

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2018: I've Never Done This Before

Royal Rumble 2018

Date: January 28, 2018

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 17,629

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

It's hard to believe that a year has passed since this show as I can barely remember most of the card. This show features the first ever all women's Royal Rumble, which really is quite the milestone. Now of course they had to bring in a bunch of legends/former wrestlers who aren't legends but are called such to fill in the lineup, but there are worse things to do. Let's get to it.

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

They aren't the Lucha House Party yet but they're the Lucha House Party. As usual, the arena is still mostly empty because we need to be having a match an hour and a half before the show starts. Kalisto and Gulak start things off with a weak POWERPOINT chant annoying Drew. The announcers talk about the upcoming 205 Live General Manager as Kalisto twists the knee around into something like a reverse Figure Four. Gulak rolls out so it's Metalik and Gallagher (in his suit of course) coming in instead.

A quick takedown sends Gallagher outside where he insists a fan not boo him. TJP comes in and that earns him a triple dab from the House Party. We settle down to TJP and Dorado exchanging wristlocks until Kalisto comes in for a headlock. The pace picks up again but this time it's Gulak coming in and flying over the top to the floor. All three luchadors get on the top and it's a triple moonsault to the floor to pop the dozens of fans in attendance.

Back from a break with TJP dropkicking Dorado out of the air so the heat

segment can begin. Gallagher hits a surfboard double stomp on the knees and it's off to a leg crank. Gulak stomps away and it's back to TJP to look annoyed at Dorado for not staying down. Instead it's Gallagher going to the middle rope and looking terrified, allowing Dorado to roll away. After a quick lecture, Gulak comes in as Metalik gets the hot tag to pick up the pace. The rope walk elbow gets two as everything breaks down. The double Golden Rewind sets up a big double dive from Metalik for two on Gulak. A quick Salida Del Sol finishes TJP at 13:13.

Rating: C. For the life of me I don't get the point in having these matches this early. There's no one there and while the action was fine, it's not like there's anyone to react to them. They had a nice match here though with the dives taking them wherever they wanted to go. 205 Live was still figuring out a bunch of things but the match worked well enough because people who can fly around are always going to be worth a look.

The crowd has filled in now.

Kickoff Show: Luke Gallows/Karl Anderson vs Revival

What a lack of a difference a year makes. Revival is fresh off getting beaten up by a bunch of legends Dawson chops at Anderson in the corner until a dropkick gets him out of trouble. Dawson makes a tag from the floor (not sure if you can do that) and the distraction lets him rake Gallows' eyes, though it doesn't really do much. The threat of a right hand sends Revival outside and we take a break. Back with Dawson snapping Anderson's knee over the middle rope to give the Revival a target.

Anderson gets double teamed in the corner as the announcers ignore the match to talk about Brock Lesnar. The leglocking begins so Anderson kicks him square in the jaw for the break. That's always going to work but it's not enough to get the hot tag off to Gallows. Another kick away allows the tag to Gallows so the pace can pick up. House is cleaned but the Magic Killer is broken up as Anderson comes back in for some reason. Anderson is fine enough to hit a kick to the head in the corner, only to have a chop block finish Anderson at 9:14.

Rating: C. Another match that only served as filler for the sake of filling time, which is one of the most annoying things you can have. It's

a match that didn't need to exist and only served to burn off a little more of the crowd's energy before we get to the matches that actually matter. The match was fine, though just another match that didn't serve much of a purpose.

Kickoff Show: US Title: Bobby Roode vs. Mojo Rawley

Open challenge it seems. Roode is defending, having won the title less than two weeks ago. Before the match, Roode talks about winning the title and being the Glorious One. Rawley plants him with a shoulder but Roode is right back with a hard clothesline. A Russian legsweep gets two but it's way too early for a Glorious DDT. Instead Rawley sends him outside and into the barricade for two as we take a break. Back with Roode still in trouble as Rawley drives knees into the ribs.

We hit the chinlock until Roode belly to back suplexes his way to freedom. The Blockbuster is countered but Roode slips off and grabs a neckbreaker for two more. Now the Blockbuster gets two but the Glorious DDT is broken up again. A spinebuster gives Rawley two and he sends Roode shoulder first into the post. The running right hand is blocked with a boot though and the (not very) Glorious DDT retains the title at 7:37.

Rating: D+. I for one am very glad that we had to sit through this as well, with Roode barely breaking a sweat to retain the title in a match that was never in doubt. Roode isn't exactly thrilling as a face but even worse is the fact that he got stuck with the US Title of Death, which has hurt just about everyone it's touched for a long time now.

The opening video talks about the opportunity for all, both in the Royal Rumbles and in the triple threat. Thankfully the rest of the card gets some time as well, even if Brock Lesnar still looms over everyone.

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

Owens and Zayn are challenging in a handicap match as part of the Daniel Bryan/Shane McMahon love/hate Owens/Zayn story which was more about Shane than anyone else. I miss Sami's heel stuff as he really is someone you want to see get punched in the face. Owens lets Sami start but he tags right back out. It's another tag a few seconds later as they're clearly

filling in time here. That's not a complaint as there's only so much that can be realistically done in a match like this.

AJ takes Owens down without much effort so Kevin slides to the floor and tags Sami in from the floor to a rather nice reaction. Sami headlocks AJ for little avail as Saxton GOES OFF on Graves in the most emotional outburst I've ever heard from him. A cheap shot lets Owens take over on AJ with a hard whip into the corner getting two. They head outside (Owens: "We'll play outside!") with AJ being whipped ribs first into the barricade.

Back in and Sami grabs a quickly broken chinlock, allowing AJ to come back up slugging away at Owens. A missed Cannonball in the corner bangs up Owens' knee to put him down for a bit, allowing AJ to pull Sami off the top for a breather. Owens tries to come back in but can't do much on the knee, meaning it's back to Sami who charges into a boot in the corner.

The moonsault into the reverse DDT plants Sami but Owens is back up again. This time he throws AJ out of the corner but Styles catches Sami in a hurricanrana to send him outside. AJ grabs the Calf Crusher on Owens until Sami dives in for save. Owens, with his knee fine in a hurry, misses a charge into the post but is still able to superkick AJ into the Blue Thunder Bomb for a close two. Not exactly Sweet Chin Music into the Pedigree in the Cell but not bad. Important note: Sami had pinned AJ with the Blue Thunder Bomb earlier in the week, so the move was suddenly a threat. The little things like that can go a long way.

AJ slips out of a superplex attempt and scores with the Phenomenal Forearm to Sami as Owens makes a save. Sami dives over to Owens for a tag and gets sent outside, leaving Owens' Pop Up Powerbomb to be countered into a rollup to retain AJ's title at 15:50. The replay shows that Sami might not have actually tagged, meaning AJ pinned the wrong man.

Rating: C+. This was only going to be so good as you can only make AJ be so much of an underdog before he wins. Owens and Zayn are a great heel act but they just lost almost clean to one guy. Yeah it's AJ Styles, but that's not exactly the best way to present them. It doesn't help that

it's just part of a story involving Shane McMahon as a screwy boss, but you know we're not escaping him anymore.

Wrestlemania ad. I forgot how sick I got of that song.

Sami and Kevin complain to Shane about what happened and he really doesn't care.

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

Gable and Benjamin are challenging and this is 2/3 falls. Before the match, the Usos yell a lot about this being their house and how they're going to win in the Uso Penitentiary. Shelton shoulders Jey down to start and Jey seems rather pleased. Gable comes in but a blind tag lets Jey come in and break up Rolling Chaos Theory. The challengers take a break on the floor before a chop block takes Jimmy's knee out.

Shelton hits one of his own and it's time to really work the knee over with a Robinsdale Crunch into a regular leglock. Some stereo running knees to the face drop Jimmy again and the charge continues to knock Jey off the apron as a bonus. Since WWE tends to do the same things over and over, the hot tag comes through a few seconds alter, allowing Jey to speed things up and hit a big dive to the floor.

Back in and a running hip attack in the corner looks to set up the Superfly Splash but Gable is up just in time. Some rollups get two as Shelton comes back in to load up a powerbomb. Chad has to dropkick Jimmy down instead though, leaving Shelton to powerbomb Jey into Jimmy instead. A good looking moonsault to the floor drops both Usos, though it's not exactly enough to wake the fans up.

The Usos are right back in with superkicks into the Superfly Splash for a very near fall for two on Gable. Jimmy superkicks Shelton and it's both Usos firing off even more superkicks. A double superkick finishes Gable for the first fall at 12:08. The delay lets Shelton come in and take Jimmy down, leaving Jey to take a powerbomb/apron clothesline from the apron to the floor. Back in and...Jimmy small packages Benjamin for the pin at 13:49.

Rating: D+. The action wasn't bad but what in the world was the point of the 2/3 falls stipulation? This was a watchable match but it wasn't anything more than and the fans really didn't care. I'm not sure what they were going for here and given that the whole show went over four hours, this really could have been cut to shave off nearly twenty minutes total.

Rumble By The Numbers. That never gets old.

Jerry Lawler comes out for commentary.

Men's Royal Rumble

90 second intervals here, which has hit and miss results. Rusev is in at #1 and Finn Balor is in at #2. Aiden English does Rusev's intro to a very, very strong reaction. You knew Philadelphia would be a Rusev Day town. Rusev wastes no time in trying to dumb Balor but has to take him down for an elbow instead. The running spinwheel kick cuts Balor off again and it's Rhyno in at #3. Makes sense in the ECW Arena and I could go for Lawler making fun of ECW forever. Rhyno starts cleaning house and it's already time for the ECW chants. Clotheslines abound until Rusev spinwheel kicks Rhyno down as well.

Baron Corbin is in at #4 because I couldn't even avoid him back then. Corbin cleans a bit of the house and catches a charging Rhyno with Deep Six. That's enough to toss Rhyno but Balor dumps Corbin a few seconds later to get us back to two. Corbin isn't cool with that and pulls Balor to the floor (not eliminated) for a whip into the barricade. Rusev takes End of Days and everyone is down. Heath Slater is in at #5 and gets dropped on the ramp to put everyone down again.

Elias, with guitar of course, is in at #6 and since everyone is down, let's have a song! See, now this makes some sense and is a proper way to fill in some time and keep things fresh. After a kick to Slater on the way down the ramp, Elias confirms that the people do indeed want to walk with Elias. You always have to make sure of course. The song is about spitting in the face of the Rocky Statue (T00 FAR!) but the countdown clock cuts him off and it's Andrade Cien Almas (NXT Champion with Zelina Vega) in at #7. Now that's a nice move and having it happen the night

after he won a classic match makes it even better.

Almas wastes no time in hitting the running knees in the corner but the hammerlock DDT is broken up. Bray Wyatt is in at #8 and walks rather to the ring rather quickly. Before he gets in, he beats Slater up on the floor and sends him into the barricade, meaning Slater still hasn't gotten in yet. Balor gets up and saves Elias from Sister Abigail but gets knocked down as it's all Wyatt. Big E. is in at #9 but first, we need to have some pancakes. A single belly to belly drops Wyatt, only to have Rusev pop up with a superkick to Big E.

Tye Dillinger somehow gets #10 again...but hang on a second as Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens jumps him from behind so Sami can take his spot (while knocking Slater down again to continue the running gag). That gives us Rusev, Balor, Slater (on the floor), Elias, Almas, Wyatt, Big E. and Zayn. Nothing of note happens until Sheamus is in at #11 and he even throws Slater inside...and gets clotheslined out just as fast. Sheamus' shocked face is rather good, though the fans aren't happy when Wyatt eliminates Slater a few seconds later. Everyone is down again until Xavier Woods is in at #12 so 2/3 of New Day can start to clean house, thereby waking the crowd up a bit.

The fans get way into the countdown as Apollo Crews is in at #13, which should kill the crowd all over again. I'm not sure why they're so quiet here but maybe they're waiting for the big finish instead. Again not much happens and it's Shinsuke Nakamura at #14 to fill up the ring even more. The fans are into Nakamura as he starts cleaning house, including the running knee in the corner to get rid of Zayn for old times' sake.

Cesaro is in at #15 and gets to clean house as the fans get behind Rusev. They're quite fickle in Philadelphia. Kofi Kingston is in at #16 and the New Day is at full strength. Apollo nearly gorilla presses Cesaro out but gets sent to the apron himself, allowing Cesaro to uppercut him out. Jinder Mahal is in at #17 because we're just that lucky. Woods dropkicks him into the corner but gets knocked off the top for the elimination. We didn't even get anything from the full New Day in the whole thing?

Mahal gets rid of Big E. as well and it's Seth Rollins in at #18 to a

nice reaction. Rollins monkey flips Cesaro out as at least they're keeping the eliminations flowing. Mahal goes to dump Kofi but Woods is still on the floor, meaning Kofi can land on him instead of the floor. Big E. offers a plate of pancakes for the other foot and a nice case of hopping lets Kofi get back in, complete with Big E. and Woods launching him back in. Trouble in Paradise eliminates Mahal and it's time to cover him in pancakes. With the celebration rolling, Almas hits Kofi with the hammerlock DDT to get rid of Kofi.

Woken Matt Hardy is in at #19 (King: "Oh brother.") and he goes straight for Elias with the rams into the corner. Matt and Bray get together and eliminate Rusev, much to the fans' annoyance. That's it for the teamwork as they slug it out and then eliminate each other to really clear the ring a bit. John Cena is in at #20, giving us Balor, Elias, Almas, Nakamura, Rollins and Cena. The other five are waiting for Cena and stomp him down, because they're rather smart. They don't go for the elimination though, because their intelligence is short sighted.

Cena dumps Elias (because Cena always ruins Elias' night) and the Hurricane is in at #21, much to Cena's shock. The Hurri-chokeslam is easily countered into an AA to get rid of Hurricane, who is shocked as well. Aiden English is in at #22 but the fans would rather argue about Cena. Adam Cole, with bad ribs, is in at #23 and you know these fans are going to like him. Balor (hey he's still in this) eliminates English and it's Randy Orton in at #24. Cena shrugs off an RKO attempt so Almas takes it instead and gets thrown out as the amount of entrants stays at a nice pace.

Titus O'Neil is in at #25 but no one seems worried about him. At least they know their history. Titus does actually beat up Nakamura in the corner as Cena and Orton have their contractually obligated fight until Intercontinental Champion The Miz is in at #26. That means house can be cleaned, including the YES Kicks to Rollins and Cena. A Skull Crushing Finale keeps Cena down but Rollins superkicks Miz.

Rey Mysterio makes a surprise appearance at lucky #27, marking his first appearance with the company since the night after Wrestlemania XXX. The pace gets to pick up and Cole is eliminated off a headscissors. Miz eats

a 619 and it's Roman Reigns in at #28 to tick the fans off in a bad way. Almost everyone gets a right hand until it's a showdown with Miz, who took Reigns' Intercontinental Title on Raw earlier in the week.

Reigns gets rid of Titus but the Miztourage saves Miz, who takes the Stomp from Rollins for the mini Shield reunion. A DoubleBomb onto the Miztourage gets rid of Miz...and Reigns throws Rollins out, though he seems to understand. Goldust of all people is in at #29 and scores with some uppercuts.

Dolph Ziggler is in at #30 (Cole: "I thought he retired or something!") This was after Ziggler vacated the US Title and walked out without ever mentioning what he was doing. And now he's right back, apparently saying that the US Title means nothing. Anyway the final group is Balor, Nakamura, Cena, Orton, Mysterio, Reigns, Goldust and Ziggler. Cena tries an AA on Ziggler, who flips out and lands on his leg, which probably should have counted as full on impact. Goldust scores with the snap powerslam but Ziggler easily puts him out with a superkick.

Some tuning up the band takes too long though and Ziggler is knocked to the apron so Balor can knock him out. They vacated the title to give Ziggler a two minute cameo. Well done indeed. We're down to six and that's a CRAZY deep field, with Nakamura being the least successful in WWE. Balor takes an AA and it's a 619 to Reigns, followed by an RKO to Nakamura (Lawler: "COVER HIM! COVER HIM! Oh wait...").

Reigns gets up with a Superman Punch to Orton for an elimination but it's Mysterio with a double 619 to Reigns and Cena. Balor breaks up a springboard though and Mysterio is out to leave us with four. Everyone is down in a corner until it's Cena vs. Nakamura and Reigns vs. Balor. Nakamura and Balor are knocked down so it's a Reigns vs. Cena showdown but nothing happens before the other two are right back up. Nakamura's running knee in the corner rocks Balor but he gets back in, only to get kicked square in the head.

Reigns is back up for a save this time and NOW we get Reigns vs. Cena for the big showdown. The slugout goes to Reigns but Balor gets up and starts firing off Sling Blades. Kinshasa is cut off with a running double stomp

from Balor, only to have Cena pop up and throw Balor out to get us down to three. A Superman Punch puts Nakamura down but he's right back up to kick Cena to the apron. Another knee sends Cena to the floor and we're down to Nakamura vs. Reigns. I think you know who the fans are behind here.

They slug it out in the middle and it's a Superman Punch to put Nakamura in trouble. Nakamura is sent to the apron but comes back with a triangle choke over the ropes. That's rather stupid, though it's also broken up with a powerbomb. The spear is cut off by a kick to the face and the middle rope knee to the face drops Reigns. Kinshasa gets blocked by a tackle to the face (called a spear) but the second attempt works just fine. Reigns is out on his feet and Nakamura tosses him out for the win at 1:05:29.

Rating: B-. This is one where you're going to have to think about things for a bit. First and foremost, the winner is a fine choice. Nakamura hadn't broken through yet and this is the kind of win that can help him do that (it didn't, but it could have). Second, the last fifteen minutes or so with the final group was great stuff and full of drama as you could see anyone winning.

The problem is everything else, which isn't terrible but it's also not too great. The first part barely meant anything with just Balor being there from the beginning until the end. There were a few nice surprises and it doesn't drag terribly or anything, but you really could skip about the first half hour and not miss much. It's a completely watchable Rumble but it's in the middle of the pack at best.

Post match Nakamura (or Shin as Cole keeps calling him because WWE likes to make Cole sound like an idiot) picks AJ Styles for Wrestlemania to really pop the crowd. Sounds awesome to me and for the most part, it was.

Next year's Rumble is in Phoenix.

The bosses of the show trade bragging barbs. Watching a year later, I can't believe how stupid these look now. WWE really thinks that we care about these stupid battling brand arguments. I have no idea why, but but that's been their narrative for years. Stephanie says that no matter who

wins the Women's Royal Rumble, everyone will be surprised. That's some nice foreshadowing.

We look at the KFC Colonel Sanders Rumble, with Ric Flair reenacting the 1992 Royal Rumble to win the whole thing. I still think this is some fever dream that they managed to record.

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

Jordan and Rollins are defending after winning the belts on Christmas night. It's pretty clear that Jordan is filling in for the injured Dean Ambrose and that's not a bad thing. Rollins and Cesaro start things off with Rollins taking over off a flying mare (you don't see that one very often). It's off to Sheamus but a quick Cesaro distraction prevents Jordan from coming in, meaning Rollins is driven back into the corner.

An enziguri gets Rollins a breather as the crowd is eerily silent. Cesaro breaks up the hot tag attempt to Jordan and sends him into the post, leaving Rollins to hit a suicide dive on both challengers. The medics are out checking on Jordan, though that might be making sure he doesn't fall asleep. Cesaro grabs a chinlock, which is the last thing this match could possibly need. Rollins fights up and tries the springboard but gets clotheslined down by Cesaro.

A Demolition Decapitator and a double backbreaker give the Bar two each and Rollins is in big trouble. Sheamus misses a charge into the post though, giving Rollins a breather as Jordan is STILL down. Rollins gets the Blockbuster on Cesaro, followed by the Falcon Arrow for two. Super White Noise is broken up and Jordan is finally on the apron for a tag. He immediately grabs his head though and tags himself out. That's fine with the Bar, as the spike White Noise gets the titles back at 12:50.

Rating: D. As you probably guessed, this was Jordan's last "match". I know he wasn't the most thrilling guy in the world, but he was getting the hang of things until his neck just gave out on him and there was no coming back. At least he got a nice run and there's a very real chance that he could get back in the ring one day. It's not exactly fair to call the match bad...but it was really quite bad and the fans were just gone in a terrible way.

Here's what's coming to the Network.

We recap the Universal Title match. Brock Lesnar is a monster, two other monsters are challenging for his title, Braun Strowman is really strong and broke some stuff.

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

Lesnar is defending. Braun starts fast with running splashes in the corner and a running dropkick to Brock, followed by a knee to his head. Brock then UNLOADS on Strowman with right hands which look a lot like receipts from a former UFC Heavyweight Champion rather than working punches. Lesnar shouts something that sounds like SLOW DOWN as Kane gets back up. Brock grabs a chair which is knocked into his face, followed by a toss out to the floor.

Some shots with the steps put Lesnar and Kane down and it's time for a pair of tables inside. With one set up in the corner, Strowman chokeslams Kane for two with Lesnar making the save. Three rolling German suplexes...don't do much to Strowman, who powerslams Lesnar through a table for two. Kane shoulders Strowman through the other table in the corner but again, Strowman is right up. A German suplex sends Lesnar outside but he's fine enough to hit an F5 to send Strowman through the announcers' table.

With that not being enough, Lesnar turns the other announcers' table onto Strowman, literally burying him. Another F5 sends Kane through the other announcers' table, because we need three of them at ringside. Strowman is back up, because of course he is, and Lesnar isn't sure what to do. Back in and Lesnar takes two powerslams, only to have Kane make the save with some chair shots to Strowman. Lesnar pops up, sends both of them into each other, and F5's Kane onto the chair to retain at 11:00.

Rating: D. There were some good power spots in there but this match didn't need to be on the card either. Lesnar won another match that didn't do anything for him and then walked off with the title for two and a half months, which was the case for FAR too long. I get the idea of keeping Strowman warm but they're taking way too long to get anywhere.

We recap the Women's Royal Rumble. Stephanie McMahon announced that we needed one and everyone nodded along because that's how WWE works.

Women's Royal Rumble

90 second intervals, Maria Menunos is guest ring announcer and Stephanie is on commentary. As she comes to the ring, the announcers are all over themselves to suck up to her, with lines like "she's a trailblazer but would never admit it". Alexa Bliss and Charlotte (reigning Women's Champions) are sitting at ringside. Sasha Banks is in at #1 and pre-Man Becky Lynch is in at #2 for a feeling out process to start. Neither can grab a submission hold and it's a double clothesline, allowing Sarah Logan to come in at #3 and pick the bones.

She goes after Becky first but stops to point at the sign, meaning Becky is staying in. A headbutt drops Banks so everyone stands around until it's Mandy Rose in at #4. The near eliminations abound as Stephanie gets into full on "person having an unnatural conversation" mode with Corey, making her rather annoying in her own right. Lita is in at #5 (in a #timesup shirt) to really fire the fans up for the first time in awhile.

Sasha and Becky stare her down and we get the slugout, which is rather cool when you consider how much of an inspiration she and Trish Stratus were on the current generation. Stephanie talks about how she and Lita were close over the years...and actually mentions CHYNA, which I didn't think was allowed. Well I guess it's cool if you're Stephanie. Mandy is sent to the apron and hits a knee to Lita, who eliminates her without much effort. Kairi Sane is in at #6 and it's a double spear to Lynch and Banks.

The Insane Elbow hits Banks and there's one to Becky as Tamina (all in white for some reason) is in at #7. Lita drops her with a DDT because Tamina isn't very good, setting up Twists of Fate to Lynch and Banks. There's the moonsault to both of them and Lita throws Tamina out. Becky gets rid of Lita a few seconds later and it's Dana Brooke in at #8. She goes straight for Sane in the corner...and actually eliminates her in a pretty big upset. Torrie Wilson is in at #9 and we now have to pretend that she was anything more than eye candy because she wrestled fifteen

years ago.

Logan dropkicks her down as a TORRIE WILSON chant begins. A backdrop and dropkick to the knee get rid of Dana and it's Sonya Deville in at #10. That means a kick to the ribs to get rid of Torrie (yes she looked great, and that's about the extent of her value here). Liv Morgan is in at #11 and we hear about how much she idolized Lita. That likely applies to almost everyone in the match, which is rather cool given that Lita was in the match.

Things settle down again and it's Molly Holly in at #12 to a rather big reaction. She dumps Logan with ease and there's the Molly Go Round to Banks. They both fall to the floor (not out) and it's Lana in at #13. These people are just coming and going at this point with very little other than nostalgia holding things together. Lana takes Liv down with a rather impressive spear and it's Michelle McCool in at #14.

The fans immediately chant for the Undertaker as Michelle dumps Sonya. Morgan is out as well and Michelle gets rid of Molly with ease. Lana gets back up and is dumped just as well. Becky and Sasha double team Michelle to little avail as Ruby Riott is in at #15. No one can get anywhere and it's Vickie Guerrero (the obvious comedy spot) in at #16. A bunch of EXCUSE ME's earn her an elimination and it's Carmella in at #17, but Vickie blasts her with the Money in the Bank briefcase to leave her laying on the floor.

Natalya is in at #18 (Stephanie: "Here she comes." Natalya gets "here she comes"?) but Carmella decks her on the floor before it's time to start the strutting. The Bexploder puts her down though and everyone is on the mat for a breather. Kelly Kelly is in at #19 and opts for some kicks in the corner as Natalya eliminates Michelle.

It's Naomi in at #20, giving us Sasha, Becky, Riott, Carmella, Natalya, Kelly Kelly and Naomi. A bunch of Rear Views clean house and a kick to the head drops Banks. Sasha gets sent outside (not out, again) but Becky doesn't have the same luck as Riott gets rid of her. Jacqueline is in at #21 and goes after Kelly as very little is going on at the moment. Nia Jax is in at #22 and gets rid of Kelly and Jacqueline without much

effort. Riott gets tossed as well so Naomi fires off kicks. Jax throws her onto the big pile but Naomi lands on the barricade.

As she tries to figure it out, the injured Ember Moon is in at #23 and slugs away with one arm. Naomi walks the barricade and gets to the timekeeper's area where she steals Menunos' chair to crawl over to the steps for the improbable save. Back in...and Nia dumps her with ease. With everyone else on the floor, Beth Phoenix is in at # 24 and it's time for a showdown.

Beth avoids a charge in the corner but can't get her up in the fireman's carry. Another attempt works to a big reaction as Natalya gets back in. They can't get rid of Nia as they knock her to the floor (enough already) instead. Natalya quickly turns on Beth and throws her out as Carmella comes back in. Having this many women on the floor is ridiculous as you can't remember who is still in.

Asuka is in at #25 to strike away, setting up the big reunion fight with Ember. Moon is fine enough for a one armed Eclipse but Asuka throws her out a few seconds later. So much for that. Mickie James is in at #26 and grabs a neckbreaker on Natalya. A bunch of near eliminations go nowhere and it's Nikki Bella in at lucky #27, to a strong pop because we live in a random and chaotic universe. There's a springboard kick to the face to put Banks down and it's a spear to Natalya. Nikki throws Carmella out but everyone jumps onto the superwoman known as Nikki until Brie Bella comes out of retirement to come in at #28.

That means it's time for the YES chants and some horrible running knees. The Bellas get their big moment (because they haven't had one in a few minutes) and Nia is knocked to the floor (say it with me: without being eliminated). Bayley is in at #29 and gets to clean house until Asuka kicks her in the head. Trish Stratus is in at #30, which is quite the moment, though it was always going to be her or Rousey. That gives us a final grouping of Banks, Natalya, Jax, Asuka, James, Nikki, Brie, Bayley and Trish.

After tackling Natalya, we get the Trish vs. Bellas showdown which I think only WWE believes matters. A double Stratusfaction drops the Bellas

and it's time for a real showdown with Trish vs. Mickie. The Stratusphere is blocked so Trish kicks her in the head for the elimination. Nia gets back in so the big beatdown is on with a couple of kicks sending her to the ropes. Everyone gets together for the elimination in a good moment. Sasha dumps Bayley in a bit of a stab in the back and it's Natalya grabbing a Sharpshooter on Trish.

That's broken up because it's a worthless move here, allowing Trish to kick Natalya out to get us to five. Banks goes after Trish, who kicks her in the ribs and does Sasha's dance (that works). That's fine with Banks, who kicks Trish out but turns into Asuka. They decide to go for the Bellas but it winds up being all three going after Asuka in a smart move. Banks says she's ready for Asuka and loads up the double knees in the corner, only to have the Bellas turn on her.

That leaves Asuka and the Bellas (plus probably fourteen women on the floor as you never can tell) with the former firing off kicks to both of them. Brie gets sent to the apron but Nikki cuts Asuka off with the Rack Attack 2.0. A forearm knocks Brie out though as the sisters fight again. Asuka hits the missile dropkick on Nikki but she's right back with a kick to the face. They both wind up on the apron with Asuka kicking the leg out (barely) for the win at 58:57.

Rating: B-. I remember being confused about what to think of this one last year and that's the case again here. The legends needed to be there to flesh out the match and while there were some other options (NXT), I can go with this for the sake of history. This was designed to be more of a history of women's wrestling over the years and there's nothing wrong with that. They did a great job of making me want to see who was next as it was a nice mixture of all those generations. Having the nice mixture worked well and the right person won, so it's hard to complain all that much. Stephanie was fine, though rather unnecessary.

Post match Charlotte and Alexa get in the ring to hold up the titles...and here's Ronda Rousey to a huge reaction because she's a star that was rumored to be in Columbia for this show. We get the most awkward sign pointing of all time (there's an art to it) but Asuka won't shake her hand. A bunch of staring and then high fiving fans, plus a handshake with

Stephanie ends the show.

Overall Rating: C+. It wasn't a very good show, but the two namesake matches delivered well enough and only the Universal Title match was really bad. The big story here was Ronda of course and that delivered (awkward pointing aside) so it's hard to really call this anything but pretty good. The wrestling wasn't great overall and, again, the show was way too long but the important stuff worked well and that's how you get a nice show.

Ratings Comparison

Lucha House Party vs. TJP/Jack Gallagher/Drew Gulak

Original: C

Redo: C

Luke Gallows/Karl Anderson vs. Revival

Original: C

Redo: C

Bobby Roode vs. Mojo Rawley

Original: D

Redo: D+

Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn vs. AJ Styles

Original: B

Redo: C+

Usos vs. Chad Gable/Shelton Benjamin

Original: B-

Redo: D+

Men's Royal Rumble

Original: A

Redo: B-

Seth Rollins/Jason Jordan vs. The Bar

Original: C-

Redo: D

Brock Lesnar vs. Kane vs. Braun Strowman

Original: B-

Redo: D

Women's Royal Rumble

Original: B

Redo: B-

Overall Rating

Original: A-

Redo: C+

I don't remember the last time I was that far off on so many matches. I mean....dang man.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2018/01/28/royal-rumble-2018-i-had-fun-again/>