

Best of 2016: Non-Wrestler of the Year

As I'm sure you know, a lot of what goes on in a match isn't what goes on in a match. A lot of the time it's what happens outside the ring or before the match starts or just on commentary. That's what we're going to look at today: the best non-wrestlers of the year. This could be anywhere from a manager to an authority figure to a commentator or really anything but a wrestler. Hence the term NON-WRESTLER in case you're a bit slow today. In no order of course.

1. Mauro Ranallo.

Sometimes you just need someone that sounds like they love their job and has a blast watching it. Over on Monday Night Raw you get the corporate shilling Michael Cole (who is very underrated at his job but that's another story). Over on Smackdown and 205 Live though, it's Ranallo, who sounds like he's put in way more research and prep time than necessary but still comes off like one of the most knowledgeable commentators in years.

Ranallo's major moments came at the Cruiserweight Classic where he made you believe that what you were watching right this instant was the most important thing in the world. In other words, he was doing his job. That's something that you just don't get often enough in wrestling these days as everyone either either sounds like an idiot (Byron Saxton), sounds WAY too rehearsed (JBL) or is just a tool that you would rather punch in the face than listen to (Josh Matthews). Ranallo is on the other end and that's a great perk on Tuesdays.

2. Daniel Bryan.

Speaking of the Cruiserweight Classic, we have the new Smackdown General Manager who can be around for most of the important decisions while Shane McMahon shows up on major occasions. Bryan is still incredibly over and there's the whole YES thing which is always going to get a crowd involved in a show. It's always going to work and that's what matters in Bryan's case.

On top of that, there's the Miz thing. I'm still not sure if that's going anywhere or where it's going but that makes me want to keep

watching the shows to see if anything actually does come from it. That makes for an interesting story, which adds even more to what Bryan can do on his own. That's really impressive and something not a lot of people could pull off.

3. Corey Graves.

One more commentator here as we have one of the most natural heel commentators in a long time. I never got the big appeal of Graves as a wrestler but I certainly get the appeal of him as a commentator. The guy comes off as such a jerk but a smooth jerk, which is exactly what he's going for. I can even tolerate him picking on Saxton because...well, it's Byron Saxton and that's what he deserves.

Graves just gets the idea behind being a heel and plays the heck out of it. He praises the heels and likes to call out faces for their nonsense, which makes him much more of a Jesse Ventura than a Bobby Heenan. That's not a bad thing either as Ventura was one of the best of all time. It's been a long time since we've had someone like that and Graves does it like few others could.

4. Maryse.

Let's go with the women for a bit here as Maryse returned back in April and was all of a sudden the best heel manager in a long time. There's something about the fact that she can go from wearing the dress and looking all proper to wearing the skin tight leather body suits during Miz's matches. That's a great way to show how different her two sides can be and that's always impressive to pull off.

On top of that she's raised Miz up that much more. Sure Miz is annoying and a loudmouth but how much more do you hate him because he has an absolutely stunning blonde wife who loves him? It helps so much and makes the whole thing that much better. Miz is a great heel and on an amazing roll but Maryse has helped him so much.

5. Dario Cueto.

We might need to just rename this award after Cueto as he almost always seems to be the perfect option. I can't emphasize enough how great it is to have an actor playing this part instead of just another wrestler. Cueto has gotten WAY into the character and knows how to play him like no one else could. That's why the character works: he's played to absolute perfection.

I know Lucha Underground doesn't get the most coverage but at least they have some bright spots. Cueto seems to be involved in the major story of the season...whatever that might be. Whatever it winds up being, it's going to be entertaining because that's what a good actor is capable of doing with almost anything.

6. Renee Young.

One more good looking blonde for the road. With Young, it's much easier to list off what she can't do instead of what she can. I don't remember the last time we had someone who could do almost everything like she could and that's a great asset to have. Young is just talented and it was interesting to see her get involved with a storyline as Miz feuded with Dean Ambrose.

It could be an interview, a talking segment, hosting or doing something on the Network but Young just knows how to be charming on camera. It's always helpful to have a jack of all trades like her around and that's one of the best things possible. I really wouldn't be surprised to see her snatched up by ESPN sometime soon so enjoy her while you can.

Overall...dang this is actually hard. I think I'm going to go with Bryan though, if nothing else due to how much nicer it is to have a face boss instead of yet another corrupt and evil authority figure. Couple that with the chance of Bryan making one more in ring appearance down the line and it's hard to go wrong with him, even in such a stacked field.

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Monday Night Raw – August 26, 2002 (2017 Redo): The Champion as a Prop

Monday Night Raw

Date: August 26, 2002

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're past Summerslam and that means a lot of things have changed. To begin with, Shawn Michaels shocked the world and beat HHH in one heck of a street fight. Other than that, Brock Lesnar is the new WWE World Champion but is exclusively signed to Smackdown. It's not clear if that's going to mean we need something new around here for HHH to likely dominate. Let's get to it.

Here's Eric Bischoff to open up "his" Monday Night Raw. Tonight we're going to combine the Hardcore Title with the Intercontinental Title which is probably best for everyone. On top of that, we're going to have a special Lifetime Achievement Award for a member of the WWE Hall of Fame.

As for right now though, Bischoff brings out Brock and Heyman for a chat. The fans are happy when Lesnar comes out but cut Paul off with the ROCKY chants. Heyman finally gets to talk and says every legacy before Lesnar's doesn't matter, including Hulk Hogan and Bruno Sammartino. Enough of that though as Paul goes into a glorious rant about how no one believed him when he promised that Lesnar would do all this. Lesnar brags about being twenty five years old...and here's HHH to Shawn's music because THIS NEEDS TO BE ABOUT HIM.

That's the last time you'll ever hear Shawn's horrible music because HHH has gotten rid of him for good. As for right now though, Lesnar only has that title because HHH softened Rock up for him. HHH wants a title shot but here's Undertaker to cut them both off. Undertaker wants the first shot at the young pup and the fight is on. Lesnar

gets knocked to the floor but HHH is allowed to leave mostly unscathed. WAY too much non-Lesnar here but we all need more HHH in our lives.

Booker T. vs. Christian

After what looks like a quickly fixed lighting problem, Booker hammers away until a reverse DDT onto the knee puts him down. A chinlock sets up some choking until Booker pops up with the spinning sunset flip out of the corner for two. Goldust and Lance Storm get in a fight (of course) and it's the scissors kick for the pin on Christian.

Rating: C-. Just a quick match here to keep the Tag Team Title feud going, though I'm not sure what they're waiting on at this point. It's not like the Un-Americans are all that interesting as heels or champions so just let them lose the belts already to an interesting team. Booker is getting hotter and hotter every week, which almost guarantees his imminent destruction.

The WWE was in New York for the Smackdown Your Vote campaign.

Test has plans for the American flag tonight. This isn't likely to end well.

Bubba Ray Dudley/Spike Dudley vs. Christopher Nowinski/William Regal

The villains have Molly Holly in their corner due to one heck of a horribly acted segment between Chris and Molly. Bubba side slams Chris to start and Spike adds a top rope stomp (that always looks so painful) for no cover. Chris pops back up and distracts the referee so Spike can get crotched against the post. The beating doesn't last long as Spike gets up and tags Bubba so everything can break down. What's Up hits Molly and it's table time. That goes nowhere so it's the Bubba Bomb to end Regal.

Rating: D+. Not much to see here as I didn't know this story was still going. Are we really supposed to be interested in Nowinski wanting to sleep with Molly? It's the start of a character at least but Nowinski really isn't the most interesting guy in the world no matter what. At least it's better than making fun of Molly's weight.

Post match Nowinski saves Molly from the table.

Bischoff tells the guest to come out when Eric says.

Molly thanks Chris and offers to help him if need be.

Apparently that would be after the break as Bischoff brings out Jimmy Snuka. Highlight package, Bischoff cuts him off, 3 Minute Warning, JR is aghast. Chris Jericho comes out and puts Snuka in the Walls of Jericho and tells the has been to get out of the ring. Who would guess that we would see something similar at Wrestlemania one day? Jericho shows us some clips from last night and claims that he made Flair tap out. Since Fozzy's concert was cut off last week, Jericho belts out his own version of New York, New York.

Chris Jericho vs. Jeff Hardy

Jericho knocks him around to start until Jeff gets in a dropkick of his own to take over for a bit. Lawler talks about a tuxedo vs. evening gown match later tonight as Jeff sends Jericho outside for a big dive off the top. The dive off the apron is countered into a powerslam (cool looking spot) and Jericho starts choking with Jeff's shirt.

A missed dropkick has Jeff in even more trouble (it might help if he did something other than throw dropkicks) so we hit the abdominal stretch. This isn't exactly burning up the mat so far. When the hold goes nowhere, Jericho heads up top but gets dropkicked out of the air. Even that's not enough to pop the crowd very strongly but the Whisper in the Wind does a bit better. The Swanton is good for two as Jericho grabs the rope. Jericho grabs the Walls and Hardy grabs the rope, only to have Jericho refuse to break for the DQ.

Rating: D+. These two are capable of doing so much better and I'm not sure why they were this dull here. I don't know if Jeff is just done or if Jericho's stuff with the submissions isn't working but I don't know how you go from good last night to a near disaster just a day later. Maybe it's a bad night but this was a big disappointment.

Brock doesn't care who wins tonight.

Test wants to burn the American flag. After a break, here are the

Un-Americans with Test carrying a blowtorch. Kane's pyro goes off but Booker and Goldust make the save instead. The Texans are cleaned out and it's Kane (with a new half mask) coming in for the real save. So we owe one to Spain. Make that two as we get a Kane-A-Rooni.

Intercontinental Title: Tommy Dreamer vs. Rob Van Dam

Officially this is a unification match but the Hardcore Title is done no matter what so I guess it's not on the line. This is however under hardcore rules so Dreamer has a bit of an advantage. They shake hands and we're ready to go. We actually start with some technical stuff until Dreamer dropkicks him in the face to take over.

It's time for the first kendo stick and a White Russian legsweep gets two on Rob. They head outside with a ladder being bridged between the ring and the barricade. Dreamer hits a quick spinebuster but can't suplex Rob onto the ladder. Instead Van Dam shoves him face first into the ladder, setting up a kick off the ladder for two.

Back in and the DDT gives Dreamer two, followed by a middle rope elbow which only hits the ladder. Rolling Thunder onto the ladder onto Dreamer and Rob crotches him for a bonus. The dropkick drives a chair into Dreamer's face and the Five Star gets rid of the Hardcore Title for good.

Rating: C+. Not a bad match actually and it's nice to see the division go out on a nice note instead of 18 people who never do anything else hitting a single weapon shot for a pin. I'm no Dreamer fan but it's cool to see him having a good match in his element like this, even if he had no chance of winning.

Lillian Garcia vs. Howard Finkel

The winner is permanent ring announcer. It's a tuxedo/evening gown match, meaning whoever is stripped first loses. Stacy Keibler comes out to keep an eye on Trish so Howard says she's interfering with something in his trousers. JR: "Howard may get aroused!" Thankfully

the fans boo this out of the building until Trish and Stacy object to Howard insulting blondes. Fink is stripped and Lillian wins. As you might expect, that just makes the fans hate the match even more.

HHH vs. Undertaker

The winner gets Lesnar at some point in the future. HHH jumps Undertaker as he gets off the bike and we're ready to go in a hurry. They get inside with an early Pedigree attempt being blocked so Undertaker can hammer away in the corner. Old School gets two but HHH hits a jumping knee to the head. The very slow beating continues and we hit a HHH chinlock.

That shifts over to a sleeper in case we were going too fast for you. Back up and Undertaker hits him in the head a few times but the ref gets bumped. One of the worst big boots I've ever see (there was a good six inches between the boot and HHH's face) sets up a chokeslam but here's Lesnar for a distraction. HHH gets in a low blow and, after a belt shot from Lesnar, the pin and the title shot.

Rating: D. Boring match of course but that's what you have to expect when two older guys get to be the focus instead of the new World Champion. This was really weak stuff from two guys who should be more than capable of doing something better. Lesnar felt like an afterthought here, which has been the case all night long.

Oh look: it's Stephanie, who is all happy because she's never allowed to lose any face. Lesnar is officially signed to Smackdown and the title is coming with him. So now she can change the rules of the Brand Split. Stephanie to Eric: "How do my peaches taste now?"

Overall Rating: D-. I don't remember the last time I've seen two shows on back to back nights be such polar opposites. Last night was all about energy and entertainment while tonight was all about HHH vs. Undertaker and Stephanie vs. Bischoff with Lesnar being little more than a plot device in either. The best thing on the show was Dreamer vs. Van Dam while the rest was spent on stuff they knew wasn't going to be interesting while having almost no focus on anything that mattered. In other words, it's back to what Raw has been doing in recent months.

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New Column: The Elite Eight

Who will take the final Royal Rumble spots and who won't?

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-elite-eight/>

NXT – January 25, 2017: Trouble Brewing

NXT

Date: January 25, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

It's the go home show for Takeover: San Antonio and that means we're in for the final push towards a card that isn't the strongest in the world. However, that seems to be where NXT shines. They just know how to turn something that might not look the best into something

that's a lot of fun. Tonight's focus seems to be on the Women's Title match so let's get to it.

Ember Moon vs. Liv Morgan

They start faster than expected with some small packages getting two each. Morgan misses a charge into the corner though and Moon blasts her in the face with a jumping knee. It's off to a Crossface until Morgan fights up and gets a bulldog. A guillotine choke has Moon in more trouble than she's ever been in...so she throws Morgan over the top for a big crash. The Eclipse is good for the pin at 4:00.

Rating: C-. I've seen worse but I'm really getting behind the idea of Moon vs. Asuka in Orlando over Wrestlemania weekend. Moon has been treated like an unstoppable force and that's the more than anyone else has been able to do in the division. Better match than I was expecting here and that's encouraging for Morgan.

Andrade Cien Almas is in the back when Roderick Strong says he's ready to go right now. Almas beats him down without much effort.

Long video on DIY vs. Authors of Pain.

No Way Jose vs. Kona Reeves

Jose dances out of a waistlock to start and the threat of a right hand sends Reeves into the corner. Reeves suckers him in with the offer of a dance and hammers away, setting up a Samoan drop for two. Some surfing on Jose's back doesn't really do much, allowing him to come back with a series of right hands. A pop up right hand finishes Reeves at 4:04.

Rating: D+. Not much to see here as the combination of somewhat goofy gimmicks didn't do a lot of good. You had a dancer against a surfer here and since this isn't GLOW, I'm not sure that's the best idea. Reeves hasn't shown me much and while Jose is one of my favorites on the roster, he needs something better than this.

Post match Elias Samson comes out with a song but Jose suggests something else and sings YOUR SONG SUCKS to the beat of his theme song. Samson gets punched in the face.

Chris Atkins vs. Eric Young

I've heard Atkins' music (something about putting your hands up if you're scared to fly) somewhere before but I can't place it. A Sanity distraction lets Young jump him from behind and the beating is on in a hurry. Young chokes in the corner and drops a middle rope elbow to the back. The wheelbarrow neckbreaker ends Atkins at 1:54.

Young shouts about choices and Damo crushes Atkins again.

We look at the Revival destroying Shane Thorn's knee. Thorn had surgery earlier this week and will be out seven to nine months. I love that WWE seems to be bringing back the idea of crediting someone with injuring wrestlers. Thorn was going to be out no matter what so let Revival get some heat on it instead of just letting Thorn go on the shelf and be forgotten.

Video on Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Bobby Roode.

William Regal is here to keep an eye on the four way interview to hype up the Women's Title match. Billie Kay and Peyton Royce come out first and say you know what the two of them can do. Asuka has already taken a beating and Nikki is just crazy so there's no way both of them are losing. Nikki doesn't say anything and it's Asuka coming out for the big showdown with Cross. The Aussies jump them from behind and that goes as well as you would expect. Security is easily dispatched and Asuka kicks Nikki in the head. Security pulls Asuka to the floor and Cross dives on the pile. Billie and Peyton look terrified to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. They pushed the card as much as they could but I'm not sure it's enough. There isn't one match on the card that seems like it could carry the rest of the show and I'm not sure there's a way around the fact that the challengers all seem to have no chance. I've seen longer shots but I don't really buy anyone as having a chance against Asuka and Roode doesn't seem likely to win the title. Stranger things have happened and I'll never doubt Takeover's ability to surprise me but this is a long shot. They did what they could this week but I'm not convinced just yet.

Results

Ember Moon b. Liv Morgan – Eclipse

No Way Jose b. Kona Reeves – Pop Up Right Hand

Eric Young b. Chris Atkins – Wheelbarrow neckbreaker

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Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2013: Well Duh

Royal Rumble 2013

Date: January 27, 2013

Location: US Airways Center, Phoenix, Arizona

Attendance: 13,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

This show was only a year ago and I can barely remember anything about it. Aside from the Rumble the big matches are the Rock challenging CM Punk for the WWE Title in the most obvious ending ever and Alberto Del Rio defending his newly won World Heavyweight Championship against Big Show in a last man standing match. Other than that we've only got HELL NO vs. the Rhodes Scholars to complete the card. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: US Title: The Miz vs. Antonio Cesaro

Cesaro is defending. This is just after Flair passed the Figure Four to Miz, starting the worst period of his career. Miz grabs a headlock to start and gets two off an elbow to the jaw. The headlock takes Cesaro down to the mat but he fights up and grabs one of his own. Back up and Miz tries a leapfrog but gets caught in midair with a tikt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. The champion takes over and cranks on both of Miz's arms before getting two off a Michinoku Driver.

A hard European uppercut sets up the gutwrench suplex for two and it's back to the double arm. Back up again and Miz slips out of a slam and hooks the Reality Check for two. There's the running clothesline in the corner and Miz goes up but hurts his knee on the top rope ax handle. Cesaro gets caught with his feet on the ropes, allowing Miz to get two off a rollup. Antonio misses a running knee in the corner but is still able to roll away from the Figure Four. Cesar takes him to the floor and rams Miz into the metal underneath the ring. Miz is out cold so Cesaro Neutralizes him for the pin to retain.

Rating: D+. Miz just doesn't work in a lot of these matches and the Figure Four doesn't work in the slightest. Thankfully he wouldn't be featured very prominently for awhile as there was just nothing to him for the most part. Cesaro still needs to get a push as he's more talented and marketable than half the roster but instead we get people like Miz.

The opening video is about time passing and how no one has enough. This ties into Punk's time as champion with Rock saying the reign ends tonight.

Smackdown World Title: Big Show vs. Alberto Del Rio

Last man standing match, which is a rematch with the same stipulations from when Alberto won the title a few weeks ago. Del Rio turned the announce table on top of Big Show so Big Show turned it on top of him a few weeks later. Alberto is shown in the back and he runs into Bret Hart for no apparent reason whatsoever. Bret says Alberto reminds him of a Mexican version of himself. Alberto calls

Bret a Canadian Del Rio and Ricardo gushes, earning him Bret's sunglasses. What a bizarre cameo.

Some hard chops have Del Rio in early trouble and a slam gets a five count. Alberto chops away but jumps off the middle rope right into a chop to change control right back. The champion dropkicks the giant's knee out but the low superkick actually knocks Big Show up from his knees to his feet. A hurricanrana and a seated senton put Big Show down and Alberto gets a breather. It's amazing how much more interesting Del Rio is by doing this lucha stuff instead of his arm work. The arm stuff is good but this is such a nice change of pace.

Big Show blocks the armbreaker with one arm and slams Del Rio down, sending him outside. Del Rio gets back in as Big Show gets a chair but the champion dropkicks him in the ribs to knock it out of his hands. A series of chair shots (crowd: "SI! SI! SI!") has Big Show down but Alberto dives into a chokeslam for an eight count. We head outside again with Del Rio getting chopped to the floor with ease. This is a very slow paced match so far.

A pair of low blows puts Big Show down in the aisle but he's up at nine. Show hits something resembling a DDT on the floor before sending Del Rio into the set. He rips a piece of the set, resembling a light tube, and blasts Del Rio over the back. Since this is WWE there's a table readily available and Big Show takes the champion on top of the set for a chokeslam through the table. The bump looked awesome but he's again on his feet at nine.

The beating takes Del Rio back to the ring and Show loads up the WMD. Alberto sees it coming and rolls outside, only to have Big Show throw Ricardo around for fun. Big Show misses a charge through the barricade (clearly heavily padded) for five but a long series of chair shots has him down again. Del Rio crushes the arm between the steps and a chair, but Alberto follows up with a fire extinguisher blast to the face for no apparent reason. Back in and the armbreaker goes on, but Ricardo ups the ante by duct taping Big Show's legs to the ropes. The giant can't get up and Alberto retains the title.

Rating: C-. This wasn't the worst match in the world but it was very slowly paced and the ending made Del Rio look more clever than tough. It also doesn't help that the match was the same gimmick they did less than a month ago. Face Alberto was a nice guy but they cut the cord just six months after this. Not bad, but Del Rio winning the title here would have been much better.

Send Slim Jims to the military!

Ziggler isn't worried about being in the Rumble and AJ threatens Matt Striker with Big E. Langston for implying Ziggler can't win. Langston does one of the most mind blowing imitations of an annoying reporter while asking Ziggler for his thoughts on the main event. Dolph has little of note to say but no one was hearing him after Big E.'s bit anyway.

Cesaro says he'll continue the streak of non-Americans winning the Rumble.

The Prime Time Players.....WE'RE GETTING RUMBLE PROMOS!!!! Anyway they say anyone that thinks they'll eliminate either of them is getting a penalty flag.

Orton says he's perfect for the Rumble because it's every man for himself.

Cena is ready for the Rumble because it means he can be champion again.

Intercontinental Champion Wade Barrett says he'll restore credibility to the Rumble.

Sheamus says he won the Rumble last year and he'll do it again tonight.

Ryback isn't any catchphrase and he doesn't eat Fruity Pebbles, but he'll see food every 90 seconds. Feed him more.

We recap Miz vs. Cesaro on the pre-show.

Tag Titles: HELL NO vs. Rhodes Scholars

The Scholars are challenging. Cody kicks Bryan in the ribs as Cole references Queen lyrics. Bryan spins out of a wristlock and the fans

chant for Cody's mustache. Cody's leapfrog is countered into a surfboard and it's off to Kane for a low dropkick and a two count. Rhodes scores with a dropkick of his own and drives Kane into the corner for the tag off to Sandow. Kane easily powers Sandow into the corner because, you know, he's Damien Sandow and it's off to Bryan for the YES Kicks.

JBL rants about Cole and Lawler hugging as Kane kicks Sandow in the face, knocking him out to the floor. The FLYING GOAT takes out the challengers but Cody low bridges Bryan to the floor to take over. Back in and a half crab has Daniel in trouble but he reverses into a small package to escape. Damien comes in again and drops an elbow for two before dropping the Wind-Up Elbow.

After some knees to the back it's Cody in again but he charges into a boot in the corner. Sandow breaks up a hot tag attempt and Cody puts Bryan in an over the shoulder backbreaker. Daniel slides down to escape and makes the tag to Kane. Sandow is tossed around like a rag doll but a Cody distraction prevents the top rope clothesline. Kane grabs both guys by the throat and Bryan tags himself in. The Scholars double suplex Kane but Bryan shoves Cody into a chokeslam and Daniel YES Locks Sandow to retain.

Rating: C. Nothing you wouldn't see on Raw around this time which means it was fine. The Scholars were a nice idea for a team but it was clear that they had no chance at this point given how low their individual stocks were. Kane and Bryan gelled perfectly well as a team and Bryan would get far bigger very soon.

Rumble By The Numbers which I've typed many times already.

HELL NO celebrates in the back when Vickie Guerrero comes up and gives them their Rumble numbers. Daniel shows Kane his but Kane won't show Bryan.

We look at the Royal Rumble Fan Fest which is another name for Axxess. This included a tournament of NXT wrestlers for a spot in the Rumble, won by Bo Dallas.

Royal Rumble

Ziggler is #1 which he picked (the other option was #2) after winning a Beat the Clock Challenge on Raw. Dolph says he'll win and doesn't care who he faces first, bringing out a returning Chris Jericho at #2. This was a complete shock and the roof is blown off the building. Also remember that Ziggler beat Jericho to send him out of the company to give us some history. The clock is at 90 seconds between entrants this year.

Jericho is quickly sent to the apron but comes back with a top rope ax handle. Now it's Dolph on the apron as the fans tell Jericho he still has it. When did Jericho ever come close to losing it? A superplex brings Ziggler back into the ring and Cody Rhodes is in at #3. Jericho hammers away on him but Ziggler gets in a cheap shot as the double teaming begins. Chris knocks Ziggler down and puts Cody in the Walls but Dolph makes the save.

Dolph catapults Jericho throat first into the bottom rope as Kofi Kingston is in at #4. Kofi immediately speeds things up and pounds away on Cody but can't hit Ziggy with Trouble in Paradise. Ziggler is thrown to the apron and all four guys try to eliminate each other at the same time in the same spot. Santino Marella is #5 and he sends all four to the apron before loading up the Cobra. Everybody is back in and even though Santino takes Kofi down with the sock, it's Cody backdropping Marella out.

Drew McIntyre of 3MB is #6 and gets to fight Kofi as everyone else takes a breather. Back up and it's time to lay on the ropes while trying to eliminate people. Jericho is sent over the ropes but he keeps his feet off the ground and gets back in. Titus O'Neil is in at #7 to add some power, including taking Cody and Kofi down with a double clothesline. Cole finally tells us that the bark is a shout out to his fraternity from Florida. Thank you for explaining that to us after two years.

Jericho throws out McIntyre but can't do the same to Ziggler as Goldust is #8. Cody gets ready for the showdown and the fans are WAY into this. They trade the kneeling uppercuts and Goldie stomps on Cody for a bit. The fans chant for Goldust and it's David Otunga

(remember him?) is in at #9. The announcers ignore the match to talk about the commentators being in the Rumble last year as people start to pair off.

Nothing much happens until Heath Slater is in at #10. That gives us Ziggler, Jericho, Rhodes, Kingston, O'Neil, Goldust, Otunga and Slater at the moment. Slater fires off right hands to Kofi as Jericho calls spots to Ziggler. Dolph gets stuck on the apron again and Sheamus is #11 to clear out some bodies. He destroys everyone with his usual stuff before sending Titus to the apron for the ten forearm. Otunga is thrown onto Titus to get rid of O'Neil before ten forearm and a Brogue Kick get rid of the lawyer. Tensai, still the Japanese lunthead, is #12.

Everybody goes after Tensai to make a big cluster in the corner. That goes nowhere at all so Brodus Clay comes in at #13. We get a Tons of Funk preview before Goldust backdrops Cody to the apron, only to get pulled to the apron as well. Cody gets back in and sends Goldust into the post for the elimination and a lot of booing. Rey Mysterio is #14 to make the crowd happy again. Ziggler and Jericho get quick 619s and the top rope splash crushes Jericho. Things slow down a bit until we reach the halfway point with Darren Young at #15.

A bunch of guys join forces to dump Brodus and Kofi puts out Tensai a few seconds later. Now we get to the part that everybody was waiting on as Kofi is knocked off the apron, only to land on Tensai's back. He jumps onto the announcers' table as he tries to figure this out. Why he doesn't just jump two feet to get onto the steps is beyond me. Bo Dallas is #16 as this is going on. Instead of the steps, Kofi gets JBL's office chair and pogos his way back to the ring. Kingston pulls Darren out of the ring but gets caught with the Disaster Kick for the elimination before he can get back inside. Godfather gives us the nostalgia pop at #17 and is dropkicked out by Ziggler four seconds later. He seems ok with that and leaves with his women. The whole point was the entrance anyway so I have no issue with that. Wade Barrett is in at #18 as the ring is getting

too full. Everything slows down again and John Cena is #19 to clear out some tired people. Everybody gets ready for him so Cena comes a charging. John fights them all off and throws out Slater and Cody but can't dump Jericho.

Damien Sandow is #20, giving us Ziggler, Jericho, Sheamus, Mystero, Dallas, Barrett, Cena and Sandow. Mysteiro and Barrett fight to the apron and a big forearm puts Rey out. Sheamus goes right after Wade as Jericho tries to put Cena in the Walls. Daniel Bryan is #21 and fires off kicks to Sandow. Now it's Barrett getting the kicks as everyone else is down. Sheamus and Bryan try to put Jericho out but he slides back in under the ropes.

Antonio Cesaro is in at #22 and gets in a fight with Sheamus as the fans start the dueling Cena chants. Everybody is back up now and Great Khali is #23. It's chops all around until things calm a bit. Kane comes in at #24 to fire things up again (get it?) but the ring is too full. It gets even worse with Zach Ryder coming in at #25 but HELL NO dumps Khali. Bryan dumps Kane but Cesaro dumps Bryan into Kane's arms. Daniel: YES! Kane shouts no and drops Bryan for the elimination in a funny bit.

Randy Orton is #26 and it's powerslams all around. Ziggler and Dallas get a double Elevated DDT and it's an RKO for Ryder, followed by the elimination. Jinder Mahal gets lucky #27 as Cesaro lifts Cena up, only to be eliminated himself. Ziggler gets launched to the ropes but slides back in as Miz is #28. He gets in a fight with Cesaro in the aisle and limps into the ring to sell the ankle injury from earlier. Sheamus dumps Mahal and Sin Cara is #29.

Cara tries an enziguri on Ziggler which misses by four inches but Ziggler sells it anyway. Bo Dallas pulls Barrett out in an elimination that should have led further than it did. Miz sends Jericho to the apron as Barrett pulls Dallas out from the floor. Ryback is #30 to give us a final grouping of Ryback, Ziggler, Jericho, Sheamus, Cena, Sandow, Orton, Miz and Sin Cara. Damien is out first and Sin Cara quickly follows. Miz tries to power Ryback out and is tossed as well to get us down to six. Jericho is somehow

still alive and hits a Lionsault on Cena but the springboard dropkick doesn't eliminate Sheamus.

Ziggler backdrops Jericho to the apron and superkicks him out (missed as well but he's spent at this point) but walks into an RK0. There's one for Cena as well and Sheamus gets the third. That leaves Ryback to fight Orton but the monster gets taken down with an Elevated DDT. Ryback fights off the RK0 and clotheslines Randy out to get us down to four. Ziggler DDTs Cena down but a Brogue Kick puts Dolph on the floor.

It's Sheamus, Ryback and Cena with Ryback getting double suplexed down. Cena and Sheamus make things serious by LOOKING AT THE SIGN. John takes over but Ryback runs him over with a clothesline. Sheamus escapes the Shell Shock, looks at the sign, and hits White Noise on Ryback. The Brogue Kick is countered with a backdrop to eliminate Sheamus and we're down to two.

They LOOK AT THE SIGN and do their signature taunts before Ryback spinebusters Cena down. The Meathook is countered into the STF and Ryback passes out, leaving him as dead weight. Ryback fights out of the corner and Cena's head into the mat. He loads up a powerslam but Cena slips out the back and shoves Ryback out for the win and title shot at Wrestlemania.

Rating: B. It's a good but not great Rumble. That being said, there was almost no other option to win here, even though it set up the rematch that no one wanted to see. There's certainly some good stuff in it and there were no down spots, but you would expect more big moments than we got here.

Coming Home ad for Wrestlemania. That still should have been Wrestlemania XXX.

We recap CM Punk vs. The Rock. It's a basic story: Punk has been champion for 434 days and Rock is getting a title shot because he's the Rock, which was kind of a lame reason, especially when the shot was announced six months ago. That began a countdown that made everything Punk did meaningless, because there was no way it would be anyone but Rock taking the belt from him here. Yeah Punk got in

some shots on Rock before the match, but this was as much of a layup as you could get. Also if Shield or anyone interferes, Punk is stripped of the title.

Rock, after waiting for them to chant his name, says he isn't worried about Shield, even though they busted up his lung recently. He goes on a rant about how many hard things he's been through, but redeems himself a bit by talking about his mom getting cancer but beating it to be here tonight. Punk has said that the people don't count but Rock says every single one of them count to him. He reaches his hand out to everyone that believes in the Rock so he can get their power, if you smell what he's cooking.

Raw World Title: The Rock vs. CM Punk

Punk of course has Heyman with him. He charges right into the brawl and actually pounds Rock down into the corner. A quick Rock Bottom is countered but Punk is sent outside. Rock follows him outside and sends the champion into the barricade before loading up the announce table. Punk comes back with a shot to the ribs and puts the table back together in a great bit. Back in and Rock scores with more right hands to knock Punk to the floor again.

Punk is whipped into the barricade one more time but he gets a boot up to stop a charging Bull. He finishes fixing the announce table instead of following up on Rock before dropping Rock ribs first on the barricade. They head inside again for a body vice from CM followed by a knee to the ribs for two. Off to a freaky looking hold where Punk pins Rock's shoulders down but pulls back on his head to crank on the shoulders and back.

More choking follows and a knee to the back has Rock on the apron, followed by a springboard dropkick to send him outside. Punk tries a top rope ax handle to take Rock down but injures his knee in the process. Rock scores with some kicks to the knee but the champion easily sends him out to the floor to stop the comeback. Back in and Punk misses the springboard clothesline and reinjures the knee, giving Rock his opening.

A DDT gets one on Punk but he fights out of the Rock Bottom. The GTS

is countered into a Sharpshooter attempt but Punk counters into the Anaconda Vice in a nice sequence. Rock rolls over into a cradle, forcing Punk to let go of the hold. Back up and tries the Rock Bottom but Punk counters into a rollup for two, only to be countered into a low seated Sharpshooter. Punk is next to the rope so naturally he takes thirty seconds to get the break.

Rock takes him to the floor and loads up the announce table again. They fight on top but Rock counters a GTS attempt into what was supposed to be a Rock Bottom but was really more like the table collapsing with Rock's arm around Punk's chest. Rock comes up holding his knee and both guys make it back in at an eight count. Punk scores with a high kick but both guys are down.

Back up and Rock wins a slugout before scoring with the spinebuster. He loads up the People's Elbow and there go the lights. Cole can see Shield pulling Rock to the floor and powerbombing him through the table. The lights come back up and Rock is laid out as the referee has no idea what's going on. The announcers try to tell Mike Chioda what happened and Punk feigns innocence.

He throws Rock back in for the pin and celebrates but here's Vince to say Punk is stripped of the title for the interference. Rock says no and to restart the match. The bell rings again and Punk stomps away as JBL threatens to put Cole through a table for playing cheerleader. The Macho Elbow gets two but the GTS is countered into a spinebuster, setting up the People's Elbow to end Punk's reign.

Rating: B. It's another good match but it felt like they were dancing around for twenty three minutes before we got to the obvious ending. The Shield stuff was a decent fake out but it really didn't need to be there. Rock winning was obvious though and that really put a ceiling on how high this was going to get.

Rock celebrates for about three minutes to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Yeah it's a good show overall, but the major problem is obvious: there was no other possibly ending other than Rock vs. Cena at Wrestlemania 29 and almost everyone knew it. The show is definitely entertaining and actually really good at times,

but it was so telegraphed up and down the card that it offers almost no excitement at all, even on the initial viewing. Still though, worth checking out if you have nothing else to do.

Ratings Comparison

Antonio Cesaro vs. The Miz

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Alberto Del Rio vs. Big Show

Original: B

Redo: C-

HELL NO vs. Rhodes Scholars

Original: C

Redo: C

Royal Rumble

Original: C+

Redo: B

The Rock vs. CM Punk

Original: B

Redo: B

Overall Rating

Original: A-

Redo: B

That original overall rating is too high for what I gave everything else. Also I think the original last man standing match rating is closer to the accurate one. It just didn't hold up as well on a second viewing, but it was good.

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

[http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/01/27/royal-rumble-2013-by-the-bo-
ok-and-still-awesome/](http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/01/27/royal-rumble-2013-by-the-bo-ok-and-still-awesome/)

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Smackdown – January 24, 2017: Why Pretend Otherwise?

Smackdown

Date: January 24, 2017

Location: Huntington Center, Toledo, Ohio

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, Tom Phillips, David Otunga

It's the final show before the Royal Rumble and that means we might be in for a few more announcements for the big battle royal. At the moment, twenty one names have been announced and most of them are from Monday Night Raw. A few more Smackdown names wouldn't hurt anything and could be on the way tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with Miz complaining to Daniel Bryan that he and Maryse don't have their own private dressing room. Miz wants to know what will be done for someone with his star power so Bryan offers to curtain off a stall in the men's room. Bryan gives him a better

offer: a rematch for the Intercontinental Title against Dean Ambrose. Miz suggests a No DQ match but Bryan thinks a lumberjack match would be better.

We get a long recap on Randy Orton joining the Wyatt Family and the team's issues since.

Randy Orton vs. Luke Harper

Bray is sitting in his rocking chair and stoically looking ahead. Orton elbows Harper in the jaw to start and they head outside for nothing in particular. Back in and Orton kicks him in the face to set up the elevated DDT. Harper's neck seems to be a bit banged up as they head outside again with Luke kicking Orton in the face.

Bray throws both of them back inside and it's off to a break. Back with Orton fighting out of a chinlock and scoring with a superplex. Harper grabs his Michinoku Driver and kicks Orton in the face for two, drawing a smile from Bray. Orton gets two off a rollup so Harper tries the discus lariat, only to get caught in the RKO for the pin at 9:50.

Rating: C. This was much more about the angle than the match and I don't think there was much of a surprise with Orton winning. Harper is a talented guy but he has no business going over someone on Orton's level at this point. I wouldn't mind if Harper went out on his own but it didn't go all that well in the first try and he's about the same as he was back then.

Post match Wyatt gives Harper Sister Abigail. The announcers aren't sure if Harper is out of the Family or if it was just tough love.

Recap of last week's cage match and Mickie James being revealed as La Luchadora.

Renee Young brings out Mickie James to explain her actions from last week. She reads off her resume but Renee says that isn't enough. Mickie doesn't like having to explain herself because this Divas Revolution is nonsense. The only person that sees things the right way is Alexa Bliss, who has been fighting against the Revolution since it started. Becky Lynch is nothing special and Mickie would

love to fight her anytime. Cue Becky to chase Mickie into the crowd but Alexa jumps her to start the double beatdown.

Last week, Carmella took James Ellsworth on a shopping spree. James wasn't sure about the prices but Carmella insists. First up: pants. Ellsworth starts with jeans but Carmella isn't happy. Various other goofy outfits ensue so Carmella finally takes over with the help of Dante the fashion guy. Eventually it's decided to make him into someone who belongs on Jersey Shore and that's it.

Battle Royal

Heath Slater, Rhyno, Tyler Breeze, Fandango, Simon Gotch, Aiden English, Konnor, Viktor, Mojo Rawley, Curt Hawkins

The winner is in the Rumble and Baron Corbin is on commentary. English and Gotch are out in the first five seconds and Mojo punches Hawkins out next. Slater and Viktor get rid of each other, followed by Mojo helping to get rid of Rhyno and Konnor. Mojo superkicks Fandango out and backdrops Breeze to the floor for the win at 3:15.

Rating: D. This wasn't much but they kept it quick enough that it couldn't cause any problems. Rawley is in a weird spot at the moment as he hasn't done any real singles work in a long time so it's not the worst idea to let him establish himself a little bit here. The match was so short that it's hard to complain so I'll spare you any issues with a three minute battle royal.

Nikki Bella was walking into the arena earlier when she explained that she and John Cena just happened to be next to her on the side of the production truck. Natalya comes up and lays Nikki out.

Here's AJ Styles to call out John Cena. Before he gets there though, he has an issue with the Royal Rumble poster. Cena is up near the front and Styles is almost in the back of a big group shot. Now it's Cena, who looks to have some new gear. Earlier this week, Styles turned on the Today Show and saw Cena as guest host. Cena talked about facing some guy from Atlanta and the incredibly marky host is confident Cena will win. AJ doesn't like being referred to as just some guy and says no one has missed Cena.

John is a sorry excuse for a wrestler so Cena finally goes on a rant about how he's been around for ten years while AJ has only been hot for six months. AJ might have been great on the indies but Cena was built for WWE and gets more done in one day than AJ does in a year. If Styles is so mad about the poster, learn how to Photoshop. AJ is just like everyone else: wanting to be Cena when he just can't do it.

Kalisto vs. Dolph Ziggler

The superkick ends Kalisto in 48 seconds.

Post match Ziggler grabs a chair but JBL stands up, allowing Apollo Crews to really chase Ziggler off.

Naomi vs. Natalya

No match as Nikki attacks Natalya in the back.

Naomi says she wants to fight someone so here's Alexa...to says he won't do it either.

Dean Ambrose says there aren't enough lumberjacks in the world to stop him from beating Miz tonight.

Intercontinental Title: Miz vs. Dean Ambrose

Ambrose is defending in the Rumble. Dean threatens Dirty Deeds to send Miz outside and the lumberjacks pummel him. That's only good for two though and we take an early break. Back with Miz sending Dean to the floor a few times, followed by the YES Kicks. Dean comes back with the top rope elbow for two and it's time for the lumberjacks to beat on Miz even more.

Back in and Maryse grabs Dean's leg, setting up a running knee ala Daniel Bryan (JBL says that's how Bryan won the title at Wrestlemania because JBL isn't as smart as he thinks) for two more. Miz is sent to the floor again and Dean dives on the big pile. The fans think this is awesome as Dean hits the rebound lariat for two, only to have everyone come in for...absolutely nothing because ten guys coming in and attacking both wrestlers isn't a DQ. Dirty Deeds ends Miz at 12:15.

Rating: C+. While I'm not sure this was awesome, I'm sure that the ending didn't make a lot of sense. Like, you can't do a no contest when ALL THE LUMBERJACKS come in at once? It's really that important to have Ambrose pin Miz here? Anyway, the match was fine as these two have chemistry together and that's all that matters.

Ambrose poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This wasn't Smackdown's best work as it seems that they're getting ready for everything besides the Rumble. Now in a way I can get that idea as there's only so much hype you can do for a battle royal when your roster doesn't even comprise a third of the lineup and none of your entrants have any real chance. Still though, they did the best with what they had and that's fine enough.

Results

Randy Orton b. Luke Harper – RK0

Mojo Rawley won a battle royal last eliminating Tyler Breeze

Dolph Ziggler b. Kalisto – Superkick

Dean Ambrose b. Miz – Dirty Deeds

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Best of 2016: News Story of the Year

This is always a trick one to define. Sometimes there are stories that mean something outside of the ring and often times, those are even bigger stories than anything between the ropes. There were a fair few stories like that this year and for once they don't all pertain to WWE. These stories are in no particular order and hopefully we have more to pick from next year.

1. Hulk Hogan vs. Gawker

Let's talk about Hulk Hogan's sex tape. While the story broke a long time ago, the trial itself actually took place in 2016 and saw Hogan eventually awarded a \$31 million settlement which resulted in Gawker closing its doors. Hogan wasn't exactly shown in the best light but at least it struck a blow for privacy instead of celebrities having their privacy invaded.

Unfortunately it resulted in Hogan basically being removed from WWE programming and anything associated with it. That's really not the most surprising reaction as the idea of having Hogan shown in a sex tape isn't exactly the most PG thing in the world. Hopefully we see Hogan back in WWE soon enough, though hopefully with him wearing pants.

2. Billy Corgan Kicked Out of TNA

Just...wow. So basically TNA was out of money (again) and Billy Corgan offered to loan/give them money to survive through their next TV tapings on multiple occasions. Now here's the amazing part: he actually WANTED SOMETHING IN RETURN. Yes indeed: a multimillionaire who has several business ventures actually hoped to gain something out of another investment.

Well that's what Dixie Carter thought was ridiculous, eventually calling Corgan a "predatory lender". Corgan would be thrown out of TNA with his money back and absolutely no authority in the long term because TNA is ridiculous enough to act like this. There's a reason they come off as the joke of the wrestling world and this is a great example. Maybe Anthem can help things but this came off as horrible and there's little other way to spin it.

3. New Japan Talent Comes to WWE

So you remember back in the day where WCW and WWE would steal each other's talent over and over? Well that's kind of what's happening now but WWE took some of the big names. Just after Wrestle Kingdom X on January 4, Shinsuke Nakamura, AJ Styles, Luke Gallows and Karl Anderson all jumped to WWE, making it one of the biggest signing periods in WWE history.

This really is a big deal as WWE replenished their roster in one swoop and also punched their only major international competition in the face at the same time. Styles became one of the top stars in the company in his first year and Nakamura seems primed for a main roster run in 2017. It was a huge moment and changed the way WWE looked for a long time to come.

4. UK Championship Tournament and Potential for More

If there's one thing WWE has seemed interested in doing lately, it's expanding internationally. On top of that, they love the idea of expanding content on the WWE Network. By running this tournament, they were able to do that in one move. WWE ran a UK Title tournament in Blackpool, England which seemed to open the door for some UK content airing on the Network.

While the tournament was a success, it also seems to have planted the seeds for other tournaments going forward. I know they might not be on the same level as WWE but there are a lot of independent promotions out there which could be major players on the WWE Network. Just imagine one of them getting a weekly spot on the Network going forward. That's a huge upgrade and opens a massive audience that had never seen them before. It's certainly something I would check out which I wouldn't do otherwise.

5. Goldberg Returns

While this was almost certainly tied in with the new WWE video game, it's still a huge deal that changed several things for WWE. Like having him beat Brock Lesnar in less than two minutes for example. Goldberg was one of the big free agents out there who could wind up being a major player in WWE and that's what he's been in one match over the course of several months.

The WWE video game reveal has been a fun day to look forward to every year and that's what we had here. It's gotten to the point

where someone who is put on the front of a video game gets to appear in WWE, which means we get a major match as a reward. I'm still not sure on Goldberg beating Lesnar like that but at least he gave us a major moment.

6. Shane McMahon Returns

Now this was a big one. I mean, Goldberg wasn't exactly expected but this was in the range of WHAT THE HECK JUST HAPPENED. As soon as Shane's music hit, you knew something was changing in a hurry and it made a lot of people very interested to see where it was going. While the story wasn't all that great, the initial surprise certainly was and that's important.

This was a big deal because Shane had been gone for so long. It really felt like he was out of the company for good but now things seem to have changed again. I don't think Shane has any authority behind the scenes but he's always been the one who felt like he could change things in a much better way. Granted I don't think that's going to happen but at least it was a great moment and gave us something to think about.

This might not be the best year in the world for wrestling news stories but it's definitely the New Japan guys. That's the kind of story that changes things in two companies and two different wrestling worlds. Those names could all be major players in WWE (Styles already is) and could help WWE expand into other areas of the world.

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Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2012: The New Star

Royal Rumble 2012

Date: January 29, 2012

Location: Scottrade Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Attendance: 18,121

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Booker T

We wrap things up here with last year's show. The Rumble is back to the thirty entrant variety which is probably the best move all around. The odds on favorite is Jericho who returned very recently before this show. Other than that we've got Daniel Bryan defending his newly won world title against Big Show and Henry in a cage, along with Punk defending against Ziggler. Let's get to it.

The opening video is of course about going to Wrestlemania.

Smackdown World Title: Big Show vs. Daniel Bryan vs. Mark Henry

Bryan is champion and beat Show at TLC by cashing in his MITB case in 45 seconds. Show beat Henry at the same show and ran over Bryan's girlfriend AJ on Raw to set all this up. This is one fall to a finish and it's pin/submission/escape. Bryan immediately goes for the corner but Henry pulls him down and Show runs Bryan over for two. Show crushes Henry against the cage wall but has to stop to pull Bryan back inside. Bryan tries to run up again but Show catches him by the ankle and slams him back in.

Show loads up the WMD but hits the cage wall instead. The champion fires off some kicks but gets headbutted right back down. Bryan kicks the knee out even harder and fires off some kicks to Henry to keep the other monster down. He goes for the door but you know this isn't ending that quickly. Henry makes the stop and demands that the referee CLOSE THAT DOOR. Show superkicks Henry down and it's his turn to take over for awhile.

Bryan gets slammed down but Henry is back up again. A few punches

put Show down because a dozen chair shots usually can't, but a few punches can. Actually that's a great way to keep Henry looking strong. The fans are cheering for Bryan as Henry and Show collide to put all three guys down. Show gets back up and clotheslines Bryan down a few times before superkicking him in the face. The chokeslam is countered and Bryan hits a tornado DDT on Show for two.

The LeBell (NO!) Lock is put on Show but Henry breaks it up in about a second. The WMD gets two on Henry but Bryan makes the save, which ticks Show off. Bryan SPRINTS up the cage but Show chases after him and grabs Bryan before he can get out. Bryan sits on the top of the cage and pounds away, only to be caught again. The champion is literally hanging from Show's wrist before finally letting go and falling to the floor to retain the title.

Rating: D+. This really wasn't all that great. At the end of the day, it was a lot of the same sequence over and over again with Show and Henry not having a ton of interaction at all. The ending didn't look great either and I'm not sure why Show would just hold him out over the floor like that. This falls under the category of "...really?" as it's hard to buy Bryan keeping the belt here.

Long video on Cena and all the stuff he does for WWE. The man is insanely committed to that company.

Divas of Doom/Bella Twins vs. Eve Torres/Alicia Fox/Tamina/Kelly Kelly

The Divas of Doom are Beth and Natalya. Natalya and Tamina start things off and they collide a few times. Tamina slaps her in the face before chopping Nattie down for two. Off to Eve for that bouncing moonsault for two. Since that's a pretty lame move, Natalya charges her into the corner and brings in Beth who blocks a rolling splash with knees to Eve's back.

Off to let's say Nikki for some basic stomps to the back and a quickly broken chinlock. Jerry is asked what he likes about the Bellas and he can't even get an answer out. Not hot tag brings in Alicia who is immediately sent into the corner and chinlocked as well. Alicia finally counters by flipping Nikki forward and makes

the actual hot tag to Kelly. There's the screaming headscissors and a faceplant for two. Everything breaks down and almost everyone heads to the floor, where Kelly hits a HUGE dive to take everyone out. Back in and Beth SLAPS herself in to hit the Glam Slam on Kelly for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was your usual Divas match: they did their "sexy" spots, they had barely there outfits, Kelly screamed a lot, Beth beat up Kelly to end things. One interesting note from a year later: would they even be able to put together an eight Divas tag now? I'm thinking through the roster and I don't know if I can name eight girls on the main shows right now.

We recap Ryder getting hurt at the hands of Kane. This was during the period where Ryder went from one of the hottest things in the company and US Champion to a rag doll that Kane destroyed over and over and over in the span of a few weeks until his push was completely destroyed. Eve blamed Cena for Ryder having his back broken for some reason.

Ryder is wheeled in and patronized by Johnny Ace (remember him?). Ace has a private room set up for Ryder but Eve comes up to yell at Ace first. Not much here but it's setting up stuff later on tonight.

Kane vs. John Cena

This is when Kane had the welder's mask look. Brawl to start with Kane beating Cena down into the corner as the fans are split on Johnny. A clothesline puts them both on the floor where Kane is sent knees first into the steps. Back in and Cena can't hit the AA on Kane. That makes sense as after all, Kane is probably 175lbs lighter than Show who Cena throws around with near ease most of the time.

Kane kicks Cena down and gets two off an uppercut. A suplex gets the same and it's off to a chinlock. Cena fights up and is sent into the buckle for his efforts followed by Kane's stupid smother hold. John tries to counter into a Crossface but Kane comes out with a side slam. The idea here is that Cena can't get anything going at all. The top rope clothesline takes Cena's head off but Cena pops up and hits his shoulder block.

The Shuffle is countered by a grab of Cena's throat and a big boot gets two. Cena blocks a superplex and hits the Shuffle off the top. That's certainly a new one. The AA is countered by an elbow to the face and Kane kicks Cena out to the floor. Booker talks about how Cena is a good kid. I don't think I ever recall Cena being called a kid since like 2004. Kane pounds on Cena in the aisle and that's a double countout so we can do this match again next month.

Rating: D+. I know that's a common theme tonight but it fits here again. These two didn't work all that well together and the story was even worse. Then again, this was nothing more than giving Cena something to do for a few months until he could get ready for the biggest match of his career. This didn't work for the most part.

The fight continues into the back where Kane finds a chair to lay to lay out Cena. To the shock of no one paying attention, Kane finds the door to Ryder's private room and kicks the door in. Ryder is taken to the ring and tombstoned as Eve screams. Cena comes out to try to save Eve but gets chokeslammed by Kane who walks away. Ryder does a stretcher job, but somehow it would get even worse for him in the coming weeks.

BE A STAR!

Zack is wheeled out and Cena is booed for it. That's the part of this story that never held up for me: why is this Cena's responsibility? Ryder was the United States Champion. He should be able to defend himself.

We get a video on the Rock just like Cena got earlier. It's shot in the back of Rock's car and is more like a mini documentary. It focuses on how insane Rock's life is and all of the stuff he does around the world.

Drew McIntyre vs. Brodus Clay

This is right after Brodus redebuted as the Funkasaurus so he was still a new character at this point. Brodus dances a lot, Drew punches him in the corner, Brodus headbutts him and hits the cross body (called WHAT THE FUNK) for the pin in about a minute.

Buy Slim Jims! For the troops!

We recap Punk vs. Ziggler who is challenging Punk on Ace's behalf. This is during the "Ace is boring" phase where Punk made fun of him no matter what he did, so Ace helped Ziggler get a win over Punk to earn a title shot. Ace is also guest referee tonight just because. He's openly admitted he's going to screw Punk out of the title tonight, so HHH is going to evaluate his job status the next night on Raw, meaning Ace has to play nice.

Raw World Title: CM Punk vs. Dolph Ziggler

Punk is defending and Ace is referee. Johnny Ace is John Laurinitis but that's a hard name to spell. Before the match, Ace says he'll be the outside referee. Ok then. Wait we're still not ready to go as Ace throws Vickie out as well. We finally get going and Ziggler tries a quick Fameasser which is countered into a failed GTS attempt. Punk tells Dolph it was that close. They feel each other out a bit longer until Ziggler starts strutting.

Punk finally gets his hands on Ziggler and puts on an abdominal stretch, complete with a wrapped toe and slicking back his hair ala Ziggler. Dolph heads to the floor and gets taken out by a suicide dive but shoves Punk off the top rope once they get back inside. Ziggler drops about eight elbows in a row and a jumping version gets two. We hit the chinlock with Ziggler cranking on the head way more than necessary.

The champ starts firing off chops and strikes before getting caught in the sleeper. That goes nowhere but neither does Punk's Anaconda Vice attempt. Back to the sleeper but Dolph can't get it on all the way. Instead there's a perfect dropkick for two on Punk but the Fameasser is countered into a helicopter bomb for two. A swinging neckbreaker by the champ puts Dolph into the corner where the knee/bulldog combination actually works.

The GTS is countered into a slingshot but Punk lands on the middle rope. He comes off with a spinning cross body but Ziggler rolls through for a near fall in a cool sequence. The high kick gets two for Punk as does the Macho Elbow, drawing a Randy Savage chant. The

GTS is countered again and the referee goes down as per the requirement in a world title mach. Punk hooks the Vice but Ace is checking on the down referee. Then Punk gets a rollup and there's STILL no referee.

Ace sends the referee back in as Punk loads up the GTS, but Ziggler's legs knock Ace to the floor. Ace sees the pin but refuses to count because he thinks Punk did it on purpose. Ziggler counters another GTS attempt into the Fameasser for two before pounding away a bit. The champ comes back with a slingshot and the GTS gets a pin from both referees to retain the title.

Rating: B+. This took awhile to get going as we were all waiting on the Ace stuff. The feud would go on for weeks until Jericho finally showed up to give Punk someone with charisma to feud with. The near falls at the end were a lot better than Ace, but it occurs to me that this was pretty much the same match he had last year. Good stuff though.

Rumble by the Numbers:

30 Superstars

1 winner

31 Hall of Famers in the Rumble

21 main events those Hall of Famers have been in at Wrestlemania

695 entrants who have been eliminated

39 entrants eliminated by Michaels, a record (Kane is second at 35)

13 consecutive Rumbles for Kane

11 eliminations for Kane in 2001

194,107lbs that have been in the Rumble, or over 97 tons, or 430 Big Show

421,883 people who have attended the Rumble

62:12 Rey Mysterio spent in the Rumble in 2006, a record

3 wins for Austin

1 second that Santino lasted in 2009

2 women who have competed in the Rumble

1, the entrant that has produced the same amount of winners as #30 at two each

27, the entrant with more winners than any other at four

55 percent of winners that have won the title at Wrestlemania

Royal Rumble

The Miz is #1 and talks about how he's going back to the main event of Wrestlemania this year. His former apprentice Alex Riley is #2 which isn't really surprising given how RANDOM these draws are. I always liked Riley and he always got a good reaction, which is clearly why he doesn't get on TV more. Riley pounds away to start and runs Miz over with a forearm but walks into a big boot. Maybe it's the old school fan in me but I don't like a 6'0 guy using a big boot. Miz talks trash and low bridges Riley out with ease.

R-Truth, Miz's former partner, is #3. Truth fires off some kicks and avoids the Finale before hitting a kind of powerslam. Miz gets sent to the apron for the second time but Truth turns his back to watch Cody come out at #4. A quick Disaster Kick puts Truth down (Cole says it hits Miz because those two are so hard to tell apart) and Truth gets double teamed for awhile. He manages to send Cody to the apron but gets caught in the Reality Check as the clock seems to be speeding up.

Justin Gabriel is #5 and things speed WAY up. A big spinwheel kick puts Miz down before Cody goes nuts on Gabriel in the corner. Primo is #6 to keep things low key to start. Actually he speeds things up as well and hits a sweet headscissors out of the corner to take Gabriel down. Truth hits the spinning forearm on Cody, only to be dumped out by Miz a second later. Since he's still crazy, Truth pulls Miz to the floor and lays him out on the outside.

Mick Foley is #7 to fire up the crowd a little bit. He dumps Primo almost immediately before getting beaten on by Cody. Foley looks really old and slow here but to be fair, he is in fact old and slow. In a HILARIOUS bit, Ricardo Rodriguez is #8 but comes out in an old

banged up, rusted out rental car. He's even got the Del Rio scarf to hide some of his hideous pale body. We get a HUGE Ricardo chant as Foley and Gabriel have no idea what to do here.

Ricardo takes Cody down and pounds away before proposing an alliance with Foley of all people. They actually do team up and toss Gabriel, allowing Ricardo to do a CM Punk knee slide. We keep the comedy going with Santino at #9 and Ricardo runs from the Cobra. Santino beats on Ricardo and literally rolls him around the ring before pulling his trunks up and tossing Rodriguez.

Now we get my favorite spot of the match as Santino puts on the Cobra and Mick puts on Socko and it's TIME FOR A DUEL!!! Before they can collide though it's Epico at #10 but he falls to the powers of the socks and is out almost immediately. The socks COLLIDE until Miz and Cody pop back in (neither was eliminated) and dump Santino. Miz gets Socko but Cody dumps Mick. Fun comedy bit here to give us a good first act to the match.

Kofi Kingston is #11 and hits a double springboard clothesline before hitting a double Boom Drop. In at #12 is Jerry Lawler (Cole: "WHAT ARE YOU DOING???") and he causes Miz to hit Cody by mistake. Lawler speeds things up and hits the middle rope punch with the lowered strap, only to be put out by Cody. Ezekiel Jackson is #13 and gets to do the usual power moves on each guy while the others lay around.

Jinder Mahal is #14 and the fans start chanting USA, even though the only two Americans in this match are Rhodes and Miz. Great Khali comes in at #15 and Mahal panics. Everyone gets chops and Mahal is out in just a few seconds. Jackson tries to pound away and is put out almost immediately as well. Hunico is #16 on that stupid bicycle of his and hits a spinning cross body on Miz and his Angle Slam on Cody.

Khali chops Hunico down as the ring is staying relatively empty. Booker T is #17 to surprise Cole. You would think he would have noticed that the man sitting next to him for over two hours wasn't wearing pants but he never was considered that bright. Now we get

the spot of the match as Miz shoves Kofi to the floor but Kofi holds himself up by his hands. Miz shoves Kofi into a handstand but Kingston WALKS ON HIS HANDS ACROSS THE FLOOR TO THE STEPS to get back in. FREAKING AWESOME MAN!

Dolph Ziggler is #18 as the ring is starting to get full. Hacksaw Jim Duggan makes his annual return at #19 to pop the crowd huge. He cleans house for a bit and we get a DOUBLE NOGGIN KNOCKER on Miz and Rhodes. Cody avoids a charge in the corner though and dumps Duggan in less than a minute. That's the best idea at the end of the day. Miz and Cody team up to put out Booker and Khali at the same time. We complete the trio with Michael Cole at #20. At the moment we've got Cole, Miz, Rhodes, Kingston, Hunico and Ziggler in the ring. Kharma returns at #21 in her only WWE match ever. She hits Cole so hard she knocks his headgear off so Cole eliminates himself. Well he gets to the apron where King and Booker eliminate him. Ziggler tells Kharma to get out so she DRILLS him. Kharma dumps Hunico but Ziggler sneaks up and eliminates her (Booker calls this doing the impossible. Not really Book.) to a ton of heat.

Sheamus is #22 to give us some A level star power. Well maybe B+ level. Things speed up with Sheamus destroying everyone and tossing Kofi out. There are the ten forearms in the ropes to Cody and ten to Miz as well. The Zig Zag is countered and Road Dogg is another surprise return at #23. He gets to clean house for a bit and earns a "you still got it" chant. In far less than 90 seconds, Jey Uso is #24.

Everyone pairs off until Jack Swagger is #25. After a few suplexes everything settles down into its usual brawling phase until Barrett is #26. He throws out Roadie and stomps away on a lot of people. David Otunga gets the lucky spot at #27 and poses a lot before he comes out. Not a lot happens so Orton comes in at #28 to pick things up a bit. Remember we're in his hometown so everyone goes nuts.

Cody breaks up the RK0 on Barrett so Randy hits the Elevated DDT on both Cody and Ziggler at the same time because he can. There's an RK0 to Barrett and he's out. Chris Jericho, complete with a blackout

of the arena, makes his return at #29. He's still a face at this point and dumps Otunga to a good reaction. Big Show is #30 which was considered a letdown at the time. Dude, he was world champion a month ago. That's hardly Darren Young coming out.

As Show comes in he pulls Swagger out from the floor, giving us a final grouping of Miz, Rhodes, Ziggler, Sheamus, Orton, Jericho and Big Show. That's a pretty solid grouping. Show dumps Cody and Miz at the same time to get us down to five. Show tosses Ziggler as well to get us down to four. The big man cleans house but walks into an RK0, allowing Orton and Sheamus to pick him up and Randy clotheslines him out. Jericho dumps Orton immediately thereafter and we're down to two.

The fans are entirely behind Jericho here so Sheamus runs him over a few times. Jericho's bulldog is countered but Sheamus can't throw him over the corner. Jericho charges into the Irish Curse but Sheamus can't hit the High Cross. We get a great false finish with Jericho clotheslining Sheamus to the apron and then knocking him down to the point where Sheamus is hanging on by his leg. Sheamus comes back in with the slingshot shoulder but the Brogue Kick is countered into the Walls.

After the hold is broken Jericho gets knocked to the apron where he BARELY hangs on. They go to the top rope and both fall to the apron, meaning if they hit the floor they're out. Both guys get back in and there's the Codebreaker to Sheamus. Jericho gets Sheamus upside down but can't get him out. A shot to the face ticks Sheamus off and he catches a Codebreaker attempt to put Jericho on the apron. The Brogue Kick sends Sheamus to Wrestlemania.

Rating: A-. This is one of those Rumbles that is great fun as you watch it live but it loses some steam on a second viewing. They spent a bit too much time on nostalgia and funny ideas here but they were still really good ideas. The ending with Sheamus and Jericho ROCKED and I have no idea why they never got to have a long PPV match. This is a really good Rumble but it never reaches that excellent level that some of them get to.

Sheamus celebrates a lot to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. The Rumble is a unique show as it has a way to save itself from a bad first half. That's what happened here as the last two matches were certainly good enough to save it from the horrible first few matches. As usual the last two guys would both get world title shots with the winner getting the opening match instead of the real main event, but going on before Rock vs. Cena is hardly torture.

Ratings Comparison

Daniel Bryan vs. Mark Henry vs. Big Show

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Bella Twins/Divas of Doom vs. Alicia Fox/Kelly Kelly/Eve Torres/Tamina

Original: D+

Redo: D+

Kane vs. John Cena

Original: D+

Redo: D+

Brodus Clay vs. Drew McIntyre

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

CM Punk vs. Dolph Ziggler

Original: B

Redo: B+

Royal Rumble

Original: B+

Redo: A-

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: B

Just like last year, not much difference here.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/01/29/royal-rumble-2012/>

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Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2011: The Big One

Royal Rumble 2011

Date: January 30, 2011

Location: TD Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Attendance: 15,113

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Matt Striker

This is a weird Rumble as for one year only they tried having forty people in the Rumble instead of the usual thirty. It didn't quite work so they never tried it again, but for this year as a result there are only four matches on the whole card: two world titles, a Divas match and the Rumble itself. This is one of those rumbles I

barely remember. Let's get to it.

The opening video is exactly what you would expect.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Dolph Ziggler

Edge is defending and if he uses the spear here, Ziggler wins the title because Vickie is a crooked boss. Dolph takes over early and pounds on Edge in the corner but gets whipped across the ring to shift momentum. This is during Cole's heel phase so he's very annoying at this point. A gutbuster gets two for the champion and he takes things to the floor. Ziggler is rammed into the apron and the barricade for good measure as Edge stands tall.

As they come back in, Ziggler grabs a neckbreaker for two and hits an elbow to the chest. Off to a chinlock as Dolph stays on the neck. The fans cheer for Edge of course and he fights up, only to get caught in a middle rope sunset flip. Edge comes back with a slingshot into the buckle and now Dolph is in trouble. A rollup out of the corner gets two for Edge but Dolph hits another neckbreaker for two of his own.

Off to the chinlock until Edge rolls out to the apron. Ziggler knocks him into the barricade and it's back inside for the chinlock. Edge fights up but they both try cross bodies to put both guys down. Ziggy misses a Stinger Splash in the corner and Edge catches him in a flapjack to put both guys down again. Edge counters the Fameasser into a sitout powerbomb for two more but he can't follow up.

The champion goes up but has to fight out of a superplex. Ziggler gets knocked down and hit by a top rope cross body, only for Ziggler to roll through for two. Now the fans start cheering for Ziggler as he gets two off a dropkick. The Zig Zag misses and Edge busts out the Edgecator of all things. Dolph grabs the rope so Edge dives at him on said ropes, only to clothesline himself on them.

The Fameasser gets two and both guys are down again. A big boot puts Ziggler down for about the seventh time and Edge gets into spear position. Like an idiot, Vickie reminds him of this, allowing Dolph to catch Edge in the sleeper. Edge rolls out of it and hits the

Impaler for two as Vickie pulls the referee out of the ring. Vickie slaps Edge but the champion dodges a charging Dolph into a rollup for two.

She slaps Edge AGAIN so here's Kelly Kelly to take Vickie down. In the melee the Zig Zag hits for two and a BIG pop on the kickout. There's the sleeper and while trying to escape it, Edge knocks the referee down. Edge escapes the hold with a kind of Stunner and realizes there's no referee or Vickie so there's the spear to Zigler. The referee wakes up and Edge hits an Unprettier to retain the title.

Rating: A-. Good stuff here again although the ending is kind of stupid. Eventually Edge would be stripped of the title for using the spear (I can't remember if it was here or another match) and Zigler would have a stupid 45 minutes or less reign. I don't think anyone, including Dolph, considers that a real reign but hey, Zigler is a former world champion so we have to respect him, right WWE?

We recap Orton vs. Miz. The champion Miz cashed in MITB on Orton back in November and beat him in a tables match at TLC. Tonight it's an actual match which means Miz is likely in trouble.

Miz says he'll win.

Raw World Title: The Miz vs. Randy Orton

Miz has Riley with him here. Orton pounds away to start as Cole is already on his knees to suck Miz off. The champ is knocked out to the floor and gets sent into the barricades a few times. Back in and Orton kicks him in the face before stomping away a bit. Cole is already on one of his rants about how noble Miz is in comparison to Edge. Orton chokes on the ropes a bit as Cole says that Orton should have stated in advance that he wanted to brawl.

Riley finally guillotines Orton on the top rope to give Miz a chance. Orton shrugs the offense off and slugs Miz down, only to miss a running knee in the corner. Cole stays on his rant about how awesome Miz is as Riley interferes some more. Cole high fives Riley and Miz hooks a chinlock for a bit. Striker continues his brilliance

by saying Miz is working on the midsection to set up the SKULL Crushing Finale. A running knee to Orton's face gets two and it's back to the chinlock.

Randy blocks a German Suplex and elbows Miz down to break the momentum. Miz comes right back with a big boot to the face for two and the champion is getting frustrated. Miz goes up and gets crotched right back down, allowing Orton to hit his daddy's superplex for two. Randy starts his comeback with the clotheslines and the backbreaker to send Miz to the apron. Why would you go there against Orton? Perhaps it's because he can backdrop Orton out to the floor to counter and have Riley stomp away a bit.

A top rope ax handle gets two for Miz so he pounds away on Orton's head. Back to the chinlock but Orton fights out of this one much faster. Not that it matters though as Orton gets sent through the ropes and out to the floor where Miz catapults him into the post. Orton gets back in at nine and is all fired up, only to get punched into the corner. Randy comes back with a clothesline and the powerslam before hitting the circle stomp.

Riley breaks up something like a powerbomb, allowing Miz to hit a modified Reality Check for two. Both finishers are countered and Orton hits an Angle Slam of all things for two. I vaguely remember him using that around this time. Miz's attempt at walking out fails but he gets in something we can't see for two back inside.

Randy gets two off a rollup and there's the Elevated DDT. Orton loads up the RKO but here's the New Nexus for a distraction. Riley tries to come in but in a great looking spot, Orton LAUNCHES Riley over the top (and over the referee) onto Nexus. The RKO hits but Punk runs in with a GTS to keep the belt on Miz. Cole literally jumps for joy.

Rating: B. I was digging this match a lot and the ending would wind up making a lot more sense than it does on paper here. While Punk would obviously go on to feud with Punk for a few months, Miz would face Jerry Lawler of all people at Elimination Chamber before moving on to the main event of Wrestlemania. Good stuff here though and one

of Miz's best matches ever. Gee you hear that a lot when Orton is the opponent don't you?

Dashing Cody Rhodes will not be here tonight because of his shattered face. This would lead to Dr. Cody Doom which was pretty awesome and then wound up being wasted.

Fans say who they think is going to win the Rumble.

Divas Title: Natalya vs. Laycool

Nattie beat them in a handicap match to win the title and this is the rematch. Before anything gets going though, we have an e-mail from the anonymous GM. We're going to make it a four way just for the sake of making it a fourway and we want to have a new champion.

Divas Title: Michelle McCool vs. Layla vs. Eve Torres vs. Natalya

Nattie is defending as I said and this is one fall to a finish. Laycool goes after both other chicks to start and Eve gets double teamed. Natalya comes back with a slingshot to send Layla into Michelle as Matt actually tries to analyze this match. We get down to Laycool squaring off but before they do anything, Eve and Nattie come back in.

Layla breaks up the Sharpshooter on Eve so Natalya puts the Sharpshooter on BOTH OF THEM AT ONCE. Layla hits the neckbreaker on Eve to send her to the floor but Michelle kicks Eve out to the floor. Michelle misses a bit boot and takes Layla's head off by mistake. She and the champ fight to the floor, allowing Eve to sneak in and steal the pin with a moonsault.

Rating: D+. That might become my default rating for Divas matches as most of them fall into the same category: not bad but nothing worth seeing at all for the most part. The double Sharpshooter was cool but it's a five second sequence out of a five minute match. Also, why am I supposed to be excited about Eve winning the title when she wasn't even important enough to put into the match in the first place?

Michelle is mad because she had Natalya covered at the same time but the referee didn't see it.

A cleanshaven Daniel Bryan is excited for the Rumble because he could win. He's with Gail at this point and the Bellas come up to offer their condolences for trying to hook up with Bryan. The Bellas imply they're better looking than Gail and a fight breaks out.

Rumble By The Numbers time!

40 entrants

1 winner

24 winners

656 losing entrants

39 eliminations by Shawn, a record

26 WWE Hall of Famers who have competed

183,932lbs that has competed in the Rumble, or 92 tons or 492 Big Shows

2 women who have competed in the Rumble

11 eliminations by Kane in 2001, a record

13 straight Rumbles for Kane, also a record

62:12 Mysterio lasted in the 2006 Rumble

1 second, the record for shortest time in the Rumble, held by Santino Marella

3 wins by Austin

2, the number of wins that spot #1 has produced, the same as #30

70% of winners have gone on to win the title at Mania

Royal Rumble

40 entrants this year and it's Punk at #1 and before #2 comes out, here's the Corre (Barrett, Jackson, Slater and Gabriel) to surround Punk. They jump him until Punk's Nexus guys come out for the save. The GM sends an e-mail that says everyone not named CM Punk needs to get out or they're out of the Rumble. Anyway Daniel Bryan is #2 and the internet explodes.

They speed things up to start and Bryan fires off some kicks to the

ribs. Striker talks about how the internet loves this match as Bryan is sent to the apron. The dueling chants begin and Bryan misses a dropkick in the corner. Justin Gabriel is #3 and immediately goes after Punk. Bryan clotheslines CM down and Gabriel misses the 450, allowing Bryan to dump Justin out.

Zack Ryder, still a heel, is #4. He immediately takes Bryan down and hits the Broski Boot to both guys. Bryan launches Ryder into the air for a Rough Ryder into Punk, only to get dumped to the floor by Daniel. Back to Punk vs. Bryan until William Regal is #5. He starts busting out the knees to the face and some suplexes before hitting the knee trembler to Punk. The student and the teacher (Bryan and Regal) slug it out before Punk kicks the teacher in the head. Bryan kicks Punk in the head for kicking Regal in the head and only Daniel is left standing.

Ted DiBiase is #6 along with Maryse. Bryan rips off kicks to Regal before trying to dump Ted out. John Morrison is #7 to a BIG pop. He comes in (after slipping) with a slingshot kick to Regal and the Flying Chuck to Punk. A C4 takes Bryan down but DiBiase dumps Morrison to the apron. As Regal is eliminated, we get at the time the best Rumble save ever, as Morrison is knocked from the apron but catches himself on the barricade. His feet never touch as he pulls himself up to the barricade, tightrope walks down to the steps, jumps to said steps, kicks Regal in the head, and gets back in. That blew my mind live.

Yoshi Tatsu (Striker calls him the Poison Fist of the Pacific Rim because Striker likes to think he's smart) is #8 and goes right after Punk. Husky Harris is #9 and he beats everyone not named Punk before standing guard over his leader. Chavo Guerrero is #10 as these intervals are getting really short. Chavo loads up Three Amigos on DiBiase but Punk breaks it up. Now Punk takes two of them but Morrison breaks it up at two. So this time Morrison takes two suplexes but BRYAN breaks it up and finally Daniel takes all three suplexes.

Chavo takes Harris down with a middle rope missile dropkick and Mark

Henry is #11. For some reason Chavo dives on him and is immediately dumped out. Yoshi is sent out as well as JTG is #12. Michael McGillicutty is #13 and he takes out JTG almost immediately before teaming up with Harris to dump DiBiase. Christ Masters is #14 and puts Punk to the apron with the Masterlock until McGillicutty makes the save. Masters and Bryan slug it out until Otunga is #15, giving Punk and the Nexus four members.

They gang up on and toss Bryan pretty easily and there goes Masters as well. There goes Morrison too and the elimination of Henry clears the ring. Tyler Reks from ECW gets to come in at #16 and you can figure out what happens to him in about 40 seconds. Vladimir Kozlov is #17 but the numbers catch up with him and it's Punk who gets to do the honors. We're just waiting for Cena to come out now.

Instead it's R-Truth at #18 and it's the same result. The only highlight is Punk hitting the knee in the corner and saying WHAT'S UP with a big goofy grin on his face. There goes Truth but Great Khali returns at #19 to scare Punk half to death. He fights all of the Nexus off and manages to dump Harris which is a big breakthrough. Khali chops Punk down and Mason Ryan, also of the Nexus, is #20. After a brief slugout he puts Khali out and we're right back where we were.

In our second major return of the Rumble, Booker T is #21 and Striker FREAKS. Booker fires off as many kicks as he can and hits the Bookend on McGillicutty. You know we're getting the Spinarooni but Ryan throws Booker out as soon as it's over. Punk: "WE'RE GOING TO WRESTLEMANIA!" All hope seems to be lost but heeeeeeeeeere's Cena at #22. The hometown boy charges at the ring and puts out McGillicutty, Ryan and Otunga to get us down to one on one.

Cena pounds away and escapes the GTS before a double clothesline puts both guys down. Hornswoggle is #23 and is immediately kicked down by Punk. Atta boy CM! Punk loads up the GTS but Cena escapes and this the AA to toss Punk out. In next is Tyson Kidd at #24 and he gets caught between Cena and Horny. The Swogg busts out a headscissors before Cena hits the AA. In a decent visual, Horny hits

an AA of his own allowing for the elimination by Cena.

Heath Slater is #25 and DEAR GOODNESS he looks hilarious in trunks. He might be as pale as Sheamus used to be and the visual is horrible. Horny hits some Sweet Shin Music and a Stunner followed by a double Five Knuckle Shuffle. There's a Tadpole Splash and Slater is gone. Cole sounds like he's about to be sick. Kofi Kingston is #26 and this should be interesting. Kofi fires off some kicks of course followed by some punches in the corner until Jack Swagger is #27.

Cole talks about the luck of #27 and Jerry correctly points out that the number is lucky in 30 man matches, not 40. Swagger hits the Vader Bomb on both full sized guys but as he goes after Hornswoggle, Kofi cross bodies Swagger down. There's the Boom Drop with horny as a stepping stone and it's King Sheamus at #28. Cena takes the Irish Curse and there's only Horny left to face Sheamus. Horny loads up Sweet Shin Music but Cena saves Horny from elimination. The tiny man loads up the Tadpole Splash but gets Brogue Kicked out, thank goodness.

Mysterio is #29 and he hits a pair of headscissors on Swagger and Sheamus but Sheamus breaks up the 619. Trouble in Paradise takes Sheamus down but Swagger takes Kofi down. Rey hits a headscissors to put Swagger on the apron and a 619 gets the elimination. Wade Barrett is #30 and it turns into a bunch of mini brawls. Winds of Change take Cena down and Zigler is #31. There's a pretty big talent pool in there at the moment with Cena, Mysterio, Sheamus, Kingston, Zigler and Barrett.

Barrett and Dolph go after Cena but Mysterio makes a save for no apparent reason. Diesel is the final big return at #32 and there's your big pop. This is the appearance that set up Diesel vs. HHH and Punk for the latter half of the year. Everyone is stunned but I think it's just at how black Diesel has gotten his hair. That's some high quality polish. We get a Diesel chant and he cleans house in a much more effective way than you would expect. Diesel's style is really good for something like this as he does so many basic moves

but he's so big that they look that much more impressive.

Drew McIntyre is #33 and we get a LOUD let's go Diesel chant. Diesel gets caught in 619 position and in a very rare occurrence, the move gets booed. Alex Riley is #34 and Cole loses his mind when Miz's music hits again. Diesel misses a big boot and gets kicked out by Barrett. The DIESEL chant rocks the Garden as Miz sits in on commentary. Big Show is in at #35, so Striker talks about how much taller Show is than the tallest player in the NHL. For once I agree with Cole when he says "WHO CARES???" We know Big Show is tall, and simply telling us he's taller than a guy who is 6'9 doesn't change anything.

Show and Diesel have a staredown in the aisle which is a FAR better (and actual) illustration of how big Show is. McIntyre and Sheamus get dropped by Show and there's a chokeslam for Barrett. Show dumps Ziggler as Cena dumps Riley. Show shoves McIntyre out as Big Zeke is #36. He immediately throws out Show to a shockingly non-reaction. We have Barrett, Jackson, Kingston, Cena, Mystério and Sheamus at the moment.

Santino is #37 and literally immediately breaks his record of 1 second in the Rumble. Jackson almost immediately decks him and knocks Santino to the mat and out to the floor which isn't an elimination. Remember that. Jackson tries to put Cena out and Del Rio is #38. He's still new at this point and hasn't gotten on almost everyone's nerves yet.

Striker tells us that Riley has been eliminated five minutes after it happens. Not only is he annoying but he's a bad broadcaster on top of that. Alberto wisely takes forever to get into the ring as Miz's voice sounds really hoarse. By long enough I mean Orton jumps him in the aisle at #39. There's a quick RKO to Del Rio and one for Sheamus as well. A third hits Kofi and he's gone. Sheamus is out too and it's time for Cena vs. Orton. John points to the sign but Kane's pyro goes off at #40 to complete the field and scare Cena to death.

So we've got Cena, Mystério, Barrett, Jackson, Del Rio, Orton and Kane in the ring. I've seen far worse. Kane focuses on Orton and

hits the side slam, only to be run over by Big Zeke. Jackson misses a charge though and goes out via a low bridge. Mysterio jumps into a chokeslam grip but Rey headscissors him out, only to be dumped by Barrett. Orton goes after Alberto while Cena beats up Barrett. Cena gets sent to the apron but gets back in via a shoulder to Wade's ribs.

Things slow down again and NOW we get Cena vs. Orton. The fans barely react to it though so Barrett breaks it up. There's an AA to Del Rio and here's Riley again. He distracts Cena enough to have Miz run in and dump Cena to get us down to Orton, Barrett and Del Rio in the ring. There's the backbreaker to Del Rio and Orton dumps Barrett, only to have Alberto sneak in on him to win the Rumble.

Rating: A. This was a VERY well done Rumble as they hit the three act structure and had a great balance of main event guys as well as new stars and legends. While it doesn't seem like a big shock now, Del Rio had only been around for about four months. This would be like a member of the Shield winning the Rumble in 2013. Excellent Rumble though and one of the best ever.

Del Rio celebrates.....AND SANTINO CRAWLS BACK IN! He went UNDER remember so the match isn't over yet. Del Rio doesn't see him coming and Santino hits the Cobra! Cole: "OH MY GOD!!!" He goes for the elimination but Del Rio reverses and dumps Santino out to really win. I remember watching this and my heart STOPPED as soon as Santino got back in. The exact words I said: "THEY WOULDN'T! THEY COULDN'T! Oh they didn't." This makes the match even better as the fans LOST IT when he got back in.

Ricardo is literally on the floor screaming Del Rio to end the show.

Overall Rating: A. The worst and only bad match was the Divas and you have looks in that one so how can this be anything below great? 2011 was the start of the good period for WWE and they kicked it off with a bang with a great Rumble here. This is an excellent show and well worth checking out. Good stuff here.

Ratings Comparison

Edge vs. Dolph Ziggler

Original: A-

Redo: A-

Miz vs. Randy Orton

Original: B

Redo: B

Eve Torres vs. Natalya vs. Layla vs. Michelle McCool

Original: D

Redo: D+

Royal Rumble

Original: A

Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: A

Redo: A

This is why I don't see the point in redoing the newer shows: my taste hasn't changed much.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/30/royal-rumble-2011-his-name-is-alberto-del-rio/>

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<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MQKDV50>

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Ring of Honor TV – January 18, 2017: The Firm Divide

Ring of Honor

Date: January 18, 2017

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

It's a bit of a big week around here as we have the final first round match in the Decade of Excellence Tournament to go along with whatever BJ Whitmer meant by a sacrifice. If that means we don't have to watch any more Kevin Sullivan ever again....well that wouldn't be so much a sacrifice but rather a very nice surprise. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Jay White/Lio Rush/Donovan Dijak vs. The Rebellion

They're in military gear now because this thing needs to keep going. It's a big brawl to start with the Rebellion being thrown to the floor with ease. Back in and Rush gets triple teamed so the Rebellion can take over. An elbow drop/legdrop/splash sequence gets two on Rush before a quick sprint around the ring allows for a diving tag off to White.

House is cleaned for all of thirty seconds before a spinebuster gives King two. Back from a break with everything breaking down again and the Rebellion getting taken down with a cool looking stereo triple dive. Dijak gets to clean some house and it's Lio getting on the big man's shoulders to splash Coleman for the pin at 9:42.

Rating: C. Good enough match here but the Rebellion is so horribly uninteresting. This could have been a lot worse but at least White

and Dijak looked good. Rush has some solid dives but I'm still not sold on him in general. I'm still not seeing the point of the trios matches either but the Rebellion losing is a good thing.

Post match the Rebellion destroys the winners but take it easy on Rush. Chris Sabin comes in for the save.

Video on Marty Scurll, who is a natural villain.

Video on Cody (Rhodes) turning heel at Final Battle.

Here's Cody for a chat. He thinks he's gotten off on the wrong foot with the fans because they thought they were going to judge him. Really, he's there to judge all of them because there was this horrid smell of mediocrity at Final Battle. A heckling fan shouts something about Brandi but Cody says they don't deserve that. Take your chance now to take his picture because it must be nice to finally have a star that hasn't faded in this building.

Cue Steve Corino in wrestling gear of all things as Kevin Sullivan and company come out. Cody: "You're taller than I thought you would be." He brings up Corino saying he never respected Dusty Rhodes in this very building back in 1999. The fans chant for Dusty and after talk of a sacrifice in a story I probably don't care about, the match is ready to go.

Cody vs. Steve Corino

One bionic elbow is enough to take us to a break because that's how wrestling works. Back with Corino baseball sliding him into the barricade and they fight on the floor. Apparently Corino has officially joined Kevin Sullivan as we hear about the Dusty Rhodes vs. Kevin Sullivan feud from THIRTY YEARS AGO IN FLORIDA which is the whole reason Cody is involved here.

Corino gets beaten down for a bit until a right hand sends Cody outside. A quick spit of water blinds Corino and it's time to go after his bad knee. The Bionic Elbow and Flip, Flop and Fly from Corino (who I think is supposed to be the villain here as he's joined the heel stable...which also includes Cody) set up the package piledriver for no cover. Steve goes outside and gets the golden

spike but the referee says no, allowing a low blow to set up the Disaster Kick. A Dusty elbow gives Cody the pin at 5:33.

Rating: D+. I'm assuming this is Corino's swan song in ROH and it's a shame that he's stuck ridiculous story. Let me make this very clear: to really get this story, you probably had to be watching the Florida territory back in the 80s. How in the world does ROH think that's the best possible idea? What do we need Sullivan in there for anyway? How does that make things better?

Jay Lethal runs in and chases Cody off. Back from a break, Jay goes on a rant against Cody for trying to cheat his way to the top around here. Cody is just smoke and mirrors and one day soon, Lethal will get his revenge. For now though, it's Decade of Excellence time.

Recap of the tournament.

Decade of Excellence Tournament First Round: Jay Lethal vs. Jushin Thunder Liger

After a handshake, Lethal stomps him down to start and gets two off a dropkick. Another dropkick puts Jushin on the floor and that means three suicide dives. Those are only good for two and Lethal can't hit a superplex. Liger grabs a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker and there's a running flip dive off the apron to take Jay down again.

Back with the Lethal Combination dropping Liger but Jay can't follow up. An enziguri sets up a torture rack of all things but Lethal turns it into a reverse Regal Roll to set up a Crossface. An awkward looking Hail to the King is reversed into a crucifix for two and that means running palm strikes. Jay will have none of this and it's the Lethal Injection for the pin at 10:15.

Rating: C-. This was just two guys doing moves to each other until one of them won and that's not exactly thrilling stuff. Liger is a legend but this felt like "hey I'm Jushin Liger and I am in fact here". Lethal going forward makes sense and this is little more than a way for him to advance to the second round. Nothing great here though it was fine.

They bow to each other to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. Not every show can be major and that was certainly the case here. It wasn't exactly interesting and the matches were nothing special. What we had was a trio of mostly forgettable matches with stories that aren't exactly thrilling. There's a firm gap between the top stories and the lower level stuff and that was firmly on display here.

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