

Royal Rumble 2024: Run It Back?

Royal Rumble 2024

Date: January 27, 2024

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

It's the start of the Road To Wrestlemania and that should make for a huge night. The interesting thing about the Rumble is that we are only going to be in for a four match card, with the two Rumbles, a US Title match and the four way for the World Title. That should be more than enough for a good night so let's get to it.

We open with a look at wrestlers arriving.

Hulk Hogan talks about how important this part of the country is to wrestling, as there are so many people from Florida who made a big difference in wrestling. Now it's time for the Royal Rumble and the path to Wrestlemania, but you have to go through a lot to get there.

Just like last year, Pat McAfee returns as a surprise commentator and just like last year, Corey Graves is furious.

Women's Royal Rumble

90 second intervals, Natalya is in at #1 and the returning Naomi is in at #2. We get a nice WELCOME BACK chant as Cole talks about Naomi winning the TNA Knockouts Title while she was gone from WWE. Natalya knocks her down but Naomi is quickly up for a hurricanrana. The basement dropkick drops Naomi and it's Bayley in at #3. She's quickly kicked into the corner and Naomi hits the Rear View. Natalya basement dropkicks both of them but Naomi drops them both for a breather.

Candice LeRae is in at #4 and steps on Naalya's back with a Codebreaker to Bayley (and lands on Bayley in the process). TNA Knockouts Champion Jordynne Grace (a powerhouse) is in at #5 and runs people over before hugging Naomi (who she defeated for the title). They immediately slug it out and Grace hits the Juggernaut Driver (pumphandle driver) to plant Naomi. Indi Hartwell is in at #6 and hits some clotheslines, followed by a spinebuster on Bayley. Hartwell and LeRae team up for a bit and even manage a sign point.

Asuka is in at #7 and Bayley gets rid of Hartwell for the first elimination. Ivy Nile is in at #8 and can't pick up Naomi. Bayley invites Cole in from commentary, continuing their long lasting one sided feud. Katana Chance is in at #9 and goes after Asuka but gets suplexed by Grace. Nile and Grace grab stereo suplexes, with Naomi trying to put Asuka out instead. Bianca Belair is in at #10, giving us Natalya, Naomi, Bayley, LeRae, Grace, Asuka, Nile, Chance and Belair.

A double running Blockbuster plants Damage CTRL and Belair hammers at Chance in the corner (even though Chance is barely taller than the turnbuckle). More house is cleaned until Kairi Sane is in at #11 to complete Damage CTRL. Sane comes in with a top rope forearm to Belair and the trio goes after Belair. LeRae sends Sane and Asuka to the apron but doesn't bother to eliminate them, meaning Damage CTRL puts her out instead. Tegan Nox is in at #12 and Natalya has to quickly save her.

A discus lariat hits Grace but Nox tosses Natalya, only to be eliminated by Bayley. Kayden Carter is in at #13 and Sane is sent over the top but she manages to keep her feet from touching in a crazy bit of athleticism. Then she's knocked out a second later, with Asuka being eliminated as well (Bayley is livid). Chelsea Green is in at #14 and is almost eliminated just as fast as she was last year. Green holds on, leaving Belair and Grace to slug it out. They go to the apron, where Belair hits a KOD for the elimination.

Piper Niven is in at #15 and catches Green as she is sent over the top. With Green back in, Niven wrecks Chance as we get a really cool clock showing how long some people have been in. A bunch of people can't manage to get rid of Niven and it's Xia Li in at #16. With a grand total of nothing going on, Zelina Vega is in at #17. Vega manages a tornado DDT on Niven but no one gets tossed. Maxxine Dupri is in at #18 as this match is just death at the moment. Carter is tossed and it's Nia Jax in at #19.

Li and Nile are quickly out and Green goes after Jax, who promptly mauls her. Green is knocked around like a ragdoll but isn't eliminated as Shotzi is in at #20, with Green finally being on the floor but not eliminated. That gives us Naomi, Bayley, Chance, Belair, Green, Niven, Vega, Dupri, Jax and Shotzi. Niven crossbodies Jax down but Jax survives the big group elimination attempt.

Jax eliminates Niven and Chance is tossed out as well. Becky Lynch is in at #21 and that wakes the people up. She goes right after Jax, including the missile dropkick. Green comes back in and gets tossed out as Alba Fyre is in at #22. Fyre cleans some house but doesn't get rid of anyone as Shayna Baszler is in at #23. Fyre plants Jax and it's Valhalla (with antlers) in at #24...but R-Truth comes in to steal her spot. He is promptly tossed out by Jax, but Adam Pearce comes out to say Vahlalla is in...and she's immediately eliminated by Jax.

Michin is in at #25 and immediately goes after Fyre, only to have Jax clean house again. Naomi hits a hanging faceplant to get rid of Fyre and Bayley yells at Cole again. Zoey Stark is in at #26 and missile dropkicks Michin. Stark kicks out Vega, who lands HARD on Fyre. Roxanne Perez (from NXT) is in at #27 and snaps off a running headscissors. She stops to point to the sign though and has to survive Bayley throwing her to the apron. Jax gets rid of Michin, Baslzer and Shotzi to clear out a lot of space.

Jade Cargill is in at #28 and yep that brings them up again. Cargill wastes no time in fireman's carry slamming Jax and then single handedly tossing her out (Becky is STUNNED). Cargill misses a charge into the post and almost everyone is down as NXT's Tiffany Stratton is in at #29. Stratton gets to show off the gymnastics but can't get anyone out as....Liv Morgan is back at #30. Naomi, Bayley, Belair, Lynch, Stark, Perez, Cargill, Stratton and Morgan.

Stark and Perez are both out, leaving everyone to surround Stratton. And then they all pair off instead of going after her. Cargill and Belair hit stereo gorilla presses and then stare each other down to a REALLY big reaction. Bayley and Stratton break that up and the crowd goes back to mild.

Lynch can't Manhandle Slam Cargill, who puts her on top instead. Cargill knocks out Becky and Naomi, leaving Stratton to hold on by Belair's hair in a spot that made me cringe. Bayley kicks them both out and we're down to Bayley, Cargill and Morgan. They all wind up on the apron with Bayley and Morgan getting kicked away. Morgan kicks Cargill in the face and hits an Oblivion to get rid of her, only to be kicked out by Bayley for the win at 1:05:00.

Rating: C+. The last 20 or so minutes made a huge difference here as this was REALLY weak to start. What mattered here was the star power in the last third as it made things that much better. Bayley is still dependable, Cargill looked like an absolute star, Grace had a great showing, Morgan still doesn't feel like a star and Becky was just kind of there for the most part.

On the bad side though, one of the biggest problems with the women's Rumble is there aren't many feuds. You have title matches and little more for the women. That leaves people just having random fights and that doesn't give you much to work with. It's been a problem for these matches since they started and it was still the case here. The last bit saved it, but

they need to find a way to pick things up throughout.

We recap the Smackdown World Title match. Roman Reigns beat LA Knight at Crown Jewel, albeit with help from the Bloodline. The Bloodline also took out AJ Styles back in September, so he wants revenge. Randy Orton is back too and wants the title, leaving Reigns to fight them all at once.

Smackdown World Title: Roman Reigns vs. Randy Orton vs. AJ Styles vs. LA Knight

Reigns is defending and has Paul Heyman with him. All three go after Reigns and stomp him down in the corner without much trouble. Reigns is out on the floor so Knight takes over and sends Styles face first into the announcers' table over and over. Orton comes over and drops Reigns onto the announcers' table before doing the same to Knight. Back in and Orton sends Knight to the floor again, only to get chopped by Styles.

Knight comes back in and gets to take over on everyone but Reigns is back up to send Orton and Styles outside. Reigns fires off clotheslines to Knight in the corner before taking down the returning Styles and Orton. Knight ducks the Superman Punch and hammers on Reigns, including his own jumping clothesline. A DDT plants Orton and the powerslam does the same to Orton.

Knight plants Reigns again but Styles makes an accidental save. Styles' fireman's carry backbreaker hits Knight but bangs up his own knee in the process. The Styles Clash hits Reigns with Knight making the save this time. Styles loads up the Phenomenal Forearm but gets RK0'd down. Another RK0 hits Knight and the Superman Punch is countered into the RK0....but Solo Sikoa pulls the referee out.

Sikoa gives Orton and Knight the Spike (leaving Knight on Orton for what would be a cover if there was a referee) but goes after Styles, only to go crashing through the barricade. Styles is back in for a Phenomenal Forearm and covers all

three at once for two. With nothing else working, Styles grabs a chair and takes Reigns down. It works so well that he does the same thing to Knight but Reigns is up with a spear. Knight plants Reigns and hits the LA Elbow but the BFT is broken up, with Knight being shoved into the ropes to drop Styles. The spear hits Styles to retain at 19:31.

Rating: B-. This was a match where you pretty much knew how the ending was going to go and the question was more about whether Reigns was going to pin Styles or Knight. There was almost no way Reigns was going to lose here, and having the match go on second made it all the more clear. The action was good enough but far from a classic, as this was pretty much just a good version of what you knew it was going to be.

We recap Logan Paul defending the US Title against Kevin Owens. Paul is the loudmouthed champion and Owens doesn't like an outsider being here as the new star. Therefore, after winning a tournament, Owens is ready to fight.

US Title: Kevin Owens vs. Logan Paul

Owens, with a bad hand, is challenging. They're quickly on the floor with Owens sending him into the barricade. Back in and an elbow to the face sets up the backsplash for one as it's all Owens early on. A release German suplex drops Paul again and they're back on the floor, with Owens chopping away. Paul gets smart by sending the bad hand into the post, followed by a high crossbody back inside.

A Kimura starts in on the arm/hand before Paul switches over to an Octopus. With that broken up, Paul uppercuts him down and my goodness his chest is looking terrible. Owens comes back with a heck of a slap and an even harder clothesline drops Paul. Another backsplash hits raised knees but Owens grabs the fisherman's buster onto the knee. Back to back Cannonballs connect and the frog splash connects as well.

Owens' Swanton hits knees but Paul's hits mat, meaning it's

time for a breather on the floor. Back in and the Buckshot Lariat hits Owens and a top rope splash gives Paul two. Paul loads up a superplex but spends too much time yelling about how no one can superplex Owens, allowing Owens to hit the swinging fisherman's superplex. Paul's big punch is cut off by a superkick but the Stunner is blocked.

Paul hits the right hand for two and Paul can't believe the kickout. Cue one of Paul's cronies who has to be ejected, leaving Owens and Paul to hit stereo clotheslines. Cue Grayson Waller and Austin Theory, with the latter slipping Paul the brass knuckles. Owens gets two off a rollup and Owens gets the knuckles away from Paul and knocks him silly for the...DQ as the referee sees the knuckles at 14:02. McAfee: "OH NOW THE REF HAS 20/20?"

Rating: B. I rather like the ending as Owens getting carried away and Paul needing to be saved to keep the title. The other good thing is that Paul gets to stay strong, as his stuff in the ring still looks great. It was a rather good back and forth match and they even found a smart way out of keeping Owens from taking a pin.

Post match Owens lays out Paul again.

Rumble By The Numbers.

Men's Royal Rumble

90 second intervals, Jey Uso is in at #1 and Jimmy Uso is in at #2. Jey knocks him to the apron to start but it's too early for an elimination. Jimmy is back with a knockdown of his own and Grayson Waller is in at #3. Waller talks all the way to the ring and says no one cares about the sibling rivalry. Jey superkicks him off the apron (not an elimination) but gets jumped by Jimmy. Waller and Jimmy beat Jey down and the returning Andrade is in at #4.

Running knees in the corner abound and Carmelo Hayes is in at

#5. Hayes fires off some superkicks and circles around with Andrade and Jey. Waller tries to roll in but gets Codebreakered, setting up the elimination from Hayes. Shinsuke Nakamura is in at #6 and kicks Hayes into the corner as the fans sing Nakamura's song. He fires off a bunch of kicks and it's Santos Escobar in at #7.

Andrade and Escobar quickly knock everyone down and have a staredown, with Andrade not being sure at the hug. Escobar goes for the elimination but gets sent to the apron. Karrion Kross is in at #8 and forms a weird alliance with Jimmy. They don't actually eliminate anyone of course and here is Dominik Mysterio in at #9. The entrances continue to fly by as Carlito it in at #10, giving us Jey, Jimmy, Andrade, Hayes, Nakamura, Escobar, Kross, Dominik and Carlito.

It's time for an apple (the fans react) and the spitting of said apple saves Carlito from Escobar. Back up and Escobar is eliminated but Kross gives Carlito the Final Prayer. Bobby Lashley is in at #11 with some spears and a spinebuster until only Dominik is left standing. Another spar hits Dominik but Kross lets Lashley get in a free shot...which eliminates Carlito instead.

There's a spear to Kross and Lashley dumps him as well. A bunch of people can't get rid of Lashley but here are the AOP for a distraction. They don't actually do anything but Hayes and Nakamura knock Lashley to the apron where Kross gets rid of him. Cue the Street Profits to help with the brawl to the back as Ludwig Kaiser is in at #12.

With nothing going on there, Austin Theory is in at #13. Ataxia hits Hayes but it's not enough for the elimination. Hayes tries to get rid of Hayes as Finn Balor is in at #14. Balor tosses Hayes and joins up with Dominik to stomp Kaiser. Cody Rhodes is in at #15 and this should pick things up a bit. Rhodes tosses Theory and gets into it with Balor as Bronson Reed is in at #16. A double Samoan drop plants Dominik and

Balor before Reed dumps out Andrade. We get the Cody vs. Nakamura showdown with Nakamura hitting a kick to the face and it's Kofi Kingston in at #17.

Cody gets rid of Nakamura and then hammers on Jimmy as Kaiser can't get rid of Kofi. Instead Kofi kicks Kaiser out for some revenge and it's Gunther in at #18. After yelling at Kaiser for being eliminated, Gunther gets inside and chops away. A slam plants Reed but Kofi manages to send Gunther to the apron. Gunther wastes no time in shrugging that off and dumping Kofi, who never had the chance to do anything special.

Ivar is in at #19 (Cole: "He's on a roll in the last month." Ivar is 2-2 in the last month, with losses to Johnny Gargano and Akira Tozawa.) and gets in a showdown with Reed. Bron Breaker is in at #20, giving us Jey, Jimmy, Dominik, Balor, Rhodes, Reed, Gunther, Ivar and Breaker. Things start fast and it's Breaker getting rid of Jimmy and Balor before having a showdown with Gunther (no mention of Breaker beating him in NXT). A gorilla press and spear drop Gunther and it's Omos in at #21.

Omos takes his time getting in and tossed Reed, followed by Breaker getting rid of Ivar. We get the Breaker vs. Omos showdown...and Pat McAfee is in at #22, looking stunned. Breaker and Omos stare at McAfee, who teases eliminating himself, gets back in, and then does eliminate himself. McAfee: "HOW BIG IS THAT THING IN THERE???" Breaker dumps the distracted Omos but gets tossed by Dominik as JD McDonagh is in at #23.

Breaker spears McDonagh down on the floor and it's R-Truth in at #24, throwing McDonagh inside...where Jey knocks him out. Truth gets on the apron for a tag as Gunther sleepers Dominik. For some reason Dominik DOES tag him in and house is cleaned, at least until Gunther kicks Truth in the face. Miz is in at #25 and teams up with Truth for a double hiptoss to Jey. Truth saves Dominik though and Damian Priest is in at #26. Priest

wastes no time in throwing out Truth but only sends Miz to the apron. CM Punk is in at lucky #27 and IT'S CLOBBERIN TIME.

Punk gets to clean some house and eliminates Dominik but gets forearmed by Priest. Ricochet is in at #28 and is quickly sent to the apron by Priest. A springboard high crossbody hits Gunther but Priest takes Ricochet down again. Gunther chops Miz out and Drew McIntyre is in at #29. McIntyre sends Ricochet flying with a belly to belly and clotheslines Jey down.

Priest kicks away at McIntyre, who plants him with a spinebuster. Jey is back up with a superkick to McIntyre and another to send Gunther to the apron. Gunther breaks that up and dumps Jey and it's....Sami Zayn in at #30. That gives us a final grouping of Rhodes, Gunther, Priest, Punk, Ricochet, McIntyre and Zayn.

McIntyre dumps Ricochet out and we're down to six. A parade of secondary finishers puts everyone but Zayn down and there's the Helluva Kick to McIntyre. Zayn gets rid of Priest but gets dumped by McIntyre and we're down to McIntyre, Rhodes, Punk and Gunther.

A Cody Cutter hits Gunther but he clotheslines Rhodes to save himself. McIntyre kicks people down and is the only one standing, including another Claymore to Punk. He yells that it's his time now and is promptly eliminated by Punk to get us down to three.

Gunther dropkicks Punk and Rhodes down before powerbombing Punk. Cody slips out and tries a Cody Cutter but gets sent onto the apron. Cody manages to pull Gunther to the apron and then out, meaning it's Cody vs. Punk. They slug it out until a double clothesline leaves them laying. They slug it out from their knees and then again on their feet. Both finishers are broken up so Cody hits the Bionic Elbow.

Cross Rhodes is broken up again but Punk can't toss him. Punk

points at the sign and walks into Cross Rhodes but Cody can't follow up. A quick GTS plants Cody and they're both down again. Punk hits a Pedigree (McAfee: "If you know, you know.") but another GTS is countered and Cody dumps him for the win at 1:08:20.

Rating: B-. This took its time to get going and had some moments but it never quite got into that next level. Cody going back to Wrestlemania is certainly a choice but it would be nice to have him do something other than going after Reigns. As for the rest of the match, you had Breakker looking like a killer and Dominik getting in some good moments. For the most part though, the match just wasn't all that great with the crowd not being interesting. You can't argue with the final two though and that's what matters most in a match like this. It's not a bad Rumble, but it's certainly not a great one either.

Sign pointing, pyro and highlights take us out.

Overall Rating: B-. For a four match show with the Rumbles taking up almost two and a half hours, there is only so much you can complain about here. I'm still curious to see where things go for Wrestlemania, but Cody winning is kind of deflating. Anyway, it's not an all time classic or anything, but it could have been much, much worse. Wrestlemania season is here and that's all that matters, though they're going to need something to get a big spark going.

Results

Bayley won the Women's Royal Rumble last eliminating Liv Morgan

Roman Reigns b. AJ Styles, Randy Orton, LA Knight – Spear to Styles

Logan Paul b. Kevin Owens via DQ when Owens used brass knuckles

Cody Rhodes won the Men's Royal Rumble last eliminating CM Punk

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