

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2017: He Was Certainly Out Of Nowhere

Royal Rumble 2017

Date: January 29, 2017

Location: Alamodome, San Antonio, Texas

Attendance: 52,020

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga, Tom Phillips

It's kind of amazing how much this show has been forgotten in just about a year. Other than AJ Styles vs. John Cena, I can barely remember a single thing about this show. I know who won the Rumble and who were some of the bigger stars in the match but the rest is kind of a blur, which isn't a good sign for what I'm in for here. Let's get to it.

The aisle is crazy long and would require a cart to bring some of the wrestlers to the ring during the Rumble. There's something cool about that, on both fronts actually.

Kickoff Show: Naomi/Nikki Bella/Becky Lynch vs. Alexa Bliss/Mickie James/Natalya

This would be the "throw all the Smackdown women into one match" match. Oh and dang I forgot how stupid the four person announcers' booth on Smackdown was. It's almost as stupid as having a 50,000 person dome and having a match an hour and a half before the show starts because THE PLACE IS FREAKING EMPTY! Like is anyone going to not watch this show on the Network if there isn't a match going on the two hour pre-show?

This is mainly about Becky vs. James/Bliss and the rest are there because....well because the writers don't know how to write singles matches for the women and still don't do this day. For a secondary story, Natalya and Nikki are feuding because Natalya is jealous so she said that Cena will never marry Nikki. You know those are fighting words.

Nikki and Natalya start things off with Natalya doing You Can't See Me. That means a slap to the face and there are so few people being so quiet that you can hear what the women are saying. Bliss comes in and gets caught with a facebuster for two. It's off to Naomi for half of a double dropkick with Nikki's part not even coming close. Nikki and company hit a triple suplex to send them outside, followed by a dive from Naomi as we take a break.

Back with Becky clotheslining Natalya and hitting a running forearm in the corner. They head outside with Mickie getting in a cheap shot to drop Becky, allowing Natalya to snap a suplex to really take over. Back in and Becky gets driven into the corner again, allowing Bliss to choke a bit. Mickie adds a hard kick to the face as the announcers argue over whether or not cheating is smart.

A Michinoku Driver plants Becky but Natalya can't get Suplex City (Her words. Well Lesnar's words, though JR said it about thirteen years earlier.). Instead it's a double clothesline so Naomi can come in and clean house. The still dumb looking dancing kicks drop Bliss as everything breaks down. A kick to the head sets up the split legged moonsault to give Naomi the pin on Bliss at 9:39.

Rating: C-. The lack of a crowd either in their seats or really interested in this one hurt it a lot but the work wasn't terrible. The women's division had gotten so much better by this point that you could trust them to go out and have a match like this, though the stories need to be stronger. I'm really having an issue caring about Nikki never getting to marry her dream husband and complete her fairy tale story but I'm not exactly the target audience.*

Kickoff Show: Raw Tag Team Titles: Sheamus/Cesaro vs. Anderson and Gallows

Sheamus and Cesaro are defending and there are two referees due to some screwy finishes as of late. The crowd is MUCH better now, making the place look like there's an actual audience for the show. Cesaro dropkicks Anderson at the bell for two and a gutwrench suplex gets the same less than thirty seconds in.

Gallows loads up a cheap shot from the apron but the second referee catches him, making the gimmick actually work. Sheamus grabs a Regal Roll into Cesaro's jumping double stomp for two more but Anderson is back up with a kick to the face to take over. It's off to Gallows, who is quickly kicked down so the champs can take him into the corner. This has been mostly one sided so far but Gallows gets in a backdrop for a breather. Not that the fans seem to care for the most part though.

A big boot knocks Sheamus off the apron and we take a break. Back (after the commercial has been cut from the Network) with Cesaro suplexing Gallows and rolling over to bring Sheamus back in. The ten forearms to the chest have Gallows in trouble and a top rope clothesline gets two. Super White Noise gets the same but Gallows shoves Sheamus away and makes the hot tag to Anderson.

The second referee won't allow some cheating so Swiss Death gives Cesaro two. A 619 and a high crossbody give him the same but Anderson kicks him down again. Sheamus breaks up the Magic Killer and a referee eats a Brogue Kick. The second referee comes in to see Cesaro put Anderson in the Sharpshooter, only to have Gallows break it up with a kick to the face. Everything breaks down again and it's a Magic Killer for Sheamus, followed by a rollup with tights to pin Cesaro at 10:28.

Rating: C+. Nice power fight here with both teams hitting each other rather hard. That's all this needed to be, though I could go for adding a different style in there. Power vs. power isn't going to work all that well in the long term but at least they had a good match here. These title changes didn't really matter though as it was all going to change when the Hardys came back. No one knew that yet though and at least we had something good here.

Kickoff Show: Nia Jax vs. Sasha Banks

Nia injured her a month or so ago and tonight is about revenge. Sasha doesn't have her knee brace on as Nia drives her into the ropes and easily shoves off a headlock. A rope walk springboard goes just as badly as Banks can't get anything going early on. Jax runs her over and we take an early break.

Back with Sasha trying a standing Bank Statement and having it broken up with ease. Jax grabs a Brock Lock and swings Banks around until a rope can be grabbed. Sasha finally avoids a charge to send Jax into the post, followed by the top rope double knees for two. Sasha comes up holding her knee though and the pop up Samoan drop puts her away at 5:13.

Rating: D+. This was just a step above a squash and really only served to keep Nia around. Banks is going to be fine after a loss like this while Nia still doesn't have the big defining win (which would still be the case a year later). There was no need for this to be on pay per view though and it could have easily been done on Raw. That's never a good sign.

And now, a nearly four hour show. I know I say this a lot but I'm almost gassed just watching that Kickoff Show. There's really no need to do it this way, especially when you have the horrible empty stadium for the first match.

Completely standard opening video, though they do play in the cool "Remember the Rumble" tagline to show off a lot of the famous clips. If there's one thing WWE does well, it's look back at their own history. The rest of the matches get some time as well with each one having something to remember as well.

Raw Women's Title: Bayley vs. Charlotte

Charlotte is defending and still has never lost a singles match on pay per view. Bayley gets wrestled down to start as Charlotte grabs a front facelock. The fans seem split here despite giving Bayley a heck of a reaction on her entrance. Charlotte heads outside for no apparent reason, allowing Bayley to grab her by the hair and snap her over the middle rope (basically a Stunner) to take over. A headscissors gets two and it's already time to hit the stalling.

Bayley makes the mistake of going outside and gets kicked into the steps as she doesn't have much of an answer for Charlotte's power game. Back in and Charlotte slams Bayley's face into the mat a few times but makes sure to throw in a quick pose (that's the Flair in her). We hit the chinlock with Charlotte's hair falling over Bayley's face, giving us a rather odd

visual of Bayley as a blonde. A knee drop gets two on Bayley and Charlotte is getting annoyed at Bayley sticking around.

Yet another kickout off a neckbreaker makes the frustration even worse so Charlotte does her figure four necklock into the face plants on the mat. The flips to send Bayley back first into the mat make it even worse as Charlotte is completely dominant so far. Charlotte stops to mock Bayley though and a heck of a slap cuts the champ off. A battle of the chops goes to Charlotte (well duh) but Bayley bounces out of the corner with an armdrag. A springboard crossbody (with a few too many bounces) drops Charlotte again and a jumping spinning Downward Spiral (not bad) does it again.

The top rope elbow (which looked awesome on impact) gets a very close two and you can feel the crowd breathe on the kickout. Charlotte (who might be bleeding from the mouth) kicks the knee out though and the Figure Four goes on. The referee catches her grabbing the ropes though and both women are down. Charlotte is up first but her moonsault only grazes knees to give Bayley two. Bayley goes up but gets shoved off to the floor in a heap. As she gets back in, Natural Selection onto the apron retains the title at 13:01.

Rating: B-. Bayley was fighting here but came up short, which is exactly how her character needs to go. For some reason WWE didn't quite get this and instead put the title on her two weeks later in a nothing Raw match, ignoring the idea of building her up as an underdog. Charlotte was her usual awesome self here and that makes for a fun match, though the future didn't go the way it should have. At least the first match was solid though.

The shark cage is lowered. This might require an explanation.

We recap the Raw World Title match. Roman Reigns had come close to taking the title from Kevin Owens but Chris Jericho interfered to cost Reigns the match. Therefore it's time for a rematch with Jericho in a one man cage (the shark cage) above the ring. Jericho is of course scared of heights so this should be fun. It would be a better idea if they hadn't done it in NXT not too long before this.

Raw World Title: Roman Reigns vs. Kevin Owens

Owens is defending and this is No DQ. Jericho takes his sweet time getting into the cage (as he should) and is still not in even when Reigns comes out. The Canadians try some double teaming and knock Reigns into the cage all, only to have Reigns fight them off (and the fans are really, REALLY not pleased) and send Jericho into the cage to get us going. The cage is raised like a sexy pinata (Jericho's very accurate term for himself) and Owens jumps Reigns from behind.

They waste no time in fighting out to the floor and then into the crowd with Reigns hitting him in the ribs with a metal stand. Back to ringside with Owens being bounced off the German announcers' table but coming back with a whip into the steps. Owens pulls six chairs from underneath the ring and sets up four at ringside, two by two. A monitor shot to the ribs sets up the Cannonball against the barricade and Owens continues to be over like free beer in a frat house.

With Reigns down, Owens sets up two more chairs on top of the four he already had. One more is placed on top but of course the powerbomb and suplex attempts don't work to prevent a broken back. Back in and Reigns sends him shoulder first into the post before loading up a table. That's enough to make the fans cheer Reigns (I'm as shocked as you are) but a Backstabber gives Owens two.

Another Cannonball, with Owens mocking Reigns' spear pose, is countered into a powerbomb. The apron dropkick rocks the champ again as this has been better than I was expecting so far. They're beating each other up quite well and it's pretty entertaining, despite Jericho being a non-factor so far. They head outside with Reigns getting superkicked onto a table, setting up a frog splash from the top to the floor in a big crash.

That's only good for two (well duh) so Owens dedicates a chair shot to Jericho and gets another near fall. A chair is wedged into the corner because wrestlers never learn a thing. Owens scores with a superkick and manages to send Reigns into the chair as I'm not sure what to think. It's not like that's never worked before but it's about as rare as Jericho eating crab cakes and goat's milk.

With that not working, Jericho tosses Owens some brass knuckles but Reigns blocks the Superman Punch. Roman's Superman Punch gets two and a Samoan drop through the chair is good for the same. You would think being driven THROUGH A CHAIR would be a big time match but since this is modern wrestling, something that big is now just a regular move. It's the price you pay for all the big spots and violence.

Roman puts another table in the corner before another Superman Punch gets two. A spear is countered into a Stunner of all things but Reigns kicks out again. We continue the Austin homage with a mudhole stomping and a Cannonball (not so much Austin) as Owens is getting frustrated. That makes him do something dumb, like trying a superplex through that pile of chairs.

Reigns breaks that up and Superman Punches Owens through the pile instead for a very loud crash. A powerbomb puts Reigns through the announcers' table but here's Braun Strowman to beat the heck out of Reigns. Roman is sent into the post, followed by the running powerslam through the table in the corner to retain Owens' title at 23:27.

Rating: B+. This was better than I was expecting and while it feels like a similar ending to Randy Orton vs. John Cena from Royal Rumble 2015, it's still a good way to keep the title on Owens for the time being. They had a very good power brawl and Owens retaining is the right move, especially with the feud with Strowman getting a big boost. Jericho was barely a factor and that's a good thing given that they were about to split in the near future.

To really fill in time, we're doing a countdown of the thirty greatest moments in Rumble history, starting with 30-16 (or 30-15 as Cole puts it). Well kind of as the list is actually 30 facts, which is kind of Rumble By The Numbers.

30. Bret Hart was the first entrant

29. 870 people have entered

28. 3 women have entered and each has eliminated at least one man

27. 23 people have won, meaning 98% of the entrants are losers
26. 4 Rumbles have been in Texas
25. California and Florida have held 5 Rumbles each
24. 507,102 fans have seen the Rumble
23. Rey Mysterio lasted longer than anyone ever at 1:02:12
22. Edge won the Rumble in 7:37
21. Santino Marella was eliminated in 1 second
20. The longest time in a single Rumble without winning is Bob Backlund with 1:01:10
19. HHH has spent the most time in the Rumble with 4:06:08.
18. 46 Hall of Famers have competed
17. 9 Hall of Famers have won
16. Mick Foley entered the Rumble 3 times in 1998

Raw boss Stephanie McMahon mocks Raw underling Mick for Strowman interfering when Smackdown bosses Shane McMahon and Daniel Bryan come in. They roll the tumbler so Sami Zayn can come in and pick his number, which of course takes some time. Before Sami can open his ball, Dean Ambrose comes in searching for churros. He gets a number but is off to take a nap until he's due in the Rumble. After going to a crowd shot of watching this in the arena (erg), Sami gets #8.

Austin Aries joins commentary for the Cruiserweight Title match.

We recap Rich Swann vs. Neville. Swann is the Cruiserweight Champion but Neville has declared himself the King of the Cruiserweights. That's completely accurate and it's time for Swann to take a heck of a beating and give up a title that doesn't belong to him. This is about as obvious of an ending as you're going to get. They throw in some history between the two with Neville mentoring Swann both in Japan and here in America.

That's better than nothing and more than I would expect from a match like this, even if Neville winning is pretty much guaranteed.

Cruiserweight Title: Neville vs. Rich Swann

Neville is challenging and stops himself from doing his usual entrance because the fans don't deserve it. That's a nice touch and makes him feel different instead of the same guy who just happens to be a villain now. Feeling out process to start until Swann flips over Neville and misses a dropkick.

Neville gets sent outside for a dive but is fine enough to drive Swann right into the corner. A missile dropkick sets up a jackknife cover for two and Neville stands on Swann's head. Neville wants to know if this is it and gets crucified for two. Back up and Neville forearms the heck out of Swann for two more and we're off to the chinlock. The comeback is enough to have Neville take him outside for some whips into the barricade.

Back in and Neville comes up the top, diving straight into a superkick to the jaw. That one looked awesome and both guys are down. Another kick to the jaw and a super hurricanrana sets up a Phoenix flip dive to the floor to put Neville in trouble. They head back inside with Swann hammering away before getting two off something like a Warrior splash.

Neville isn't down enough that he can't crotch Swann on top. He also can't hit the superplex but settles for a hard superkick to stagger the champ. Rich's spinning kick to the head gets two as Neville gets his foot on the ropes. Swann again takes too long to get up top, allowing Neville to superplex him into the Rings of Saturn for the tap to make Neville champion at 13:29.

Rating: B-. They were beating the heck out of each other in a better than average match. Instead of having Neville squash him in relatively short order, Swann got in some offense, only to eventually not be good enough to overcome the King of the Cruiserweights. This was entertaining, but Neville is going to need some better challengers.

We recap AJ Styles vs. John Cena. Styles defeated Cena twice in a row

last year, including with one clean pinfall. Then Cena said he wanted to challenge the champion at the Rumble and since he's John Cena and one title shy of tying Ric Flair's record, the match was made.

Smackdown World Title: AJ Styles vs. John Cena

Cena is challenging and has the black shorts on here so you know it's a big night. AJ scores with a kick to the leg so Cena clotheslines him to the apron. Cena gets in a few right hands but charges into a boot in the corner to let AJ take over. Back to back knee drops have Cena in trouble but AJ stops to yell at the crowd. A third knee, this time with a You Can't See Me, misses and Cena is right back with a backdrop.

AJ sticks the landing on an AA though and there's an enziguri to put Cena down again. There's a hurricanrana and Cena doesn't seem to know what to do with Styles. The running seated forearm gives AJ two more but Cena punches him in the face. The Shuffle is broken up though and AJ grabs a wheelbarrow facebuster to put Cena down again. AJ hits the Phenomenal Blitz, only to have Cena hit that hard running clothesline for a breather that he uses when he needs a breather.

Now the Shuffle connects but it's way too early for the AA. AJ grabs a torture rack into a spinning powerbomb for two more and we get a bit of a pause. They're doing a good job here of going with the slower pace to build things up here, which is exactly what they should be doing.

The Phenomenal Forearm misses and it's an AA for two. Another hard running clothesline gives Cena two more but he charges into a Pele to the shoulder. Now the Forearm connects for two more as they're even in the near falls off the finishers. AJ starts firing off the hard kicks to the chest and Cena doesn't seem like he's breathing very well. One too many kicks earns him an electric chair into a faceplant though and Cena is right back into it.

They slug it out with JBL describing AJ as blocking every punch with his face. Apparently that's fine enough to reverse a right hand into the Calf Crusher but of course Cena reverses into the STF to a nice round of applause. At least they respect some wrestling abilities. Somehow AJ reverses that into an STF of his own but Cena powers to his feet. Instead

of an AA though, it's off to a Figure Four on the champ (because we must praise Flair, though it's appropriate here).

AJ pulls himself up though and tries a cross armbreaker, which of course is countered into a powerbomb for two. Cena goes up top for the Fameasser but gets powerbombed out of the air. Now the Styles Clash is good for two as the fans are feeling the near falls (as they should with the match picking WAY up in a hurry). Code Red gives Cena two more, followed by AJ's fireman's carry backbreaker for the same.

Something like a swinging Big Ending (called a cutter by Mauro) gives Cena two more so it's time for the big guns. Cena busts out the super AA.....for two. You can see the look of disbelief on Cena's face and now the fans aren't sure what to think. The Styles Clash gives AJ his own near fall but Cena counters the Phenomenal Forearm into back to back AA's for the pin and the title at 24:01.

Rating: A. This took its time to build up and it's one of the best matches of 2017. Cena using raw power to start but eventually learning what AJ was going to throw at him and adapting made for a great story. He couldn't win with the mega power move either, eventually having to counter AJ to beat him. That builds on their previous matches and it's a classic match as a result.

Cena celebrates. JBL: "Man that was good!" Yeah pretty much. Cena heads into the crowd and hands the title to a Make-A-Wish kid because he's that awesome.

We look at Seth Rollins invading Takeover: San Antonio to call out HHH, who cost him his spot in the Rumble. HHH said Rollins needs to be careful what he wished for. Worry not though as STEPHANIE will be on Raw tomorrow night to deal with Rollins. I'd be terrified too.

Jerry Lawler comes out for commentary on the Rumble.

Back to the Rumble by the Numbers.

15. Only 16 of the 30 possible numbers have won

14. 7 winners are from 1-10

13. 4 have been from 11-20
12. 19 have been from 21-40
11. 27 is the lucky number
10. 1 and 2 have produced 4 winners
9. 1 and 2 have been the final two entrants twice (1995 and 1999)
8. Only one person has won from the same number twice (Batista at #28)
7. Kane has entered the most Royal Rumbles
6. Kane has the most career eliminations
5. Roman Reigns has the most eliminations in one match
4. The World Title has been on the line twice
3. Three men have been runner up twice (Cena, Big Show, HHH)
2. Five men have won twice (Cena, HHH, Hogan, Shawn Michaels, Batista)
1. Only Steve Austin has won three Rumbles

Royal Rumble

Two minutes intervals and it's Big Cass in at #1, meaning Enzo Amore gets to do the full entrance. We're just that lucky I guess but the fans are still eating it up at this point. Since everything is bigger in Texas, it would make sense for Big Cass to win here tonight. We hear about some of the bigger names but Cass is going to toss all of them out because Cass is like HBK in 1995. Chris Jericho is in at #2 as his bad luck in the Rumble draws continue (this is his third time as #2).

Cass tosses him down with a fall away slam but an early Empire Elbow misses. The Walls are broken up and it's Kalisto in at #3 after only ninety seconds. A springboard dropkick staggers Cass and a regular one drops Jericho. Cass can't powerslam Kalisto and it's some kicks to cut Cass down again. Mojo Rawley is in at #4 as we're not even three minutes and fifteen seconds in yet. Corey: "Smackdown Live's resident blithering

idiot." Lawler: "That's an insult to blithering idiots".

Cass takes Rawley into the corner while the other two are down on the apron. Jericho breaks four hours in the Rumble to give him the all time record as Jack Gallagher is in at #5. The length of the aisle really becomes an issue here as Jack takes forever to get to the ring. Once there though he cleans house with the umbrella, including a low blow to a posing Jericho. One heck of a toss sends Kalisto to the mat and it's Mark Henry in at #6.

Everyone is down when his music hits but Gallagher has enough time to get up and stomp on Jericho by the time he gets there. Gallagher's headbutt just annoys Mark so he tosses Jack through the ropes (not an elimination). Jack does his Mary Poppins dive with the umbrella and is promptly eliminated. Braun Strowman is in at #7, taking twenty five seconds from the start of his music to get to the ring. Jericho hides on the floor (Jericho: "HE'S HUGE!") as Strowman gets rid of Mojo, Cass, Kalisto and Henry, the latter after a battle of the giants.

Sami Zayn is in at #8 and is stupid enough to charge into the ring and slug away as fast as he can. Sami stops a charge with a boot but tries a suplex for some reason. Strowman misses a charge into the post but comes right back with a running splash in the corner as Big Show is #9 (to a VERY strong reaction, oddly enough).

We get the big, long walk to the ring where Sami is down in the corner and Jericho is still on the floor. Strowman clotheslines Show down without much effort but a chokeslam cuts him down. Jericho picks now to come back in and is promptly punched down, leaving the giants to lift each other up for failed slam attempts. Strowman manages to muscle Show out though and is the only one standing. The debuting Tye Dillinger is #10 (in the perfect (ten) entrance), giving us Jericho, Strowman, Zayn and Dillinger. Tye goes straight at Strowman with forearms and left hands as Sami gets up to help him slug away at the giant.

They get suplexed down without much effort though and it's James Ellsworth in at #11. He and Carmella run to the ring (in a relationship that was never explained) but don't get in, allowing Tye and Sami to pull

Strowman to the apron. Dean Ambrose is in at #12 and tricks Ellsworth into charging in on his own where Strowman eliminates him in all of ten seconds. That's better than I was expecting. Dean gets in but can't do much with Strowman (well duh) but Tye and Sami get back up to help Dean out. That earns them all running clotheslines in the corner and it's Baron Corbin in at #13.

That means four on one on Strowman, who shrugs them all away. Strowman dumps Tye but Sami grabs him by the beard for a breather. A Helluva Kick rocks Strowman and Corbin gets rid of the monster after a star making performance. Dean hits a quick Dirty Deeds on Corbin but doesn't try to eliminate him. Dean never was the smartest guy in the world.

Kofi Kingston is in at #14 and the countdown is on to the cool save. Kofi gets knocked into the ropes and Corbin does his slide underneath the ropes into a clothesline on Dean. The Miz is in at #15 (thankfully with Maryse), giving us Jericho (STILL on the floor), Sami, Ambrose, Corbin and Miz at the moment.

A Skull Crushing Finale drops Dean but Miz doesn't go for the elimination. Deep Six cuts Miz off as the crowd oddly dies for a bit. For no logical reason, Kofi climbs to the top of the post but gets knocked down onto his chest. He still manages to hang on though and scores with Trouble in Paradise on Corbin. Sheamus is in at #16 and it's time for some powerslams. Miz backs away from Sheamus but gets caught in the ten forearms to the chest. Jericho gets back up and is promptly Brogue Kicked down.

Big E. is in at #17 and it's a quick abdominal stretch on Miz, allowing for some spanking. If that's what he's into I guess. The ring is getting too full and Rusev (with a broken nose) makes it even worse at #18. Right hands have Dean in trouble but no one is seriously close to being eliminated.

Sheamus gets in a hard knee on Miz and it's Cesaro in at #19. It's an early Swing to Miz and a second to Sami. Jerry: "Use him as a weapon!" Ambrose and Kofi are swung as well, followed by Big E. and Corbin but Rusev saves Sheamus from the same fate for some reason. You might notice

a lot of names being swung and that's because there are WAY too many people in the ring.

Xavier Woods is in at #20, giving us Jericho, Zayn, Ambrose, Corbin, Kingston, Miz, Sheamus, Big E. Rusev, Cesaro and Woods. We're two thirds of the way into the match and over half of the people are still in. New Day beats Sheamus up and Woods has to save Kofi from an elimination at Miz's hands. A pair of boots rock Miz but he's not going anywhere yet. Bray Wyatt, with the lights going out, is in at #21 and the Fireflies coming out during the match is a cool visual.

Miz gets the release Rock Bottom and house is cleaned until Woods stares Wyatt down in a call back to Woods being terrified of Bray. Woods is sent to the apron and Kofi is put there next to him. Big E. saves his buddies from Cesaro and Sheamus as Apollo Crews is in at #22. Crews' standing moonsault hits Miz as this is looking like a regular battle royal rather than the Rumble. Big E. pulls Woods and Kofi back inside but Sheamus and Cesaro get rid of all three of them at once to let the ring breathe a bit. Sheamus tries to dump Cesaro but Jericho runs in to get rid of both of them. Well the ring is certainly emptier in a hurry.

Randy Orton (of the Wyatt Family because reasons) is in at #23 with a quick RK0 to Corbin and Rusev. Sami goes up top for some reason and dives right into another RK0. Dolph Ziggler is in at #24 and superkicks abound. The fans are begging for Goldberg to come in and get rid of some of these people but have to settle for Luke Harper at #25. We have five spots left and Goldberg, Undertaker and Brock Lesnar still to go. Harper gets rid of Crews but stops for a staredown with Orton. Wyatt has to play peacekeeper until Harper clotheslines Bray down. Orton breaks up Sister Abigail on Bray with an RK0 as the ring is too full again.

Brock Lesnar is in at #26 and now we can get rid of some people. Ziggler and Ambrose are tossed with ease and it's Suplex/F5 City. Everyone is down and the fans want Goldberg at #27. Instead it's Enzo Amore in at #27 and I'll let you figure out what happens. Graves: "THIS MAY BE THE GREATEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE!!!" Brock throws some suplexes until Goldberg is in at #28 for the big showdown. A spear and a clothesline get rid of Lesnar in all of fifteen seconds, stunning both the crowd and commentary

at once. Sami eats a Jackhammer and Orton/Wyatt take a double spear.

Goldberg is the only man standing and it's Undertaker in at #29 to a ROAR. Thankfully he appears in the ring instead of doing the ridiculously long walk down the ramp. Cole: "THIS IS A MOMENT!" Well those are what matter more than anything else. Corbin and Rusev break up the showdown and are promptly eliminated. A spear takes Undertaker down but Goldberg turns his attention to eliminate Harper, allowing Undertaker to dump him. Undertaker chokeslams a few people and it's Roman Reigns at #30 (imagine the booing) to give us Jericho, Sami, Miz, Wyatt, Orton, Undertaker and Reigns.

That means another staredown and Reigns wins the slugout. The fans are LIVID and call this BS until Undertaker stops the Superman Punch with a chokeslam. Undertaker dumps Miz and Zayn like they're nothing but takes too long calling for a Tombstone, allowing Reigns to dump him. That earns Reigns a glare to set up the Wrestlemania main event.

Jericho is dead so Reigns tosses him without much effort, giving Jericho the most meaningless hour run in Rumble history. Reigns is left alone with Orton and Wyatt with the double teaming starting in short order. The hanging DDT plants Reigns but Superman Punches get Roman out of trouble. Wyatt is eliminated but it's an RKO and a clothesline to send Orton to Wrestlemania at 1:02:08.

Rating: D. And that's being pretty generous. There are tons of problems here, but we'll start with all the midcarders who were around forever and did nothing. Here are some of the people who weren't going to win but were in the match for at least twenty minutes each:

Sami Zayn (47:12)

Dean Ambrose (26:55)

Baron Corbin (32:39)

Miz (32:44)

Rusev (22:31)

Those five names combined for one elimination. That's a crazy amount of time to basically do nothing. If they're not going to be factors (and none of them were as they were almost all glorified cannon fodder), don't leave them out there go clog up the ring. It doesn't do Sami any good to be out there for forty five minutes and do nothing, just like it doesn't help Miz to be there for half an hour so people can beat on him. Jericho was a potential winner and stayed in there over an hour (spending a lot of it on the floor) but what good is an hour stay if he's tossed out like he's nothing after a mere two eliminations?

That brings us to the second problem: the three big names. This match was built around Goldberg, Brock Lesnar and Undertaker (the three of them and Cena are dead center on the post) and they combined to get rid of TEN people (over a third of the eliminations) despite being in the match for less time combined than any of the five names mentioned above. None of them made the final four but they cleared the way for the grouping. That's some really bad planning and a lack of drama, especially when it makes everyone left look like afterthoughts. Let one of them be there as a dragon for the winner to slay at the very least.

Throw in a lack of meaningful surprises (Reigns was the only name of value not announced in advance) and no nostalgia to be seen (but we needed Apollo Crews and Dolph Ziggler to combine for ten minutes in the ring and not get rid of anyone) and there was very little to care about for the biggest part of the Rumble. Strowman stuff was fun, but after him there was a FIFTEEN MINUTE stretch with no eliminations. This was a terribly planned out Rumble and managed to turn one of the most entertaining matches of the year into something incredibly boring.

Overall Rating: C+. It says a lot when the Royal Rumble is the only bad thing on the show. Other than that, the worst match is....I guess the women's match? This show was rather awesome but the Rumble itself was such a mess that it brings the rest of the show way down. This was a good show that could have been great and I have no idea how they thought that was the right idea with the Rumble. That should usually be the most important thing on the show but it felt like something they threw together here, which really misses the point. Fix the Rumble and it's a classic. As it is, it's just good.

Ratings Comparison

Naomi/Nikki Bella/Becky Lynch vs. Alexa Bliss/Mickie James/Natalya

Original: C

Redo: C-

Sheamus and Cesaro vs. Anderson and Gallows

Original: D+

Redo: C+

Nia Jax vs. Sasha Banks

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Bayley vs. Charlotte Flair

Original: C+

Redo: B-

Kevin Owens vs. Roman Reigns

Original: B

Redo: B+

Rich Swann vs. Neville

Original: C+

Redo: B-

John Cena vs. AJ Styles

Original: A-

Redo: A

Royal Rumble

Original: C+

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: B+

Redo: C+

That Rumble rating is ridiculous. Most of the rest of the matches are in the same ballpark though and that's a good thing.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/01/29/royal-rumble-2017-i-can-go-with-that/>

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