is in at #28 and it's FINALLY time for Miz to get in. A Skull Crushing Finale plants Dolph but Miz can't put him out. Sheamus is in at #29 but Reigns jumps him in the aisle, over twenty four minutes after he left and over HALF AN HOUR after the beatdown started. Naturally he's booted out of the building but still manages to get rid of Del Rio. I get that they're trying to repeat the 1999 Royal Rumble and ignoring the fact that they're copying the worst Rumble of all time, but there's a big stretch between the biggest star of all time and Roman Reigns.

Anyway Roman fights Bray for a bit and it's HHH in at #30 for one of the most obvious "swerves" in recent history. The final group is Reigns, Jericho, Ambrose, Wyatt, Ziggler, Sheamus and HHH, who gets a HUGE pop because the fans have a way out of Reigns winning the whole thing. Why the announcers have HHH stats despite him being A COMPLETE SURPRISE isn't clear but we'll chalk it up to the regular way of making it clear that this is entirely staged.

HHH and Reigns do the big staredown and the top heel is suddenly the big hero because that's how little people care about Reigns. Ziggler charges into a Pedigree like a goof and Wyatt takes a spear so Reigns can have equal power. The facebuster looks to set up a Pedigree on Reigns but Sheamus and Ambrose throw them both to the apron. Jericho bulldogs Bray down and hits a Lionsault but takes a Zig Zag. A superkick can't knock HHH off the apron and he gets back in to eliminate Ziggler a few seconds later.

Bray and HHH have a very interesting staredown which isn't likely to go anywhere. Sheamus saves HHH from Sister Abigail and Bray is tossed. Dean and Sheamus fight for a bit until Jericho dives on Ambrose. A Codebreaker puts HHH down but Dean eliminates Jericho to get us down to four. Dean eats a Brogue Kick but sidesteps a charge to get rid of Sheamus, followed by HHH eliminating Reigns to the pop of the night.

So we're down to Ambrose vs. HHH and Reigns stays on the floor instead of helping his buddy due to a combination of stupidity, honor and plot convenience. The rebound lariat (which Cole calls, I kid you not, the Wacky Line) has HHH in trouble and Dean sends him to the apron, only to be backdropped to the floor to make HHH the winner and champion at

1:01:42.

Rating: A-. This one took a good while to get going but once Reigns left, everything picked up. That's where everything starts falling apart. This match is all about Reigns and the problem is very simple: people don't seem to like him. It says a lot that Jericho lasted 51 minutes and Reigns officially went 58 though only one of them needed half an hour of rest. That right there is proof positive that Reigns probably isn't going to be get cheered most of the time. This made him look very lame and that's one of the worst things you can do to a star. Having him WALK OUT OF THE ARENA was just horrible and the worst possible idea.

The rest of the match was pretty awesome though as you had everyone fighting over the title. Unfortunately there are some major holes, such as Brock just walking away and having to wait for Reigns to come back. It's not the best Rumble of all time as Reigns loomed over the whole thing but having the title on the line was a great idea and something I wish they did more often than every twenty four years. Give us some better options for the possible winner and ANYTHING other than Reigns vs. HHH as the big story and this is one of the best of all time.

HHH and family celebrate as fireworks take us out.

Overall Rating: A. This was a one match show and anything else worth watching on the show (such as the opener) was going to be more than enough to make this awesome. While it wound up setting the stage for the worst Wrestlemania in a long time, at least we have an awesome Royal Rumble to get us there. WWE had a lot of potential at this point, especially considering all the injuries they had at the time. It's a strong Rumble, assuming you ignore the completely backwards reactions for Reigns.

Ratings Comparison

Mark Henry/Jack Swagger vs. Dudley Boyz vs. Darren Young/Damien Sandow vs. Ascension

Original: D+

Redo: D

Dean Ambrose vs. Kevin Owens

Original: B

Redo: B+

New Day vs. Usos

Original: C+

Redo: B-

Alberto Del Rio vs. Kalisto

Original: C

Redo: C+

Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch:

Original: C-

Redo: B

Royal Rumble

Original: A-

Redo: A-

Overall Rating

Original: A

Redo: A

What was up with me hating the women like that?

Here's the original rating if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2016/01/24/royal-rumble-2016-this-rumble-ga>

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