

# New E-Book: KB's History of the Royal Rumble

Back in late 1987, the WWF started messing with the NWA's pay per view schedule by airing Survivor Series 1987 on the same night as Starrcade 1987. This worked so well that they decided to do it again in January 1988 but as a free special on the USA network. Nearly thirty years later, the show has become one of the biggest events of the year and contains one of the most important matches on the Road to Wrestlemania: the Royal Rumble.

For twenty seven years, the Royal Rumble has given us the biggest battle royal of the year and some of the best matches of all time. Ranging from Chris Jericho vs. Chris Benoit in a ladder match to Triple H vs. Cactus Jack in a street fight to Chris Benoit vs. Kurt Angle in a technical masterpiece, you're almost guaranteed to get a solid title match in addition to the Royal Rumble itself.

In this book, we'll look at every edition of the Royal Rumble starting in 1988 and break down every show, segment and match as WWE starts their Road to Wrestlemania. The book contains twenty seven pay per view reviews and looks at everything that has taken place at the first major show of the year on the WWE calendar. As usual I'll be providing play by play, historical context and analysis of every show.

The book runs about 350 pages on a Kindle and only costs \$3.99, or the equivalent in other currencies. If you don't have a Kindle or e-book reader, there are several **FREE** apps you can use to read it on pretty much any electronic device. You can find those from Amazon [here](#).

You can pick up the book from Amazon [here](#).

From the UK Amazon [here](#).

From the Canadian Amazon [here](#).

Or if you're in another country with its own Amazon page, just search KB Rumble and my book will be the first thing that pop up.

Also you can still get any of my previous books on the WWE Championship, Monday Night Raw from 1998 and 2001, Monday Nitro from 1995-97, In Your House, Summerslam, Starrcade, ECW Pay Per Views and Clash of the Champions at my author's page [here](#).

I hope you like it and shoot me any questions you might have.

KB

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## More In Depth Thoughts On The Rumble

So I've had a night to sleep on one of the most controversial shows I've ever seen. I didn't have the chance to go as in depth as I wanted to with some of my thoughts last night because the Rumble is such a fast paced match. Let's take a closer look the whole show in more of a rapid fire format.

First of all, the New Age Outlaws are the new Tag Team Champions. The more I think about this, the less I care for the idea. Yeah the Outlaws are on a nice reunion tour, but so were the Rhodes Brothers. Cody has the potential to become something important in the future, while the Outlaws are here for nostalgia and not much more. I get the idea of the Authority being corrupt and giving their friends title shots, but it doesn't come off as cronyism when they won the title match clean.

Moving on to the actual show, the opening match was outstanding. That's the kind of a win that Bray Wyatt needed because he's the kind of character that is going to take a big hit when he loses his first big match. The win was good but the fact that it was one of the best openers in company history helped a lot.

Brock Lesnar is a terrifying human being. Seriously, the guy is just a beast and that F5 to Big Show had me screaming at my screen.

That brings us to what I thought was the bigger insult to the wrestlers of the night. John Cena vs. Randy Orton was a good match last night, but the fans treated it horribly. I understand that they wanted Daniel Bryan to be in the title picture, but it was incredibly rude to go off on those two because he wasn't in there.

The worst part of it all: it was a good match. It's true that Orton vs. Cena has been done several times and no one wanted to see this rematch, but the fans were chanting BORING less than 20 seconds in. If the match is actually boring then chant that, but don't go off on it from the beginning. The stealing finishers stuff was good and thankfully it calmed the crowd down a bit, even though Orton went nuts several times out there.

One last thing about the match: John Cena continues to be an absolute master at working a crowd. Look back to the show in Portland (somewhere in the northwest at least) right before TLC when the fans chanted for Bryan throughout the Championship Celebration. Cena was smart enough to bring Bryan into his promo. Last night the fans were chanting for Y2J and Cena tried a Liontamer. The crowd immediately calmed down because they knew that someone was listening to them and that's all they wanted. It

was still a very good match though.

That brings us to the ending of the match and its post match antics. It would seem that Cena's Wrestlemania program is with the Wyatts and that's good news all around. If there's a better way to give Wyatt a big rub, I certainly can't think of it. This is what the fans have been asking for: getting new stars to the top of the roster. Bray got the biggest win of his career last night and will now have the biggest match of his life ten weeks. It helps that Bray has shown he can have great matches and is more than just a great worker.

Now hopefully it's just a singles match instead of turning it into a rumored tag match with Cena and Bryan teaming up against the Wyatts. Daniel is at the point where he doesn't need a rub like that and we don't want the Cena vs. Wyatt match stolen by fans who want to see something completely different from Bryan.

So that brings us to the big one of the evening and we'll start from the beginning.

CM Punk was the Rumble's Iron Man and I don't think most people noticed. Punk spent a long stretch of the match laying around and waiting to get to the final four before Kane eliminated him in a very quick scene that didn't have the impact they were hoping for. Kane vs. Punk at Elimination Chamber should be good but it felt like they were rushing to get to that moment last night and it took away from Punk's Rumble performance. Good, but not memorable night for Punk last night.

The same can be said for Rollins and Ambrose. Both guys were in the Rumble for a long time but neither did anything all that special. The

most interesting thing was Dean trying to throw out Reigns, but you could easily write that off by just saying it was trying to win the Rumble. I'd be fine if that's what they did, but it feels like another seed being planted for the big Reigns face turn.

Alexander Rusev had a good debut and looked like a monster. I wish he had gotten to throw some people out, but having five or so people combine to eliminate him was a nice touch. He's the kind of guy that would have been headlining house shows against Hogan back in 1986 and his NXT matches have all been good. He'll be a force if given some time and it looks like his first program is with Kofi, who he's traded wins with in NXT.

As for Kofi, his running jump back to the apron last night was a nice change of pace from the last few years worth of saves. More often than not they've been creative or clever, but this one was all about Kofi showing off how athletic he is. It was awesome looking and that's all it was supposed to be.

Dolph Ziggler returned. It's over.

Kevin Nash was a surprise so let's look at all of the legends/comedy characters at once. It was a lighter year for these guys this time with only a handful of appearances. Nash was Nash, El Torito was there as a comedy segment (for the love of all things good and holy, don't let this start Horny vs. Chavo II with Torito and Fandango), and then there's JBL. While it was a fine idea, Cole saying "this is the first time the JBL character has appeared in the Rumble" made me groan. I know kayfabe is dead, but don't pummel its corpse. Also the lack of Jake Roberts surprised me.

I'll save Reigns and Batista for later.

Sheamus also returned last night and you can see the same problems that plagued him during his last year: he's in severe need for a story. At the moment, Sheamus is just a strong guy who kicks people in the head. He hasn't had the slightest bit of adversity or problems since he was World Heavyweight Champion. That makes for a very uninteresting character and not something that is going to carry Sheamus much further. Give us a reason to care about Sheamus the person, not Sheamus the fighter.

On a more positive note: that's three straight final threes in the Rumble for Sheamus. Him being successful in the Rumble fits his fighter character really well, just like it did with Austin. Little things like that are when you can tell the writers are actually paying attention and it's very nice to see.

Miz had a nice showing last night as well. If you let him show some aggression and stop with the stupid Figure Four stuff (that's been going on for over a year now), there's still hope for that guy.

Del Rio was just there and thankfully it doesn't look like he'll be doing anything of note for awhile.

I watched last year's Rumble for the redos and it's astounding how far Ryback has fallen in just a year. He came in at #30 in 2013 and destroyed the world before being in a showdown with Cena. Now he's a midcard comedy act and little more. There's still hope for him, but it's not as a heel.

Big E. Langston was the worst disappointment to me last night. He came

in, eliminated no one, and basically did nothing in his entire time in the Rumble. I'm still very high on the guy but he needs to have a good night soon to make up for that. Obviously it's not all on him, but the Usos had better performances in the Rumble than Langston did.

I feel very sorry for Rey Mysterio. He could have been Santa Claus with a bag full of Corvettes for the crowd and would have been the biggest disappointment of the entire night. Anybody in that spot not named Bryan was going to be booed last night and it's not Mysterio's fault at all.

That brings us to the important stuff of the match last night. First off, Roman Reigns is getting the push that people have been expecting him to get for a long time (time for a little bragging: I've said he would be the biggest star out of the three since the beginning) and breaking Kane's record was a big step towards that. Keep in mind that Reigns came in at #15 and Kane came in at #6 when he set the old record and the twelve eliminations last night are even more impressive. More on Reigns later.

Now it's time to get to the most controversial guy in the Rumble: Big Dave Batista. I think I'm one of the few who sees it this way, but Batista was find as the Rumble winner. Yeah he's been back for six days, but he was a big deal when he left and it's not like he pinned someone to win the thing. Batista came back at the wrong time due to the whole Bryan fiasco. If this was any other year, people wouldn't mind nearly as much. No he's not in the same shape as he was in before, but give him more than ten minutes in the Rumble to get back to form. Also for people criticizing his spear, he was never good at that move. Why should he be now?

And now, for the Daniel Bryan situation. I don't think people were saying

he had to win or else. It wasn't that Bryan didn't win the Rumble, but that he wasn't even in it. If Bryan was in the Rumble, got down to say the final three or even four before being screwed out of the match, it would have been a FAR better reaction. As a very smart guy named Barbosa said on WrestleZone last night:

"Pardon me and the thousands of others for having some expectation of the hottest act being put in a position to win the Royal Rumble."

That sums it up as well as anything else could. Bryan didn't need to win, but he needed to place or show. The crowd knew what they wanted last night and did not care what else they were going to get as a consolation. As I said in the review, I've never seen a crowd just turn on a match as fast as they did when Mysterio's music hit. They did not care to see anyone but Bryan and they made that very clear in a few seconds.

This brings me to the reception the show received. I've seen people calling it the worst show the company ever produced and that just makes me laugh. First and foremost, Wyatt vs. Bryan was more than enough to make it an acceptable show. Also listen to the crowd for the entire Rumble up to Mysterio's music hitting. They're totally into the match and care about everything going on, but that one moment changes everything. It's a great show with a bad last fifteen minutes, not a horrible show at all.

Oh and one more thing which unfortunately I can't take credit for. Picture this:

#30 hits and Daniel Bryan's music plays.

"I'm afraid I've got some BAD NEWS for you all. Daniel Bryan isn't in the Royal Rumble but BAD NEWS BARRETT IS!"

He would be a made man for years.

So now let's look at what we should have on tap for Mania.

Punk vs. HHH. Obvious before the Rumble and even more confirmed now.



It would seem that we're getting Orton vs. Batista, but for the life of me I can't picture that being the main event or even for the title. I'm not sure what replaces it yet, but if that's for the title then they'll be lucky if the fans don't set the ring on fire.

Cena vs. Bray Wyatt. Should be awesome, though there's a chance it'll be Cena/Bryan vs. the Wyatt Family, which doesn't blow my skirt up.

That leaves us with four men who now need Wrestlemania matches and I think we get the following matches out of it:

Daniel Bryan vs. Brock Lesnar and the Undertaker vs. Roman Reigns.

Can you imagine the David vs. Goliath story with Bryan fighting back against Lesnar's power? Punk made a great match out of it and Bryan can do the same. That would placate the audience well enough in New Orleans I believe.

Roman Reigns is as perfect of a Wrestlemania opponent as you could have for Undertaker. He's been built up as a record breaker with the Survivor Series (he tied it there but it's the same idea) and then last night with Kane's Rumble record, so why not go after the biggest record of them all? Picture Reigns hitting the spear and Undertaker kicking out at the last second or Reigns Superman Punching his way out of the chokeslam. It would be an epic showdown.

Overall it was a very good show but the booking was questionable at best and horrendous at worst. The good thing coming out of it is the number ten, as in how many weeks we have until Wrestlemania. There's a lot of time to fix the problems shown last night and I have confidence that they'll fix things instead of letting Wrestlemania be hijacked by the fans. Bryan doesn't have to be in the title match, but if they put him out there with Cena or against Sheamus, there's going to be a very big problem that they brought entirely on themselves.

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# Royal Rumble 2014: The Night The Crowd Died

## Royal Rumble 2014

Date: January 26, 2014

Location: Consol Energy Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

Tonight marks the official start of the Road to Wrestlemania. We're ten weeks away from the biggest show of the year and barring some surprising changes, the main event will be set in place tonight. The odds on favorite for the Rumble would seem to be Batista, but for the life of me I can't imagine anyone but Daniel Bryan winning it. He isn't entered yet, but there are about ten slots left open. Give him a late number and listen to the roof blow off the place. Let's get to it.

## Pre-Show: Tag Titles: New Age Outlaws vs. Cody Rhodes/Goldust

Cody and Goldust are defending and lost a non-title match to the Outlaws to set this up. Road Dogg starts with Cody and is taken down by a quick shoulder block. Back up and Roadie hits his shaky fist but has to duck the Disaster Kick. Gunn comes in off the tag but is quickly sent to the floor for a top rope clothesline as we take a break. Back with Road Dogg dropping a knee on Goldust for two and putting on a chinlock.

Goldust fights back up and a double clothesline puts both guys down. Billy breaks up a tag attempt as the announcers brag about how Gunn hasn't aged a bit since the 90s. For 50 years old the guys is in good shape. Goldust finally makes the hot tag and Cody speeds things up, including a double springboard missile dropkick to put both Outlaws down.

Cross Rhodes lays out Road Dogg but Billy saves at two. Billy comes in off a blind tag as Cody hits the Disaster Kick to Roadie, setting up the Fameasser for the pin and the titles at 6:30.

**Rating:** C. I was surprised here. Not only was this not the result I was expecting, but the match was better than I thought it was going to be. The Brothers had been on one heck of a roll since the fall, but this likely leads into the Authority being corrupt storyline. That doesn't make sense given that the Outlaws just won the match clean, but I'm assuming that's the idea.

The opening video focuses on a countdown and how the Road to Wrestlemania begins tonight.

We recap Daniel Bryan vs. Bray Wyatt. Daniel joined the Wyatt Family a few weeks ago but only lasted two weeks in the group before turning on Bray in the huge face turn, despite him barely ever being a heel. Tonight is the showdown we've been waiting for.

#### Daniel Bryan vs. Bray Wyatt

The Family is with Bray here, despite the idea of the match being that they're not supposed to be here. Daniel fires off kicks to the leg and takes Bray down with a running knee but Bray gets in a shot of his own to take over. The Wyatts get in a few blows of their own and are ejected, with Bray saying he doesn't need them to fight this war. Back in and Daniel gets in some kicks to the leg and a high cross body for two, only to be sent to the floor. Bray misses a charge into the steps and injures his knee again, giving Bryan the opening he's been needing.

Daniel hooks something resembling an Indian Deathlock before stomping Bray's face into the mat for two. They slug it out on the apron with the fans chanting YES/NO in time. Bray headbutts Daniel to stagger him and wrings his arm down onto the apron to take over. Back in and Bray is in serious mode now. We hit the chinlock but Daniel quickly fights up with forearms, only to be backdropped to the floor.

The annoying fans chant Jerry Lawler as Bray rams Daniel's head into the post and drives in forearms for good measure. A running senton backsplash

has Daniel in even more trouble and Bray asks the fans why they don't help him. Bray catapults Daniel throat first into the ropes and we hit another chinlock. Wyatt does his spider walk out of the corner and the announcers of course laugh at Linda Blair jokes. He stays on Daniel's neck with another chinlock but Daniel gets in a shot to the head and shakes the ropes before firing off even more strikes.

A drop toehold sends Bray into the middle buckle and there are the YES Kicks to the chest and leg. Daniel hooks a hurricanrana from the middle rope to send the big man flying but he's out at two. Now the fans are into it by saying this is awesome and there's the moonsault in the corner. Daniel loads up the clothesline but thankfully Bray knows what's coming and hits a running elbow to stop Bryan's comeback.

Bray misses a charge and falls to the floor, allowing Bryan to hit a running tornado DDT off the apron. Awesome looking move. There's the running dropkick to knock Bray into the barricade and the missile dropkick puts him down back inside. Now the real YES Kicks have Bray in even more trouble as the fans are going nuts. The big kick to the head gets two and Daniel loads up the running dropkicks in the corner but Bray clotheslines him inside out for a very near fall.

Sister Abigail is countered into a rollup for two and there's the YES Lock but Bray bites the hand for the break. Bray's superplex is countered with headbutts and Daniel hits a top rope splash to crush Wyatt. Daniel loads up the running knee but Bray bails to the floor. Bryan dives at him with the FLYING GOAT but Bray catches him in midair and hits a wicked Sister Abigail into the barricade. Sister Abigail connects for the pin at 21:37.

**Rating:** A. Well that was awesome. This was a good example of a match where both guys could look great and only one could win. Daniel losing here isn't a bad thing as he could still come back later and win the Rumble to make up for this. Both guys look better coming out of this and Bray was the one that needed the win more. As soon as he loses, a lot of his mystique is gone. Outstanding match here and something Bray needed.

The expert panel (HBK, Flair, Duggan) are impressed. Shawn seems fine

after his fight with Bryan a few weeks ago.

Paul Heyman says Brock wants a title shot and talks about how great Big Show is. It doesn't matter though as Brock is going to destroy him and then take over the WWE.

We recap Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar. Show doesn't like Lesnar and is tired of him being a bully so tonight he's standing up to him. He also stuffed a Lesnar takedown attempt on Raw earlier this week to show how strong he was.

### Brock Lesnar vs. Big Show

For once this is under regular rules. Brock takes him down before the bell like an MMA fight and just mauls Big Show before blasting him over and over with a chair. More chair shots put Show on the mat as Jerry butchers history, saying Big Show gave Brock his first loss at the 2002 Royal Rumble (it was the 2002 Survivor Series). Show is beaten down even more with chair shot after chair shot. The bell still hasn't rung.

The referee runs from Brock and Big Show says ring the bell. Brock comes at him with the chair but walks into the KO Punch which knocks Lesnar silly. He rolls to the floor and Big Show throws him around with ease. Back in and Brock ducks another KO Punch and gets caught in the F5. Lesnar WALKS AROUND WITH BIG SHOW ON HIS SHOULDERS and hits the biggest F5 you'll ever see, making it more like an AA, for the pin at 2:05.

Post match Brock destroys him with even more chair shots, each one louder than the last. He bends two chairs over Show's back so he goes to get a third and beats on Show's leg. Show is left in a heap after what was much more of a segment than a match.

The Shield won't tell each other their numbers. Rollins says the only number that matters is three.

Randy Orton says he'll beat John Cena tonight and send him to the back of the line. Renee Young mentions Batista, Brock Lesnar and Bray Wyatt wanting title shots. Orton: "Bray Wyatt? He's a Duck Dynasty reject." The crowd laughs as Orton says it's not John Cena's night.

We get a LONG recap of John Cena vs. Randy Orton. Randy beat him at TLC for the Undisputed Title in a TLC match but tonight it's one fall with no stipulations. On top of that Orton attacked Cena's father a few weeks ago on Raw to make it personal.

#### WWE Title: Randy Orton vs. John Cena

We're ready to go after the big match intros. The fans chant for Daniel Bryan and then that the match is boring. Cena takes him down with a headscissors and the chant shifts to the usual dueling Cena chants. Orton grabs a headlock and suplexes Cena down as the chants go to WE WANT ANGLE and Randy Savage. There's a Y2J chant....AND CENA TRIES FOR A LIONTAMER! It shifts the chants to Undertaker as Orton suplexes Cena back inside for two.

The fans think it's boring as we're in a chinlock less than five minutes into the match. They head outside with Cena being sent into the steps as the crowd is restless again. Back to the Bryan chant and Orton actually shouts that he's the champion and not Bryan. A nice DDT puts Cena down for two and the fans think both guys suck. Cena comes back with an electric chair for two and the shoulder blocks followed by the ProtoBomb. Orton counters the Shuffle with the powerslam but Cena comes back with his half nelson slam into a neckbreaker for two of his own.

Cena loads up the top rope Fameasser but first has to block a superplex attempt before connecting for two. Orton throws him to the apron but Cena backdrops him to the floor to counter the Elevated DDT. The crowd has calmed down a bit now. Orton comes right back with the Elevated DDT on the floor and holds a finger to his ear for the crowd. Back inside and the RK0 is countered into the STF as the crowd just does not care, probably because they know a title match isn't ending less than fifteen minutes in.

Randy crawls over to the rope and gets in a shot to the head for a breather on the floor. Back in and Cena grabs another ProtoBomb followed by the Shuffle but Orton grabs the rope to block the AA. The referee gets bumped and there's the STF, making Randy tap but there's no referee. Randy hits him in the face with the belt for two as the doctor revives

the referee.

The fans think this is awful as an AA gets two for John. An RK0 gets the same and the fans still don't buy that the match is ending yet. Orton poses as the fans say they want Divas. With nothing else to do, Orton puts Cena in the STF but Cena is quickly out and has Orton in a Crossface. That's countered into a rollup for two and Orton hits an AA (done more like Cena used to do it without going down) for two more.

Cena of course hits an RK0 for two of his own before loading up the middle rope AA, only to have Orton get free pretty quickly. A tornado DDT puts Orton down and sets up the STF in the middle of the ring...and cue the Wyatts. Cena chases them off but walks into the RK0 for the pin at 20:53. Orton was surprised by the Wyatts being there.

**Rating:** B. The worst part about the crowd: the match was good. Trading finishers was something new for these guys, which is impressive as they've had about a dozen matches on PPV alone. The Wyatts interfering would seem to set up Cena vs. Wyatt at Mania, which is interesting to say the least. Good stuff here, as the show continues to rock.

Cena is destroyed as Orton bails. Bray hits Sister Abigail after shouting BEHOLD THE CREATORS OF THE NEW WORLD.

The New Age Outlaws tell Renee Young to put some more onto their intro. We look at the end of the preshow match and it's a new record for longest time between title reigns at 14 years. They have two words for Renee: new champs.

We even get old school Rumble promos!

Miz will do whatever it takes to headline Wrestlemania again.

The Usos say only one can win and go to Wrestlemania.

Langston is ready.

Fandango wants to go to the Big Dance.

Batista: "Exactly."

Sandow says insanity means trying the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. He won't make them again.

Ryback says his unlimited energy takes him to Wrestlemania.

Rey Mysterio says he'll shock the world again.

Back to the expert panel. Shawn picks Shield or Punk. Flair picks Batista. Duggan picks....Dolph Ziggler?

### Royal Rumble

90 second entrants this year and it's Punk at #1 and Rollins at #2. Punk takes him back into the corner to start but Rollins puts him onto the top, only to be elbowed in the head. Punk comes back with strikes but Rollins just punches him into the face. A kick to Seth's ribs slows him down but he avoids a big kick to the face and hits a running dropkick. There's a running forearm in the corner but Punk comes back with the running knee. He calls for the GTS but gets caught by an enziguri. Punk kicks him in the face and both guys are down as Damien Sandow is in at #3.

Sandow goes right for Punk as Rollins gets a breather. Punk gets double teamed but comes back with a neckbreaker to Rollins/DDT to Sandow combo to put both guys down. He tries to throw Rollins out but Sandow breaks it up. Cody Rhodes is in at #4, meaning people from earlier in the night can be in as well. He hits a quick Cross Rhodes on Damien but Seth prevents an elimination. Sandow charges at Punk and is backdropped out to get us back to three.

Rollins gets double teamed but Kane is #5, wrestling in black dress pants. He goes right after Punk and stomps him down in the corner before hitting a nice side slam. Punk blocks the chokeslam with a high kick and throws Kane out with relative ease. Alexander Rusev, a Bulgarian monster from NXT, is in at #6. He immediately starts cleaning house but only throws Cody and Rollins to the apron. Alexander picks up Punk and throws him around with a fallaway slam and it's Jack Swagger at #7.

Jack charges to the ring and hits a quick Vader Bomb on Rollins and Cody



as the ring is filling up a bit. We get a showdown between Rusev and Swagger and the fans chant USA. Rusev takes over with a clothesline and a charge in the corner but Rollins takes Alexander's leg out and it's a triple team with everyone not named Punk stomping the Bulgarian. The fans are WAY into this.

Kofi Kingston is in at #8 and you can feel the big save coming. He rolls into the ring and immediately punches Punk down but can't throw him out. Cody hits the Disaster Kick on Swagger as Kofi goes after Rusev, who he's been feuding with in NXT. Swagger has Rollins upside down in the corner but can't get him out. Jimmy Uso is in at #9 and hits a quick Bubba Bomb on Rollins and gets in shots on everyone else. Punk headbutts Jimmy and we get some good old fashioned racial stereotypes as it has no effect.

Goldust is in at #10, giving us a group of Punk, Rollins, Rhodes, Kingston, Rusev, Swagger and Uso. He takes Rollins down with some right hands and hits the kneeling uppercut on Jimmy. Rusev punches the paint off Goldie's face to stop his momentum and everyone gangs up on Alexander again. We need some eliminations here. A big group of about five people get Rusev out in a showing that could have gone longer.

Kofi is knocked to the apron and into Rusev's arms, so he lays him on the barricade and drives knees into Kingston's back. Kofi stands up on the barricade and tightropes across before jumping ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE APRON in an incredible athletic display. Ambrose (coming through the entrance) is in at #11. He goes right for Kofi and then Punk as Swagger is in big trouble but gets back inside. Things slow down a bit as Goldust slides back in under the ropes. Dolph Ziggler returns at #12.

Ziggler speeds things up by pounding on everyone but is put on the apron in just a few seconds. The ring is really getting full as we need a monster to clear it out. Instead we get R-Truth at #13 but is double teamed by the two Shield members. They toss him to the apron and Ambrose kicks him out with ease. Jimmy goes up but gets kicked in the head, allowing Ambrose to shove him out as well. Kofi is on the apron but has to block a boot from Swagger. He holds onto it so long that he's literally hanging in by his feet and pulls Jack's boot off.

Kevin Nash of all people is in at #14, giving us a group of Punk, Rollins, Nash, Ziggler, Ambrose, Goldust, Swagger, Rhodes and Kingston. Nash puts out Swagger as soon as he gets in but has to deal with Shield. Things slow down again and it's Roman Reigns in at #15 to put the entire Shield in the match. There's a spear to Cody and a headbutt to Nash's chest. Roman catches Trouble in Paradise and throws Kofi out but shrugs off the Zig Zag and hits a GREAT spear on Ziggler for a quick elimination.

Nash is low bridged out by Reigns as well as the ring is rapidly emptying out. Goldust and Cody go after Reigns but Rollins makes a save. Great Khali is in at #16 and Shield is on him as he comes in. The giant shoves all of them down but a Superman Punch knocks him into the ropes, allowing all three of them to put Khali out. Goldust, Punk and Rhodes pair off with the three guys but Cody is sent to the floor, only to be accidentally knocked out by his brother. Reigns dumps Goldust and we're down to Punk vs. Shield.

Things even up a lot as Sheamus returns at #17. Shield is right on him but the pale one fights them off and gets them all in different corners. There are the ten forearms to Ambrose's chest with the last one being to the exposed chest. An Irish Curse puts Rollins down and a Brogue Kick knocks Reigns silly. Sheamus stands tall but Reigns is dead weight. Rollins and Ambrose double team Sheamus and it's Miz at #18, giving us Shield, Punk, Sheamus and Miz.

Everyone pairs off again but they all wind up in one corner. Punk has been down for a long time now but is likely just getting a breather. The clock is going very fast tonight as Fandango is in at #19. Shield swarms Sheamus as Fandango goes after Miz. Punk is still down in the corner. The fans want Daniel Bryan but get El Torito at #20. As in the little guy in the white bull costume.

Naturally he beats up a few guys but Punk gives him a look that channels Miz by saying "really?" Punk grabs him by the head but gets caught in a freaking hurricanrana. Fandango runs him over (JBL: "PETA is going to be mad. I head Mantaur is his grandfather.") but gets hurricanranaed to the apron and dropkicked out by the bull. Torito dives on Reigns like an

idiot though and is LAUNCHED onto Fandango for his sixth elimination. We're back to Miz, Sheamus and Punk vs. Shield.

Cesaro is in at #21 and picks Miz up for a quick Cesaro Swing. Punk gets one as well but Rollins and Ambrose break it up. Cesaro rams them into each other and swings Rollins until it's Luke Harper at #22. Reigns spears Cesaro down as things slow again. Rollins and Cesaro slug it out and Jey Uso is in at #23, giving us Shield, Sheamus, Miz, Jey, Punk, Cesaro and Harper. Speaking of Cesaro and Harper, they have a big power slugout with Harper kicking Cesaro's head off to take over.

JBL of all people is in at #24 to a BIG pop and comes in wearing a full suit and tie. He yells at Cole to come take his coat, allowing Reigns to throw him out with ease. That's #7 for Reigns. Erick Rowan is in at #25 and teams up with Harper to dump Miz, leaving us Shield, the Wyatt Family, Miz, Punk, Sheamus, Cesaro and Jey Uso. Jey is kicked out by Harper and Shield stares down the Wyatts as Ryback is in at #26. Everyone brawls and Alberto Del Rio is #27.

Nothing much happens until Batista is in for the big cleanup spot at #28. He's in very short shorts instead of trunks but still looks good. He clotheslines Rowan out and it's showdown time with Ryback. They slug it out and Cesaro has to dive out of the way of a launched Batista. Ryback is backdropped out by Big Dave but Del Rio clips Batista and kicks him in the head. Batista easily picks Alberto up and tosses him out though, right before Big E. Langston is in at #29.

Langston starts with a nice belly to belly on Batista and a series of backbreakers to Sheamus. The fans start chanting YES as the clock is ticking down. #30 is.....Rey Mysterio, completely letting the air out of the arena. The final group is Punk, Shield, Harper, Sheamus, Cesaro, Mysterio, Langston and Batista. Rey and Rollins try to eliminate each other but neither go out. Sheamus knocks out Langston to get us down to ten but the fans just do not care now.

Rollins tosses Mysterio to a pop because he's not who the fans wanted to see. Rollins and Ambrose stomp Sheamus down in the corner and get Harper to the apron but Reigns Superman Punches him out. Ambrose tries to get

rid of Reigns but can't quite do it, triggering an argument. Cesaro goes after both of them so Reigns dumps Cesaro, Rollins and Ambrose, which ties Kane's record of eleven. His reward is a spinebuster as we're down to four: Punk, Batista, Sheamus and Reigns.

Make that three as Kane comes in and pulls Punk out before chokeslamming him through the table. The final three are Reigns, Batista and Sheamus who are all down as the fans chant for Mysterio. Everyone slowly gets back up and the fans boo this out of the building. This would be Sheamus' third straight final three by the way. Batista breaks up a spear to Sheamus as the NO chants begin. Sheamus rewards him with the Regal Roll but Batista ducks the Brogue Kick.

A backdrop puts Sheamus on the apron and Reigns dumps him for the record at 12 eliminations. Batista thinks he dumps Reigns but Roman slides back in as we're down to two. Roman unzips the vest and stares Batista down as the fans are somewhat into this. They slug it out with Reigns taking over but Batista comes back with a spear. The fans are COMPLETELY behind Reigns here as he spears Batista right back. He's all fired up...but Batista easily throws him out for the win at 55:10, letting the air out of the arena again.

**Rating:** B. It was a really good Rumble, but man alive if that crowd reaction doesn't change something, nothing is going to. I've been watching wrestling my entire life and I have never ever heard a crowd just go silent like they did when Mysterio came out. I mean they just DIED. Batista was destined to win this thing, even though he was the completely wrong pick. Reigns looks like a STAR here but needed the win to cement it. Batista just was not the right pick here, but you knew it was coming the entire time.

The fans are not pleased as a lot of fireworks go off to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** A. Very ticked off crowd to say the least, this was an outstanding show. Everything was either good to excellent with only the world title match being a step below the rest. Raw tomorrow night is going to be VERY interesting as they're either going to change a lot of stuff or have the worst crowd reaction to a Wrestlemania of all time. I

had an awesome night with this show, but Batista should not have gotten that win, period.

I'll have more in depth thoughts and analysis on the Rumble tomorrow after it's had a better chance to process.

### Results

Bray Wyatt b. Daniel Bryan – Sister Abigail

Brock Lesnar b. Big Show – F5

Randy Orton b. John Cena – RK0

Batista won the Royal Rumble, last eliminating Roman Reigns

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## Royal Rumble 2014 Preview

After Smackdown last night I'm actually excited for the show.

As always we'll start with the pre-show match. I can't imagine they'll take the belts off the Rhodes Brothers and give them to the Outlaws, especially not on a pre-show. The Brothers have been on fire as of late and come off like main event players, so the belts stay with them. The Outlaws have been impressive though as they're basically at the same level they were on fifteen years ago.

Lesnar over Big Show. There's a chance they'll do a double DQ, but Big Show doesn't get hurt by losing as he'll get at

least two world title shots on PPV this year.

Orton keeps the title in a match I think people forget exists. The booking of this feud has been completely backwards with the title match being booked and then making it personal and the gimmick match leading off the feud. I don't believe for a second that there won't be interference of some sort and Orton keeps the title. I have very little desire to see this match.

I have a feeling we get a no contest/unclean ending to Bray vs. Bryan. The Wyatts losing kills most of the mystique but Bryan is so hot right now that you can't have him lose at a big PPV. I think they drag this out to another show which isn't the worst thing in the world.

Now for the real main event with the Rumble itself. Until #30 enters and it's not Bryan, I'll take Daniel Bryan as the favorite to win. He's the hottest thing in years and there are only twenty entrants accounted for so far. Yeah there are a lot of rumors out there about what might be coming for him at Wrestlemania but I'll believe the card when it's announced on Raw. If Bryan isn't in there, this is going to Batista, which it likely is anyway. Punk will make a good run but Kane will screw him over, setting up Punk vs. Kane at Elimination Chamber which sets up Punk vs. HHH at Wrestlemania.

If AJ vs. Naomi is added, the champion keeps the title.

Overall the show definitely has me interested because the Rumble is a match that can go several ways. Yeah Batista is the big favorite at this point, but there are other options to winning it. The other matches should be fun though I have less of a desire to see them. The good thing about the Rumble is that a third of the show is spent on one match, so the entire show hinges on that alone.

Thoughts/predictions?

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# Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2011: The Rumble Grows Up

## 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 Ziggler. 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 Ziggler would have a



stupid 45 minutes or less reign. I don't think anyone, including Dolph, considers that a real reign but hey, Ziggler 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 time. 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 RK0 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 RK0 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 Bells 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 heeeeeeeeeeeere'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 Ziggler is #31. There's a pretty big talent pool in there at the moment with Cena, Mysterio, Sheamus, Kingston, Ziggler 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, Mysterio 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 RK0 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. Mystério 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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## Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2010: Shawn Was This Close

### Royal Rumble 2010

Date: January 31, 2010

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 16,697

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Matt Striker

We're getting close to the end of the run here with only three shows left. Tonight we've got the Rumble of course along with Undertaker defending against Mysterio and Sheamus defending against Orton. I remember really liking this one as the new generation had arrived and was rising up the card. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about the Road to Wrestlemania is beginning and how it determines what happens for months to come. This is called the most star studded Rumble ever, which is a tagline that has been used before.

#### ECW Title: Christian vs. Ezekiel Jackson

Christian is defending and man that ECW ring announcer has an annoying voice. Regal is with Jackson here. According to Striker, Jackson went to Columbia Law School. Now there's a factoid that fell through the cracks. Jackson shoves Christian into the corner and then does it again into the ropes so the champion slaps him in the face. After a brief chase, Christian dropkicks Jackson out to the floor.

The springboard plancha takes Jackson out and we head back in. Christian finally gets caught in the corner and pounded on before having the Killswitch easily blocked. Instead Christian chokes away on the ropes and hits another shot to the face. Jackson throws Christian to the floor where Regal tries to throw him back in, earning himself an ejection. Off to a neck crank back inside which Jackson picks up into a kind of cobra clutch slam for two.

A vertical suplex gets two for Big Zeke and it's time for more choking. A sunset flip is easily blocked by Jackson and it's back to the chinlock. Striker tries to figure out what a peep is, as he knows it as a something made of chocolate. Some shots to the face get Christian out of trouble for awhile, or at least until a clothesline to the back of the head gets two.

Jackson hooks both of Christian's arms back for another hold before putting the champion on top. The superplex is blocked and Christian hits a top rope back elbow for two (LOVE that move). Jackson's big clothesline misses and a middle rope dropkick gets two for the champion. A spinwheel kick gets two on Jackson but a swan dive misses and gives Zeke a near fall as does a backbreaker.

The tornado DDT gets ANOTHER two for Christian so Jackson takes his head off with a clothesline. Off to a sleeper from Christian when the Killswitch doesn't work but Jackson counters into a powerslam position to ram Christian's back into the buckle. Christian slides down Jackson's

back and grabs the Killswitch out of nowhere to retain.

**Rating:** C+. Trim two minutes out of this and it goes WAY up in quality. The period of near falls went on too long without getting any significant heat from the crowd. Jackson would get the title in a little over two weeks on the final episode of ECW because if there's one man that should be the final ECW Champion, it's a musclehead that could barely get through a five minute match most of the time.

Cryme Tyme come in to try to get a second spot in the Rumble from Teddy and Tiffany. Khali says "no dice homeslice" to selling their spot because he's keeping it real. Apparently he's learned his English from Family Matters (Singh's words, not mine). Ok then. Anyway US Champion the Miz comes in and laughs which causes him to have to defend against MVP.

Orton is in the back when Cody Rhodes comes in. He's there for Randy in the title match tonight but that's not all. Apparently DiBiase isn't in on this because his mind is on winning the Rumble and taking the title from Orton.

#### US Title: The Miz vs. MVP

A quick clothesline gets two for MVP and he works on the champ's ribs to start. Miz gets a boot up in the corner to slow him down but MVP comes right back with a belly to back suplex for two. They head to the floor for this gem from Striker: "Miz is one of the most recognizable faces on this planet." I don't think Miz is one of the most recognizable faces in this match.

Back in and Miz sends MVP to the apron and gets kicked into the table on the floor. Not that this is treated like anything of note because the announcers are laughing about Sherri Shepard from The View. Miz sends shoulders into MVP's ribs in the corner followed by the running corner clothesline. A top rope double ax gets two for Miz and we hit the chinlock.

After that eats up some time, MVP pounds away with all of his usual stuff. Ballin hits and a running boot to the side of the head gets two for the challenger. A big shoulder block gets the same for MVP but he

misses a running boot in the corner. MVP grabs three straight quick near falls but gets caught in a small package for the pin to keep the title on Miz.

**Rating:** D+. If there was a reason for this to be on PPV other than the show was running short, I don't know what it was. Miz didn't look like anything special out there but somehow he would be world champion a year later. MVP on the other hand would be out of the WWE but he did well enough in Japan. Nothing to see here other than a filler match.

Post match MVP hits the Playmaker on Miz and gets booed LOUDLY. He lost completely clean so the booing is deserved.

Show and Jericho, the former tag team champions, run into each other. Show accuses him of being jealous of the chemistry Show and Miz have but Jericho brushes it off. He calls the crowd gelatinous worms before pointing out all of the similarities he and Miz have. Show says he'll throw both Miz and Jericho out to win the Rumble. R-Truth pops up and says he'll do the same. Show leaves Jericho standing there much to Jericho's chagrin.

DiBiase wishes Orton luck and says he's got Randy's back. Orton asks where Cody is but DiBiase doesn't know. This was during the time when Legacy was about to die and both members were trying to get on Randy's best side. DiBiase claims that Rhodes only wants to win the Rumble but Orton has heard enough. He doesn't want anyone's help and gets a clear face pop in response.

The National Guard is here.

#### Raw World Title: Sheamus vs. Randy Orton

Sheamus won the title in a shocker last month at TLC and is heel here. He's also still not that good and wouldn't really hit his stride for about a year and a half. They stare at each other to start and my goodness is Sheamus pale. A dropkick puts the champion down but he comes right back with a running ax handle. Sheamus gets in a shot to the arm and we head to the floor where said arm is sent into the steps.

Back in and Orton goes for the knee and things slow down a bit. Orton wouldn't really pick up the pace of his offense until about the following year which made his matches pretty hard to sit through. Sheamus comes back by sending Orton's shoulder into the post twice and hitting some shoulder blocks in the corner. That gets him nowhere though as Orton takes out the knee again and knocks Sheamus to the floor.

They head inside again and yet AGAIN momentum shifts back to Sheamus as he hits a DDT on the arm for two. Off to an armbar for a bit before they slug it out to the boo/yay chants. Orton wins the slugout but walks into the Irish Curse for two. The High Cross is escaped and Orton kicks Sheamus in the head to send him to the outside. Orton gets ready for the RKO but Rhodes jumps the guardrail and blasts Sheamus in the back before running away. The referee sees it though and despite Orton hitting the RKO, he's disqualified and Sheamus keeps the title. Lame ending to a pretty lame match.

**Rating:** D+. Like I said, Sheamus just wasn't very good yet. He was still this big imposing brawler who pounded on people and that's about it. There was indeed a story in the match but it wasn't a very entertaining one as they just kept beating on each other's limbs but when there's no difference because of the beating, the story doesn't work. The ending didn't help either but it did set up something in the future.

Post match Orton snaps on Cody as DiBiase comes down to save his partner. While Orton yells at Cody in the corner, Sheamus comes back in and lays out Randy with a Brogue Kick.

We recap Mickie vs. McCool. This was an awkward feud as Mickie won the title shot in a triple threat and then Laycool made fun of Mickie for being fat. This is of course odd as Mickie is a professional athlete and gorgeous and would only be called fat by a crazy person. It's also pretty disturbing when you consider how WWE pushes the Divas as role models. The final bit of it was a segment where Mickie got beaten down and covered in food.

Women's Title: Michelle McCool vs. Mickie James

Pre match Michelle runs her mouth about how fat Mickie is and accuses her

of skipping out on the match. Michelle offers cake and here's Layla in a Mickie Pig costume. The real Mickie sprints to the ring and hits a Thesz Press on Layla on the floor. She heads inside, sends Michelle into Layla and hits the MickieDT for the pin and the title in 20 seconds.

Post match the other Divas bring out a cake and smash it into Laycool's faces.

We recap Mysterio vs. Undertaker. Rey won the shot by slamming a cage door onto Batista's head to escape because that's what heroes do. Taker said he'll show no mercy on Mysterio so Rey uses the same line everyone does on Taker: he isn't afraid. Batista beat up Mysterio as well, claiming that Undertaker and the world title was his.

#### Smackdown World Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Undertaker

Mysterio, in the deep south, comes out wearing a white hood. Striker talks about Lawler being in the ring with Kamala and Lord Humongous (Sid) because he thinks it makes him sound interesting. He's trying to make a comparison to being in the ring with Undertaker, but if he was as smart as he thinks he is, he would ask Jerry what it's like to be in the ring with Undertaker himself, which would save a lot of headaches.

Rey fires off some shots in the corner before Taker grabs him by the neck and throws him up and over the top and out to the floor. That looked awesome. Back to the apron and Rey fires off strikes to the face, only to get punched right back down to the floor by a single shot. Taker misses the legdrop on the apron but hits it the second time before heading back in. Rey counters a chokeslam into the 619 but Taker easily grabs the legs. Tombstone is countered and Taker misses an elbow drop.

Rey tries a springboard cross body but jumps into a boot to the chest. We head to the floor again and there's another big boot to the head to take Rey down. A third big boot keeps Rey down but the fourth misses and Taker sends his leg around the post. Rey hits a baseball slide to send the leg into said post and Taker is in trouble. The seated senton off the apron is caught and Taker puts him back on the apron, only to be caught by an Asai Moonsault to put both guys down.

Taker grabs Rey by the throat and slams him into the barricade. The champion's nose is busted a bit. Taker does that lifting wristlock of his to crank on the arm a bit before punching Rey down in the corner for a bit. A big side slam gets two for the guy who would use a side slam in this match as Striker goes into this big speech about how the blood shows that undertaker is mortal. Seriously, it's a BLOODY NOSE. Watch the freaking Lesnar match in the Cell when the blood is literally dripping from Taker's head and down onto Lesnar's body.

Rey starts firing off some punches but a single shot from Taker is enough to put him back down. A jawbreaker finally staggers the big man and they do a kind of cross body, although Taker counters into something like Langston's Big Ending, so it's hard to say which hurt worse. Taker sits up so Rey kicks him in the face. Why has no one done that before? Rey drops the dime (springboard legdrop) for two but Taker kills him with a big clothesline. The Last Ride is countered and the 619 hits as does a second one, but the West Coast Pop is countered into the Last Ride to retain the title.

**Rating:** B. This was solid stuff for the most part for a few reasons. First of all, they didn't make Taker look ridiculous to get into position for Rey's moves. That's my biggest issue with most of Rey's battles against giants: how stupid the big men look. The other good thing here is that Taker wasn't knocked silly after just a few moves. Rey only hit maybe a dozen offensive moves here other than basic strikes and it wouldn't have made sense to have Taker in major trouble. Finally, Rey can bump like crazy when he's trying to. The only issues here are the lack of a threat to Taker and Striker's commentary. Chill out already man.

Shawn is watching in the back when Kane comes in and says Shawn's obsession with Taker is unhealthy. This is KANE calling something unhealthy. He warns Shawn to cool it with Taker because it won't end well. Kane leaves and HHH comes in. Shawn apologizes for whatever happened on Raw which apparently isn't important enough to specify. HHH agrees Shawn vs. Taker is meant to be, but it won't be by wining the Rumble.

Rumble by the Numbers time:



23 Winners

627 entrants eliminated

36 eliminations by Austin

11 eliminations by Kane in 2001

2002 was the last Rumble in Atlanta

62:12 Rey was in the Rumble in 2006

2 seconds was the record for 20 years until Santino broke it last year

3 wins for Austin

2 win for #1, the same as #30

70% of the winners win at Mania

### Royal Rumble

Dolph Ziggler is #1 and Evan Bourne is #2. Bourne snaps off a headscissors to start and follows up with a spinwheel kick to take Dolph down. Ziggler comes back with the Zig Zag but can't throw Evan out. Bourne decks Ziggler and hits Air Bourne as CM Punk of the Straightedge Society is #3. He slams the other two guys' heads together and dumps them out one after the other. Punk gets a mic and says that tonight is the greatest night in the history of the Straightedge Society. These two are just the first of 29 men who will challenge him, but they can be saved.

The clock starts running down, so Punk gives us the line of the night: "Excuse me, it's clobberin time." JTG is #4 and after a few clotheslines, he poses like an idiot in the corner and gets dumped. Punk gets the mic again and says that not everyone can be saved because they don't have his dedication. Great Khali is #5 and Punk immediately says he can make Khali greater by saving him. He asks Khali to raise his hand for the Straightedge Pledge but Khali lowers the hand onto Punk's head for the chop.

There's the Khali Vice and in less than 90 seconds, Beth Phoenix of all

people is #6. She stares down Khali and gets picked up and placed on the apron. Beth kisses Khali but in the process pulls him over the top to eliminate him. Phoenix gets back in and BEATS UP PUNK, only to get caught in a GTS to the chest. Would that really knock her out? Before she's dumped out, here's Zack Ryder at #7.

As Ryder gets in, Punk grabs the mic and says Zack has potential. PREACH IT BROTHER! Punk starts offering him a spot but his Ryder with the mic before he gets done with it. The fans are going nuts for Punk now and there goes Ryder. Punk talks about how great he is and wants to know who is next, but whoever it is, they're inferior to Punk. In at #8 is HHH as we enter the second segment of the Rumble.

They stare each other down and HHH starts punching. The facebuster has Punk staggered and a spinebuster puts him down as Drew McIntyre is #9. That gives us a tag champion in HHH and the IC Champion in Drew at the moment. HHH is looking a bit flabby here. He hits the high knee on McIntyre and escapes the GTS to eliminate Punk. DiBiase is #10 as we're flying through this.

HHH gets double teamed down in the corner until John Morrison, the guy that lost the title to McIntyre, is #11. He takes both heels down and pounds away on them before hitting a jumping DDT on Drew. Starship Pain almost completely misses Drew and HHH clotheslines John down. Kane is #12 and comes in with the top rope clothesline to HHH. There's a double chokeslam to McIntyre and Morrison before Kane tries to dump DiBiase.

Rhodes is #13 and saves Ted as he comes in. Morrison is sent to the apron and springboards back in, only to get dropkicked out of the air. Legacy goes after Kane but HHH saves him for no apparent reason. Cody saves himself from being eliminated and MVP is #14. Miz runs up behind him though and blasts MVP with the US Title. Morrison hits the Moonlight Drive on McIntyre to break up the Future Shock on Kane. HHH is in trouble in the corner and MVP is carried to the back.

Carlito is #15 and the ring is starting to get full. There's a Backstabber to HHH and one for Drew and Ted as well. Miz is #16 and hits a quick Finale on Carlito. Cue MVP to clothesline Miz out and eliminate

himself in the process. Matt Hardy is #17 and lasts about 20 seconds before Kane puts him out. HHH immediately dumps Kane too and the ring is a lot more empty all of a sudden.

HHH starts laying out everyone and Shawn is #18. Carlito is backdropped out, Rhodes and DiBiase are tossed, Morrison gets dumped, and DX puts out McIntyre to get us down to DX. Before anything can happen though, Cena is #19 to get us to the final third of the match. Cena cleans house and hits a double Shuffle before getting caught in the Pedigree. Out of nowhere Shawn superkicks HHH out to pop the crowd BIG.

Shelton Benjamin in that stupid gold period is #20. He hits Paydirt on both guys but gets dumped by Cena in less than 50 seconds. Yoshi Tatsu is #21 and doesn't even make it 30 seconds. Big Show is #22 and Cena is shaken. Big Show RUNS down to the ring and house is cleaned. Shawn and Cena try to eliminate each other but Show pulls Shawn back in for some reason. What's up with that tonight?

Mark Henry is #23 and we get a quick battle of the giant. Who would think those two would have a world title feud a year and a half later and be REALLY popular? Henry slams Show and falls on Cena as he tries an AA. Show spears Henry down and Chris Masters is #24. Masters tries the Masterlock on Show and gets dumped for his efforts. Now Henry goes after Show but Shawn breaks it up for some reason. R-Truth is #25 and actually dumps BOTH big guys. There's something you wouldn't expect.

Truth hits a Stroke on Cena and Jack Swagger is #26. All three guys get Vader Bombs and Swagger goes old school with a very slow Oklahoma Stampede. Jack knocks Michaels to the apron but can't get the elimination. Kingston is #27 and cleans house on Swagger, hitting the Boom Drop and dumping him out with a nice leverage move. Truth puts Kofi on the apron but gets pulled out by a reverse headscissors.

Jericho is #28 but after cleaning about half the house, Cena grabs an AA to put him down. Shawn adds the top rope elbow and tunes up the band but Kofi hits Trouble in Paradise to take him out. Cena dumps Kofi but walks into a Codebreaker. Everyone is down and EDGE makes his big return at #29. That's rather brilliant instead of waiting for the big surprise at

#30, we get a SWERVE that actually makes sense.

Everyone gets a spear and Jericho is out. Edge is back about six months early and it's Edge-O-Matics all around. Batista is #30, giving us a final four of Shawn, Cena, Edge and Batista. Not bad at all. It's power all around but Edge spears him down. Everyone is down now Shawn gets up first and hits the forearm on Cena followed by the nipup.

Shawn slams every American in sight and drops the top rope elbow on Cena. Batista takes one too as Edge is still down in the corner. Sweet Chin Music hits Cena and there's one for Batista as well. Edge clotheslines Shawn to the apron and Michaels superkicks Edge back in, only to get knocked out by Batista. The crowd gasps HUGE at that and Shawn is about to cry. Shawn gets back in and superkicks the referee to vent some frustration. Shawn FINALLY leaves and Cena escapes the Batista Bomb before dumping Batista out. Edge misses the spear but throws out Cena a second later to go to Wrestlemania.

**Rating:** A-. This is kind of a hard one to grade. They definitely followed the three act structure which helped a lot and the match was VERY fast paced. I mean, the longest anyone was in there was Cena and he barely broke 20 minutes. The problem with that is it doesn't give anything time to develop. The main story was Shawn which is fine and he would get to Mania at the end of the day anyway. It's a really fun Rumble but not one of the best ever.

**Overall Rating:** B. The Rumble is very solid and the rest has nothing terrible so we'll call it a good show overall. Things would get a lot more interesting soon after this with the rise of the Nexus and a very solid Wrestlemania. This was also a time of transition for the company as a lot of the guys in this show would be gone by the end of the year. Anyway good show here and worth checking out.

### Ratings Comparison

Christian vs. Ezekiel Jackson

Original: C+

Redo: C+

Miz vs. MVP

Original: B-

Redo: D+

Sheamus vs. Randy Orton

Original: B

Redo: D+

Mickie James vs. Michelle McCool

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Undertaker vs. Rey Mysterio

Original: C-

Redo: B

Royal Rumble

Original: A

Redo: A-

Overall Rating

Original: A-

Redo: B

Dang I liked Sheamus a lot more than I thought I did.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/29/royal-rumble-count-up-2010-one-of-the-best-ever/>

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# Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2009: Groundhog's Day For The Main Event

## Royal Rumble 2009

Date: January 25, 2009

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Attendance: 16,685

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross, Todd Grisham, Matt Striker, Tazz

This isn't so much the Royal Rumble as much as it is HHH and Randy Orton are in a match and 28 other guys happen to be in the ring too. Other than that we have Edge challenging the NEW WWE Champion Jeff Hardy and Cena defending against JBL, who has Shawn Michaels and his crisis of conscience working for him at the moment. This wasn't the best year for WWE so let's get to it.

No intro video this year. That's interesting.

ECW Title: Jack Swagger vs. Matt Hardy

Swagger won the title about two weeks ago and this is Hardy's rematch. We actually get big match intros for this, which is a rare sight for an ECW Title match. Matt takes him into the corner to start before punching Jack

in the face. Striker calls that a pugilistic endeavor to sound smart. Another punch sends Swagger to the floor and we head back inside for a clothesline from Matt.

Jack heads to the floor to hide after Matt swings again. Back in and Swagger takes Hardy to the mat and cranks on the arm a bit. Hardy comes back with a dropkick in the corner and a bulldog for two, only to go up and get shoved down to the floor. Back in and Swagger starts in on the arm but Hardy quickly escapes a key lock. A punch to Hardy's arm blocks a clothesline and a big boot gets two for the champion.

Back to the key lock as Jack stays on the arm. He lifts Hardy off the mat by the arm a few times as the fans cheer for the challenger. Matt fights back but he's basically fighting with one arm here. A bulldog puts Jack down for two and a middle rope elbow to Swagger's back gets the same.

Hardy walks into a belly to belly suplex from Jack for two though and both guys are down. A DDT on the arm gets two for the champion but Matt blocks a belly to back superplex. Matt hits a decent looking moonsault for two and the fans are getting into these kickouts. The Twist is countered and Jack sends Matt shoulder and possibly head first into the post. The Swagger Bomb retains the title.

**Rating:** B-. Better match than I was expecting here with both guys looking good out there. Matt was getting close to being something decent as a singles guy and this was his way off ECW and onto Smackdown. Swagger would go on to win a world title and shock the world in the process before falling through the floor soon after. Solid opener here.

Orton arrives and gets glared at.

#### Women's Title: Beth Phoenix vs. Melina

Melina is challenging and Beth has Santino with her here. Beth shoves her around to start before easily breaking out of a headlock. A LOUD Santino chant starts up as Beth throws Melina around. Melina comes back with a shot to the head but gets shoved down immediately again. The challenger hooks an armbar of all things but Beth easily stands up while Melina stands on her shoulder.

Melina gets on Beth's shoulders again but Beth shoves her down in a crash. A running Umaga attack in the corner puts Melina down again and Beth is in full control. In a freaky looking move, Beth grabs Melina's leg in a kind of ankle lock position and bends the leg forward to make Melina kick herself in the back of the head. FREAKING OW MAN! Melina escapes a gorilla press and fires off some forearms before getting two off a sunset flip. Two knees into Beth's back have her staggered and a hair drag gets two. Out of nowhere, Melina grabs a spinning rollup for the pin and the title. As sudden as it sounds.

**Rating:** D+. Not terrible here and the girls looked good so I can't complain much. That leg lock thing of Beth's was SICK and it's one of those moves that just looks painful all around. At the end of the day though, does it matter who has either of the female belts? They're completely interchangeable and this one was retired the next year.

We recap JBL vs. Cena, which is basically the Shawn Michaels Story. Basically the story went that Shawn was crushed by the financial crash and JBL offered to hire him to help win the title. Shawn helped JBL win a #1 contenders match and the question is will he screw over Cena tonight and compromise his morals? There was a VERY real argument to be made for Shawn vs. JBL at Mania for the title, so this wasn't a layup. The problem with this story is still there though: Shawn is a world class wrestler with the top company in the world....and he's broke? He may have lost his savings but he's not unemployed.

JBL tells Shawn if he wins the title tonight, Shawn is free with a huge payday and he can be in the Rumble tonight, which at the moment he isn't. Bradshaw leaves and Taker shows up, saying that sometimes it's a nightmare getting to Heaven.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Cena is defending in case you skipped the previous parts. We get the big match intros here and even a weapons check for old times' sake. Cena takes him to the mat with a headlock to start but JBL counters into one of his own. A shoulder block puts JBL down and out to the floor as we take a breather. JBL whispers something to Shawn before heading back



inside for some clubbing forearms to the back.

Cena slams him down for two though and we're still in the early stages. JBL heads to the floor again but this time Cena goes after him. He runs into Shawn though and stops cold, allowing JBL to get in a shot to take over. Shawn didn't move at all. Back in with JBL in control and a standing clothesline gets two. Presumably that one was only from Hoboken.

Off to a chinlock from the challenger as we keep things at JBL's slow pace. A side slam gets two on Cena and he rolls out to the apron. Layfield knocks him to the floor and then sends him into the stairs for two back inside. Cena fights out of a superplex attempt and hits the top rope Fameasser for two of his own. The champ initiates his finishing sequence with all of his usual stuff including the Shuffle. Shawn hasn't been a factor in the first nine minutes or so of the match.

JBL escapes the AA but gets caught in the STF instead. Shawn starts grabbing the ropes but doesn't do anything. Cena lets go of the hold anyway, allowing JBL to kick Cena to the floor. JBL's Clothesline gets two so he glares at Shawn for some reason. A quick AA attempt misses and JBL kicks the referee down by mistake. The Johns double clothesline each other and it's time for the big moment.

Shawn gets in the ring and is staring at both guys. Both guys get up and Shawn superkicks John. As in the challenger/him employer. He also kicks the champion/the guy he was hired to take out before leaving. Shawn puts JBL's arm across Cena, causing the fans to chant for the champ. Another referee comes out and gets a two count for Layfield and both guys get up. Cena hits a quick AA on JBL to retain.

**Rating:** C-. The match itself was pretty dull but the drama worked well enough to make up for it. At the end of the day, JBL simply wasn't good enough at this point to hang in a world title match. Cena had to tone it WAY down to let JBL keep up with him and it showed badly. Still though, Shawn more than makes up for it and would go on to have a masterpiece with Taker at Mania so all is well and good.

We recap Edge vs. Hardy. Hardy shocked the world (including me) at Armageddon by winning the title, but a few weeks later he started having

a string of “accidents” including having pyro go off in his face and nearly getting killed by a crazy driver. Everyone blamed Edge but he denied responsibility. The question is who is behind all this stuff. Hardy hasn’t had a match that I know of in the meantime. I went to a house show during this period and Hardy didn’t wrestle.

### Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Jeff Hardy

Vickie makes it No DQ for no apparent reason and Chavo is in Edge’s corner because he’s familia. Jeff spears Edge into the corner to start and pounds away as fast as he can. The fans almost immediately start chanting WE WANT CHRISTIAN. Now remember that line as I’ll get back to it later on. Christian had left TNA and word hadn’t broken yet on if he had signed with WWE yet (I don’t think). Anyway, Jeff tries to bring in a chair but Edge kicks it out of his hands before it gets inside.

Hardy pounds away but Edge gets in a shot to take over for the first time. Edge sends him to the floor but can’t hit a baseball slide, allowing Hardy to hit a clothesline off the apron. Back in and Jeff tries a springboard but gets kicked down to the floor for the third time. Edge rams him into various hard objects including tables and the barricade and then another table.

We head back inside again with Edge in full control including a spear in the corner. Jeff grabs a quick two off a sunset flip but gets clotheslined right back down. Off to a body vice by Edge to slow things down a bit. Jeff fights up and hits a mule kick before going up top, only to jump into a dropkick from Edge for two. Now Edge goes to get two chairs but Jeff spears him down off the apron before it can be brought in.

Edge gets back to the apron but gets pulled down into a Twist of Fate onto said apron, sending both guys down onto the floor. Since it’s Jeff vs. Edge, here’s a ladder. Jeff spreads Edge out on the table but Chavo climbs up to slow Jeff down. Edge moves, so Jeff hits a HUGE splash to put Chavo through the table instead. Back in and Jeff gets two off a high cross body. Edge gets up first and pulls a buckle off, only to get caught in the Whisper in the Wind for two.

Out of nowhere Edge counters the Twist into a DDT for a very close two. We're pretty clearly in the final stages of this match which means it's getting awesome. Edge counters the slingshot dropkick into a kind of hot shot into the exposed buckle for ANOTHER two. The spear is countered into a Twist of Fate so Jeff goes up. After kicking Vickie away, the Swanton hits but Vickie pulls the referee out. Cue Matt to send Vickie into the ring and pick up a chair. To the shock of a lot of people, Matt cracks Jeff with the chair to give Edge of all people the world title.

**Rating:** B. This too awhile to get going but once they hit their stride they started acting like Edge and Jeff Hardy in a big match. The No DQ stuff wasn't needed here but it made things work a bit better. At the end of the day, these two work best when they can turn off the rules and go nuts, which is what they did here.

Now remember earlier that I mentioned Christian. He was originally supposed to be in Matt's spot, setting up a reunion with Edge. However, WWE felt the fans figured this out so we got Matt in his place. This also happened in 2012 with Sheamus winning the Rumble instead of Jericho. Based on this theory, Shawn should have kept the title at Wrestlemania 14 because almost everyone knew that Austin was winning.

That makes no sense and I don't get what they think this is accomplishing. It didn't work out well for Russo and it won't work out for the WWE. Matt vs. Jeff didn't work at the end of the day, mainly because I don't think people wanted to see them fight. I'll give them this: they did come up with a logical reason for Matt to turn so it's not a terrible idea. It just wasn't the best option they had.

Orton says he'll win. Jericho pops in to thank Orton for punting Vince on Monday but Randy will probably get fired for it.

Rumble by the numbers which is roughly the same as the previous year.

### Royal Rumble

Mysterio is #1 and Morrison is #2. Rey kicks him in the face a few times to start but gets put on the apron for trying his sitout bulldog. A springboard cross body puts Morrison down and there's a big headscissors

to take Morrison down. John gets sent to the apron but hangs on by the top rope, even when Mysterio dropkicks him in the ribs. Carlito is #3 and is the second tag champion in here along with Morrison. Those titles would be unified at Mania.

Rey tries a standing moonsault but gets caught in a modified swinging neckbreaker instead. Carlito hits a gorgeous double jump moonsault to take Morrison down and stomping ensues. MVP, currently on a winning streak after losing forever, is #4. There's Ballin on Morrison and a facebuster to Carlito. Rey get sent to the apron but he saves himself almost immediately.

Great Khali with the awesome dance music is #5. Everybody gets a chop and Khali poses a bit. Mysterio tries to springboard onto him and Carlito tries a Backstabber, both to no avail. Kozlov is #6 and immediately headbutts Khali out by himself. MVP misses a running kick in the corner and he's gone too (BIG heat on Vlad for that). Carlito is gone after jumping into a spinebuster and Mysterio looks to be up next, but heeeeeeeeeere's HHH at #7.

Since no one else can get a good match out of Kozlov, you know HHH is going to try his hand at him. They stare each other down and Kozlov hits the headbutt to take him down. The facebuster stuns Kozlov and HHH throws him out wise ease. It's HHH, Morrison and Mysterio in there at the moment with Rey chilling in the corner. The knee to the face puts Morrison down and Orton is #8.

The battle of Evolution continues and the backbreaker puts HHH down. Both finishers are countered with Morrison breaking up the Pedigree. Rey hits a seated senton on Orton and the 619 on Morrison before JTG is in at #9. Orton tries to put Mysterio out as people start pairing off. Ted DiBiase, as in one of Orton's lackeys, is #10. Mysterio and DiBiase immediately fight to the apron with Rey doing some gymnastics to stay alive.

Jericho is #11 and goes right for Orton. He can't get him out so there's a Lionsault to HHH instead. Jericho is knocked to the apron and Mike Knox is #12. Orton and DiBiase focus on JTG as Knox beats on Rey. HHH saves the masked dude for no apparent reason and Miz is #13. He goes right

after JTG and hits something like the Skull Crushing Finale before going after the Game.

Morrison and Mysterio team up on Orton but John and Miz both take RKOs. There's one for JTG but HHH hits a Pedigree to stop Randy dead. HHH dumps Miz and Morrison to prove how awesome he is and Finlay is #14. Jericho backdrops Mysterio to the floor but he lands on Morrison and hops onto Miz to get back to the ring. Finlay beats on everyone in the ring until Cody Rhodes, the other of Orton's goons, is #15.

We currently have Mysterio, HHH, Orton, JTG, DiBiase, Jericho, Knox, Finlay and Rhodes. Legacy (the collective name of the trio) starts picking off people one at a time, starting with Finlay. They don't actually put anyone out but they get to beat on everyone at least. Rey dives at Orton but gets caught in an RKO in a nice counter. The Undertaker is #16 and here come the punches. His only victim at this point is JTG to clear the ring out a bit.

Goldust of all people is in at #17 and immediately goes for DiBiase. Rhodes pulls his real life brother (Goldust) off so Goldie sends him to the apron a few times. That's as far as he can get though as an RKO puts Goldust down and Rhodes gets to dump him out. Punk is #18 and happens to be the IC Champion at this point. There's a GTS for HHH as RKO works on Y2J. Mysterio gets sent to the apron by Knox and Finlay works on Taker.

Mark Henry is #19 and throws a lot of people around but can't get anybody out. Shelton Benjamin is #20 to fill the ring up even more. Jericho and Punk go up top for no apparent reason other than for Shelton to charge the corner and hit a kind of double DDT to bring them both back down. Billy Regal is #21 and goes right for Punk, who beat him for the IC Title a week or so again.

Mysterio dumps Henry off camera to thankfully get someone out of the ring. HHH is upside down in the corner but he winds up sitting on the apron. Here's Kofi at #22 to speed things up as well as he can with so many people around him. Taker dumps Benjamin and Kane is #23. After beating up a few people he stares his brother down before they start working together to chokeslam some people.

Punk pulls Regal out and brags about it without getting thrown out. R-Truth is #24 and nothing happens. Rob Van Dam makes a one night only return at #25 after not having been seen in the WWE in about a year and a half. That at least wakes the crowd up but there are too many people in there for his style of stuff to work. He loads up the Five Star but Truth is too close so he has to bail out in mid air.

The Brian Kendrick is #26 back when he was actually a big deal. To show how big he is, he manages to dump Kofi and get thrown out by HHH in about fifteen seconds. Dolph Ziggler gets lucky #27 but only lasts about six seconds longer than Kendrick with Kane getting the point. Your future World Heavyweight Champion ladies and gentlemen. Santino is #28 and breaks Warlord's record of two seconds in the Rumble by being clotheslined out by Kane before he can even stand up straight.

Jim Duggan makes his token Rumble appearance at #29 and he punches everything in sight, including knocking the Dead Man down. Big Show is #30, giving us a final group of Mysterio, HHH, Orton, DiBiase, Jericho, Knox, Finlay, Rhodes, Undertaker, Punk, Kane, R-Truth, RVD, Duggan and Big Show, or half the field in the entire match. Nearly everyone goes after him at once but it's Duggan that gets tossed instead.

Jericho tries to put a sleeper on Show but it gets about as far as you would expect. Taker throws Punk to the apron as Show dumps Truth. Punk fires off some kicks and hangs on three times so Show finally knocks him out cold and out to the floor. Show knocks out Knox and Mysterio as Horny gets in for no apparent reason. Finlay tries to save him and gets dumped for his efforts at good parenting.

Jericho hits a Codebreaker on Kane and Orton hits the Elevated DDT on HHH. Taker and Show have their required staredown and RVD hits the Five Star on Orton. Jericho comes up behind Van Dam to dump him while Rob holds his ribs. That's his last WWE appearance to date. Chris turns around and sees Taker who tosses him with glee. Legacy teams up to put Kane out and we're down to Taker, Big Show, HHH and Legacy.

The trio surrounds Undertaker as HHH gets chokeslammed. Taker does the same to most of Legacy so the giants punch each other a lot until Show

gets knocked to the apron and hangs on with his feet flying off the apron. THAT was cool. Not that it matters anyway as he gets RK0'ed out a few moments later but it still looked good. Show pulls Taker to the floor a minute later because that's how he rolls.

So as people expected at the time, it's HHH vs. Legacy for the Rumble. Taker and Show fight into the crowd for no apparent reason. HHH goes after Rhodes first but the numbers catch up with him. He gets beaten down and Orton says pick him up. The RK0 is countered though and HHH sends Orton to the apron. There goes DiBiase and Rhodes follows, but Orton sneaks up on HHH and throws him out to win the Rumble.

**Rating:** D. This was one of the weaker Rumbles there's ever been. For one thing, it was clear that Orton was going to win no matter what happened. Second and probably more important, they got caught in the classic Rumble trap of having WAY too many people in there at once. They didn't even try the three act structure here and it showed badly. That's something Pat Patterson was absolutely amazing at and he was gone by this point.

**Overall Rating:** C-. It's clear that the company was in a transitional period here and that makes this a hard one to get through. There's enough good stuff here to check it out, but it's nothing worth going out of your way to see. The only really solid match is Edge vs. Hardy and even that is nothing really worth seeing. This is a rare instance where the Rumble didn't dictate how the show went as the rest of it is a far easier sit than the Rumble itself.

#### Ratings Comparison

Jack Swagger vs. Matt Hardy

Original: B

Redo: B-

Melina vs. Beth Phoenix

Original: C-

Redo: D+

John Cena vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Original: C

Redo: C-

Edge vs. Jeff Hardy

Original: B-

Redo: B

Royal Rumble

Original: D

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: B+

Redo: C-

So let me get this straight: every match is literally within a single grade of the original but the original is nearly two grades higher? Dang I was REALLY feeling generous that day. A show with an hour long match that gets a D doesn't sound like a B+ overall to me.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/28/royal-rumble-count-up-2009-the-voices-tell-me-no-one-but-orton-has-a-chance/>

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# WWE.com's Top 15 Pay Per Views

Oh this is going to be fun. I'll even throw in my overall rating in parentheses.

Honorable Mentions:

Summerslam 1991 (C-. Never got why this was supposed to be great overall)

Wrestlemania X (A-)

Great American Bash 1996 (C-. That one needs a redo)

Barely Legal (C-. That's a feel good show and nothing more.)

Backlash 2000 (A. Why is this just an honorable mention?)

InVasion (B-)

Summerslam 2002 (A+. This should be third at worst.)

15. Survivor Series 1995 (B)

14. Heat Wave 1998 (D. I have NEVER gotten the appeal of this show)

13. Backlash 2009 (B)

12. Bash at the Beach 1996 (B+)

11. Extreme Rules 2012 (A)

10. In Your House 16: Canadian Stampede (A+)

9. No Way Out 2001 (A)

8. One Night Stand 2005 (A+)
7. Summerslam 2013 (A-)
6. Great American Bash 1989 (B+)
5. Wrestlemania III (A+)
4. Spring Stampede 1994 (A-)
3. Royal Rumble 2000 (A+. Amen.)
2. Money in the Bank 2011 (A)
1. Wrestlemania X7 (A++)

Some of those are in the wrong place (Summerslam 2002 not being in the top 3 is questionable. Not having it on the list is unacceptable). They got #1 right and while MITB 2011 at #2 is a stretch, I can't argue with most of this list at all, save for the ECW shows. They just don't compare.

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## **Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2007:**

# Strike Up The Gong

## Royal Rumble 2007

Date: January 28, 2007

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Attendance: 13,500

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Tazz, Joey Styles, John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

We're back in Texas here and the main question is which Texas guy is winning the Rumble. The main change from last year is that ECW is around now and get to have seven guys in the Rumble because their roster isn't deep enough to support ten. Other than that we've got Cena vs. Umaga in a last man standing match and Batista vs. Kennedy because Kennedy gets a lot of title shots. Let's get to it.

This is the 20<sup>th</sup> Rumble so you know the theme of the opening video already. The other matches get a little hype as well but the Rumble dominates, as it should.

### MNM vs. Hardys

Mercury had his face shattered at Armageddon in a ladder match and tonight is about revenge. Jeff is IC Champion here and Matt was given a Snapshot (MNM's elevated DDT finisher) on the exposed concrete recently. Matt and Nitro start things off but it's quickly off to Mercury. He goes for Matt's dislocated jaw but lets Nitro back in for some shots to the ribs. Matt comes back with punches of his own to slow Mercury down in the corner.

Jeff comes in and speeds things up before hitting an atomic drop and legdrop to split the legs of Nitro. Back to Matt who is rubbing his face a lot. A neckbreaker gets two on Nitro but he comes back with a shot to Matt's jaw to take him right back down. Mercury comes in and slugs away as Matt is playing Ricky Morton for a bit. Back to Nitro for some choking on the ropes and it's already back to Joey.

Melina does that ear piercing scream of hers and Mercury goes after

Matt's jaw again. Off to a chinlock followed by a hair pull to send Matt to the mat again. Mercury goes to the middle rope but misses an elbow, allowing for the tags to Jeff and Nitro. The sitout gordbuster gets two as everything breaks down. A double suplex puts Nitro down and the Hardys go up for a legdrop from Matt and a splash from Jeff, but the latter hits knees on the way down.

Mercury comes in off the tag and gets two off a knee to the ribs. Nitro does exactly the same before sticking on the ribs for a bit more. Jeff grabs a quick rollup on the incoming Mercury but Joey goes right back to the ribs. Nitro comes in and does the same as MNM continues to keep tagging in and out very quickly. We hit a chinlock with a bodyscissors but Jeff fights out pretty quickly. He still can't make the tag but finally backdrops Nitro down and makes the tag...which isn't seen. I love that spot.

Jeff hits a mule kick to take Mercury down and FINALLY makes the hot tag to Matt. Things speed up a lot and Matt fires off elbows to everyone named M or N. A combination bulldog and clothesline takes MNM down for two followed by the yodeling elbow to the back of Nitro's head. There's Poetry in Motion to Mercury but one to Nitro misses, as Johnny grabs an Oklahoma Roll for two on Matt. The Side Effect puts Nitro down but Mercury spears Matt to the floor. As he went through the ropes though, Jeff made a blind tag and hits the Swanton on Nitro for the pin.

**Rating:** B. This took a long time to get going but it was building up to a nice finish. This was old school tag team stuff and that's hard to screw up. MNM was getting a good rub off the Hardys who were as much of a nostalgia act as you could have at this point. Good stuff here and a hot opener, at least after the tag to Matt.

Coach and Teddy talk trash about brand dominance. Edge comes in to draw and runs into Kelly Kelly, who is an exhibitionist. Edge's condescending talking to Kelly is hilarious stuff. Orton comes in to draw and threatens to throw his tag title partner out if need be. Edge: "I'll show you mine if you show me yours." Booker walks in and comedy ensues.

Wrestlemania promo. I liked that All Grown Up campaign.

### ECW Title: Bobby Lashley vs. Test

Lashley won the title in December and Test is the warm body that he gets to crush in his first major defense. There's a video package for this which is basically both guys beating up RVD to show how awesome they are. Test powers Lashley back into the corner so the champion comes out with a spear to take over again. Now Test tries to choke, so Lashley suplexes him down. Nice to see them sticking with the same formula. A delayed vertical suplex puts Test on the floor and the champion follows him.

Test sends Lashley into the barricade to take over and we head back in for a chinlock. He shifts into an armbar and hits a Stunner onto the arm for two. Lashley fights out of trouble and backdrops Test before hitting a three point stands shoulder in the corner. He tries a slam but the arm gives out, allowing Test to fire his one big weapon, the big boot, but it only gets two. Lashley pops up with a clothesline to send Test to the floor...and he walks out for the countout.

**Rating:** D. They needed to protect TEST? Seriously? Lashley doesn't get to pin TEST clean? The match was dull stuff in the first place before a stupid ending like that. Lashley did what he could out there but Test was as much of a worthless musclehead as you could possibly ask for at this point.

Lashley pulls Test back in and beats him up, which makes you wonder WHY DID THEY NOT DO THIS BEFORE???

Cena gets his broken ribs looked at when Vince comes in to see if Cena wants to forfeit. Vince says he can't see (get it?) Cena as champion after tonight...and that's it. I don't remember them having an issue at this point but whatever.

We recap Mr. Kennedy (Anderson) vs. Batista, which is just Kennedy winning a Beat the Clock challenge and having a great record against former world champions.

### Smackdown World Title: Mr. Kennedy vs. Batista

Kennedy slaps Batista to start and takes over as he tries to tie Batista

up. Batista slugs him down and gets two off a suplex and we head outside. Kennedy spears/shoves Batista into the steps, injuring Batista's knee in the process. We get into a regular "hurt the big man's knee" match which is the smartest thing they could do here. A reverse Figure Four has Batista in trouble but Kennedy gets caught holding the rope.

A running kick to Batista's face in the corner has the champion in trouble again and a knee to the head gets two. Off to a half crab for a minute or so before Batista fights up and hits a spinebuster to put both guys down. Kennedy kicks him in the face but Batista Hulks Up. There's a weak slam as the knee is giving out on the champion.

Batista hits a Regal Roll (Kennedy used that a lot) of all things but Kennedy hits the knee to break up the Batista Bomb. The referee gets bumped so there's no one to count after Kennedy's neckbreaker. A DDT gets two and JBL is LOSING IT. The fans chant for Kennedy as he goes to the middle rope, only to jump into a clothesline followed by a Batista Bomb to retain the title.

**Rating:** D+. The psychology was there from Kennedy but Batista didn't really go along with it. I'm not saying he didn't sell, but at the end of the day this was only eleven minutes long which isn't enough time to tell the story they were going for. Also Kennedy didn't have the Mic Check yet so he didn't have anything to finish Batista with and everyone knew it. Not a bad match but they needed more than they had here.

Kevin Thorn draws his number. He and Ariel leave and Hornswoggle comes in to terrorize the tumbler. Apparently he's in the Rumble too and attacks Coach for good measure. Khali comes in and scares Horny off. Kelly makes a stupid joke about holding balls, drawing in Ron Simmons for his usual line.

The Marine is on DVD.

Wrestlemania is coming and Saliva, the band that does the theme song, is in the front row.

We recap Cena vs. Umaga. Cena escaped the last PPV with the title and gave Umaga his first loss so tonight it's last man standing. Cena is

coming into this with bad ribs.

#### Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Umaga

Cena is defending and this is last man standing. Cena pounds away to start but Umaga barely moves. Umaga gets in a shot to the ribs and Cena falls to the outside, clutching his ribs. The champ gets sent into the steps and it's all Umaga in the early going. They slug it out in the aisle and all of a sudden Cena's punches work better. He tries to ram Umaga face first into the apron but Umaga screams and hits Cena in the ribs again.

Back in and Cena is in even more trouble with Umaga pounding on the ribs. A clothesline puts Cena down and Umaga brings in the steps. Cena knocks him off the apron though and throws the steps down onto Umaga's (hands covering) head. It looked a lot better when Kane did it because you couldn't see the hands but whatever. That draws a six count but more importantly it allows Cena to get a breather.

Umaga superkicks Cena down and it's off to a bearhug. Since there are no submissions, Umaga lets Cena go and brings in some more steps. The steps are set up in the corner but Cena avoids the running hip attack (SEE??? IT WAS UMAGA AND NOT RIKISHI!!! SCREW YOU WWE ANNOUNCERS!!!) and blasts Umaga in the head with the steps. That only gets seven so Cena goes up and jumps into a spinning Rock Bottom, drawing some loud screams from the champ.

The Samoan cannonballs down onto Cena's ribs but Cena finally knees him in the crotch to slow Umaga down. The Protobomb sends Umaga onto the steps but only gets about five as Cena hits the Shuffle to break the count. Cena tries the FU but Umaga's weight causes Cena to fall face first into the steps. John is busted open so the fans tell him that he sucks. Ignore the fact that almost no one else could get a match this good out of Umaga I guess.

Cena gets up at eight and gets punched in the face some more, only to start Hulking Up. He pounds away on Umaga but walks into a Samoan Drop, driving the ribs and Cena's shoulder into the mat. The Samoan Spike is blocked (for the life of me I do not get why they picked a thumb to the

neck for Umaga's finisher. The guy is a MONSTER and he pokes you in the neck?) so Umaga headbutts Cena down instead.

Umaga puts him in the Tree of Woe but Cena sits up in the corner to avoid a running headbutt. The top rope Fameasser takes Umaga down and Cena sends him shoulder first into the post. They head to the floor and Cena is covered in blood. With Umaga still laying over the ropes, Cena BLASTS HIM with a monitor to the head to put him down. Back to the floor but Umaga catches a diving Cena and drives him back first into the post.

Umaga puts Cena on the announce table and runs along the other tables, only to miss a splash and crash onto the ground. That gets nine and Cena has no idea what to do next. Estrada, Umaga's manager, unhooks the top rope and tells Umaga to use the metal pole to blast Cena in the head. Cena catches a charging Umaga with the FU and hits him in the head with the pole. He hooks a kind of STF with the ring rope and Umaga is passing out. Umaga starts fighting up so Cena chokes him even more. FINALLY Umaga is out and Cena retains the title.

**Rating:** B+. This was a FIGHT which is what a last man standing match is supposed to do. I was digging the story they were telling here with Cena fighting a savage but having to become a savage himself to beat him. The fans didn't like him at this point, but screw them as would you really rather have Umaga as champion? This was one of many awesome matches Cena had in this stretch, but OH NO kids like him so he must suck right? Give me a break.

Sandman draws his number and has a beer. Flair comes in to draw and gets hit on by Kelly. We get adult music and Extreme Expose comes in to dance with Flair, complete with club lighting. Not that I'm complaining about Layla, Brooke (Tessmacher) and Kelly dancing in barely there outfits, but WHY DID THAT HAPPEN???

Rumble video. Not much else to say here as I'm sure you get the idea by now. This is more of a history package than a hype video for this year. The theme of this year is how star studded it is. Seven guys are from ECW so I question this premise.

Royal Rumble



Flair is #1 (second time for that along with drawing #3 one year. He really doesn't have a great record in these things) and Finlay is #2. Finlay drops Flair with a quick shoulder and we have ninety second intervals here. Flair chops away in the corner but gets backdropped down for his efforts. Kenny Dykstra of Spirit Squad fame and currently in a small feud with Flair is #3. Flair chops away at him in the corner and Finlay tries to dump Kenny.

Everyone hits everyone for awhile until Matt Hardy is #4. That's a pretty diverse group of guys to start things off. The young and old guys pair off with Finlay and Kenny taking over. Matt takes over on Finlay and Edge is #5. Hardy avoids a spear and hits a Twist of Fate but gets taken down with a double clothesline with Kenny. Ric throws in a chair but Edge easily throws him out instead. Kenny tries to take credit despite doing nothing, so Edge throws him out too.

Tommy Dreamer is #6 and takes down Edge of all people before getting beaten up in the corner by Finlay. Sabu is #7 and actually doesn't bring any weapons with him. Instead he finds a table under the ring and sets it up at ringside before going in to fight Dreamer. Nothing of note happens for now so here's Gregory Helms at #8. Finlay is sent to the apron but he hangs onto the bottom rope.

The Irishman almost sends Sabu through the table but Sabu hangs on. Now Helms teases going through it but saves himself as well. Shelton Benjamin is #9 and goes for Hardy. Benjamin and Finlay both nearly go out but somehow both survive. They've teased that table being broken about five times already. Kane is #10 and immediately pounds away on everyone. There's a chokeslam to Edge and an elimination for Dreamer and Sabu, the latter being chokeslammed through the table. Law of wrestling #1: you set up the table, you're going through it.

CM Punk is #11 and is immediately called boring by JBL for not smoking and drinking. Finlay sends CM to the apron but can't get him out. There's the running knee to Edge's head in the corner from Punk but again he can't get an elimination. King Booker is #12 and dumps Helms pretty quickly. We've currently got Finlay, Hardy, Edge, Shelton, Kane, Booker and Punk.

Super Crazy is #13 and is knocked down by Kane before he can do much else. JBL mentions that Mil Mascaras owes him money, which he said on Raw a few months ago. I wonder if there's something to that. Booker and Finlay go at it until Jeff Hardy is #14. The Hardys team up on Finlay (smart) before shifting over to Edge. Now they go after Kane for some reason and hit Poetry in Motion. Sandman is #15 and is gone in as many seconds thanks to Booker.

Jeff skins the cat to save himself and Orton is #16. Hopefully he and Edge (tag champions) can clear things out a bit. Yep there goes Super Crazy and Matt takes the backbreaker. Rated-RKO throws out both Hardys and things are a lot clearer now. Benoit is #17 and fires away chops at everyone. Finlay takes a German as Punk is teetering on the apron. Now Benjamin takes a German and RVD is #18.

Van Dam fires off kicks all around and Kane throws Booker out. Booker, ever the jerk, goes back in and throws out Kane. He beats on the Big Bald on the floor which didn't set up a Mania match surprisingly enough. Viscera is #19 as things slow down a bit. We've got Finlay, Edge, Benjamin, Punk, Orton, Benoit, Van Dam and Viscera in there at the moment. Nitro is #20 and things are getting too full again.

Punk gets crushed in the corner by Viscera for awhile and Shelton hangs on by inches. That was impressive. Kevin Thorn is #21 and no one is really doing anything at the moment. Hardcore Holly is #22 and that's not going to pick anything up. A bunch of guys go after Viscera and Shawn is #23. He's in DX mode and you know he's the hometown boy here. Shawn hits a Thesz Press on Finlay and clotheslines him out before superkicking Viscera, allowing a huge group of guys to dump him.

Shelton is gone at Shawn's hands too. The ring is FINALLY cleared out a bit now until Masters is #24. Nitro goes up top like a schmuck and gets dumped by Benoit. Chavo Guerrero is #25 and Benoit dumps Thorn in the same fashion that he dumped Big Show in 04. Van Dam goes up, can't find anyone to kick, and hops back down. MVP is #26 as Orton tries to dump Punk.

Nothing happens AGAIN until Carlito is #27. There are way too many people

in the ring again. Shawn is sent to the apron but you know he's not going out yet. Great Khali is #28 and swings his arms a lot on the way to the ring. The match stops as Khali gets in and he beats everyone down. Khali dumps Holly as Miz is #29. He lasts a good seven seconds and there's only one man left. Van Dam is thrown out as are Punk and Carlito. Chavo gets dumped as well and Shawn gets chokebombed. Things look hopeless but heeeeeeeeeere's Taker at #30.

This gives us a final group of Edge, Orton, Michaels, MVP, Khali and Taker. Taker and Khali slug it out with everyone else down. The Dead Man finally puts Khali out with a clothesline and everyone else gets beaten down as well. MVP is eliminated and tries to get a chair but Orton takes it away and cracks Taker in the head with it. Edge tries to spear Orton down but gets scared off by the chair. Instead of going after Edge though, Orton hits the RK0 on Shawn to send him down to the floor but not out.

Rated-RK0 goes after Taker and we're in a handicap match at this point. Taker fights back but can't hit a double chokeslam. He can however hit a double clothesline while being busted open. Snake Eyes and the big boot drop Edge but as Taker goes to chokeslam Orton, Edge spears Taker down. A BIG chair shot to the head drops Taker again and it's Conchairto time. Shawn comes back in and backdrops Orton out before superkicking Edge out to get us down to two.

The fans are WAY into this all of a sudden as Taker sits up. He looks over at Shawn and there's the nipup. The showdown is on and Shawn pounds away in the corner to no avail. Shawn kicks the chair to the floor and gets launched into the corner so Taker can pound away even more. Shawn is knocked upside down in the corner but punches his way to safety. Shawn does a Flair Flip to the apron but Taker misses a big boot, sending HIM to the apron as well. Shawn charges into an elbow and both guys are back in.

A neckbreaker puts Taker down but Shawn can't follow up. They slug it out and Taker kicks Shawn's head off to take over again. Taker lifts him for a suplex and wisely puts him on the apron instead of down onto the mat. Shawn fights back and goes up, only to get crotched. Taker loads up a

superplex but gets knocked down so Shawn can hit the flying elbow. Chin Music is caught and there's a chokeslam but Taker can't follow up. The tombstone is countered into a superkick and both guys are down again. Taker catches another superkick and dumps Shawn to the floor, nearly silencing the fans in the process.

**Rating:** C+. The ending stuff starting with Khali cleaning house until Taker dumps Shawn out is GREAT, but until then it's pretty dull with way too much laying around and too many people in there. The ending here is pretty questionable too as Shawn is in his hometown and would wind up being in the actual main event of Mania anyway. Taker would beat Batista for the Smackdown Title, which makes you wonder why they didn't have Shawn win for the big hometown win here, as the results literally would have been THE EXACT SAME THING. Not a great Rumble at all but the ending helps it a lot.

**Overall Rating:** C+. There are two long matches here and both of them are solid enough so I can't complain much here. The stuff that is good is good and the stuff that is bad is bad, so while it's not terrible, this definitely isn't a must see show. Shawn and Taker are of course great together and would have some masterpieces at Mania in the coming years, but they couldn't make this a great show on their own.

#### Ratings Comparison

Hardys vs. MNM

Original: B-

Redo: B

Bobby Lashley vs. Test

Original: D-

Redo: D

Batista vs. Mr. Kennedy

Original: B-

Redo: D+

John Cena vs. Umaga

Original: C

Redo: B+

Royal Rumble

Original: B

Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: B

Redo: C+

Man I REALLY liked that ending last time. I have no idea what I was thinking on the world title matches though.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/26/royal-rumble-count-up-2007-the-best-spot-finally-wins/>

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# Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2008: Reach For It Jeff

## Royal Rumble 2008

Date: January 27, 2008

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City New York

Attendance: 20,798

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole Jonathan Coachman, Joey Styles, Tazz

We're in New York City again and there are three main events tonight. We have the usual Rumble and Edge defending the Smackdown Title against Mysterio, but the interesting one here was Orton defending against Jeff Hardy. I don't know how they did it, but the company did an OUTSTANDING job of making Hardy seem like he had a very real chance of taking the title tonight and shocking the world. I had no idea who was going to win and I LOVED that feeling. Let's get to it.

The opening video focuses more on the show being in MSG than anything else.

## Ric Flair vs. MVP

Flair's career is on the line but MVP's US Title isn't. Flair talks about having his first match here in 1976 but MVP's music cuts him off. MVP takes him into the corner to start and he's BALLIN already. Flair goes after the arm for a second before chopping away at the jumpsuit. MVP comes back with a running boot to the head for two before hooking a chinlock. The fans tell MVP that he sucks as he cranks on the chin.

Flair fights up and picks the leg, only to get small packaged for two. A backdrop puts Flair down and there's a running boot to the face in the corner for three, but Flair has his foot on the rope. You know MSG isn't buying that one. Flair tries to steal the pin but gets clotheslined down for his efforts instead. A superplex gets two for MVP and a double clothesline puts both guys down. Flair starts trying for some fast pins before slugging away. MVP punches him down and hits a facebuster, but the

Playmaker is countered into a quick Figure Four to end this.

**Rating:** C. This was about what you would expect. At the end of the day, everyone knew Flair wasn't going to lose this but it was a way to give him one last moment in MSG before retiring in April. I'm not wild on him beating the US Champion clean but the title hasn't meant anything in years anyway so what difference does it make?

Vince talks to Horny about the Rumble. This is during the "Vince is Hornswoggle's dad" phase. Vince tells him to not trust Finlay but he has to win. Finlay comes in and takes some offense to Vince telling them not to trust each other.

Mike Adamle is introduced as the newest broadcaster. Oh dear. For those of you that don't remember him, imagine Cole but with something resembling charm.

We recap Jericho vs. JBL. JBL cost Jericho the title at Armageddon and tonight is the blowoff. JBL brought Jericho's children into this too, saying Jericho would have to admit to them that he's a coward. Jericho would use this same line against Shawn soon after this.

#### Chris Jericho vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Feeling out process to start with JBL hiding in the corner and ropes a few times. Jericho forearms him down and pounds away but gets sent to the floor. That doesn't last long as he slides right back in and hooks the Walls but JBL immediately grabs the rope. A baseball slide keeps Jibbles on the floor where he is sent into the steps. Back in and Jericho charges into a hot shot to put both guys down.

A clothesline (not the one from down under) puts Jericho down as apparently he has a bad throat and neck coming into this. Bradshaw slingshots Jericho throat first into the middle rope and hooks a quick sleeper. Jericho fights out of it and hits a clothesline of his own, only to charge into a big boot. John sends him shoulder first into the post which busts his head open somehow. Back in and JBL pounds away at the cut as a villain would do. Jericho comes back but they botch a clothesline, causing both guys to get booed loudly. A Cactus Clothesline sends them to

the floor where Jericho cracks JBL with a chair for the LAME DQ.

**Rating:** D+. This didn't work at all for the most part. Jericho didn't work at all as a face with the short hair during this comeback and I think everyone knew it. Thankfully he would turn heel over the summer and have the feud of the year with Shawn. The ending to this sucked and I don't think they had any other matches after this.

Jericho destroys JBL post match and chokes him with a cord, which is what JBL did to him. That gets Jericho cheered at least.

Santino tells Ashley that Maria won't do Playboy. Thank goodness he was wrong.

We recap Edge vs. Mysterio. Edge is with Vickie now who just happens to be the corrupt GM. Mysterio won a Beat the Clock challenge by beating Edge himself to earn the shot. Edge is annoyed that Rey is claiming that Edge is just using Vickie, which of course he is.

#### Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Rey Mysterio

Edge is defending if that's not clear. Vickie, Hawkins and Ryder are at ringside as well. After some big match intros we're ready to go. The fans LOUDLY boo Rey and cheer for Edge as Rey kind of messes up a rana. Edge runs him over but Rey speeds things up, causing Edge to panic a bit. Rey gets sent to the floor where Hawkins and Ryder go after him, only to stop when they're nearly caught. The referee ejects them anyway.

Back in and Rey almost hooks the 619, only to have the champion bail to the floor. Rey is perfectly cool with diving to the floor to take out Edge, drawing boos in a bizarre sequence. Back in and a seated senton gets two for Rey but Edge takes his knee out to take over. Edge pounds away and hooks a half crab for a little while. Rey comes back with kicks to the face to escape and you would think he was choking a kitten from the crowd's reaction.

Rey loads up the 619 but charges into a powerslam for two. Off to a kind of ankle lock hold but bending the knee instead of the ankle. Edge tries to take the knee brace off of Rey but gets caught in the sitout bulldog



to put both guys down. Mysterio uses his good leg to kick Edge in the face for two before hitting another kind of seated senton for two. Like an idiot, Rey goes up and hits a double stomp for two. Smart move on a bad knee Rey. Edge is sent to the floor where Rey slide through the ropes into a tornado DDT for two back inside.

Back in and Edge kicks Rey right in the face to put him down again. Why over complicate things? The spear misses so Rey hits the 619 and the top rope splash, but Vickie pops out of her wheelchair to break up the count. Edge misses another spear and puts himself in 619 position, but Vickie jumps onto the apron to take the hit, allowing Edge to hit the spear for the retaining pin.

**Rating:** C+. This was ok but you kind of expect more from Edge vs. Rey Mysterio. The ending was about Vickie, which would become a running theme over the next few months. Edge being all conniving and backstabbing the already evil Vickie was awesome stuff, but getting there was tedious at times. Still not a bad match at all though.

Mr. Kennedy is waiting for Flair when he gets out of the shower in a towel. Shawn comes in before anything happens and shakes hands with Flair. Shawn: "Imagine, a loud mouthed platinum blonde with a catchphrase. That gimmick will never work." Batista comes in (pop), as does HHH (lesser pop). HHH: "I've said this a lot of times before Ric, but put your pants on." It turns into a merchandise plug in a cute bit.

Maria comes out to do the Royal Rumble Kiss Cam. This eats up some time until Ashley comes out to ask Maria to be in Playboy again. Santino comes out to insult the fans (and the Giants), saying the people would cheer if you asked if they wanted hepatitis. He brings out Big Dick Johnson with a rubber chicken and wearing a half Patriots jersey. You can figure this one out for yourself.

WrestleMania ad featuring Mae Young as a lifeguard. Ok then.

Mike Adamle introduces us to the next match, featuring Randy Orton vs. Jeff Harvey.

We recap Hardy vs. Orton, which is based on three simple words: Hardy

could win. Apparently this match drew HUGE numbers for the Rumble, which showed why they held out on Hardy winning the belt for nearly a year. Hardy hit a HUGE Swanton off the set on Raw, which made you wonder how far he would go to win here. The video is a mini-history of Orton's career to this point, which isn't really a good idea for a heel. This is followed by a music video about Jeff Hardy set to the song Rooftops by the Lost Prophets, which really fits him well. I remember being very excited for the match and this video was a big reason.

#### Raw World Title: Randy Orton vs. Jeff Hardy

Jeff is Intercontinental Champion. Feeling out process to start with Jeff taking over via a headlock on the mat. An atomic drop gets two but Orton hits him in the face and brags to the crowd about it. Orton gets sent to the floor and a baseball slide sends him into the barricade. Hardy follows with a plancha to the floor as JR SCREAMS to get Orton back in the ring. Randy tries to walk out with the belt but Hardy will have none of that. Orton is rammed into the announce table and back inside we go.

As Hardy tries a springboard, Orton dropkicks him right back to the floor in a big crash. There's the Orton Stomp and some choking as Orton shows off his wide range of offense. This is before Orton was orange so the visuals aren't all that bad. A pair of knee drops get two on Hardy as Orton asks the fans if they believe in Jeff still. Hardy sends Orton over the top to the floor, followed by a bad clothesline off the apron (it hit Orton's arm and completely missed his neck and chest).

Back in again and Jeff misses a charge into the post, giving Orton both a two count and control again. Randy hooks a chinlock with a bodyscissors followed by a powerslam for two. Back to the chinlock (yep it's an Orton match) to fill in some time. Jeff fights up again and takes Randy down with a clothesline but can't follow up. Jeff starts striking with everything he's got and hits the Whisper in the Wind to fire up the crowd even more.

That's one thing I haven't talked about enough here: the fans are WAY behind Hardy here. It isn't the usual New York reaction to a face. They want Jeff to win the title NOW. Hardy hits the slingshot dropkick in the

corner but before he can hit the Swanton, Randy bails to the floor. Jeff is cool with that and hits (kind of at least) a moonsault to the floor. Back in and Jeff loads up the Twist but Orton counters into the RKO out of nowhere to retain.

**Rating:** C+. That's a really bad finish for a few reasons. First of all, it's WAY too sudden. If they were shooting at punching the audience in the stomach I guess they accomplished that, but it doesn't do much else. Hardy winning was an option, but at the end of the day they made the right move here....I think. I was disappointed Hardy won, but thankfully WWE stretched it out for a LONG time before he got the title, which was the right move at the end of the day.

Hardy gets a well deserved standing ovation. His time would come.

We get the Rumble by the Numbers video, which is always a favorite of mine. Here are those numbers:

20 years of history

21 winners

569 superstars in the Rumble

36 eliminations (by Austin, since broken by Shawn)

11 Rumbles for Shawn (since broken by Kane)

11 eliminations for Kane in 2001

3 identities under which Foley entered the Rumble in 1997

2 feet that must touch the ground

1 woman in the Rumble (Chyna, since joined by Beth Phoenix and Kharma)

62:12 of time that Mysterio was in the Rumble

2 seconds that Warlord lasted in the Rumble (since broken by Santino)

3 wins for Austin, still a record

1 is the spot that has the same amount of wins as #30 (Shawn and Undertaker)

4 men that have won the Rumble from the 27 spot, the most ever

73 percent of the Rumble winners have won the title at Wrestlemania

I love that.

### Royal Rumble

As introduced by Michael Buffer (only the Fink gets all caps in the Garden), #1 is Undertaker, #2 is Shawn Michaels,. Now how's THAT for an opening pair? Isn't it amazing how a RANDOM pairing finishes the match the previous year and opens it this year? 90 second intervals here which seems to be the right amount of time most of the years. Taker powers Shawn around to start and elbows him in the corner.

Shawn gets crotched on the ropes but Taker GOES AIRBORNE with a running boot that misses in the corner. Shawn charges into the grip of Taker as he gets back in but there's no chokeslam. Taker kicks him in the face instead as Santino is #3. Twenty five seconds later Shawn superkicks him and Taker gets the elimination. Shawn tries to dump him but Taker hangs on and works on the arm.

Old School is countered and Shawn hits an atomic drop as Great Khali is #4. Taker jumps him as he comes in as Shawn is down from something we missed. The big chop puts Taker down as the fans tell Khali he can't wrestle. They grab each other by the throat but Khali misses a chop and gets eliminated. Shawn never touched Khali but charges at Taker when it's just the two of them.

Hardcore Holly is #5 and is a tag champion here. Taker slugs Holly down but Shawn tries to dump the big man again. John Morrison, also a tag champion but with Miz instead of Cody Rhodes like Holly, is #6. Morrison looks at Taker and immediately goes after Holly instead. Shawn dumps him to the apron but John gets back in. That winds up being bad for him as he get slammed down by Shawn followed by the top rope elbow.

Shawn tunes up the band but Morrison blocks the kick. Tommy Dreamer is #7

to a big pop and a LOUD Tommy Dreamer chant. #8 is Batista as we get another good blast of energy. Big Dave and Taker knock everyone down (no eliminations) and they stare each other down, only for Dreamer to charge at Batista, earning himself an elimination. Shawn goes after Batista now but Dave spears Morrison down instead.

Hornswoggle is #9 and immediately dives under the ring without ever getting in. Batista and Taker hammer on each other in the corner as Holly clotheslines Shawn to the apron. Chuck Palumbo, a lame biker at this point, is #10. Taker flips Morrison to the apron but he hangs on again. Shawn and Morrison fight on the top rope as Jamie Noble, Palumbo's enemy at this point, is #11. Noble has taped up ribs so his offense can't last long. Palumbo dumps him after less than a minute.

At the moment we have Taker, Shawn, Holly, Batista, Palumbo and Morrison in the ring with Horny underneath. #12 is CM Punk as Morrison makes ANOTHER impressive save. Punk is insanely popular in New York of course and fires off running knees in the corner to everyone he sees, only to charge into a clothesline from Undertaker. Morrison, the guy that took the ECW Title from Punk, pounds away on him. Punk takes Palumbo out but gets jumped from behind by Shawn.

Cody Rhodes is #13 before he means anything at all. Yes he's a tag champion, and yes I stand by what I just said. Cody goes after Punk before shifting over to Taker like an idiot. Umaga is #14 to a decent pop. He spikes Holly out and gets to try on Batista for a bit now. Shawn gets backdropped to the apron but hangs on of course. Snitsky is #15 and badly pounds on everyone at once.

Rhodes jumps on Snitsky's back and they both head to the apron but no further than that. Taker gets headbutted by Umaga as the ring is starting to get too full. Miz is #16 with those stupid shorts of his. He goes after Punk as Taker tries to put Umaga out. Shelton with his even stupider gold hair of his knocks both Miz and Morrison off the top and onto the ropes but not out, before walking into a superkick from Shawn for the elimination in less than 20 seconds.

Jimmy Snuka of all people is #18 to a HUGE pop. He goes after Morrison as

the fans do Snuka's barking kind of chant. Taker gets a headbutt which staggers the dead man before Snuka goes after Miz. At #19 here's Roddy Piper to an even BIGGER pop. He takes his shirt off and causes about half the audience to faint before having a showdown with Snuka, which the rest of the match (remember this includes Umaga, Taker and Shawn) stops to watch. Piper pokes Jimmy in the eyes and the match finally picks up a bit.

Kane is in at #20 to hopefully clean out the ring a bit. Yep he knocks out Piper and Snuka before chokeslamming Miz. Taker loads up a chokeslam on Kane but before he grabs the throat, he spins around and grabs Michaels instead. Carlito is in at #21 and spits the apple at Rhodes. Punk and Morrison pick up Carlito but he kicks off the ropes and sends them both into them. Punk kicks Morrison in the head but gets caught by a Backstabber. Cool little sequence there.

Mick Foley is #22 and you know the fans freak out for him. A double arm DDT takes Kane down as Umaga hits a Samoan Drop on Taker. The ring is WAY too full now with Taker, Michaels, Morrison, Batista, Punk, Rhodes, Umaga, Snitsky, Miz, Kane, Carlito, Foley and Horny under the ring. Morrison hits a springboard kick to take Foley down and Kennedy is #23. I'll say this: the ring has some star power in it.

There's a Mic Check to Miz and a kick to Taker after he sits up from something. A chokeslam puts Kennedy down and Taker starts beating up everyone. Here's Big Daddy V at #24. Taker shoves Snitsky out, Shawn superkicks Taker out and Kennedy throws Shawn out. The only question I have from that: why is Taker on his feet after being superkicked? Taker drops a leg on the announce table on Snitsky because he's a big jerk at times.

Kennedy and Rhodes fight to the apron as Henry is #25. Horny comes out from under the ring and pulls Miz out from the ring for an elimination. Horny goes back under the ring as V is trying to put out Morrison and Kennedy. Chavo is #26 and freshly ECW Champion, thereby making it clear that the ECW Title isn't a world title. Kane sends Morrison to the apron and then to the floor with a big boot.

Horny comes in again as V and Henry double team him. Finlay runs out ahead of the gun (presumably at #27) and blasts both guys with the club. He and Horny leave through the ropes and don't return, with the official statement being that Horny was eliminated for leaving and Finlay was disqualified. In the Rumble. Yeah this story was just badly done overall. Elijah Burke (D'Angelo Dinero) is #28.

Chavo dumps Punk after taking his title on Tuesday. That's just overkill man. Umaga spikes Batista under the ropes and out to the floor. HHH is #29 which leaves a hole at #30. Basically every major star has entered and the announcers aren't sure who is possibly left. Rhodes, V, Foley and Burke all go out at HHH's hands before he pounds on Umaga. The countdown begins for #30.

The roof is blown off the Garden, because JOHN CENA is #30. This is shocking as Cena had torn his pec and had announced that he would be gone until Wrestlemania at the earliest. Imagine that: lying about an injury and getting a big response from the crowd. Who would have ever thought of that, and in wrestling of all things? Carlito, Chavo and Henry are all gone in about fifteen seconds before it's HHH staring Cena down.

We've got Cena, HHH, Batista, Kane, Umaga and Kennedy to go. HHH takes Cena down with a spinebuster but walks into a superkick from Umaga. Batista takes Umaga down with the spinebuster and dumps Kennedy to get us down to five. There goes Umaga and we're down to four. HHH and Batista dump Kane and we've got three left. Batista gives the double thumbs down, Cena says you can't see me and HHH says suck it. They are fighting catchphrases and it's on.

Trips and Cena go after Big Dave but he clotheslines them both down. The spinebuster plants Cena and another one takes HHH down. The fans don't seem thrilled with Batista so they cheer when Cena backdrops him down. HHH clotheslines Batista out and we're down to HHH vs. Cena.

Since this is New York, the fans hate Cena by default and it's boo/yay time. Triple H pounds away but walks into the Protobomb and the Shuffle. The finishers are both countered and they clothesline each other down. Cena can't FU HHH out and gets caught in a DDT. The finishers are

countered again until Cena hits the FU on HHH for the elimination and the win.

**Rating:** C+. It took awhile to get through the bad parts but once Cena's music hit the place was electric. The fans booing Cena doesn't surprise me at all because that's how New York works. Cena would wind up facing Orton at No Way Out for some reason, resulting in a three way at Mania with HHH involved as well.

Cena celebrates to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. Well it definitely wasn't terrible but at the end of the day, nothing is really all that good here at all. The best match is probably Hardy vs. Orton and that's just ok. On the other hand though, nothing is really bad here and you likely won't be bored with the show. It's one of those shows where you watch it and other than Cena's return, you probably won't remember watching it two days later.

#### Ratings Comparison

Ric Flair vs. MVP

Original: B-

Redo: C

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Chris Jericho

Original: D+

Redo: D+

Edge vs. Rey Mysterio

Original: A-

Redo: C+

Jeff Hardy vs. Randy Orton

Original: C-



Redo: C+

Royal Rumble

Original: C-

Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: C+

Redo: C-

Wow the Smackdown title match really changed things around here.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/27/royal-rumble-count-up-2008-screw-wwes-list-this-is-the-1-rumble-moment/>

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