

Royal Rumble 2018: I Had Fun Again

Royal Rumble 2018

Date: January 28, 2018

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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

The big night is finally here and for the first time ever we have two Royal Rumbles in one night. This time around we have a women's version to go with the standard men's version and that opens up the doors for a lot more surprise entrants. Of course it also opens the door for a lot more boring action if the last few Rumbles are any indication. Let's get to it.

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

Drew takes Kalisto down by the arm to start as the announcers talk about the upcoming 205 Live General Manager. That just earns a few chants from the crowd, which Gulak of course can't stand. It's off to Gallagher vs. Metalik with Gran working on the knee until Lince and TJP come in to complete each trio's ring time.

The announcers discuss dabbing until the villains are all sent outside. The three masked men hit stereo moonsaults from the same turnbuckle (very cool) to the floor as we take a break. Back with TJP kicking Lince in the ribs and handing it off to Gulak, who drops Dorado's partners off the apron. Now the announcers speculate on the next General Manager, which is much more focused than you would expect from these guys.

Jack cranks on Dorado's leg as about half of the HUGE group of empty seats opposite the hard camera is filled in. But hey, at least we have a meaningless match going on an hour and a half before the rest show starts. Gallagher goes to the middle rope, pauses to listen to Gulak telling him not to jump, and then misses a dive anyway. The hot tag

brings in Metalik for the rope walk into the dropkick to put Gulak down. The rope walk elbow works just as well for two as everything breaks down. Stereo dives take Gallagher and Gulak down, leaving the Salida Del Sol to finish TJP at 13:13.

Rating: C. Take any match between some combination of these guys that you might have seen on 205 Live and add five minutes to get this match. I'm not sure how that's supposed to entice me to watch a pay per view but I'm sure WWE is smarter than I am on that front. Nothing special here, outside of that triple moonsault that is. This would have been fine as the only dark match but with two more, it could have been cut.

Kickoff Show: Revival vs. Anderson and Gallows

Rematch from Monday where Anderson and Gallows won, followed by the Revival getting destroyed by DX and Scott Hall. The Brian Pillman style trunks don't really suit Revival but anything is better than Monday. Dawson gets sent outside to start for a breather before it's Gallows tossing both of them around. Back from a break with Dawson working on Anderson's knee with a string of elbow drops.

Wilder comes in to crank the knee even more but Anderson keeps kicking him away. Therefore, in a good tag team idea, Revival double teams him to keep the advantage. Now why is that so hard to figure out? Of course the hot tag goes through a few seconds later but at least they were trying. Everything breaks down and Gallows scores with a splash for two. Everything breaks down and the Magic Killer is broken up. Dawson sidesteps a charge to post Gallows and Dash's chop block is good for the pin on Anderson at 9:11.

Rating: C. Well, it was better than Monday. I'm glad Revival won and now of course we're likely to have the rubber match tomorrow night because WWE loves their trilogies. The leg stuff was fine here but the break in the middle didn't do it many favors. At least the right team won though and that helps a lot.

Kickoff Show: Bobby Roode vs. ???

Roode is defending in an Open Challenge answered by...Mojo Rawley. The

fans think Mojo sucks as he sends Roode into the corner and actually hammers him down as we take a break. Back with Mojo driving knees in the corner and grabbing a chinlock. Roode fights up and hits a running forearm, followed by a neckbreaker for two. There's the Blockbuster but the Glorious DDT is countered into a spinebuster. Back up and another Glorious DDT is countered into a backdrop but the running punch is blocked. Instead it's a regular DDT to retain the title at 7:37.

Rating: D. This could have been on any house show and that's not good as the Kickoff Show main event. Roode doesn't have a ton of challengers and a lot of that is due to how so few people were treated as important for the sake of Jinder Mahal. They need some kind of a feud going here and Rawley isn't the kind of person to do that.

The opening video doesn't say much out of the ordinary but it does a very good job of setting up the big matches while treating the Rumble win as a big deal. It's very nice that they gave the match some shine for once because they haven't exactly treated it like it matters up to this point.

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

AJ is defending in a handicap match. The challengers do have to tag and it's Sami starting for the team. No contact and it's off to Owens, who hangs on the ropes instead of going after the champ. Sami is already back in as there's almost no contact in the first minute and a half. AJ wrestles Sami down but it's already back to Owens, who takes AJ down, runs to the floor and tags Sami back in.

That means a drop down into a dropkick for Zayn as Byron and Graves have ANOTHER stupid argument that completely ignores the match. There's a backdrop for two on AJ as the fans aren't sure who to cheer for. Owens comes back in and unloads with right hands before sending AJ into the barricade. Almost all challengers so far. Owens gets in a double stomp and brings AJ into the corner for more right hands. An electric chair faceplant is good for two more and it's off to the chinlock.

AJ fights up again and gets in a shot to Owens' ankle, which was banged up on Smackdown in the first place. The Pele is enough to bring Sami back in but the Helluva Kick is blocked with a raised boot. Everything breaks

down and Owens monkey flips Styles, who hurricanranas Zayn to the floor instead of crashing to the mat. The Calf Crusher has Owens ready to tap until Sami dives back in for the save.

Owens kicks AJ in the back of the head to knock him into the Blue Thunder Bomb, which of course only gets two (once in a lifetime you see). Another kick to the head puts Sami down this time and the springboard 450 is good for another near fall. They slug it out with AJ throwing Sami to the floor, only to eat a superkick from Owens. The Pop Up Powerbomb is countered into a rollup though and AJ retains (pinning the illegal man) at 16:08.

Rating: B. About what was expected here as there's only so much you can do when the participants have been treated as background characters. I'm glad Bryan and Shane were left out but the match has been booked to make them the stars, meaning this is likely to continue. Some good action here, but it wasn't the most thrilling match in the world.

Wrestlemania XXXIV ad.

Sami and Kevin ask Shane what he's going to do. They can't have another referee screw Owens out of another title. Shane says that yep, he did indeed see that. Nothing else is said.

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

The Usos are defending and this is 2/3 falls after Gable pinned the wrong Uso a few weeks back. In other words, the same ending as the previous match, again showing the limited creative abilities of WWE. Gable can't hit a German suplex on Jimmy to start so it's some chops to the chest in the corner. A distraction lets Chad get in a chop block though and Jimmy is in trouble early on.

Benjamin drives knees into the bad knee as the challengers start cutting the ring off for an old NWA feel. Shelton stops to yell at the crowd though and it's an enziguri to cut him off. The hot tag brings in Jey, who dives through the ropes to take out both challengers in a row. Back in and Gable gets two off a tiger suplex (I haven't seen that one in years), followed by a powerbomb to send Jey into Jimmy.

Pay Dirt gives Shelton two and the bug eyed look on the kickout is funnier than it should be. It's back to Gable who moonsaults onto both champions on the floor but Gable can't pin the illegal Uso. That means a superkick into the Superfly Splash for two in a surprise near fall. The double Superfly Splash is broken up so Gable loads up Rolling Chaos Theory.

That's broken up as well and four straight superkicks end Gable at 12:21. Gable and Benjamin beat the heck out of both champs to start the second fall. A rolling Liger Kick hits Jey and Chad goes up, leaving Shelton to get small packaged to retain the titles in two straight falls at 13:47.

Rating: B-. That was kind of a surprising ending but it's not like it really matters. The Bludgeon Brothers (who have kind of disappeared in recent weeks) are pretty clearly the next challengers and it should be a fun match when we get to it. I'm not sure what happens to Benjamin and Gable at this point but they've proven to be a good team who deserve more time.

Rumble by the Numbers video.

Jerry Lawler joins commentary for the Rumble.

Men's Royal Rumble

90 second intervals this year. Rusev is #1 (with Aiden English singing him to the ring) and Finn Balor (in red here) is in at #2 to a very strong reaction. Balor gets sent to the apron early on but gets back in without too much effort. Rhyno is in at #3 and gets in a showdown with Rusev that doesn't go much of anywhere. Balor is back up and it's Baron Corbin in at #4 to quickly eliminate Rhyno.

Finn is right behind Corbin though and gets rid of him as well, sending Corbin into a rage. That means Balor is pulled to the floor for a whip into the barricade (shoulder first) and End of Days on the floor to Rusev. Heath Slater is in at #5 and gets run over on the ramp. Everyone is down and it's Elias in at #6, playing the guitar (and kicking Slater in the head) on the way to the ring.

It's time for a song about spitting in the Rocky statue's face but the countdown clock cuts him off. NXT Champion Andrade Cien Almas is in at #7 (running Slater over again as we have a running joke) and a running elbow puts Elias into the corner. The running knees rock Elias again but the hammerlock DDT is broken up. A hard clothesline drops Almas and it's Bray Wyatt in at #8.

Naturally Slater gets laid out again and there's a release Rock Bottom to Elias. Balor comes back in to break up Sister Abigail (again, thank goodness). Big E. is in at #9 and gives Slater some pancakes instead of beating him up. Bray is waiting on him with Cole saying Bray has been so dominating since entering. IT'S BEEN LIKE TWO MINUTES!

Rusev is back in but can't get rid of Almas. Tye Dillinger is in at #10 (again), giving us Balor, Rusev, Slater (still not in the ring), Elias, Almas, Wyatt, Big E. and Dillinger. Actually hang on a second as we cut to the back to see Dillinger getting beaten down by Owens and Zayn. Sami is taking his place and continues the tradition by jumping Slater.

Sheamus is in at #11 and throws Slater in...who immediately eliminates Sheamus (on his BIRTHDAY). Bray dumps Slater almost immediately and it's Xavier Woods in at #12. Woods and Big E. double team Sami and a wheelbarrow slam into a splash hits Elias. Rusev can't get rid of Big E. and it's Apollo Crews in at #13. Apollo gets in a good looking jumping enziguri on Bray as Byron is now anti-Zayn as he tries to show a personality.

Balor escapes Sister Abigail and it's Shinsuke Nakamura in at #14. Sami is waiting on him in a Takeover: Dallas flashback as the fans sing Nakamura's song. There are WAY too many people in there and some eliminations are needed. Nakamura fires off some kicks and it's Good Vibrations for Elias. The running knee in the corner gets rid of Sami and Cesaro is in at #15, giving us Balor, Rusev, Elias, Almas, Wyatt, Big E., Woods, Crews, Nakamura and Cesaro.

Uppercuts abound without much happening and it's Kofi Kingston in at #16 to put New Day at full strength. Cesaro cuts him off with an uppercut but Crews gorilla presses Cesaro...to the apron at least but he gets back in.

Instead a shot to the back gets rid of Crews to thin the ring out a bit. Jinder Mahal is in at #17 and goes after Woods, who dropkicks him into the corner. Woods is dumped a few seconds later though and Mahal gets rid of Big E. as well.

Seth Rollins is in at #18 (now with flames on his tights) and gets rid of Cesaro in short order. Mahal sends Kofi over the top but he lands on Xavier...and then on a plate of pancakes. Big E. and Woods launch him from the floor over the ropes and over Mahal, who gets caught with Trouble in Paradise for the elimination. As the rest of New Day throws pancakes at Mahal, Almas hits the hammerlock DDT and eliminates Kofi in a pretty big upset.

Matt Hardy is in at #19 for a standoff with Bray, which is broken up by Rusev. Bray and Matt actually start working together and get rid of Rusev (the fans are NOT pleased) before fighting each other. They eliminate each other and it's John Cena at #20, giving us Balor, Elias, Almas, Nakamura, Rollins and Cena.

Everyone jumps Cena at the same time in a smart move but then let him up, allowing him to AA Elias out. The Hurricane of all people is in at #22 (which Cole calls a superhero persona which was a huge hit with kids years ago) and tries a chokeslam but gets tossed out by Cena. Hurricane lands on the pancakes, nearly slips, and then does his pose over and over again on the way to the back. Aiden English is in at #22 and goes after Rollins before switching to Balor.

Adam Cole (with taped ribs) from NXT is in at #23 to a very nice reaction. Balor kicks English off the ropes for an elimination and it's Randy Orton in at #24. An RK0 drops Almas and there he goes after a strong performance. Things settle down a bit and it's Titus O'Neil in at #25. Cole gets sent to the apron but slides back in, leaving Titus to chop Nakamura in the corner. Miz is in at #26 and starts fast with the YES Kicks, followed by a Skull Crushing Finale on Cena.

Lucky #27 is the returning Rey Mysterio to get rid of Cole in a hurry. The Miz takes 619 and it's Roman Reigns in at #28. You can feel the pain from the booing. Reigns goes after Miz and hits the jumping clothesline,

followed by the clotheslines in the corner. Titus gets eliminated but the Miztourage saves Miz from the same fate. Rollins Curb Stomps Miz but gets into a showdown with Reigns. A DoubleBomb gets rid of Miz but Reigns turns on Rollins to get rid of him as well.

Goldust is in at #29 and hurts himself headbutting Reigns. Cena gets beaten up as well and it's Dolph Ziggler (POP) in at #30, giving us a final group of Balor, Nakamura, Cena, Orton, Mysterio, Reigns, Goldust and Ziggler. Goldust is out in a hurry and Balor kicks Ziggler out, making him one of the most inconsequential #30s in recent memory. Rey, Cena and Orton get together in one corner, Nakamura and Balor are in another and Reigns is on his own (how appropriate).

Balor takes a quick AA followed by the 619 to Reigns. There's an RKD to Nakamura but Cena blocks another attempt. A Superman Punch lets Reigns get rid of Orton and a double 619 hits Reigns and Cena (with Cena loudly talking to Reigns while they wait). Balor throws Mysterio out to get us down to four meaning everyone goes to a corner.

We get the big staredown as the fans are behind Nakamura. Cena throws a You Can't See Me at Balor and hammers on Nakamura while Reigns beats on Balor. That gives us the big showdown as the fans think they both suck. No one throws a punch as Balor and Nakamura get back up, giving us a much better received showdown. The running knees in the corner put Balor on the apron but he kicks a charging Nakamura in the head. Another kick to the head rocks Balor but he scores with a basement dropkick.

Reigns and Cena are back up again with Cena charging into a Samoa drop. The Superman Punch is countered with a ProtoBomb but the Shuffle is broken up with a Sling Blade. Balor hits the shotgun dropkick on Reigns but Nakamura kicks Balor in the face. Balor's standing double stomp cuts off Kinshasa and Cena tosses Balor to get us down to three. Reigns slips out of an AA and hits the Superman Punch on Cena. The spear is cut off by the AA and Nakamura puts Cena on the apron.

A running kick to the face gets rid of Cena and we're down to Nakamura vs. Reigns. That means COME ON and Reigns does so with a Superman Punch. Reigns sends him to the apron but gets kicked in the head but Nakamura

grabs a hanging triangle over the apron. A powerbomb brings Nakamura back in and they're both down again.

It's Reigns up first but the spear is cut off with a kick to the face. A middle rope knee to the face drops Reigns but Kinshasa is hit with a spear to put them both down again. Nakamura grabs the ropes to hang on and another running knee drops Roman, setting up the elimination to give Nakamura the win at 65:32.

Rating: A. Best Rumble in years, though that's not exactly saying much. The important thing here was they went with a popular name to win the Rumble, which has been lacking in recent years. Nakamura winning really surprised me as I never thought they would actually do it but I'll take what I can get.

They laid the match out nicely here as things took a little time to get going but the final ten to fifteen minutes were excellent with the final six all being solid options. I wasn't dreading this one at all and it made the match that much better. This was a lot of fun and the way the Rumble should go, with one of the best endings in a long time. Great match.

The Smackdown bosses are celebrating in the back when Stephanie McMahon and Kurt Angle come in to say Raw will win later. Daniel and Shane (buddies again) don't seem to care.

Post match Nakamura is asked who he wants to face at Wrestlemania. Fans: "PLEASE SAY STYLES!" Nakamura: "AJ STYLES!"

There was a Royal Rumble to determine the next Colonel Sanders with Ric Flair winning. He has the wrinkles for it.

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

Rollins and Jordan are defending with Seth and Sheamus starting things off. Seth gets driven into the corner with Cesaro offering a distraction to keep Jordan away from interfering. Jordan is ready for the hot tag but Cesaro pulls him down (I thought that was the heel turn) and posts him into near unconsciousness. Back in and Sheamus' top rope clothesline gets

two as the double beatdown is on, made especially worse by Seth's long Rumble run.

Seth finally sends Sheamus into the post to get it back to even, followed by a Sling Blade and Blockbuster. Sheamus comes back in for the save but Rollins drops both of them for a double frog splash. As Seth gets up, Jordan is STILL sitting on the steps, leaving Sheamus to hit the Brogue Kick. The super White Noise gives us new champions at 13:03. Jordan was never in the match.

Rating: C-. This was an angle instead of a match and there's nothing wrong with that. For some reason we seem to be waiting on Jordan vs. Rollins at Wrestlemania, even though that doesn't quite blow my skirt up. The match was stuck in the cool down spot after the great Rumble and that was the right spot for it.

We recap the Raw World Title match. Basically you have three monsters fighting each other and breaking things to hurt each other, meaning it's time to get violent.

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

Brock is defending and it's one fall to a finish. Strowman wastes no time in cleaning house, including a hard knee to Brock's head. That's fine with Brock who starts throwing punches, only to have Kane score with a chokeslam. Brock grabs a chair but Braun punches it away and drops everyone.

Shots with the steps clean house and it's time for a pair of tables. Strowman chokeslams Kane for two with Brock making the save and it's time for Suplex City. Braun pops up like a daisy and powerslams Brock through a table with Kane making the save this time. Kane is tossed away again (it's almost like he's completely unnecessary in this match until the ending) and it's time for the announcers' table.

Braun takes too long though and it's an F5 to drive him through instead. Brock turns the other table over Braun (Corey: "I'm about to throw this German guy in front of me!") and F5's Kane through another. Braun gets up again and sends Brock into the steps, followed by the powerslam. Kane

makes the save and sends Braun outside, setting up an F5 onto the chair to retain Brock's title at 10:12.

Rating: B-. Well duh. The world knows that Braun is ready to be World Champion and should have been like six months ago but Vince McMahon and seemingly Vince McMahon alone wants to see Reigns take the title from Brock. Again, as has been the case many, many times: none of this is important because we're just sitting around waiting on Reigns to take the title like we've been waiting for for nearly a year now. After that, I have no idea where they go and I'm not sure WWE does either. This was fun, but exactly as expected.

Trailer for Andre the Giant's HBO documentary.

We get a video on the women's Royal Rumble with a focus on the Revolution (and Stephanie of course) with everyone talking about how important this is.

Maria Menunos is guest ring announcer and Stephanie McMahon is guest commentator, with Cole reading off her resume (and saying Stephanie will tell you about her trailblazing). Alexa Bliss and Charlotte come out to watch at ringside.

Women's Royal Rumble

Sasha Banks (in Wonder Woman gear) is in at #1 and Becky Lynch is in at #2 to give us a good start. Becky blocks an early elimination attempt and we talk about how nervous Stephanie is. The Bank Statement is broken up and it's a double clothesline as Sarah Logan is in at #3. Logan clotheslines Becky down but Sasha makes a questionable save. Becky gets stomped down in the corner and it's Mandy Rose in at #4. Mandy can't get rid of Sasha and it's LITA in at #5.

Sasha and Becky aren't sure what to do so they opt with kicking her in the stomach. Mandy jumps Lita from behind and gets placed on the apron, followed by a hard shot for the first elimination. Kairi Sane is in at #6 and chops Lita into the corner as Cole talks about her "yacht persona". She's not Ashley Remington (bet you didn't think I knew that one) because SHE'S A FREAKING PIRATE! Sane kicks Sasha down and drops the Insane

Elbow, followed by another to Becky as Tamina is in at #7.

Lita starts hitting the Twists of Fate and hits a double moonsault onto Sasha and Becky (more like her falling backwards instead of any kind of jump but give her a break). That means the YOU STILL GOT IT chant before she eliminates Tamina, only to get dumped by Becky. That's all this needed to be from Lita and it worked to perfection. Dana Brooke is in at #8 and actually dumps Kairi before stomping on Sasha in the corner.

Torrie Wilson is in at #9 (oh give me a break) and it's time to prove why she wasn't a wrestler. Logan dropkicks her down but Torrie pops up and eliminates Dana. Sonya Deville is in at #10, giving us Banks, Lynch, Logan, Wilson and Deville. Sonya starts firing off knees and gets rid of Torrie (thank goodness). Liv Morgan is in at #11 so the Squad can start getting together. No one is tossed though and it's Molly Holly in at #12.

Molly gets rid of Logan and hits the Molly Go Round on Sasha. Lana is in at #13 and is immediately taken down by Morgan and Deville. She actually gets fired up and slaps her way to freedom as Michelle McCool is in at #14. That means an UNDERTAKER chant as she gets rid of Logan, Morgan and Holly. Sasha and Becky are down on the floor (not eliminated) as Michelle gets rid of Lana as well. With Michelle alone, Becky and Sasha get back in and it's Ruby Riott at #15, giving us Michelle, Becky, Sasha and Ruby.

Vickie Guerrero is in at #16 and shouts EXCUSE ME over and over but everyone stares her down. She tries to bail and is tossed with ease (I guessed that as a comedy spot and it's as perfect as I thought it would be). Carmella is in at #17 but Vickie takes the Money in the Bank briefcase to knock her silly. Natalya is in at #18 and throws her gear on Carmella, who pulls Natalya off the apron. That's enough for Carmella to get in for some superkicks and it's Kelly Kelly in at #19. Kelly fends off an early elimination as Natalya gets rid of McCool.

Naomi is in at #20, giving us Banks, Lynch, Riott, Carmella, Natalya, Kelly and Naomi at the moment. Becky goes up for some reason and gets dumped by Riott. Jacqueline is in at #21 and goes after Kelly. Nia Jax is in at #22, meaning it's time to clear the ring. Jacqueline is out first, followed by Kelly with ease. Natalya is sent outside (through the ropes),

leaving Nia to press Riott onto the top turnbuckle and then out to the floor. Naomi goes after Nia's legs but tries a hurricanrana.

Nia knocks her off the apron but the pile catches her, allowing Naomi to land on the barricade. NXT Women's Champion (with a bad arm) is in at #23 with a springboard kick to Nia's face. Nia sends her flying as Naomi is walking across the barricade to steal Maria's chair on wheels. She then crawls across the floor using her hands and the wheels on the chair...only to have Nia catch her coming back in and toss her out. I smiled at the irony. Beth Phoenix is in at #24 and this could be a lot of fun.

Phoenix is a lot closer to Nia's size than I expected and manages a fireman's carry but can't eliminate Nia. Natalya's help doesn't work very well as they knock Nia through the ropes. That means a hug and of course Natalya turns on her and gets rid of Beth. Carmella (never eliminated) comes back in to jump Natalya from behind...and it's Asuka at #25. There's the hip attack to Carmella and it's time for the showdown with Ember Moon.

Ember actually hits a one armed Eclipse but Asuka goes after the bad arm and gets rid of her. Sasha (also never eliminated) gets back in and it's Mickie James in at #26. That goes nowhere and it's Nikki Bella getting lucky #27 (well duh). That means the JOHN CENA SUCKS song but Carmella takes Nikki into the corner for the Staten Island Shuffle (not the Moon Walk Stephanie). Nikki powers her up though and a neck snap across the top rope gets rid of Carmella.

Brie Bella is in at #28 to save her sister from a big beatdown. The Bellas get their big moment (their latest one for those of you who have lost track) and knock Nia off the apron. A double suplex puts Natalya down and it's Bayley in at #29. Asuka kicks Bayley in the head in short order but can't get rid of her. It's Trish Stratus in at #30 (not exactly shocking and that's not a bad thing) to give us a final group of Sasha, Natalya, Nia, Asuka, Mickie, Nikki, Brie, Bayley and Trish.

Stratus gets to clean house and hits a double Stratusfaction before getting into a showdown with Mickie. James misses a charge and gets tossed, meaning it's time for everyone to go after Nia. She shrugs them

all off but the Bellas choke her on the ropes, allowing everyone else to join in and get rid of Nia. Sasha of course turns on Bayley for the elimination and we're down to six.

Natalya puts Trish in the Sharpshooter for some reason and is broken up just as quickly. The Chick Kick eliminates Natalya but Trish mocks Sasha's Boss pose, meaning the Stratusfaction is broken up to get rid of Stratus. Sasha turns around to meet Asuka but they decide to get rid of the Bellas....for all of three seconds until Sasha decks Asuka from behind. Sasha calls the Bellas off so she can beat on Asuka in the corner but the Twins dump her out as she tries the double knees.

So we're down to the Bellas and Asuka and it's time for the YES Kicks to both Twins (there's a joke there that I'm not touching). Brie gets sent to the apron but Nikki decks Asuka, followed by the Rack Attack 2.0. Nikki decks Brie to get rid of her though and it's down to two. Asuka is on the apron and hits a missile dropkick but Nikki's spinning middle rope kick catches her in the face. Nikki puts her on the apron for the big forearm....which doesn't end it. Instead Asuka grabs a headscissors to put Nikki on the apron but Asuka kicks kicks her in the leg for the elimination to win at 58:47.

Rating: B. I know a lot of people are going to be annoyed about the amount of legends (and the amount of botches) in there but my goodness what else were you expecting? The women's division is about twenty people deep and I'd rather have people like McCool, Lita and Trish in there to give us either a good performance or appearances from people who are legitimate trailblazers (not McCool obviously but she did quite well). I was surprised by the lack of NXT names but what we got was fine, save for the Iconic Duo still not appearing.

The match itself was fine, albeit a bit predictable. You knew Asuka was the heavy favorite and really, it's not like there were many other solid options. Aside from Jax, who really else was there? Banks or Lynch? Well maybe, but Asuka getting the title needs to be a big deal and one of those two can take the other title. Either way....uh, back in a minute.

The champions get in the ring.....AND BAD REPUTATION HITS AS RONDA ROUSEY IS

HERE!!! Rousey, in a Roddy Piper shirt, points at the Wrestlemania sign and offers Asuka a handshake but Asuka slaps it away. Ronda also shakes Stephanie's hand and high fives fans to end the show.

Oh and Stephanie's commentary was annoying but acceptable. She didn't need to be there and added nothing at all but she could have been worse. Sounded very much like a fan who wasn't the most polished but it was fine.

Overall Rating: A-. I loved the heck out of this show as they made the Rumbles FUN. That's been sorely, sorely lacking in recent years and they made up for it tonight. The Rumbles are interesting by definition but above all else, these matches were a good time as I kept waiting to see who was coming out next. I was actually worried about Reigns and Nikki winning so well done on some false drama. This did everything it needed to do, including setting up a major Wrestlemania match. I had a great time with this show and that's what the Rumble is supposed to be. Well done all around and a great show.

Results

AJ Styles b. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens – Rollup to Owens

Usos b. Chad Gable/Jason Jordan – Small package to Benjamin

Shinsuke Nakamura won the Royal Rumble last eliminating Roman Reigns

The Bar b. Seth Rollins/Jason Jordan – Super White Noise to Rollins

Brock Lesnar b. Kane and Braun Strowman – F5 to Kane

Asuka won the Royal Rumble last eliminating Nikki Bella

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She's Going to Wrestlemania!

Something something BAD REPUTATION!!!

Again not quite as Asuka won, last eliminating Nikki Bella. The others in the final four were Brie Bella and Sasha Banks. ASuka was about to pick the champion to challenge when RONDA ROUSEY came out. Ronda, in a Roddy Piper t-shirt and what looked to be Piper's old jacket, offered Asuka a handshake and then pulled it back before pointing to the Wrestlemania sign. Rousey shook Stephanie's hand too and Stephanie awkwardly stared at her to end the show.

I'm sold, either way. Well not with Stephanie vs. Rousey but Rousey vs. Asuka works for me.

New Column: You Wanna Rumble Too?

So much for what I had planned.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-wanna-rumble/>

2015 Awards: Moment of the Year

This one is always kind of hard to pick.

Again, we'll get through some of the easier ones first.

The Salida Del Sol through the ladder at TLC was amazing and one of the biggest high spots in a LONG time. Just...dang. It doesn't really have a long lasting impact but it was really cool and definitely deserves mentioning.

For a quick one, Brock Lesnar sitting up next to Undertaker and laughing at him, only to have Undertaker do the same. Again, didn't mean much but it was awesome at the time.

The Ronda Rousey appearance at Wrestlemania was great as well with the great line of "She's going to reach down your throat and play jump rope with your Fallopian tubes." This would be a nearly runaway winner if Rousey had really hurt Stephanie but pesky contracts prevented it.

Shield reunited for all of thirty seconds. That's more of a preview than an awesome moment though.

Now we'll get down to the actual top choices.

First up was the Divas Revolution, which would have been even better had Stephanie not been involved. I get that she wanted to be involved because she's Stephanie and has to be involved in something cool every time, but it was Paige's story and should have gotten the moment to make the whole thing work.

Another major one is Seth Rollins cashing in Money in the Bank. This was a legitimate shocking moment and the big story that people remember from Wrestlemania. I don't know if I'd put it at number one but it worked very

well at the time, before WWE decided to make Rollins a worthless champion.

From the same show, there's the NWO vs. DX. This was the Monday Night Wars in the span of fifteen minutes and I had a blast with it. Points off for the complete lack of continuity and HHH winning, but this was so much fun.

Then Bayley did a reverse super hurricanrana, gave Sasha Banks a Bayley to Belly and won the Women's Title, followed by the Four Horsewomen posing in the ring one last time. Wrestling is all about emotion and that's what you got here. This was as good as it got in 2015 and it's going to be a long time before anything tops this.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of Wrestlemania at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0188BJRGU>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Dana White Says Ronda Rousey Will Not Have A Match In WWE

Wow that's.....pretty much the least surprising thing I've heard in a long time. I'd have loved to see Rousey in a WWE ring (or anywhere for that matter), but this was a long shot at

best so I'm not at all surprised.

Writer Doesn't Like Mainstream Sports Covering WWE

Because it's not real you see.

It's another day and another story of a "mainstream" sports writer deciding that professional wrestling is "rasslin" and something not worthy of coverage on ESPN or CBS. In this case it's Michael Bradley of the National Sports Journalism Center at Indiana University.

The gist of the opening of his piece is basically saying that wrestling is being used to fill in space on a 24/7 sports station and how it's the price we pay. This leads to saying it started with ESPN "breaking" (his quotation marks) the story that Brock Lesnar wasn't returning to the UFC. This is the first red flag I see. Why is this not a breaking story? Mixed martial arts is certainly a mainstream sport, but for some reason a former World Champion opting not to return isn't a story.

I wonder if say, Tom Crean not returning to coach the Hoosiers' basketball team would be considered mainstream enough. As I'm writing this, the first four articles on their website are all about college basketball, followed by the article on the mainstream coverage of Wrestlemania. I don't see anything about Major League Baseball or the upcoming NFL Draft, but it seems that college basketball is important enough to cover, in addition to the Indy Racing League. Mixed martial arts apparently isn't worthy of a breaking news story though. Good to know.

Then the ESPN commentators talked about Wrestlemania and their Twitter

and Facebook feeds were used to discuss the results of the show. So now it's not ok to dedicate part of an unlimited space to talk about the results of a show that runs four hours of a year. By the way, on the group's Facebook page: an article on football analyst Lee Corso, led by a discussion of how often he gargles to keep his throat strong. Back and forth, hand to hand combat with former collegiate athletes: not ok, but football analysts gargling: ok. Again, good to know.

Now we'll get to the point of this: apparently Bradley doesn't care for the idea of mixing fake results with real results, because it might confuse the fans. Apparently this could lead to breaking down sports films or discussing TV, which is totally different than airing dramatic films on ESPN (which they've done) or Harlem Globetrotters games (which they air from time to time and Bradley says would be the next horrible step) or anything besides hard hitting journalism at the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network.

Then we get to the big line at the end: "It's fun to talk about Lesnar and his fellow rasslers, but it's not journalism." That word of "rasslers" tells me everything I need to know here. That one word makes Bradley come off as just another writer who seems to have no idea of how wrestling works and sees himself as a defender of REAL athletics who has no idea what wrestling is all about. Yes, the results are fake and it's been a known factor for years. For some reason, this means it's completely ridiculous to cover.

There was an excellent ad campaign from the WWF back in 1998 with a lot of the roster talking about their mainstream athletic backgrounds such as Ron Simmons, who has since gone into the College Football Hall of Fame and Ken Shamrock, who was a UFC Champion (oh wait that's not worthy of a mention. I wasn't sure if I was wrong about the site's coverage of UFC but their last story involving them was posted over a year ago so it doesn't seem to be a priority).

Apparently talking about the post-career lives and activities of athletes such as Brock Lesnar or the Rock, or current mainstream athletes like Ronda Rousey, would just befuddle the average fan because I guess they're not smart enough to figure out the difference. To paraphrase the end of

that ad campaign, try watching their boots, because they're probably working a lot harder than some of the "real" sports out there.

Overall, I've certainly seen far worse attacks on wrestling and other than implying that wrestling or other sports fans might not be bright enough to know the difference between scripted or unscripted results and using the antiquated term of "rasslers", he doesn't take any unnecessary shots at the sport.

As usual though, it seems that he heard the letters WWE and had already decided that it was just guys doing fake moves to each other because that's what he heard it was growing up. It's a shame that mainstream writers don't give it a bigger chance, but with columns like this out there, it's not surprising that they don't as it basically shames them for trying to talk about it. But hey, it's fine to air poker, cheerleading, darts, spelling bees and specials on fantasy football or the NFL Draft right?

Here's the original article:

<http://sportsjournalism.org/sports-media-news/lets-hope-media-outlets-remember-what-e-in-wwe-means/>

WWE Wants Stephanie McMahon vs. Ronda Rousey At Wrestlemania XXXII

This would be....different. I think you can see the major issue here: without a small army helping her, Stephanie would be lucky to last ten seconds in there from bell to bell. I know that sounds like a cliché, but the top competition the UFC can get for Rousey barely makes it fifteen seconds.

Now I know this is wrestling and Stephanie would cheat like there was no tomorrow and would probably have Rousey next to dead before she went after her, but this is pushing the boundaries of reality a bit too far for me. Stephanie can work a good match for a Diva, but if they're really going to try and sell this as Rousey is out of her element, they're in for a long night. Fans aren't going to buy Stephanie as any sort of a favorite in a match <http://onhealthy.net/product-category/womens-health/> where you can win by submission and have the match on a flat surface, and we know Rousey can strike as well. I'd be against the idea, but there's a slight chance it could be done right.

By right, I of course mean Rousey snapping Stephanie's arm in about 19 different places and Stephanie taking a long hiatus from TV, not showing up the next night and yelling. Or holding her arm to her side one segment and waving it over her head the next time she's on screen. That would just be dumb. Like, as dumb as emasculating Sting and raving about how she and Andre the Giant were friends and how it would disrespect Andre's legacy to have one of the biggest stars of all time in a match dedicated to Andre's memory. We're talking that level of dumb.

Wrestlemania XXXI: Shock and Awe, Shock and Awe

Wrestlemania XXXI

Date: March 29, 2015

Location: Levi's Stadium, Santa Clara, California

Attendance: 76,976

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

Tonight is the night. Even though the build hasn't been the best in recent history, this is still Wrestlemania and the biggest show of the year. The main event is the recently re-signed Brock Lesnar defending his WWE World Heavyweight Title against the winner of the Royal Rumble, Roman Reigns. The card looks good on paper but that has to translate to something more. Let's get to it.

The stage is HUGE and has a big circle in the middle for a Titantron.

Pre-Show: Tag Team Titles: Los Matadores vs. Usos vs. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd vs. New Day

One fall to a finish here. Cesaro and Kidd are defending, Jey Uso has a banged up shoulder and it's Kofi and Big E for New Day. The Usos are in regular short trunks with tassels and are in San Francisco 49ers colors. The fans are behind Cesaro as he starts with Kingston but Fernando tags Cesaro to come in. Cesaro goes after Jey on the floor and sends him into the barricade, likely to write him out of the match due to his shoulder.

Back in and Kofi takes Fernando down for two as Jimmy checks on his brother. Diego slingshots in with a hilo to Kofi and it's back to Cesaro for a chinlock. Jey is taken out as Kidd comes in for the Swing into the dropkick for two. Everything breaks down for a bit until it's only Kofi and Kidd with the latter holding a chinlock. Jimmy comes back in and cleans house with superkicks all around and four straight running Umaga attacks in the corner.

Kofi dives off the top onto Fernando, leaving Jimmy to drop Kidd for a close two. Cesaro drops Jimmy with an uppercut but Big E. tags himself in for a splash on both guys. He throws Kofi at Cesaro for two but everyone goes to the corner for a series of superplexes, a splash and Los Matadores with a powerbomb into a backstabber for two on Kofi. Natalya (and her very low cut outfit) offer a distraction, allowing Torito to hurricanrana Woods into the barricade.

Natalya puts Torito in the Sharpshooter but Naomi dives on a bunch of people, followed by a Rear View to Natalya. Back in and the Midnight Hour gets two on Fernando with Jimmy and Cesaro making a save. The referee actually says Big E. isn't legal (Lawler: "How would he know?") with

Fernando but Kidd tags himself in anyway, only to have Big E. throw him and Fernando onto his shoulders at the same time.

Kofi kicks Kidd and knees Cesaro in the corner but Los Matadores get in there to knock Cesaro to the floor. The announcers are already calling this a car wreck. A six man Tower of Doom puts everyone not named Uso down, leaving Jimmy to splash Big E. but Cesaro runs in to steal the pin and retain at 10:00.

Rating: C+. This wasn't as good as last year but it was a completely different kind of match. This was a huge mess with everyone all over the place and no flow to the match after the five minute mark. That being said, at least they went with the right choice for the winners and Natalya got to keep looking awesome. Not a great match or anything but it was fast paced and fun, which is what something like this should be doing.

Andre the Giant Memorial Battle Royal

The Miz, Curtis Axel, Ryback, Fandango, Adam Rose, Zack Ryder, Jack Swagger, Titus O'Neil, Darren Young, Big Show, Kane, Erick Rowan, Damien Mizdow, Sin Cara, Goldust, Heath Slater, Mark Henry, Konnor, Viktor, Hideo Itami, Cesaro, Jimmy Uso, Diego, Fernando, Bo Dallas, Kofi Kingston, Big E., Xavier Woods, Tyson Kidd, Alex Riley

There are some unannounced people in there, including everyone in the opener, but I'm not sure I have everyone included. Axel does the Hogan pose and everyone eliminates him at once. It's a huge mess to start so it's really hard to see what's going on. Itami kicks away at Cesaro and gets a great reaction from the fans. Rose and Fandango eliminate each other and Show chops Itami. Miz and Mizdow go after Riley and get him out without too much of a problem.

Bo Dallas breaks up the Broski Boot and dumps Ryder, only to eliminate himself in celebration. He goes back in anyway so Itami kicks him out again. Kidd and Itami kick it out but Big Show punches Hideo out. So much for NXT meaning anything. Kane dumps Los Matadores and Cesaro throws Sin Cara onto the two of them. Henry throws Kidd onto the pile but Ascension gets together to throw him out.

Ascension goes after Big Show as and actually knock him down but JBL points out the obvious problem that creates. Ryback eliminates Viktor and Konnor at the same time, followed by doing the same to Young and Slater. Titus gets eliminated by Ryback as well but it's Big Show clotheslining Ryback down before knocking out Swagger. New Day triple teams Big Show but he eliminates all of them with ease. We're down to Jimmy Uso, Rowan, Big Show, Cesaro, Kane, Ryback, Goldust, Miz and Mizdow.

Things finally slow down until Big Show eliminates Rowan (were you expecting anything else?) and Ryback dumps Goldust. Kane breaks up a Shell Shock to Big Show and chokeslams Miz and Mizdow. Cesaro hangs on and slides back in to slam Kane out for a big reaction. Show tosses Jimmy and it's Cesaro vs. Big Show just like last year. This time though Big Show escapes the slam and throws Cesaro out. Instead it's Ryback spinebusting Show as we're down to Ryback, Big Show, Miz and Mizdow.

Show counters the Meat Hook and throws out Ryback, leaving Show to smile at the only two left. The fans cheer for Mizdow, who FINALLY tells Miz no. Miz tries to talk him down and yells at him as Big Show just stands around for two minutes while they argue. Miz goes after Big Show and gets eliminated to a big reaction, only to turn around and see Big Show.

JBL keeps harping on Big Show never winning a battle royal in WWE but Mizdow skins the cat to get back inside. He hammers away but gets taken down by a shoulder. Mizdow avoids a charge to send Show to the apron but Show grabs him by the throat. A guillotine choke looks to do the same ending as the 2004 Royal Rumble but Show shoves him off and wins at 18:11.

Rating: D+. Good grief man really? I mean REALLY? Their big idea is to FINALLY turn Mizdow to a hug....screw sarcasm. I'm sick of Big Show, I'm sick of him getting pushed, I'm sick of WWE thinking he's interesting because he's big, and I'm sick of his old body getting these big moments because he was there in the Attitude Era with his stupid country sounding song. Thanks for all the work Mizdow. Maybe you'll get a better push if you grow a foot and turn 44.

Aloe Blacc (I haven't heard of him either) sings America the Beautiful.

The opening video features LL Cool J talking about how universal the world has become with everyone being connected. However, one thing stays the same: us. People come together and feel a connection between themselves. J talks about some great moments in Wrestlemania and says these generations have come together for this night. Kind of a far cry from the huge party down the streets of New Orleans.

Intercontinental Title: Bad News Barrett vs. Stardust vs. R-Truth vs. Dean Ambrose vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. Daniel Bryan vs. Luke Harper

Ladder match with Barrett defending. Pat Patterson is here to put the belt up, which makes sense as he's the first Intercontinental Champion and had his greatest fame in this area. Ziggler seems to have braided his hair, Stardust has a cape and Ambrose gets the loudest pop. Dean hits the ring and the brawl is on in a hurry. Truth flip dives onto Barrett and Ambrose but Stardust dives onto all three.

Harper throws Ziggler outside too and hits a big suicide dive. Not to be out done, Dean climbs a ladder for a flying elbow drop to the pile. Truth is up first and goes for the belt but Barrett cleans house with a ladder of his own. Bryan comes in with some running dropkicks to crush Stardust into the ladder into Barrett in the corner but Harper throws the ladder at Daniel's head. Harper gets tied upside down in the ladder and Bryan fires off some YES Kicks. Apparently being a former World Champion makes you immune to falling ladders.

Ziggler and his hair of doom comes back in with a superkick to Daniel before getting into a climbing contest with Dean. Barrett pulls both guys down before Stardust knocks all three of them down and crushes Ambrose's legs in the ladder. Stardust goes outside and pulls out the, I quote, Exo-Atmospheric Star Bird. In other words, a ladder with glitter on the sides. That's fine with Barrett who rips a rung off and beats Stardust with it because I guess he likes black ladders.

We get a stepladder thrown in and Harper sends Dean face first into the ladder in the corner. It's time for the Terry Funk helicopter spot but Truth drop toeholds him down to break it up. Truth brings in the big ladder but can't find the middle of the ring, allowing Barrett and

Stardust to climb up with Bad News superplexing him down. Dean shoves Bryan and Ziggler's ladder down before hitting the rebound clothesline to Harper.

That's fine with Luke as he powerbombs Dean over the top and through a bridged ladder at ringside. Dolph puts Harper in the sleeper but Luke climbs anyway, only to fall backwards to crush Ziggler again. Ziggler is up first though and makes a fast attempt, only to get pulled into a Bull Hammer. Stardust and Truth get one as well but it's Bryan making the save, only to have Ziggler and Barrett pull down. Back up and the running knee puts Bad News down but Ziggler sprints up the ladder for a slugout. The belt starts swaying but it turns into a headbutt exchange. It's Ziggler going down though and Bryan wins at 13:55.

Rating: B. Total mess for the most part here but Bryan winning is the smart move. The guy is still one of the most popular guys on the roster and hopefully they're not going to give him the losing streak. Maybe this makes it the wrestler's title again, which would be the best thing they could do with the belt. Really good opener here with the right ending to top it off. Harper looked great here too and is a star in the making if they ever figure out how to use him.

We recap Randy Orton vs. Seth Rollins with a different twist: both guys have been called the future but now Orton might be surpassed. Then they go with the stupid story of Orton attacking the Authority, then joining the Authority, then attacking them again. It never made sense before and it doesn't now.

Seth Rollins vs. Randy Orton

Orton has elbow pads again. Some headlocks get us nowhere so Rollins does a standing backflip, only to eat a dropkick. After a quick chase on the floor, Rollins stomps away in the corner but Orton takes his head off with a clothesline. The RKO is broken up by a Stooges distraction, earning them a double elevated DDT onto the floor to get us down to one on one. It takes too much time though and Rollins nails a suicide dive to take Orton out.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before Rollins takes Orton down with a

running splash in the corner. An early Curb Stomp attempt is countered into a powerslam followed by a t-bone suplex. Another elevated DDT is countered though and Rollins kicks him to the floor for an Asai Moonsault. Back in and Orton's superplex is countered but he backdrops Rollins to break up superbomb attempt.

Rollins rolls through a high cross body for two but now the elevated DDT connects. The RK0 is countered into the low superkick but Rollins tries a standing Sliced Bread #2, only to walk into the RK0 for a very close near fall. That's not a move you see kicked out of often (outside of a John Cena match of course). The Stooges come in to break up the Punt and take RK0s, setting up a Curb Stomp for another close two. Rollins misses the Phoenix Splash but tries another Curb Stomp, only to be LAUNCHED into the air for the RK0 and the pin at 13:35.

Rating: B. Not quite the show stealer it could have been, but man alive that was one heck of an RK0. I was thinking they were going to do the Phoenix Splash into the RK0 but that would have been a bit too far. The ending was sweet though and it's the second really good match in a row to start things off. Orton winning is surprising, but we might not be done with Rollins tonight.

Ronda Rousey is here.

We recap HHH vs. Sting with the on the Authority being corrupt before changing to HHH just wanting to end Sting's legacy.

Sting vs. HHH

Sting is played out by a Japanese drum group. HHH one ups him with scenes from the new Terminator movie, a shot from the Terminator's view, and an army of Terminators on stage. HHH is in Terminator attire and Arnold Schwarzenegger himself appears on the screen to say it's time to play the game. Sting shouldn't be scared. After all, he knows Robocop. In an added stipulation, you can only win by pinfall or submission. Sting is in his singlet instead of a t-shirt.

After a 45 second staredown, it's time for the first lockup

with Sting shouldering him down. HHH does the same and throws out a crotch chop. Sting is right back up with a dropkick and HHH is stunned. The facebuster is no sold but HHH bails from a Scorpion attempt. Sting follows him out and gets sent hard into the steps to give HHH his first advantage. Back in and HHH starts on the ribs before putting on a chinlock. That goes as far as you would expect before HHH gets two off a spinebuster. We hit the chinlock again but Sting counters into the Deathlock.

Cue the New Age Outlaws and X-Pac (remember no DQ). Sting fights them off with ease and throws HHH to the floor before dives off the top to take DX down! Back in and the Pedigree connects for two with the fans not really buying that as a major threat just yet. It's sledgehammer time but cue Hall, Nash and Hogan to make it about the Monday Night Wars again. You know, because Sting was SO into the Black and White.

The Death Drop gets two on HHH and we hit a long Deathlock as everyone fights at ringside (with Nash going down and holding his leg, which would be one heck of a rib). Shawn Michaels runs in with Sweet Chin Music to break it up but Sting gets up at two. Gunn hands HHH the sledgehammer but Hall gives Sting the bat. A bat shot to the ribs puts HHH down and another BREAKS THE HAMMER! The Stinger Splash staggers HHH but he comes back with the head of the hammer to knock Sting cold for the pin at 18:35.

Rating: B-. GOOD GRIEF. I was having a great time with the nostalgia until they completely missed the point with the ending. What in the world is the point in bringing Sting in to have him lose? For the sake of doing one more shot at WCW for the Monday Night Wars? That thing that was FIFTEEN YEARS AGO and Vince still isn't over? The worst part for me was the match was actually rocking before the ending. This was a really fun match until the bad ending, which is way more than I was expecting.

HHH shakes his hand post match. Uh, no. YOU HIT HIM IN THE FACE WITH A HAMMER AFTER COMING OUT WITH AN ARMY OF ROBOTS! NO HE DOES NOT WANT TO SHAKE YOUR HAND!

New series coming to WWE Network: Camp WWE (Rated mature), Jerry Springer's Too Hot For WWE, a Jackass style show and the new Divas Search.

Daniel Bryan is with Maria Menunos (in a Bushwhackers shirt) when Pat Patterson, Roddy Piper (with a kiss to the head), Ricky Steamboat and Ric Flair come up to congratulate him. A Woo-off ensues until Bret Hart comes in to shake Bryan's hand and starts a YES chant. Cue Ron Simmons and you know the rest.

Skyler Gray performs the theme song. I'll use this break to say this show has rocked so far and is WAY better than I was expecting coming in.

Paige/AJ Lee vs. Bella Twins

No recap video but it's about the Bellas being celebrities and AJ/Paige being themselves. Paige (with blue highlights) takes Nikki down to start but gets caught in an Alabama Slam for an early two. Off to Brie for a front facelock before knocking AJ off the apron. The BRIE MODE running knee to the face gets two for Brie before Nikki comes in with a spinebuster. Paige fights back but there's still no AJ to tag. Instead she just dives off the apron with a flip to take out both Bellas and now the hot tag brings in AJ.

A quick tornado guillotine onto the top rope sets up a high cross body but Nikki rolls through for two of her own. Nikki lifts her up for an electric chair but AJ spins out into a DDT which was slightly botched but looked good enough. Brie breaks up the Black Widow but Nikki's big forearm only gets two. Paige sends Brie into the steps and the Black Widow makes Nikki tap at 6:40.

Rating: C+. Well that happened. It was a step above most Divas matches but this really didn't do anything special. Like I said coming into this match, if there's nothing on the line, this doesn't mean much. I'm pretty sure AJ has made Nikki tap before, so this really doesn't mean anything.

Decent match but it certainly didn't knock anything out of the park. The time didn't do it any favors though.

Hall of Fame video.

The Class of 2015 is presented. Butch is on crutches but still does the arm wacking.

We recap John Cena vs. Rusev. Cena passed out in the Accolade last month but he choked Rusev out to get a rematch. This is firmly about the USA vs. Russia and Cena wanting to bring the title back home.

US Title: Rusev vs. John Cena

Lana is back and carrying the title, flanked by Russian soldiers carrying the Russian flag. Rusev RIDES OUT IN A TANK to the Russian national anthem. Cena counters with an American theme with various Presidents talking about American exceptionalism but just walks out with the fans singing "John Cena sucks" in time to his music ala the Raw after Wrestlemania last year. Rusev insists that his big match intro is first and Cena stares a hole through him.

Rusev scores with an early spinwheel kick for two and throws Cena around with a suplex. He stops to get the Russian flag though and Cena gets fired up, meaning it's time to start his finishing sequence. The AA doesn't work though and Rusev gets two off a spinning belly to back suplex. Rusev gets the same off a spinning Rock Bottom but his superplex is countered for a top rope Fameasser. The fans start chanting for Lana but get shut down as Cena gets two off a tornado DDT.

Rusev comes back with a knee to the head and an Alabama Slam (Russian for "TELL HER THAT'S HOW IT'S DONE!") for two. Cena takes him down with the STF but Lana throws her shoes in for some reason (that was a real, ahem, heel move) as Rusev makes the ropes. He slams Cena down again and goes up for a pretty good looking top rope headbutt and two more.

The Accolade doesn't work so Cena gets up, jumps at the ropes like a Lionsault but catches Rusev in a Stunner of all things for two. Rusev shrugs it off and puts on the Accolade but Cena gets to his feet and rams

Rusev into the corner. The STF goes on but Lana offers a distraction, only to have Rusev accidentally knock her down, setting up the AA for the pin at 14:43.

Rating: B-. Good match but a bit below their previous match and not exactly the emotion they were going for. They hit all the big points but Cena winning was kind of just there instead of having a big impact. I'm thinking more about that Stunner than anything else, but it's nice to see Cena with a midcard title and taking a backseat to the World Title. Not that he doesn't belong in the title scene, but this is refreshing.

Post match Rusev yells at Lana and leaves.

It's 9:30 and we have two matches left. Those are going to have to go a long time to make this fit. It's possible that that's a stretch.

Wrestlemania XXXII is in Dallas on April 3, 2016.

The pre-show panel talks for a bit and recaps the two matches before the show started.

Here are Stephanie and HHH to announce the new attendance record: 76,976. Stephanie talks about being at Wrestlemania I to watch her friend Andre the Giant (my goodness let it go Steph) slam Big John Studd. She takes credit for the evolution of WWE because this company has grown under her leadership. HHH says he beat Sting tonight but he also beat everyone who bet against them. It's like he beat everyone here tonight and millions more around the world. He owned Sting and every superstar and Diva back there. They own the people too and you know what that means.

Cue the Rock for a huge ovation. Stephanie: "Ok you're happy to see him. Can you be quiet now?" Rock says the Authority doesn't own the people or the Rock because he's an East Bay boy (meaning from this area of California). HHH's options are to go dress up like Terminator again or we can have a Wrestlemania moment right here, right now. HHH remembers beating Rock in most of their matches so he has nothing to prove. Rock left his heart in San Francisco but HHH left his balls in Connecticut.

Stephanie gets in his face and says Rock is trying to get the fans to

cheer for him because he knows without the McMahons, there is no Rock. She brings up Rock's father and grandfather but the fans chant for Shane. Rock says Stephanie can run her mouth about the McMahons and the Johnsons, but she wouldn't be in power without McMahon's Johnson. Stephanie slaps him in the face and asks if he's going to hit her.

Rock actually leaves as Stephanie still won't shut up, so Rock goes over to.....Ronda Rousey. Fans: "RONDA'S GONNA KILL YOU!" Rock says he would never hit a woman, but Rousey would be happy to. Stephanie says they're friends but Ronda just stares at her. See, this is Stephanie's ring so she's not scared of Ronda. Ronda says any ring she steps into is hers so make her leave.

Stephanie still won't shut up so Rock warns her about the look on Rousey's face. "That look means she's about to reach down your throat and play jump rope with your Fallopian tubes." HHH remembers that he's here and says that's the last thing Rock is saying about Stephanie.

The fight is on and Rock hammers away before Rousey takes HHH down as well. Stephanie pulls back for the slap but Rousey catches the arm....and lets her go as Stephanie screams in pain. Rock says that's the Wrestlemania moment of the night. WAY longer than it needed to be and Rousey didn't get nearly enough heat off Stephanie but she looked at home in the ring.

Bray Wyatt vs. Undertaker

No recap but Bray keeps the awesome entrances going with zombie scarecrows that come to life as he passes them. Bray sprained his ankle earlier in the night so he might not be moving like usual. The sun is still partially out so the entrances are nowhere near as ominous as usual. Undertaker has some hair again and looks similar to how he did back in 2002. Bray says all of this is his now and charges into a boot to the face before the bell.

The driving shoulders put Bray down again and Old School connects, only to have Bray nail him with a clothesline. Another clothesline puts Undertaker over the top but he pulls Bray outside. The apron legdrop has Bray in even more trouble as it's almost all Undertaker early. Back in

and Snake Eyes looks to set up the running boot but Bray takes him down with the running cross body. The running splash in the corner gets two and we hit the chinlock.

Undertaker is dragged over to the corner as Bray goes outside for a big running charge into the steps, possibly sending Undertaker's head into the post. Back in and Bray goes to pick him up but gets caught in Hell's Gate. Undertaker can't quite get it locked in though and some right hands get Bray out. A release Rock Bottom and the backsplash get two and Undertaker is rocked.

Sister Abigail is countered into a chokeslam and the Tombstone gets two. Another Tombstone is countered into Sister Abigail for two. Bray Spiders up but Undertaker sits up and just stares at him, making Bray fall back to the mat in an unintentionally funny moment. The look basically said "Boy, what in God's name do you think you're doing?" Bray wins a slugout but takes too long mocking Undertaker, allowing Sister Abigail to be countered into another Tombstone for the pin at 15:06.

Rating: B. That sitout to break the spider walk was great but the match worked really well too. This really makes me think that last year was mostly due to the concussion, as this was much closer to the (still overrated) Punk match two years ago. Bray isn't going to die because of this, but he needs a major win or a big feud soon. Undertaker winning was pretty much the only option, especially since he can still go this well. It wasn't a masterpiece, but it was more than acceptable.

We recap Roman Reigns vs. Brock Lesnar. To keep it short, Brock is a monster that can't be beaten but Reigns says he can do it. There isn't much more to it than that.

WWE World Title: Roman Reigns vs. Brock Lesnar

Brock is defending of course and Reigns doesn't get the best reaction in the world. Reigns goes right for him but gets driven into the corner and thrown down with a German. The F5 from a bloody Lesnar connects in 31 seconds but he doesn't cover. Brock throws him down again and Reigns looks stunned. He elbows out of another German and the fans are all over him. Brock no sells some clotheslines and throws Reigns with another

German.

Reigns smiles up at him and shoves Brock's face. Brock: "SUPLEX CITY!" Another comeback is countered with the fifth German of the match but Roman keeps smiling at him. Number six has Reigns in even more trouble and Brock drapes him across the top rope. The fans say this is awesome and Brock drives Reigns off the apron and into the barricade. As they come back in, Reigns scores with a knee to the face and fires some kicks to the chest to nothing but boos.

Brock catches a kick though and just BLASTS Reigns with a clothesline to send him back outside. Back in and another suplex sends Reigns flying as Brock seems to like the blood on his face. Now Reigns looks to have some blood in his mouth too. Brock belly to bellies him over the ropes and back inside, followed by the second F5 for two. There go Brock's gloves and he slaps Reigns in the face a few times. Reigns starts laughing again so Brock throws him down with two more Germans. A third F5 only gets two and Brock is a combination of livid and shocked.

They head outside again and Brock goes hard into the post to really bust him open. He beats the count back in at nine and Reigns is smiling again. Now the Superman Punch connects but he doesn't go down. A second puts him down in the corner on one knee but the third misses, only to have Reigns counter the German. Reigns headbutts him (hooray for racial stereotypes!) and nails the third Superman Punch followed by the spear but Lesnar stumbles to the corner. A second spear gets two and Reigns is stunned. I totally bought that as the finish.

Brock catches a third spear in the fourth F5 AND HERE COMES ROLLINS! He cashes in right now and I think we have a triple threat! Rollins kicks Reigns to the floor and connects with the Curb Stomp but loads up a second, allowing Lesnar to counter into the F5. Reigns spears Lesnar down but Rollins Curb Stomps Reigns to win the title at 16:43!

Rating: B+. YES! I've wanted Rollins to win the title for the better part of a year now and this is the PERFECT way to pay it off. They keep Lesnar looking like a killer, Reigns looks strong and above all else, ROLLINS IS THE WORLD CHAMPION! They were running into a problem with Lesnar as

champion: you can only see him squash people for so long before it stops being entertaining. Let him go back to the big featured match and keep him away from the title (or turn him face) and let Rollins be the top star as he should be. I'm thrilled with this and couldn't be happier. Great choice for an ending to a great show.

Overall Rating: A. We'll file this under WHERE THE HECK DID THIS COME FROM??? I had a blast with this show and couldn't be happier if I tried. Above all else, there were no bad matches on the whole card. Not a single one. The worst thing all night was a too long Rock vs. HHH segment to set up a huge match next year and there's nothing wrong with that. I'm still on a high from that ending and might be overrating the show, but this was a great night all around.

I need to give credit to the entrances too. These were on fire all night and the best thing about them was how much more of a spectacle they made the show. Yeah it's cool to see them walk down a ramp, but having a tank, robots or a Japanese band (what was up with that?) makes it feel like you're seeing something special.

I can't believe how much I liked this show after dreading what I felt was coming. The best part about it though is the renewed faith in the company. Yeah, the build sucked, but they NAILED the show (save for one or two questionable booking moves) and the whole thing was just a blast all around. I had a great time with this and didn't get bored once, save for a lame concert but we'll ignore that for now. Really good show and a high quality all night, with the worst match being a totally watchable Divas tag. Loved it and I can't believe how good of a time I had watching, especially the ending.

Results

Daniel Bryan b. Dolph Ziggler, Luke Harper, Stardust, R-Truth, Dean Ambrose and Bad News Barrett – Bryan pulled down the title

Randy Orton b. Seth Rollins – RK0

HHH b. Sting – Sledgehammer to the face

AJ Lee/Paige b. Bella Twins – Black Widow to Nikki

John Cena b. Rusev – Attitude Adjustment

Undertaker b. Bray Wyatt – Tombstone

Seth Rollins b. Roman Reigns and Brock Lesnar – Curb Stomp to Reigns

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