

# Royal Rumble 2024: Run It Back?

## Royal Rumble 2024

Date: January 27, 2024

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

It's the start of the Road To Wrestlemania and that should make for a huge night. The interesting thing about the Rumble is that we are only going to be in for a four match card, with the two Rumbles, a US Title match and the four way for the World Title. That should be more than enough for a good night so let's get to it.

We open with a look at wrestlers arriving.

Hulk Hogan talks about how important this part of the country is to wrestling, as there are so many people from Florida who made a big difference in wrestling. Now it's time for the Royal Rumble and the path to Wrestlemania, but you have to go through a lot to get there.

Just like last year, Pat McAfee returns as a surprise commentator and just like last year, Corey Graves is furious.

## Women's Royal Rumble

90 second intervals, Natalya is in at #1 and the returning Naomi is in at #2. We get a nice WELCOME BACK chant as Cole talks about Naomi winning the TNA Knockouts Title while she was gone from WWE. Natalya knocks her down but Naomi is quickly up for a hurricanrana. The basement dropkick drops Naomi and it's Bayley in at #3. She's quickly kicked into the corner and Naomi hits the Rear View. Natalya basement dropkicks both of them but Naomi drops them both for a breather.

Candice LeRae is in at #4 and steps on Naalya's back with a Codebreaker to Bayley (and lands on Bayley in the process). TNA Knockouts Champion Jordynne Grace (a powerhouse) is in at #5 and runs people over before hugging Naomi (who she defeated for the title). They immediately slug it out and Grace hits the Juggernaut Driver (pumphandle driver) to plant Naomi. Indi Hartwell is in at #6 and hits some clotheslines, followed by a spinebuster on Bayley. Hartwell and LeRae team up for a bit and even manage a sign point.

Asuka is in at #7 and Bayley gets rid of Hartwell for the first elimination. Ivy Nile is in at #8 and can't pick up Naomi. Bayley invites Cole in from commentary, continuing their long lasting one sided feud. Katana Chance is in at #9 and goes after Asuka but gets suplexed by Grace. Nile and Grace grab stereo suplexes, with Naomi trying to put Asuka out instead. Bianca Belair is in at #10, giving us Natalya, Naomi, Bayley, LeRae, Grace, Asuka, Nile, Chance and Belair.

A double running Blockbuster plants Damage CTRL and Belair hammers at Chance in the corner (even though Chance is barely taller than the turnbuckle). More house is cleaned until Kairi Sane is in at #11 to complete Damage CTRL. Sane comes in with a top rope forearm to Belair and the trio goes after Belair. LeRae sends Sane and Asuka to the apron but doesn't bother to eliminate them, meaning Damage CTRL puts her out instead. Tegan Nox is in at #12 and Natalya has to quickly save her.

A discus lariat hits Grace but Nox tosses Natalya, only to be eliminated by Bayley. Kayden Carter is in at #13 and Sane is sent over the top but she manages to keep her feet from touching in a crazy bit of athleticism. Then she's knocked out a second later, with Asuka being eliminated as well (Bayley is livid). Chelsea Green is in at #14 and is almost eliminated just as fast as she was last year. Green holds on, leaving Belair and Grace to slug it out. They go to the apron, where Belair hits a KOD for the elimination.

Piper Niven is in at #15 and catches Green as she is sent over the top. With Green back in, Niven wrecks Chance as we get a really cool clock showing how long some people have been in. A bunch of people can't manage to get rid of Niven and it's Xia Li in at #16. With a grand total of nothing going on, Zelina Vega is in at #17. Vega manages a tornado DDT on Niven but no one gets tossed. Maxxine Dupri is in at #18 as this match is just death at the moment. Carter is tossed and it's Nia Jax in at #19.

Li and Nile are quickly out and Green goes after Jax, who promptly mauls her. Green is knocked around like a ragdoll but isn't eliminated as Shotzi is in at #20, with Green finally being on the floor but not eliminated. That gives us Naomi, Bayley, Chance, Belair, Green, Niven, Vega, Dupri, Jax and Shotzi. Niven crossbodies Jax down but Jax survives the big group elimination attempt.

Jax eliminates Niven and Chance is tossed out as well. Becky Lynch is in at #21 and that wakes the people up. She goes right after Jax, including the missile dropkick. Green comes back in and gets tossed out as Alba Fyre is in at #22. Fyre cleans some house but doesn't get rid of anyone as Shayna Baszler is in at #23. Fyre plants Jax and it's Valhalla (with antlers) in at #24...but R-Truth comes in to steal her spot. He is promptly tossed out by Jax, but Adam Pearce comes out to say Vahlalla is in...and she's immediately eliminated by Jax.

Michin is in at #25 and immediately goes after Fyre, only to have Jax clean house again. Naomi hits a hanging faceplant to get rid of Fyre and Bayley yells at Cole again. Zoey Stark is in at #26 and missile dropkicks Michin. Stark kicks out Vega, who lands HARD on Fyre. Roxanne Perez (from NXT) is in at #27 and snaps off a running headscissors. She stops to point to the sign though and has to survive Bayley throwing her to the apron. Jax gets rid of Michin, Baszler and Shotzi to clear out a lot of space.

Jade Cargill is in at #28 and yep that brings them up again. Cargill wastes no time in fireman's carry slamming Jax and then single handedly tossing her out (Becky is STUNNED). Cargill misses a charge into the post and almost everyone is down as NXT's Tiffany Stratton is in at #29. Stratton gets to show off the gymnastics but can't get anyone out as...Liv Morgan is back at #30. Naomi, Bayley, Belair, Lynch, Stark, Perez, Cargill, Stratton and Morgan.

Stark and Perez are both out, leaving everyone to surround Stratton. And then they all pair off instead of going after her. Cargill and Belair hit stereo gorilla presses and then stare each other down to a REALLY big reaction. Bayley and Stratton break that up and the crowd goes back to mild.

Lynch can't Manhandle Slam Cargill, who puts her on top instead. Cargill knocks out Becky and Naomi, leaving Stratton to hold on by Belair's hair in a spot that made me cringe. Bayley kicks them both out and we're down to Bayley, Cargill and Morgan. They all wind up on the apron with Bayley and Morgan getting kicked away. Morgan kicks Cargill in the face and hits an Oblivion to get rid of her, only to be kicked out by Bayley for the win at 1:05:00.

**Rating:** C+. The last 20 or so minutes made a huge difference here as this was REALLY weak to start. What mattered here was the star power in the last third as it made things that much better. Bayley is still dependable, Cargill looked like an absolute star, Grace had a great showing, Morgan still doesn't feel like a star and Becky was just kind of there for the most part.

On the bad side though, one of the biggest problems with the women's Rumble is there aren't many feuds. You have title matches and little more for the women. That leaves people just having random fights and that doesn't give you much to work with. It's been a problem for these matches since they started and it was still the case here. The last bit saved it, but

they need to find a way to pick things up throughout.

We recap the Smackdown World Title match. Roman Reigns beat LA Knight at Crown Jewel, albeit with help from the Bloodline. The Bloodline also took out AJ Styles back in September, so he wants revenge. Randy Orton is back too and wants the title, leaving Reigns to fight them all at once.

### Smackdown World Title: Roman Reigns vs. Randy Orton vs. AJ Styles vs. LA Knight

Reigns is defending and has Paul Heyman with him. All three go after Reigns and stomp him down in the corner without much trouble. Reigns is out on the floor so Knight takes over and sends Styles face first into the announcers' table over and over. Orton comes over and drops Reigns onto the announcers' table before doing the same to Knight. Back in and Orton sends Knight to the floor again, only to get chopped by Styles.

Knight comes back in and gets to take over on everyone but Reigns is back up to send Orton and Styles outside. Reigns fires off clotheslines to Knight in the corner before taking down the returning Styles and Orton. Knight ducks the Superman Punch and hammers on Reigns, including his own jumping clothesline. A DDT plants Orton and the powerslam does the same to Orton.

Knight plants Reigns again but Styles makes an accidental save. Styles' fireman's carry backbreaker hits Knight but bangs up his own knee in the process. The Styles Clash hits Reigns with Knight making the save this time. Styles loads up the Phenomenal Forearm but gets RK0'd down. Another RK0 hits Knight and the Superman Punch is countered into the RK0...but Solo Siko pulls the referee out.

Sikoa gives Orton and Knight the Spike (leaving Knight on Orton for what would be a cover if there was a referee) but goes after Styles, only to go crashing through the barricade. Styles is back in for a Phenomenal Forearm and covers all

three at once for two. With nothing else working, Styles grabs a chair and takes Reigns down. It works so well that he does the same thing to Knight but Reigns is up with a spear. Knight plants Reigns and hits the LA Elbow but the BFT is broken up, with Knight being shoved into the ropes to drop Styles. The spear hits Styles to retain at 19:31.

**Rating:** B-. This was a match where you pretty much knew how the ending was going to go and the question was more about whether Reigns was going to pin Styles or Knight. There was almost no way Reigns was going to lose here, and having the match go on second made it all the more clear. The action was good enough but far from a classic, as this was pretty much just a good version of what you knew it was going to be.

We recap Logan Paul defending the US Title against Kevin Owens. Paul is the loudmouthed champion and Owens doesn't like an outsider being here as the new star. Therefore, after winning a tournament, Owens is ready to fight.

#### US Title: Kevin Owens vs. Logan Paul

Owens, with a bad hand, is challenging. They're quickly on the floor with Owens sending him into the barricade. Back in and an elbow to the face sets up the backsplash for one as it's all Owens early on. A release German suplex drops Paul again and they're back on the floor, with Owens chopping away. Paul gets smart by sending the bad hand into the post, followed by a high crossbody back inside.

A Kimura starts in on the arm/hand before Paul switches over to an Octopus. With that broken up, Paul uppercuts him down and my goodness his chest is looking terrible. Owens comes back with a heck of a slap and an even harder clothesline drops Paul. Another backsplash hits raised knees but Owens grabs the fisherman's buster onto the knee. Back to back Cannonballs connect and the frog splash connects as well.

Owens' Swanton hits knees but Paul's hits mat, meaning it's

time for a breather on the floor. Back in and the Buckshot Lariat hits Owens and a top rope splash gives Paul two. Paul loads up a superplex but spends too much time yelling about how no one can superplex Owens, allowing Owens to hit the swinging fisherman's superplex. Paul's big punch is cut off by a superkick but the Stunner is blocked.

Paul hits the right hand for two and Paul can't believe the kickout. Cue one of Paul's cronies who has to be ejected, leaving Owens and Paul to hit stereo clotheslines. Cue Grayson Waller and Austin Theory, with the latter slipping Paul the brass knuckles. Owens gets two off a rollup and Owens gets the knuckles away from Paul and knocks him silly for the...DQ as the referee sees the knuckles at 14:02. McAfee: "OH NOW THE REF HAS 20/20?"

**Rating:** B. I rather like the ending as Owens getting carried away and Paul needing to be saved to keep the title. The other good thing is that Paul gets to stay strong, as his stuff in the ring still looks great. It was a rather good back and forth match and they even found a smart way out of keeping Owens from taking a pin.

Post match Owens lays out Paul again.

Rumble By The Numbers.

### Men's Royal Rumble

90 second intervals, Jey Uso is in at #1 and Jimmy Uso is in at #2. Jey knocks him to the apron to start but it's too early for an elimination. Jimmy is back with a knockdown of his own and Grayson Waller is in at #3. Waller talks all the way to the ring and says no one cares about the sibling rivalry. Jey superkicks him off the apron (not an elimination) but gets jumped by Jimmy. Waller and Jimmy beat Jey down and the returning Andrade is in at #4.

Running knees in the corner abound and Carmelo Hayes is in at

#5. Hayes fires off some superkicks and circles around with Andrade and Jey. Waller tries to roll in but gets Codebreakered, setting up the elimination from Hayes. Shinsuke Nakamura is in at #6 and kicks Hayes into the corner as the fans sing Nakamura's song. He fires off a bunch of kicks and it's Santos Escobar in at #7.

Andrade and Escobar quickly knock everyone down and have a staredown, with Andrade not being sure at the hug. Escobar goes for the elimination but gets sent to the apron. Karrion Kross is in at #8 and forms a weird alliance with Jimmy. They don't actually eliminate anyone of course and here is Dominik Mysterio in at #9. The entrances continue to fly by as Carlito in at #10, giving us Jey, Jimmy, Andrade, Hayes, Nakamura, Escobar, Kross, Dominik and Carlito.

It's time for an apple (the fans react) and the spitting of said apple saves Carlito from Escobar. Back up and Escobar is eliminated but Kross gives Carlito the Final Prayer. Bobby Lashley is in at #11 with some spears and a spinebuster until only Dominik is left standing. Another spear hits Dominik but Kross lets Lashley get in a free shot...which eliminates Carlito instead.

There's a spear to Kross and Lashley dumps him as well. A bunch of people can't get rid of Lashley but here are the AOP for a distraction. They don't actually do anything but Hayes and Nakamura knock Lashley to the apron where Kross gets rid of him. Cue the Street Profits to help with the brawl to the back as Ludwig Kaiser is in at #12.

With nothing going on there, Austin Theory is in at #13. Ataxia hits Hayes but it's not enough for the elimination. Hayes tries to get rid of Hayes as Finn Balor is in at #14. Balor tosses Hayes and joins up with Dominik to stomp Kaiser. Cody Rhodes is in at #15 and this should pick things up a bit. Rhodes tosses Theory and gets into it with Balor as Bronson Reed is in at #16. A double Samoan drop plants Dominik and

Balor before Reed dumps out Andrade. We get the Cody vs. Nakamura showdown with Nakamura hitting a kick to the face and it's Kofi Kingston in at #17.

Cody gets rid of Nakamura and then hammers on Jimmy as Kaiser can't get rid of Kofi. Instead Kofi kicks Kaiser out for some revenge and it's Gunther in at #18. After yelling at Kaiser for being eliminated, Gunther gets inside and chops away. A slam plants Reed but Kofi manages to send Gunther to the apron. Gunther wastes no time in shrugging that off and dumping Kofi, who never had the chance to do anything special.

Ivar is in at #19 (Cole: "He's on a roll in the last month." Ivar is 2-2 in the last month, with losses to Johnny Gargano and Akira Tozawa.) and gets in a showdown with Reed. Bron Breaker is in at #20, giving us Jey, Jimmy, Dominik, Balor, Rhodes, Reed, Gunther, Ivar and Breaker. Things start fast and it's Breaker getting rid of Jimmy and Balor before having a showdown with Gunther (no mention of Breaker beating him in NXT). A gorilla press and spear drop Gunther and it's Omos in at #21.

Omos takes his time getting in and tossed Reed, followed by Breaker getting rid of Ivar. We get the Breaker vs. Omos showdown...and Pat McAfee is in at #22, looking stunned. Breaker and Omos stare at McAfee, who teases eliminating himself, gets back in, and then does eliminate himself. McAfee: "HOW BIG IS THAT THING IN THERE???" Breaker dumps the distracted Omos but gets tossed by Dominik as JD McDonagh is in at #23.

Breaker spears McDonagh down on the floor and it's R-Truth in at #24, throwing McDonagh inside...where Jey knocks him out. Truth gets on the apron for a tag as Gunther sleepers Dominik. For some reason Dominik DOES tag him in and house is cleaned, at least until Gunther kicks Truth in the face. Miz is in at #25 and teams up with Truth for a double hiptoss to Jey. Truth saves Dominik though and Damian Priest is in at #26. Priest

wastes no time in throwing out Truth but only sends Miz to the apron. CM Punk is in at lucky #27 and IT'S CLOBBERIN TIME.

Punk gets to clean some house and eliminates Dominik but gets forearmed by Priest. Ricochet is in at #28 and is quickly sent to the apron by Priest. A springboard high crossbody hits Gunther but Priest takes Ricochet down again. Gunther chops Miz out and Drew McIntyre is in at #29. McIntyre sends Ricochet flying with a belly to belly and clotheslines Jey down.

Priest kicks away at McIntyre, who plants him with a spinebuster. Jey is back up with a superkick to McIntyre and another to send Gunther to the apron. Gunther breaks that up and dumps Jey and it's...Sami Zayn in at #30. That gives us a final grouping of Rhodes, Gunther, Priest, Punk, Ricochet, McIntyre and Zayn.

McIntyre dumps Ricochet out and we're down to six. A parade of secondary finishers puts everyone but Zayn down and there's the Helluva Kick to McIntyre. Zayn gets rid of Priest but gets dumped by McIntyre and we're down to McIntyre, Rhodes, Punk and Gunther.

A Cody Cutter hits Gunther but he clotheslines Rhodes to save himself. McIntyre kicks people down and is the only one standing, including another Claymore to Punk. He yells that it's his time now and is promptly eliminated by Punk to get us down to three.

Gunther dropkicks Punk and Rhodes down before powerbombing Punk. Cody slips out and tries a Cody Cutter but gets sent onto the apron. Cody manages to pull Gunther to the apron and then out, meaning it's Cody vs. Punk. They slug it out until a double clothesline leaves them laying. They slug it out from their knees and then again on their feet. Both finishers are broken up so Cody hits the Bionic Elbow.

Cross Rhodes is broken up again but Punk can't toss him. Punk

points at the sign and walks into Cross Rhodes but Cody can't follow up. A quick GTS plants Cody and they're both down again. Punk hits a Pedigree (McAfee: "If you know, you know.") but another GTS is countered and Cody dumps him for the win at 1:08:20.

**Rating:** B-. This took its time to get going and had some moments but it never quite got into that next level. Cody going back to Wrestlemania is certainly a choice but it would be nice to have him do something other than going after Reigns. As for the rest of the match, you had Breakker looking like a killer and Dominik getting in some good moments. For the most part though, the match just wasn't all that great with the crowd not being interesting. You can't argue with the final two though and that's what matters most in a match like this. It's not a bad Rumble, but it's certainly not a great one either.

Sign pointing, pyro and highlights take us out.

**Overall Rating:** B-. For a four match show with the Rumbles taking up almost two and a half hours, there is only so much you can complain about here. I'm still curious to see where things go for Wrestlemania, but Cody winning is kind of deflating. Anyway, it's not an all time classic or anything, but it could have been much, much worse. Wrestlemania season is here and that's all that matters, though they're going to need something to get a big spark going.

### Results

Bayley won the Women's Royal Rumble last eliminating Liv Morgan

Roman Reigns b. AJ Styles, Randy Orton, LA Knight – Spear to Styles

Logan Paul b. Kevin Owens via DQ when Owens used brass knuckles

Cody Rhodes won the Men's Royal Rumble last eliminating CM Punk

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## Royal Rumble 2024 Preview

So after one of the busiest weeks that WWE has ever seen, we have one of the biggest shows of the year as the Road To Wrestlemania begins. As usual, this show revolves around the Royal Rumble matches and in this case, there isn't one clear cut favorite to win both of them. The more options the matches have, the better things tend to go with them and that is certainly true here so let's get to it.

US Title: Logan Paul(c) vs. Kevin Owens

This is a match that has gotten quite a bit of attention as Paul is back to defend the title. Paul really is one of the best talents in WWE today but he is going to need someone to help him through the match. That is what he has in Owens and the talking has been great as well. Paul is in a weird spot as he is still more or less a rookie but has high expectations and now we get to see what he can do with his title involved.

I'll go with Paul retaining here, as he is a huge star and there is no reason to have him lose the title so soon. He is probably carrying the title into, if not through, Wrestlemania so giving him a win over Owens will only boost things up. We should be in for a good showdown here, with Owens doing his thing well enough and making Paul look good, even in defeat.

### WWE Universal Title: Roman Reigns(c) vs. LA Knight vs. AJ Styles vs. Randy Orton

What we have here is a good idea, as it's hard to imagine Reigns losing the title in a singles match, so they've added in some drama with the two extra challenges and a chance that someone else could steal a fall for the title. While that might be hard to fathom actually happening, I do like the idea of WWE trying to make things feel a bit more intense, especially with the RKO as a threat.

To the shock of no one, I'll go with Reigns retaining and the question being whether he pins Knight or Styles. Knight would seem to be the logical choice as he's a step beneath the other two and it would make sense for him to lose here. Either way, it is almost impossible to imagine Reigns losing here, as he seems destined for some huge title match at Wrestlemania, which we might find out tonight as well.

### Women's Royal Rumble

We'll go with the match with fewer options here, as there are two main choices for the win here. That being said, the Rumble is weird as you never know who might pop in and turn the whole thing around. That has been the case before and it very well might be again, though you really can't guess at that kind of a surprise. Therefore we'll go with the options of people already announced and that narrows it down a lot.

The two main options here would seem to be Becky Lynch and Bayley, as Lynch vs. Ripley seems a very likely possibility after their showdown on Raw. At the same time, Bayley has been

pushing towards the match more than anyone else and with Elimination Chamber still looming, it would seem like Lynch has another way in. Therefore I'll go with Bayley, though it doesn't feel like a big guarantee.

### Men's Royal Rumble

Now we get to the complicated one, as there are multiple possible options to win here, and that's not even counting all of the potential surprises. We have, at minimum, three main possibilities here and that opens up a bunch of doors for Wrestlemania, as at least one of them is going to get the title shot through other means. It also makes me wonder who wins here, which is kind of the point.

The more I think about it, the more CM Punk seems to be the likely choice. The other two main options, including Gunther and Cody Rhodes, either have another path to Wrestlemania or another path to get there. Punk coming back for his first match in ten years and winning the Rumble would be huge and set up a likely match with Seth Rollins. That's assuming the Rock isn't a surprise #30, but for now we'll go for Punk

### Overall Thoughts

It's a four match show, but when two of those matches will probably combine for about two and a half hours, they should be fine. The important thing here is that nothing on the card looks bad and I'm really not sure how confident I am in either Royal Rumble pick. That is a great feeling to have and with so many options, I want to see where the matches go and that is something that hasn't happened in more than a bit.

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# **Royal Rumble Count-Up: 2013 Redo – 2002: He's Back And There's Not A Thing We Can Do About It**

## **Royal Rumble 2002**

Date: January 20, 2002

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 12,915

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is the first step to things falling downhill, as we're a few months away from the Brand Split and things falling through the floor in quality. The main event tonight aside from the Rumble is Jericho defending his newly won Undisputed Title (which he won by beating the Rock and Steve Austin IN THE SAME NIGHT in case you didn't know that) against Rock. HHH is back in the ring tonight also (he may have fought on Smackdown before this but I don't think he did) so let's get to it.

The opening video has clips of various Rumble wins in a photo album kind of theme. The theme for this year's show is 30 Men, 1 Winner. I've heard worse ideas which we'll get too very soon.

Tag Titles: Spike Dudley/Tazz vs. Dudley Boys

I LOVE Stacy as the Duchess of Dudleyville. I never remember her looking better. Anyway, Spike and Tazz are defending here in a reign that I don't think anyone ever remembers. The Dudleys beat up Spike recently so he's in a neck brace. The Dudleys attack to start and hit the belly to back neckbreaker on Tazz on the floor. It's Bubba vs. Spike to start things off in a handicap match for all intents and purposes. Bubba rips the neck brace off and drops a big elbow.

Bubba shouts at Spike to get up as we get a very nice shot of Stacy. Tazz is back on the apron as D-Von hits a Hennig necksnap of all things. Bubba loads up a second brainbuster on Spike but gets countered into a Dudley Dog for no cover. The tag to Tazz is missed so Spike has to take a double flapjack instead. Spike avoids a headbutt from D-Von and makes the Dudleys clothesline each other. Hot tag brings in Tazz to clean house with suplexes. A big boot to Bubba's head sets up a top rope cross body by Spike for two. Stacy interferes and gets put in the Tazmission. D-Von gets caught in the same hold and the champions retain.

**Rating:** D+. I have no idea what the point of this being on PPV was as it barely broke five minutes. Nothing with Stacy in the Dudley attire can be bad, but this came about as close as you can get. Actually scratch that as it wasn't so much bad but just short. I have no idea why this wasn't on Raw or something like that. Tazz would be retired very soon after this due to a horrible neck.

We immediately go to a recap of Regal vs. Edge which is based on Regal using brass knuckles over and over again. Edge got fed up with it and beat up a lot of people with a chair.

Edge has a chair with him tonight to counter the knuckles. Apparently he broke Regal's nose recently.

#### Intercontinental Title: Edge vs. William Regal

Edge is defending. The referee checks Regal over and over again for knuckles and finds them in his trunks. Well you can't say he didn't do his job. The referee stupidly puts them on the ring post instead of like, giving them to someone to take to the back or something. Edge pounds away to start and chokes with his boot in the corner. He goes after Regal's

bad nose as Lawler claims conspiracy.

Regal comes back with a clothesline but Edge kicks him in the back to put both guys down. Being the British dude that he is, Regal suplexes Edge down for two. Make that four. Uh six. Yet somehow that isn't three. Off to an arm trap chinlock followed by a hard forearm to put the champion down again. A double arm powerbomb hits Edge for two and they head to the apron. Edge busts out a DDT onto said apron, further injuring Regal's nose.

Back in and they ram heads to put both guys down as the match continues to drag at a slow pace. Edge wins a slugout and takes Regal down with a spinwheel kick and a suplex for two. Regal suplexes him down as well, only for Edge to hit a big old clothesline for two more. The Regal Stretch goes on out of nowhere but Edge reverses into a terrible version of his own to no avail. A top rope spinwheel kick puts Regal down but he finds another set of brass knuckles. Instead of swinging them though, he pulls the referee in the way of Edge's spear. Regal clocks Edge and wins the title.

**Rating:** D+. This didn't click at all. Regal didn't seem interested in selling at all and Edge wasn't ready to carry a match by himself yet. He was getting to the point where he could but it would take a summer of feuding with Eddie to get him up to that point. Regal wouldn't really do anything with the belt other than lose it to RVD. Nothing to see here.

#### Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Jazz

Jacqueline is referee for absolutely no apparent reason and Trish is defending. Jazz is basically being a bully and has injured Trish's hand coming into this. Jazz jumps Trish to start but misses a splash, giving Trish two off a rollup. A modified hot shot slows the champ down again and a legdrop gets two. Jazz works on the bad hand for a bit but Jackie pulls them out of the ropes. Jackie of course makes it all about herself and won't count a cover on Trish. Stratusfaction hits out of nowhere for two and Jazz is up a few seconds later, basically no selling it. Trish hits a bad looking running bulldog to retain.

**Rating:** D. It was short, it was sloppy, the ending was stupid and Jackie

was in it. What other kind of grade do you expect here? Stratus was starting to get better but it would take another year and Lita before she got amazing. Jazz was a pretty stupid pick to bring over to WWE as no one remembered her and she didn't have the looks to back up any lack of hype. Bad match here.

Flair says he'll win.

We recap Vince vs. Flair. Flair debuted after Survivor Series as the new co-owner of the company and has driven Vince crazy since. This led up to a street fight tonight between the two of them tonight which isn't as big a deal as they were shooting for I don't think. The highlight of it was Vince dressing up as Flair and saying destroying lives turned him on.

### Ric Flair vs. Vince McMahon

Remember this is a street fight. Vince shoves him down to start and struts, so Flair punches him down and struts as well. Flair wins a chop battle in the corner (duh) so Vince goes to the eyes to escape. There's the Flair Flop followed by a Flair Flip in the corner as Vince is in full control. We head to the floor and get our first weapon shot, with Vince pounding on Ric with a metal Keep Off sign.

There's a trashcan shot to the head and Flair is busted open. How thin must the skin on his forehead be? Anyway, Vince steals a camera from someone to take a picture of Flair's cut before we head back inside. Since he's a jerk, Vince starts working over the knee in (less skilled) Flair fashion. The leg is wrapped around the post and Vince puts on a Figure Four that Dusty Rhodes would be jealous of.

Flair turns the hold over and Vince IMMEDIATELY lets go of the hold. So not only is he better at it than some wrestlers, he's also smart. Never let it be said that Vince doesn't know what he's doing. Vince bails to the floor and grabs a lead pipe that he used to bust Flair open in the build up to the match. Flair catches him coming in with a low blow and pounds away on the floor.

Vince takes a monitor shot to the head and in a weird spot, we see a replay on the monitor on the table as the live match goes on. Vince is

busted open now and we head back inside. Scratch that as we go back outside immediately where Flair's family takes pictures of Vince's cut. Set it up earlier, pay it off later. Good move. Back in and Flair kicks him low again just because he can, cracks him in the head with the pipe and ends it with the Figure Four.

**Rating:** C+. At the end of the day, this match makes as much sense as almost anything you'll see. Vince controlled at the beginning, but at the end of the day he's a boss and Flair is a veteran wrestler and athlete. It makes sense for him to be able to shrug that off and destroy Vince with relative ease once he got the upper hand. On top of that we got some good blood and Vince getting hit in the balls so how can this not be entertaining?

Stephanie talks trash about everyone else in the Rumble and runs down Debra as well. Austin walks up and WHAT's her away. Cole gets a bit of it too. This is when the bit was brand new and still kind of funny, as opposed to now when it ruins almost every serious promo.

No highlight package for the world title match? For those of you not around in 2002 (LUCKY!), Jericho won the title in December, beating Rock along the way. It makes sense for Rock to get the first shot, especially since they feuded over the end of the year.

#### WWF World Title: The Rock vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho still has both titles because HHH wasn't there to win the first Undisputed Title and get the new belt. Rock decks him immediately and the champ heads to the floor, only to run back in and get punched some more. Jericho misses a charge and hits the post but pulls off a hot shot out of nowhere to give himself a breather. They trade strikes in the corner before Jericho hits a spinwheel kick to Rocky's arms for two.

A suplex gets two for Jericho and for some reason Rock's left thumb is sticking out. The champ unhooks a buckle but can't get the Walls. A missile dropkick gets two on Rock and it's off to the chinlock. That goes on for a good while so Chris goes up again, only to get crotched and superplexed. A belly to belly suplex gets two for Rock but Jericho clotheslines him down and hits the Lionsault. Due to high reasons of

arrogance, Jericho waits forever to cover and fights with the referee after getting two.

Another dropkick attempt by Jericho is caught in a Sharpshooter, but here's Lance Storm for a distraction while Jericho taps. Christian comes in as well and is promptly punched out by Rock. Jericho hits a Rock Bottom on Rock for two and the frustration begins. The champ loads up a People's Elbow but Rock nips up and sends Jericho out to the floor.

Both guys are rammed into both announce tables before Jericho's Rock Bottom attempt is countered into an AWESOME looking Rock Bottom by Rock from one table through the other. That only gets two back inside before Jericho counters another Rock Bottom into the Liontamer (yes I said Liontamer instead of the Walls). Ok now it's the Walls, which allows Rock to make the rope.

The jumping clothesline takes the referee down by mistake, allowing Jericho to blast Rock with the belt. Another referee slides in and gets two off that and Rock DDTs Jericho down. Rock covers...and Nick Patrick won't count. There's a Rock Bottom for his efforts and a People's Elbow for Jericho but there's no referee. Rock checks on Hebner, allowing Jericho to hit him low, send him into the Chekov's Gun in the shape of an exposed turnbuckle. All that plus a rollup with his feet on the ropes is enough for Jericho to retain the title.

**Rating:** B. This took awhile to get going but once things picked up it turned into what you would expect from Rock vs. Jericho in a nearly 20 minute match. The overbooking worked here as Jericho needed something to boost him up to Rock's level, which is what you're supposed to do as a heel. Good stuff here and a very fine title match.

Shawn Michaels, in a really stupid looking Texas flag shirt, is at WWF New York. He picks Taker or Austin to win the Rumble.

Video on the Rumble. The main picks to win are Taker, HHH, Angle and Austin.

Royal Rumble

Rikishi and Goldust are #1 and #2 respectively and we've got two minute intervals. Goldie walks around Rikishi to start and gets punched in the face for his efforts. Rikishi knocks him around for a bit but can't quite drop the big load on Goldie's chest. A backdrop puts Goldust on the apron and Boss Man is #3, making it 2-1 against Rikishi. Goldust gets punched in the face but Boss Man pounds Rikishi into the corner. The heels explode after a long one minute partnership.

Bradshaw is #4 and hopefully he can pick things up a bit. He beats up everyone as Rikishi loads up the Stinkface on Boss Man. A superkick and a clothesline put Boss Man out and there's a Samoan Drop to Bradshaw. Goldie pounds away on Bradshaw in the corner and gets powerbombed for his efforts. Lance Storm is #5 and absolutely nothing of note happens until Al Snow (on Tough Enough at this point) is #6. Bradshaw kills Storm with the Clothesline as the fans want Head.

Billy of Billy and Chuck is #7 and we're still waiting on something to happen. The fans are still into this at least so it's not a failure at this point. Storm and Snow fight to the apron with Snow superkicking Lance to an elimination. Billy dumps Bradshaw and Undertaker is finally #8 to pick things up a bit. A chokeslam kills Billy (the third in the series, not starring Uma Thurman) and another one puts out Goldust. Snow and Rikishi are dumped out and Billy follows them, leaving Undertaker alone to a big reaction. He's evil here in case you're not up on Taker history.

Matt Hardy is #9, which is interesting as Taker injured both Hardys and Lita. The redhead gets in along with Matt and helps him take the big man down via a low blow. Matt hits a Twist of Fate and stomps away but can't get Taker out. Naturally Jeff Hardy is #10 because that's how the TOTALLY RANDOM draw works in the Rumble.

Taker slugs down one of the best tag teams ever in just a few seconds, only to get caught in the Twist/Swanton combo. Again, why would you use moves that keep a giant on the mat? Not that it matters as Poetry in Motion is caught and Jeff is easily thrown out. The Last Ride kills Matt and he's gone too, leaving Taker alone again. The clock during that segment was REALLY long too as they were roughly three minutes each to

get the whole segment in.

Maven from Tough Enough is #11 but Lita is on the apron. Taker PUNCHES her down, drawing the Hardys back in. Taker dumps both of them again, but Maven dropkicks Undertaker in the back and eliminates him in arguably the biggest surprise elimination ever in the Rumble. The look on the Dead Man's face is hilarious as he has absolutely no emotion at all. He calmly turns around, gets back in the ring, and mauls Maven, sending him through the ropes to the floor. A HUGE chair shot cracks Maven's head and the beating continues until Scotty 2 Hotty is #12.

Taker punches Scotty down and throws Maven back in to eliminate him, which under old Rumble rules would count. The beating goes into the crowd as there's nothing in the ring at the moment. Christian is #13 but has no one to fight because Scotty is still down. Instead we go to the back where Maven is rammed face first into a popcorn machine. Taker eats a handful of popcorn and finally leaves Maven alone.

Scotty gets in and walks into a DDT as DDP is #14. Nothing of note continues to happen until Scotty superkicks Page through the ropes to the floor and hits the Worm on Christian. Page sneaks back in and throws Scotty out as Chuck is #15. They all beat on each other for a bit with Christian and Chuck teaming up for a bit. Godfather, now the owner of an escort service in an attempt to salvage the gimmick, is #16 and brings out 12 good looking women with him. Page is eliminated off camera during this.

With Godfather in the ring after about 15 seconds due to dancing, Albert is #17. He's the Hip Hop Hippo at this point and lasts about 45 seconds before being tossed by the villains. Godfather is dumped soon thereafter, and here's Saturn at #18. Chuck and Perry slug it out as the fans cheer for the Ho's leaving. Nothing happens again, until Austin is #19. Chuck is the first victim, getting stomped down in the corner. There goes Christian, Saturn gets a Stunner, Chuck is eliminated, Saturn is dumped, Christian gets thrown back in, Stunned and thrown out again, Chuck gets the same as Christian, and Austin takes a breather.

Val Venis is #20 (and also returning) and things go about as you would

expect, although Val does get in some offense and survives until Test is #21. A double teaming lasts for a bit until Austin remembers who he's fighting and dumps both guys in a few seconds. Austin does his watch bit when no one is in the ring with him. Notice the difference between the big stars and the regular guys: the big ones are CONSTANTLY trying to keep the audience entertained instead of letting them die.

Speaking of entertaining the crowd, HHH is #22. The entrance takes about a minute and a half, they stare at each other for about twenty more seconds, and the slugout only lasts for a few seconds until Hurricane is #23. Luckily for him, the legends knock each other down so Hurricane can try a double chokeslam. The look on Austin's face is hilarious as the two of them dump Hurricane with ease.

Austin and HHH chop each other in the corner until Faarooqq is #24 and lasts about that many seconds. Mr. Perfect makes a surprise return at #25 to a big surprise reaction from the audience. He looks a bit, shall we say, tipsy here. Perfect chills on the floor a bit as JR makes a mistake, saying Perfect debuted at the Rumble in 1993. In reality he was #4 in 1989. Austin and HHH double team Perfect to no avail so here's Angle at #26, drawing the rare double chant of YOU SUCK WHAT.

HHH and Angle pair off as do the other two guys and the match slows down a bit. Kurt starts suplexing people but can't dump HHH because Austin makes the save due to reasons of a big ego. Big Show is #27 in his one piece women's swimsuit. Angle gets chokeslammed so Austin and HHH double team the big man to limited avail. HHH saves Angle, presumably because he wants Kurt's help to get Show out. Makes sense I guess.

Show dominates everyone until Kane is #28. HHH gets chokeslammed so we can have our battle of the giants. Jerry: "They're not getting any smaller are they JR?" Uh yeah Jerry, actually they are. They do the double chokeslam spot but Kane kicks Show low and picks him up, slamming him to the floor. AWESOME display of strength there, but Angle immediately dumps Kane to get us back down to four.

Van Dam is #29 and hits a Five Star on Angle who is down from something we didn't see. Everyone but HHH gets kicked down so he hits a Pedigree to

put Van Dam down. Booker T is #30, giving us a final group of Booker, RVD, Angle, Perfect, HHH and Austin. Booker throws out RVD without having to do anything else thanks to the Pedigree. We get a Spinarooni, followed by a Stunner and elimination to get us down to Austin, Angle, HHH and Perfect.

Austin hits a slingshot into the post on HHH who walks into an Angle Slam. Angle rolls some Germans on Austin and the C/Kurts try to dump Austin. Austin hits some HARD right hands to break that up but as he tries to dump Perfect, Angle runs up and dumps the Rattlesnake. Austin pulls Perfect to the floor but Kurt sends Austin into the steps to break it up. Steve still isn't done as he comes back in with a chair for all three guys. Eh he's Austin so he can get away with it.

Angle accidentally clothesline Hennig but doesn't eliminate him. There's the PerfectPlex (BIG pop for that) to Kurt but HHH dumps Perfect a second later. Angle and HHH stare each other down and the Game pounds away on him to take over. Kurt gets HHH to the apron but can't get the win. HHH chokes away but charges into a backdrop, sending him to the apron. Kurt makes the classic mistake of not making sure the other guy is out and gets clotheslined to the floor, giving HHH the Rumble. For you trivia guys, this is the longest Rumble ever to date, even going 11 seconds longer than the 40 man version.

**Rating:** C+. This has some very bad spots in it but the rest of the stuff is solid all around. Once Austin gets in there things pick up a lot, but the 18 guys before him don't do much. Taker's elimination came too fast which hurt things here, as there was no one of note from #9 until Austin at #19. Still though, the good stuff here was good enough to check this out, but you might want to fast forward some parts of it.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This is a pretty good but certainly not great show. 2002 was a bad year for the company on Raw and things were clearly starting to look weak here. The main problem was the lack of elevation of anyone new to the main event in the year, as the main events for almost every PPV were people who had been there before. There's nothing on here that's required viewing but there's also nothing terrible on here either. Check it out but don't expect to be blown away.

## Ratings Comparison

Spike Dudley/Tazz vs. Billy and Chuck

Original: C-

Redo: D+

William Regal vs. Edge

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Trish Stratus vs. Jazz

Original: D+

Redo: D

Ric Flair vs. Vince McMahon

Original: D+

Redo: C+

Chris Jericho vs. The Rock

Original: B+

Redo: B

Royal Rumble

Original: C-

Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: B-

Yep, about the same for the most part here.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/21/royal-rumble-count-up-2002-game-on/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews

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## **Pick A Royal Rumble For Me To Redo**

It's that time again. The Royal Rumble is in about five weeks so it's time for me to redo some of them. As usual I'll be redoing the most recent, but I'd like you all to pick the other redo. You can pick any in history except for the ones listed below, which I've either done too recently or too often:

1992

2000

2008

2022

Vote in the comments, with the count-up starting on December 22.

KB

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# Royal Rumble 2023: He's Gone And Done It Now

## Royal Rumble 2023

Date: January 28, 2023

Location: Alamodome, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Pat McAfee

It's time to get on the Road To Wrestlemania and that means we should be in for a big night. There are two Royal Rumbles, but the real main event is probably Roman Reigns defending the World Title against Kevin Owens. The interesting piece there is not in the result, but in what Sami Zayn is going to do. That should make for a heck of a show so let's get to it.

Hardy (a musician) talks about the opportunity and how you kick down a door in front of you.

Pat McAfee is back to join commentary and Graves is livid.

## Men's Royal Rumble

90 second intervals and Gunther is in at #1 and Sheamus is in at #2. They slug it out hard to start with Gunther not being able to throw him out. The Irish Curse slows Gunther down but it's too early to toss him out as well. Sheamus takes him into the corner and the Miz is in at #3. Miz annoys Sheamus before he can get in though and the chase is on, allowing Gunther to chop Miz down. Sheamus and Gunther take turns missing each other but hitting Miz by mistake.

Kofi Kingston is in at #4 and hits a Boom Drop on Gunther and Sheamus as Johnny Gargano is in at #5. Miz can't toss Gargano out so it's One Final Beat to cut Miz down instead. Sheamus

hits the forearms to Miz on the apron and the Brogue Kick gets rid of him. Gunther can't get rid of Sheamus and it's Xavier Woods in at #6. New Day gets to clean house for a bit before stopping for a dance (spanking is involved). Everyone else gets back up and it's Karrion Kross in at #7.

Kross, Gunther and Sheamus get to beat on each other with the heavy shots until Chad Gable is in at #8. Suplexes and shooshing abound but Woods actually takes Gable down in a wrestle off. Drew McIntyre is in at #9 and drops everyone before kicking Kross in the face for the elimination. Gunther and McIntyre have the showdown and it's time to chop it out. Santos Escobar is in at #10, giving us Gunther, Sheamus, Kingston, Gargano, Woods, Gable, McIntyre and Escobar.

A quick trip to the apron has Escobar in early trouble but he kicks Sheamus in the head. Escobar dives back in to drop Gable but Gargano catches him on top. The super Phantom Driver hits Gargano and it's Angelo Dawkins in at #11. Dawkins gets to clean house and Gunther kicks Woods out. Kingston hits his standing double stomp on Escobar but Gunther knocks him off the apron and into a well placed chair. That was a NASTY crash but one foot is still on the chair.

Brock Lesnar is in at #12 though so none of that might matter. Most of the people in the ring stops for Lesnar and it's time for Suplex City on a bunch of people. Escobar, Dawkins and Gable are all out...and it's Gunther vs. Lesnar. They stare each other down and it's Bobby Lashley in at #13. Lashley spears Lesnar down and hits McIntyre with another one. There's one for Sheamus as well and Lashley gets rid of Lesnar. That's not cool with Lesnar, who throws in part of the announcers' table.

Baron Corbin is in at #14 as Lesnar throws some steps around. Lesnar runs Corbin over before he can get in and wrecks various other things at ringside. Seth Rollins is in at #15 as it seems Kingston is gone (not confirmed though). Rollins

takes forever to get in and throws Corbin inside. A superkick and clothesline get rid of Corbin and Rollins slugs it out with Sheamus.

Otis is in at #16 and World's Strongest Slams McIntyre. Rey Mysterio is in at #17...or at least he is supposed to be as he doesn't show up. Rollins dumps Lashley and there's the Caterpillar to Gunther. Dominik Mysterio, in a Rey mask, is in at #18. Otis is eliminated during Dominik's entrance as commentary suggests that Dominik jumped Rey and took his mask. Dominik stays outside for warmups before coming in for some worthless shots to Sheamus.

Elias is in at #19 and guitars Gunther but McIntyre and Sheamus give him stereo kicks to the face (OUCH). That's it for Elias and Finn Balor is in at #20, giving us Gunther, Sheamus, Gargano, McIntyre, Rollins, Rey Mysterio (yet to be seen), Dominik Mysterio, and Balor. Sheamus won't let Balor go after McIntyre and gets dropped for his efforts. Dominik saves Balor from being dumped by Gargano and Balor kicks Gargano in the head. That's it for Gargano, leaving us with Judgment Day gs. Sheamus/McIntyre. Booker T. of all people is in at #21 and it's a Book End into a Spinarooni.

Gunther tosses Booker without much trouble and it's Damian Priest in at #22 to complete Judgment Day. Brawling ensues and it's Montez Ford (dressed like a boxer) in at #23. Ford sends Dominik to the apron but can't get rid of him. Instead Balor sends Ford over the top but some cat skinning is good for the save. Priest chokeslams Ford out without much trouble though and it's Edge in at #24.

Spears abound to Judgment Day and Edge tosses Priest and Balor. We get the Edge vs. Rollins staredown but Dominik interrupts, allowing the rest of Judgment Day to pull Edge out. Austin Theory is in at #25 as Edge chases Balor up the aisle. Edge beats up Priest at the entrance but Rhea Ripley jumps Edge. Cue Beth Phoenix to go after Ripley though and I

think we have a mixed tag set for Elimination Chamber. We get back to the match with Theory taking down Rollins and hammering on McIntyre.

Omos is in at #26 and side slams Theory before getting chopped by Gunther. A chokeslam drops Gunther and it's Braun Strowman in at #27. The Omos vs. Strowman staredown is on and they hit each other in the face a few times. Strowman's right hand just annoys Omos but a running clothesline gets rid of him. Strowman beats up various humans and it's Ricochet in at #28.

Sheamus and McIntyre go after Strowman and get him to the apron but can't get him out. Sheamus saves McIntyre from an elimination and slugs it out with Gunther again. With Sheamus on the apron, McIntyre helps him again but Gunther puts both of them out. Logan Paul returns at #29 and everyone goes after him.

Paul gets back up and hits a Buckshot Lariat on Ricochet but Gunther sends him to the apron. That's broken up and it's Paul vs. Strowman for a bizarre staredown. Strowman and Ricochet beat up Paul and send him through the ropes to the apron as Cody Rhodes is in at #30. That gives us a final grouping of Gunther, Rollins, Theory, Strowman, Ricochet, Paul, Dominik and Cody. After taking his time with the entrance, Cody hits a Cody Cutter on Theory.

Dominik tries Three Amigos on Cody but gets caught with the Cross Rhodes. That's it for Dominik but Strowman Monsterbombs Cody. The Last Symphony hits Strowman but Ricochet hits Gunther with a standing Sliced Bread. Ricochet and Paul land on the apron and springboard at each other, colliding in the air for one of the coolest spots you'll see in a long time. Cole says there are seven left, meaning Rey is officially not in. Cody gets rid of Strowman and Theory dumps Ricochet to get us down to four, as Paul apparently evaporated somewhere.

Cody clotheslines Theory out, leaving us with Cody, Gunther

and Theory. Rollins and Cody team up on Gunther and they both hit Pedigrees. With Gunther down (not out), Cody and Rollins slug it out but Paul comes back in to toss Rollins. So we're officially down to Gunther, Cody and Paul, the latter of whom gets in the Wrestlemania sign point. The big right hand is countered into Cross Rhodes and Paul is gone, leaving us with Cody vs. Gunther.

Cody flips away from Gunther but gets chopped in the corner. With the Wrestlemania sign over them, Gunther gets sent to the apron but blocks the Disaster Kick to get back in. They both go on top with Gunther getting Cody to the apron and stomping as well as he can. A butterfly superplex brings Cody back in but the Cody Cutter drops Gunther again. Gunther gets back in from the apron and Shattered Dreams makes it worse.

Somehow Gunther manages the running dropkick though and there's the powerbomb to drop Cody again. Cody is sent to the apron but hangs on and they chop it out. The sleeper goes on with Cody still on the apron but he tries to pull Gunther over. Gunther is smart enough to let him go and chop Cody back inside. Cody pulls him into Cross Rhodes though and Gunther is out to give Cody the win at 1:11:25.

**Rating:** A-. Now THAT is how you do a Royal Rumble, as they kept this filled with star power and kept it moving throughout. You had mini feuds and stories throughout the match and then the last ten minutes had some actual drama. Cody was the big favorite to win throughout but what matters here is they showed they know how to do a Royal Rumble. It was an excellent performance throughout with only a few down spots. Cody gets the win but this was an absolute star making performance for Gunther too. Awesome match and one of the better Rumbles of all time.

We recap the Mountain Dew Pitch Black match. Bray Wyatt returned and LA Knight doesn't think too much of him. They have attacked each other, but now it's time for Bray's first

match back after returning a few months ago. No one knows the rules, but you win by pinfall or submission.

### LA Knight vs. Bray Wyatt

Pitch Black match meaning...the lights are going to be all neon, including Knight's gear. Wyatt, all covered in paint, starts fast and choke throws Knight. They head outside with Bray loading up the announcers' table (and knocking around all of the light up neon stuff). Knight fights out of a suplex and hits a clothesline to drive them through the table. A kendo stick shot just wakes Wyatt up though and it's Sister Abigail to give Wyatt the pin at 5:03.

**Rating:** D+. Yes it was stupid and yes it was WWE getting a nice check, but it was five minutes and Wyatt gets his feet wet with a win now that he is back. That's about all you can ask for out of something like this so I'll take what I can get. Wyatt going too far is always a danger and thankfully they mostly avoided it here.

Post match Wyatt puts on a new mask and stalks Knight, whose kendo stick shots have no effect. They fight to the tech area and Wyatt cuts him down with the Mandible Claw. Uncle Howdy pops up on a balcony above the stand and dives down onto Knight, meaning it's time for a bunch of explosions and fire. The Firefly Fun House characters pop up above the platform too and look down on Knight.

Tonight's attendance: 51,338.

### Raw Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Bianca Belair

Belair is defending and hammers on Bliss in the corner. Bliss pulls her out of said corner and hits a dropkick to the ribs. Some kicks to the ribs have Belair in more trouble and we hit the chinlock. Belair powers that up and snaps off a suplex before pounding down forearms in the corner.

The handspring splash hits knees but Belair is fine enough to hit a faceplant. Now the handspring moonsault can connect for two but Belair can't quite powerbomb her. Instead Bliss grabs a DDT for two and a backsplash gets the same. Back up and Belair hits a quick KOD to retain at 7:02.

**Rating:** C-. Not much to see here as Belair runs down someone else. I'm not sure what is coming for her at Wrestlemania but she almost has to lose at some point. There is nothing left for her to do on Raw save for maybe losing to Rhea Ripley, which very well may come in Los Angeles in a few months.

Post match we see a playground and visions of Uncle Howdy, as Bliss sees various images from her past. What in the world does the writer of this story have on WWE? They've been at this for years now and I still don't get the appeal.

### Women's Royal Rumble

90 second intervals and Rhea Ripley (favoring her ribs from earlier) is in at #1 with Liv Morgan in at #2. Liv knocks her into the corner to start and gets in a few shots, only to get pulled out of the air. Ripley muscles her up for a suplex and Dana Brooks is in at #3. Brooke dropkicks them out of the air and knocks Ripley around a bit before going up top with Morgan. A superplex brings Morgan back down and it's Emma in at #4. Emma cleans some house, including a neckbreaker over the middle rope to Ripley.

Shayna Baszler is in at #5 and goes after Ripley's arm before ankle locking Liv. Baszler stomps on Dana's arm and Bayley is in at #6. Liv grabs Oblivion on Bayley before she can get in but Bayley saves herself on the apron. Bayley fights back on Liv and B Fab is in at #7...and is the first one out at Ripley's hands. NXT Women's Champion Roxanne Perez is in at #8 and snaps off a headscissors to Ripley. As Perez gets to clean house, Dakota Kai is in at #9. Damage Ctrl takes too long to pose and get jumped by Liv and Dana.

Iyo Sky is in at #10 to complete Damage Ctrl, giving us Ripley, Morgan, Brooke, Emma, Baszler, Bayley, Perez, Kai and Sky. Morgan and Brooke get springboard missile dropkicked down before Brooke and Emma are tossed. Perez goes after Bayley but a hard dropkick from Sky puts Perez out. Natalya returns at #11 and goes after Baszler, who put her on the shelf. Candice LeRae is in at #12 and gets knocked into the corner by Baszler. We get the Natalya vs. Baszler showdown with Natalya snapping off a German suplex. They fight to the apron with Damage Ctrl eliminating both of them.

Zoey Stark from NXT is in at #13 and gets to kick a bunch of people. A kick to Ripley staggers her a bit and it's Xia Li in at #14. Li gets to fire off a bunch of kicks of her own as Damage Ctrl gets rid of LeRae. Becky Lynch is in at #15 and this should clear out the ring a bit. Lynch unloads on Bayley and they fight to the floor (not out) with the rest of Damage Ctrl going after them. The trio takes out Becky and sends her over the announcers' table but no one is eliminated.

Tegan Nox is in at #16 and helps Liv beat up Stark. Asuka is in at #17 (in long tights, with what looks like tiger/clown face paint and short hair, which might be her old Kana persona) and cleans house before starring Bayley down. Bayley gets scared and Asuka kicks Nox out. Piper Niven (yes Piper Niven, not Doudrop) is in at #18 and gets to clean house. Splashes abound and Tamina is in at #19.

Tamina goes after Doudrop, with commentary saying they have been dreaming of this showdown. No, no you haven't you liars. Everyone else breaks it up and Becky is back in to start hitting people. Chelsea Green returns at #20, giving us Ripley, Morgan, Bayley, Kai, Sky, Stark, Li, Lynch, Asuka, Niven, Tamina and Green. Speaking of Green, Ripley tosses her in 5 seconds. Lynch gets rid of Kai and Sky back to back but Bayley dumps Lynch as well. Morgan gets rid of Bayley and Damage Ctrl brawls with her to the back.

Zelina Vega is in at #21 and is dressed as a character from Street Fighter 6, which she will be in as a character. Doudrop takes Vega to the apron, where Li and Vega strike it out. Li gets knocked to the floor and a middle rope Codebreaker hits Niven. Raquel Rodriguez is in at #22 and runs people over, including a fall away slam to Stark. Mia Yim is in at #23 with a tornado DDT to Stark and Lacey Evans is in at #24.

House is cleaned again and Michelle McCool, coming out of the front row, is in at #25. Tamina is out and Indi Hartwell from NXT is in at #26. Not much happens until Sonya Deville is in at #27. Yim hits Stark with Eat Defeat and Deville gets rid of her. Evans Cobra Clutches Vega to choke her out and send her hard to the floor for the elimination. Shotzi is in at #28 and has to save herself from a fast elimination. Deville gets rid of Hartwell and Nikki Cross is in at #29.

Cross forearmms just about everyone...and Nix Jax is back at #30. The final grouping is Ripley, Morgan, Asuka, Niven, Rodriguez, Yim, Evans, McCool, Deville, Shotzi, Cross and Jax. Everyone surrounds Jax but she shrugs them off, setting up the showdown with Rodriguez. Jax drops Rodriguez and Morgan but a bunch of people go after her, with Ripley not being able to slam her. A horrible Riptide (fair enough) plants Jax and everyone gives her the giant treatment for the elimination.

Rodriguez knocks Evans out but gets caught in Asuka's armbar. Asuka and Deville go to the apron with the latter being kicked out. McCool is out, with Shotzi and Yim following her. We're down to Ripley, Morgan, Asuka, Niven, Rodriguez and Cross, with Niven getting to clean some house. Rodriguez kicks Niven out though and picks Ripley up for the trip to the apron. Ripley kicks Rodriguez out and Morgan gets rid of Cross. That leaves us with Ripley, Morgan and Cross so we reset a bit.

Morgan gets tossed into a Codebreaker on Asuka and manages to put Ripley on the apron. Ripley pulls Morgan out to the apron with her and kicks her down but not out. Asuka's hip attack is

blocked and all three of them wind up on the apron. Asuka mists Morgan and gets kicked out, leaving Morgan and Ripley. Morgan kicks the feet out so Ripley is hanging on by her hands but a headscissors drops Morgan to give Ripley the win at 1:01:07.

**Rating:** C. Well, the important thing is it cleared last year's bar by about a mile. Having the NXT women in there helped a lot as there was no reason to not have them in there before. Other than that, they went with what mattered the most, as the idea was to have Ripley get the big win to move back into the main event scene. Ripley has been ready for the next big title run and this should set her up for that rather well. They had some dead spots in here but I'll take some NXT surprises and a few returns (not Jax, never her) over the same legends every year. Not a great Rumble, but a passable enough one.

Hardy performs the show's theme song, with commentary basically ignoring him.

We recap Roman Reigns vs. Kevin Owens for the World Title. This is all about finding out which side Sami Zayn is on, even if there is nothing to really suggest that he is anything but loyal to the Bloodline.

#### Undisputed WWE Universal Title: Roman Reigns vs. Kevin Owens

Reigns, with Paul Heyman and Sami Zayn, is defending. They take their time to start with neither going very far. Owens knocks him to the floor though and takes over early, including a backplash to crush Reigns. Back in and Owens gets whipped hard into the corner, allowing Reigns to hit the jumping apron kick for two. Reigns grabs the chinlock before firing off the corner clotheslines.

Owens hits his own running clothesline for a breather before another one sends Reigns outside. The apron Bullfrog splash connects and the real version gets two back inside. Owens takes too long to follow up though and it's a sitout powerbomb

to give Reigns two. The Superman Punch is countered into a German suplex for two on Owens, only to have the Superman Punch connect to give Reigns a near fall of his own. The spear goes into the post though and Owens nails a superkick.

Owens hits the Swanton for two but gets caught on top. Some elbows knock Reigns down and Owens tries a jumping spinning moonsault but crashes down instead. Back up and Owens tries a more traditional moonsault, which misses anyway. The spear connects for two but the referee gets bumped. The Pop Up Powerbomb hits Reigns but there is no one to count. Reigns hits him low and tells Owens to grab a chair. Sami: "You told me not to do anything!"

Sami goes looking and finally finds one but takes a second to slide it in. The Stunner connects for two on Reigns, who comes back with the spear for the same. Owens bails to the floor and lands in front of Sami. Zayn tells him to stay down but Reigns hits another spear to send Owens through the barricade.

Back in and...Owens rolls outside again. This time Reigns sends the back of Owens' head into the steps (OUCH) and then does it again. Reigns throws what used to be Owens back inside, with Heyman acknowledging Reigns as Zayn is looking worried. Some slaps to the face wake Owens up...and another spear cuts him down to retain the title at 19:14.

**Rating:** B-. The ending was about as obvious as you could get, but the question was what Sami would do. In this case that would pretty much be nothing, though you can all but guarantee something is coming before the end of the show. For now though, Owens gets to be the latest designated victim as we get closer to Reigns vs. Cody Rhodes at Wrestlemania. Not a great match, but that was never really the point.

Post match Jey goes to give Sami his own lei but Reigns says hang on a second. The big beatdown is on Owens, with a chair being wrapped around his neck in the corner. Solo Sikoa hits

the running Umaga Attack as commentary wants someone to do something about this. Reigns busted out the handcuffs as Sami is looking more and more uncomfortable. Owens is cuffed to the rope so the Usos can superkick him over and over.

The fans chant for Sami as Reigns picks up the chair. Reigns talks a lot but Sami FINALLY gets in front of him before the swing. Sami says Owens is done and this is beneath Reigns. Instead, Reigns hands Zayn the chair, but Zayn doesn't want it. Zayn finally takes it, with Reigns telling him about how Owens has held him down since day one(ish). Zayn loads up the chair and....pauses, until Reigns hits him in the face.

They go nose to nose with Reigns saying this is his whole life. Zayn nods...and blasts Reigns in the back with the chair to a MONSTER reaction. Jimmy and Sikoa are livid and kick Zayn down as Reigns sits up and looks crushed. Jey Uso looks at Zayn but doesn't beat on him as he is told to, instead walking up the ramp and looking upset.

Reigns unloads on Sami with the chair (Fans: "F\*\*\* YOU ROMAN!") and rips up the lei before leaving Sami laying. I know Cody is the #1 contender and all that, but with that segment and that reaction, they better have something huge for Sami between now and Wrestlemania or Cody is going to be sacrificed to the wrestling gods in Los Angeles. That segment, especially that reaction, was an all timer and there is nothing that is topping it for a long time in WWE.

**Overall Rating:** B. This is a bit of a weird Royal Rumble as the show is normally built around the Royal Rumbles. In this case though, you have an awesome men's Rumble, an ok women's Rumble and an incredible post main event angle. That Zayn/Bloodline segment is more than enough to boost this up a bit and tied together with an all time men's Rumble, the rest of the show is good enough. The Wyatt and Belair matches weren't great, but they clocked in at a combined 12:05 (call it 20 for the post Wyatt match stuff) out of a four hour and

twenty minute show. This show worked and the Road To Wrestlemania could be great.

### Results

Cody Rhodes won the Men's Royal Rumble last eliminating Gunther

Bray Wyatt b. LA Knight – Sister Abigail

Bianca Belair b. Alexa Bliss – KOD

Rhea Ripley won the Women's Royal Rumble last eliminating Liv Morgan

Roman Reigns b. Kevin Owens – Spear

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## **Royal Rumble 2023 Preview**

It's that time of year again as we are beginning the Road To Wrestlemania. That means we are going to be seeing some of the biggest shows of the year and things are about to get a lot more exciting. WWE has done a nice job setting up the Royal

Rumble matches this year as there are a lot of open spots remaining, though the men's match is more or less a two horse race. Let's get to it.

### Bray Wyatt vs. LA Knight

Let's get the goofy out of the way first. This is the Pitch Black match, which is a product placement match from Mountain Dew. WWE still hasn't exactly explained what it's going to be, but knowing Wyatt's involvement, things are going to get more than a little strange. By strange I mean ridiculous, but it's a new Wyatt so I'm trying to hold on to false hope for as long as I can.

Of course Wyatt wins here, as there is zero reason to have Knight beat him in his first match. Save or some Uncle Howdy shenanigans, I can't imagine there being any reason to think that Wyatt is in any danger here, though it is nice to see Knight putting in the work to make the match feel more important. This is Wyatt's to win and I can't imagine anything else, so hopefully they keep the goofiness to a minimum.

### Raw Women's Title: Bianca Belair(c) vs. Alexa Bliss

As much of a layup as this seems to be, this one has me wondering about where it is going. Belair has nothing left to prove on Monday Night Raw and shifting her over to the Smackdown Women's Title picture could be a good change of pace. At the same time, if Bliss is doing nothing more than being weird all the time without any actual success, it is going to get old fast.

I'm not certain on it, but I'm taking the title change here, as I think Belair moves over to do something else. Becky Lynch or even Bayley can take the title from Bliss soon enough, but Belair is very, very firmly established as a top star and she needs a new challenge. At the same time, Bliss needs a win to reestablish herself and I'll go out on a limb and say she gets that win here.

## Undisputed WWE Universal Title: Roman Reigns(c) vs. Kevin Owens

The fact that Reigns is still on the same reign from when he defended against Owens TWO YEARS AGO at this same event tells you a lot about what he is doing. As has been the case with a lot of stuff lately, this is going to be much more about Sami Zayn than anyone in the match. Reigns has basically made this match Zayn's final Bloodline exam and it begs the question of what is going to happen.

I'll go with Reigns retaining, but I think we get the big stuff after the match. Once Reigns keeps the title, Zayn does something like refusing to help destroy Owens, turning face in the process. For the life of me, I can't imagine anything but Zayn challenging Reigns for the title next month in Montreal, which would basically be Zayn's Wrestlemania. Reigns isn't losing the title here, but it's going to be a big turning point in the Bloodline saga.

## Men's Royal Rumble

Let's get the obvious out of the way right now. You can have your Brock Lesnar, your Bobby Lashley, your Seth Rollins and your Drew McIntyre. This match is 100% Cody Rhodes' match to win with Sami Zayn being the only other person on the planet as a dark horse. Unless WWE has a monster surprise waiting on us here (and there are 11 spots open as of the end of Smackdown), this one should be pretty much in the bag.

Naturally I'm taking Rhodes, as I can't picture a reason not to. I'm still not sure if Rhodes is THE guy to do all of this stuff, but if WWE has picked him to do it, then that's better than slapping something together at the last second. As for a surprise pick, I still think there is a chance Randy Orton is back here, though he would almost have to win if he is back in this kind of spot. It's going to be the Rhodes Show though, and while I don't quite like it, I certainly get the idea.

## Women's Royal Rumble

Then we have this one and as sure as I was on the men's, I'm completely in the dark here. There are several ways you could go for a winner and the fact that we only know twelve entrants makes it all the more confusing. Bayley and Becky Lynch are both possibilities, even if Lynch has yet to be announced for the match. I'd also call Raquel Rodriguez the darkest of dark horses, but if they wanted to pull the trigger on someone (even if they aren't ready yet), Rodriguez is an option.

That being said, I'll go with Rhea Ripley, who has yet to have her big moment. Her title reign was completely overshadowed by Charlotte and since then she has grown into a much bigger (and better) star. Ripley fits all of the criteria here and could be primed for a heck of a title match at Wrestlemania, say against a bit of a lame duck champion Becky Lynch. It should be Ripley this year, but I'm far from confident on this one.

## Overall Thoughts

Even though the Sword Of McMahon continues to hang over our heads, there is a lot of potential with this show. If nothing else, I love not knowing who is scheduled for the Royal Rumbles and there is a good chance that we could be in for some awesome surprises. Just the fact that I can be excited for this show again is nice, and while it might go away as soon as McMahon changes his mind (again), I'll take it for one night.

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# Royal Rumble 2014 (2015 Redo): Do They Have Your Attention Now?

## Royal Rumble 2014

Date: January 26, 2014

Location: Consol Energy Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

The big story here is the rise of Daniel Bryan, who has gone from solid midcard guy to the people's choice to win the Rumble. However, Batista has returned and is basically the guaranteed winner of the Rumble, no matter what the fans want to see. I can't imagine this ends well. Let's get to it.

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

The Outlaws reunited as a nostalgia act and pinned the champs to earn this shot. Dogg and Cody get things going with Dogg hammering away, only to miss his Shake Rattle and Roll punch. Cody misses the Disaster Kick but sends both Outlaws to the floor. The champs hit dives on the Outlaws as we take a break. Back with Goldust in trouble as Dogg puts on a chinlock.

The Outlaws double team Goldust for a bit until he hits a jumping sunset flip for two on Dogg. Gunn charges into a powerslam and there's the hot tag to Cody. A missile dropkick drops both Outlaws and Cross Rhodes plants Dogg for two with Billy making the save. Gunn makes a blind tag

and hits a Fameasser on Cody for the big upset win.

**Rating:** C. This was fine for an opener and the fans were into the nostalgia. The Outlaws were only transitional champions anyway as the Usos would get the belts before Wrestlemania. Cody and Goldust had them back before the year was over too so no one was really hurt by this.

The opening video talks about working to achieve your dreams. Sometimes there's a very thin line between almost getting there and getting everything you want. We also focus on Orton vs. Cena because that's the real main event here. The Rumble itself gets a quick mention too.

### Daniel Bryan vs. Bray Wyatt

Daniel joined the Wyatt Family on the last Raw of the year but then rejected them a few weeks later, leading to one of the loudest YES chants you'll ever hear. Bryan punches out of the corner to start but Bray drives knees into his ribs and blasts him with an elbow. That's fine with Bryan as he kicks the knee out but has to go after Bray's followers Luke Harper and Erick Rowan. A suicide dive drops Harper but the referee ejects both monsters.

Bray huddles with his Family on the floor, allowing Daniel to take him down with a plancha. Back in and a high cross body gets two on Wyatt but he chops Daniel off the middle rope and out to the floor. Bray charges at Daniel but drives the bad knee into the steps to put him back down again. Back in and Daniel starts kicking at the leg before snapping off a dragon screw leg whip. A modified curb stomp gets two for Bryan but Bray drives him back into the corner.

They slug it out to the apron with Wyatt snapping Daniel's shoulder down in a big crash. Back in and Bray hits his release suplex slam and we hit the chinlock. Bray puts Daniel's head against the post and drives in forearms to follow up on Bryan's recent concussion. Back in again and a kick to the face gives Bray a few near falls. A big release Rock Bottom plants him again and Bray does his Spider Walk out of the corner. Bryan finally avoids an elbow drop and hits a running clothesline.

Some kicks stagger Bray and a drop toehold sends him into the middle

buckle. Daniel kicks away in the corner and nails a top rope hurricanrana for two. Another running clothesline is countered by a running elbow to the chest as Bray takes over again. Bryan low bridges him to the floor and hits a running tornado DDT off the apron. A running dropkick sends Bray into the barricade and a missile dropkick puts Wyatt down in the ring.

The YES Kicks get two but Bray turns him inside out with a clothesline for two. Sister Abigail is countered but Bray bites his way out of the YES Lock. Daniel scores with more kicks and hits a top rope splash but Bray ducks to the floor to avoid the running knee. The Flying Goat is blocked though and Bray hits Sister Abigail into the barricade to knock Bryan silly. Back in and another Sister Abigail is good for the pin.

**Rating:** A. This was considered a match of the year contender and it's easy to see why. These two beat the tar out of each other with each move getting harder and harder than the previous. Bryan lost here but came out looking like a star. Bray on the other hand looks like a killer and that's exactly what he's supposed to be.

Paul Heyman says Brock Lesnar is going to challenge the winner of Orton vs. Cena for the World Title. However, first he has to make an example out of Big Show.

Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger is here.

The expert panel of Jim Duggan, Shawn Michaels and Ric Flair aren't sure who to pick between Lesnar and Big Show.

### Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar

These two have had a feud for years and this time Big Show has been getting the better of it through pure power. Lesnar takes Show down before the bell and pounds on him with fists and then a chair. As Big Show is down, Lawler says Big Show gave Lesnar his first loss at the 2002 Royal Rumble, which would be three months before Lesnar debuted. We get the opening bell with Lesnar getting another chair but Show nails him with the KO Punch. Lesnar is rocked and Show takes him outside for a whip into the barricade. Back in and Big Show loads up another KO but Lesnar

ducks and throws him up for the F5 for the easy pin.

Lesnar beats on him with the chair even more after the match. He's broken two chairs over Show's back.

Shield says they have 27 enemies tonight and it'll be the three of them left standing. Only one of them can stand tall at the end but Reigns thinks he has the winning number. He won't say what it is though. Dean offers to tell him his if Reigns tells his. Dean: "What if I have two numbers? I have ALL the numbers!" They agree to believe in the Shield.

Orton says he's going to beat Cena and put him to the back of the line. Renee Young asks about Batista, Brock Lesnar and Bray Wyatt wanting title shots but Orton laughs it off and calls Wyatt a deranged hillbilly Duck Dynasty reject.

We recap Orton vs. Cena. This is more about their short term history, focusing on the titles being unified back in December. Orton seems to be cracking under the pressure of being champion and even attacked Cena's father at Raw recently.

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

No countout and no DQ with Orton defending.. The fans loudly chant for Daniel Bryan before and after the bell. They hit the mat and the fans are already bored less than twenty seconds in. Cena fights up and gets two off a bulldog but charges into an elbow in the corner. Now a Randy Savage chant starts up and Orton stops for a second before kicking Cena even more.

Off to a chinlock as the fans chant for Y2J. After fighting out, Cena catches on and tries a Boston crab. Orton kicks him to the floor during a brief Undertaker chant and now it's just the standard boring chant. A clothesline puts Orton back outside but he sends Cena into the steps. Back in and a DDT gets two for Orton as the fans just say both guys suck. Cena comes back with shoulder blocks and the ProtoBomb, only to take too long jawing and walk into a powerslam for two.

A half nelson slam into a neckbreaker gets two for Cena but he gets

caught on top. He headbutts his way out though and hits the top rope Fameasser for two. Orton counters the AA attempt into his backbreaker for two as the fans have calmed down a bit. The Elevated DDT off the apron to the floor gets two more on John. Orton's RKO is countered into the STF but Randy is too close to the ropes. He grabs the ropes to block an AA as well but the referee gets bumped.

There's the STF again and Orton taps but there's no referee. Orton uses the opportunity to nail Cena with a title belt for two. He stands around too long again though and takes an AA for two more. The RKO gets the same and now the fans want Divas. Orton misses the Punt but pulls Cena down into an STF. John counters that into a Crossface but Orton rolls into a cover for two.

Back up and Orton hits Cena with an AA, followed by Cena grabbing an RKO for another near fall. With nothing left to do, Cena loads up a middle rope AA but has to settle for a tornado DDT. The STF goes on in the middle of the ring...we've got Wyatts. The lights go out and come back on to reveal all three on the apron. Cena goes after them but walks into an RKO to keep the title on Orton.

**Rating:** B. This matchup has suffered from brand damage. We've seen it so many times over the years that even if the match is good, like it was here, people just do not want to see it. The guys got the crowd to calm down a bit about halfway through the match, but there's just nothing left to see from these two. They're both hard workers and try every time they're out there but the interest is just gone.

The fans chant for Bryan as the Wyatts destroy Cena even more.

Tribute video to the recently passed away Mae Young.

The New Age Outlaws celebrate but tell Renee that she isn't invited to the party.

We get some classic Rumble promos.

Miz will win because he'll do whatever it takes to headline Wrestlemania again.

The Usos are cool with having to fight each other.

Intercontinental Champion Big E. says headlining Wrestlemania is where it's at.

Fandango thinks he's the only one worthy to headline the big dance.

Batista just says exactly.

Damien Sandow says it's insane to try the same thing and expect different results. He won't make the same mistake again.

Ryback says there are 29 superstars and one Human Wrecking Ball.

Mysterio will shock the world again.

The expert panel makes their picks. Duggan likes Ziggler, Shawn goes with Shield or Punk and Flair takes Batista.

### Royal Rumble

90 second intervals with Punk at #1 (as ordered by Kane) and Seth Rollins at #2. Punk takes him into the corner to start for some shoulders to the ribs. Some kicks stagger Rollins but he comes back with a big kick of his own. A clothesline drops Rollins again but he pops back up with an enziguri. Both guys are down as Damien Sandow is in at #3. The fans loudly chant for Punk as he DDTs Sandow and drops Rollins with a neckbreaker at the same time.

The heels stomp Punk down until Cody Rhodes is in at #4. Cross Rhodes plants Sandow but Rollins stops an elimination attempt. Punk dumps Damien a few seconds later though and it's time for Rollins to get double teamed. Kane comes in at #5 and cleans Punk's clock. He loads up the chokeslam but Punk kicks him in the head for a surprise elimination. The debuting Alexander Rusev is in at #6.

Rusev kicks Rollins and Rhodes in the face but can't eliminate either guy. Instead he just beats everyone up until Jack Swagger is in at #7. It's Swagger vs. Rusev now but everyone opts to gang up on Rusev instead. Cody and Swagger break off and Kofi Kingston is in at #8. Everyone fights

by the ropes until Jimmy Uso is in at #9. The announcers are noticing how fast the clock is going by.

Jimmy goes after Kofi in the corner as Rusev works on Swagger. Punk puts Rusev in a sleeper and Goldust is in at #10, giving us a group of Punk, Rollins, Goldust, Cody, Jimmy, Swagger, Kingston and Rusev. Goldust hammers away until Rusev nails him in the jaw. A group of people gang up on Rusev and dump him out, which isn't quite a great debut for him. Kofi gets thrown out as well but Rusev catches him in mid air. He drops Kofi on the barricade and it's time for the great return. Kingston stands up, uses the barricade as a balance beam and jumps back to the apron in a pretty cool save.

US Champion Dean Ambrose is in at #11 and goes right after Punk. Things slow down again and Dolph Ziggler is in at #12. The fans are entirely behind Dolph as the ring is getting too full. Punk has to hang onto the apron as R-Truth comes in at #13, only to be dumped in about thirty seconds by Ambrose. Rollins knocks out Jimmy and Kofi steals Swagger's boot while literally hanging on by his feet. Jack comes over to him but gets nailed by the boot as Kofi gets back in.

Kevin Nash makes a required return at #14. He eliminates Swagger with ease and goes after Ambrose and Rollins. Punk has Ziggler dangling but Dolph gets his feet back in. Roman Reigns completes the Shield at #15, giving us Punk, Rollins, Rhodes, Kingston, Goldust, Ambrose, Ziggler, Nash and Reigns. Roman cleans house with punches and spears before launching Kofi out.

Ziggler puts Roman down with a DDT but eats a spear to cut him in half. Reigns throws Ziggler out with ease and the fans suddenly hate him. Nash gets the same treatment as Reigns now has three eliminations in less than two minutes. Great Khali is in at #16 and goes after the Shield but gets tossed by Reigns. Goldust eliminates Cody to make up for the last two years but Reigns gets rid of Goldust a second later. That leaves the Shield alone with Punk but Sheamus returns after being out six months with an injury at #17.

Sheamus cleans house and gives Dean the ten forearms followed by an Irish

Curse to Rollins. Reigns eats a Brogue Kick as Miz is in at #18. Punk is just laying in the corner and making almost no effort to get back up. Miz hammers away on Reigns in the corner and Fandango is in at #19. The entire crowd starts doing his dance but Miz sends him to the apron in just a few seconds. Fandango gets back in though as Shield slowly takes over again. Reigns motions to Punk in the corner but doesn't go after him. Punk hasn't moved from there in at least five minutes now.

El Torito is in at #20, giving us Punk, Rollins, Ambrose, Reigns, Sheamus, Miz, Fandango and Torito. Of course the bull cleans house until Punk stands up. Punk grabs him by the head but takes a headscissors, only to have Fandango run Torito over. The referee checks on Punk as Torito dropkicks Fandango out. Reigns catches Torito with ease and dumps him out for his sixth elimination. Punk gets back up as Cesaro is in at #21. He immediately starts swinging Miz but Shield breaks up a Swing attempt on Punk. Instead Rollins gets swung a ridiculous THIRTY TIMES. Luke Harper is in at #22 as Reigns spears Cesaro down.

Rollins and Cesaro slug it out until Jey Uso is in at #23. The brawling slows down a bit now and JBL is in at #24. Cole: "The JBL character has never entered the Royal Rumble." Good grief. JBL wears his full suit into the ring but asks Cole to go get his jacket, allowing Reigns to dump him out. Fans: "YOU STILL GOT IT!" Erick Rowan is in at #25 as JBL tries to talk about ANYTHING but being in the Rumble. Rowan kicks Miz out to clear things up a bit but everything slows back down again.

Harper tosses Jey Uso but the Wyatts turn around to see the Shield. Ryback is in at #26 and goes right for Cesaro as the fans chant Goldberg. Alberto Del Rio gets lucky #27 and things slow down yet again. Batista is in at #28 and the fans just rip him apart. He quickly dumps Rowan and has a staredown with Ryback before dumping him as well. Del Rio, the man who has been going after Batista since he returned, superkicks him down but gets lifted into the air and dumped with ease.

Intercontinental Champion Big E. is in at #29 to almost no reaction but the fans like him for suplexing Batista. The fans are chanting for Bryan and get even louder as the countdown clock comes on. The clock runs out...and it's Rey Mysterio. To say the fans aren't pleased with this is

the understatement of the year. We're going to pause for a second here and look at this.

First of all, Rey Mysterio is a fine choice for #30 in the Royal Rumble. He's a multiple time World Champion, he's held nearly every title in WWE history, he's going to be in the Hall of Fame one day, he's the most successful cruiserweight of all time, he's won the Royal Rumble before and he's one of the most popular wrestlers ever. However, he's not the right choice for this spot.

There are two schools of thought here. The first and more prominent is that WWE just did not understand the fans and thought they would accept Batista as the big star making his return and embrace him with open arms. Then they heard the reaction and changed course to make Wrestlemania all about Daniel Bryan. The other school of thought is Bryan not being in the Rumble was planned from the beginning, they knew where they were going at Wrestlemania the entire time and the stories about Orton vs. Batista headlining the show were false rumors. I'm in the middle on that but I lean more towards the second.

Now Bryan didn't have to win the Rumble here. You could have had a bunch of different ways to get rid of him, even down to having Kane run out and eliminate him if need be. However, he should have been in the main event. It makes sense that he at least has a chance to be in there, even if it's just to get screwed over again.

Anyway, we have a final grouping of Punk, Rollins, Ambrose, Reigns, Sheamus, Cesaro, Harper, Batista, Langston and Mysterio. Rey hurricanranas Punk to the apron as the fans are booing the heck out of the match. Sheamus clotheslines Langston out to end his worthless Rumble. Cesaro hammers on everyone in sight and Rey hits the 619 on Rollins just to make everyone even madder. Rollins enziguris Rey out for a nice pop and we're down to eight.

Dean and Seth put Harper on the apron but Reigns Superman Punches him out to give him eight eliminations. Ambrose tries to put out his Shield mates but Cesaro jumps he and Rollins. That's fine with Reigns who dumps Cesaro, Rollins and Ambrose all at once to tie Kane's record for

eliminations in a single Rumble.

We're down to four now and everyone hits a finisher. Reigns takes the GTS but Kane sneaks in to eliminate Punk. That would be Punk's last WWE match to date. Kane goes off on Punk outside and chokeslams him through the announcers' table. We're down to Sheamus, Batista and Reigns but all three are down. Another Daniel Bryan chant starts up as Batista takes over, turning it into a NO chant.

Sheamus cleans house and points at the sign before loading up a Brogue Kick. He misses Batista though and gets backdropped to the apron. Reigns elbows Sheamus out to set a new Rumble record for eliminations with twelve. That leaves Reigns vs. Batista and all of a sudden everyone is a Reigns fan. Reigns wins a slugout and clotheslines Batista down as the people chant for Roman. Batista comes back with his own horrible spear, only to have Reigns show him how it's done...and then get thrown out a few seconds later to send Batista to Wrestlemania.

**Rating:** D. This just wasn't a very good Rumble though its moments. Batista came in at the wrong time and it killed any kind of comeback he could have had. The fans did not want to see what the company was offering them at this point and they let them know about it. In their defense though, this Rumble was kind of awful. The comedy and returns felt forced, Rusev's debut went nowhere and they might as well have given it to Batista and put on an hour of Mighty Mouse cartoons to save everyone's time. It's not a good match but the crowd reaction is certainly interesting.

Batista is booed out of the building as we see a highlight package ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. The Rumble really hurts this show as it drags down two good matches and an entertaining Lesnar squash. The problem is that's the lasting memory of this show: the fans booing the heck out of Batista as WWE seemed to think he was exactly what WWE wanted. The show isn't horrible but it leaves a really bad taste in your mouth.

Ratings Comparison

New Age Outlaws vs. Goldust/Cody Rhodes

Original: C

Redo: C

Daniel Bryan vs. Bray Wyatt

Original:A

Redo: A

Brock Lesnar vs. Big Show

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

John Cena vs. Randy Orton

Original:B

Redo: B

Royal Rumble

Original:B

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original:A

Redo: D+

Hokey smoke that's quite the drop.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2014/01/26/royal-rumble-2014-the-night-the-crowd-died/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on

the History of Saturday Night's Main Event at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00SATPVKW>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

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# Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2001 (2018 Redo): Canadians and Carey

## **Royal Rumble 2001**

Date: January 21, 2001

Location: New Orleans Arena, New Orleans, Louisiana

Attendance: 17,137

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross

This is the first of two requested Rumble reviews of the year to go along with the regular redo of last year's show. We're nearing the end of the Attitude Era and Steve Austin is back after nearly a year on the shelf for neck surgery. All signs are pointing to Rock vs. Austin for the title at Wrestlemania and there's nothing wrong with that. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at how this is the only chance for a lot of people to become World Champion.

The opening sequence is rather clever as it's a pole with street signs, each bearing a Rumble participant's name. The Road to Wrestlemania you see.

Tag Team Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. Edge and Christian

Edge and Christian are defending and the story...well it likely doesn't matter as these teams plus the Hardys feuded for the better part of ever. Thankfully the recap shows us that the Canadians laid both of them out with chair shots to the head on Monday. What a sign of the times that really is. Edge and Christian tease walking out but you know that's not going anywhere.

D-Von neckbreakers Edge for two to start as Jerry goes over the Dudleys' family tree. Eh it was better when Heyman did the same thing at Wrestlemania. Bubba comes in and drops a big elbow for two as Lawler makes fun of the concussions. Again, total sign of the times and it's almost disturbing to hear today. Christian walks into a side slam for two but a forearm to the back of D-Von's head gives the champs their first control.

A Russian legsweep keeps the head banged up as it's time to talk about Christian's hair and teeth. Bubba comes in for a save with Lawler giving tips for how to make the concussion even worse. We get a rare D-Von chant as he tries to fight out of a chinlock. Another neckbreaker gets two on D-Von and Edge stays on the neck. Lawler: "I love it when Edge talks trash." JR: "Does it keep you aroused?" D-Von gets in half of a double clothesline and it's time for the slow crawl to the corner.

Like any good villain, Christian distracts the referee so the tag doesn't count. Instead it's Conchairto time but the chairs only hit each other, allowing D-Von to clothesline both champions down. NOW the hot tag brings in Bubba and it's What's Up to Edge. It's table time but Christian cuts him off. Edge misses a belt shot and gets rolled up for two. A spear cuts off the 3D though and gives Edge two on Bubba. The champs load up their own What's Up but D-Von makes the save this time, followed by 3D for the pin and the titles.

**Rating:** B-. These teams are always good for a layup and like I said, it's not like the story really mattered. You could throw any combination of these four and the Hardys out there for a great match and that's a great thing to have in your back pocket. It's not like the titles really mattered at this point as the fans wanted to see some combination of these three teams, which the company certainly gave them. The concussion

stuff is still a bit rough to sit through though.

Drew Carey arrived earlier today. More on this later.

Also earlier today, Vince clarified that HHH will still get his title shot tonight despite what happened with Steve Austin on Smackdown. What happened you ask? Well again that's not important enough to mention. Like anyone wasn't watching the shows at this point though.

HHH doesn't want Stephanie coming out to the ring tonight but Stephanie says she has to be there to deal with any potential Trish Stratus interference. After listening to Stephanie's normal levels of acting, we're joined by someone with some actual talent in that area as Carey comes in. He didn't know the two of them were married because he's been a bit busy lately.

Carey talks about running into Kamala recently and HHH tries to get rid of him. Drew understands and is looking for Vince for some tips on his upcoming comedy pay per view. Stephanie leaves with him because she wants to find Trish. Nothing wrong with a little promotion like this and the segment didn't take long.

The APA talks about showing each other something. Bradshaw: "I'll show you mine if you show me yours". They mean Rumble numbers of course and Faarooq needs two beers. Crash Holly comes in to say he'll throw them out tonight even if they're friends. Bradshaw: "And people say we're drunks."

We recap Chris Benoit vs. Chris Jericho. They've been fighting over the Intercontinental Title and tonight it's a ladder match for Benoit's belt. Most of the video doesn't even have words but it's not like it matters. Much like the tag match, you could throw these two and Angle out there with whatever story you wanted and it's going to get a strong reaction. Again, that's incredibly valuable to have at your disposal.

#### Intercontinental Title: Chris Benoit vs. Chris Jericho

Benoit is defending in a ladder match and the fight is on in a hurry. The slugout leads to both guys trying their submission to no avail. Benoit

sends him shoulder first into the post as Lawler picks Benoit to win in a blowout. A shoulder breaker stays on the shoulder and Jericho's springboard dropkick is knocked out to the floor. They're definitely going with the idea that Benoit knows Jericho very well to start.

The shoulder goes into the post and it's already ladder time. It's way too early to climb though as Jericho pulls him off in an electric chair. Jericho rams the ladder into Benoit's ribs and puts said ladder in the corner. Now you know what's going to happen and I know what's going to happen, but since Jericho is a face here, he's stupid enough to be whipped into the ladder and fall outside again.

Benoit's dive through the ropes is blocked with a chair to the head (egads that's tough to watch). A ladder shot to Benoit's back only hits barricade and now it's the ladder going off Jericho's head. Jericho sends him into the ladder back inside before tying Benoit's leg into the ladder. That means a super Russian legsweep to bring them both crashing down. Benoit goes into the ladder again and Jericho catapults the ladder into his face to make things even worse. These are some brutal, brutal shots here and they keep getting harder and harder.

Jericho starts going up the ladder so Benoit belly to back suplexes him over the top in a heap. They both head up the ladder this time though and Jericho gets the Walls ON TOP OF THE LADDER for one of the coolest and most painful looking spots you'll ever see. Benoit falls off but manages to kick the ladder over, sending Jericho into the ropes. The Crossface makes Jericho tap (and goes back to the shoulder from earlier) but Jericho's other arm is still good enough to send Benoit into the ladder.

The ladder is set up in the corner but Benoit knocks him off, setting up a HUGE Swan Dive...which only hits mat. Jericho puts the ladder on top of Benoit for a climb but Benoit shoves it forward, sending Jericho crashing into the top rope. Benoit goes up but Jericho makes the save with a chair to knock Benoit to the floor. That's too much of a fall and Jericho wins the title.

**Rating:** A. This is one of my all time favorites as the match is nothing short of brutal and featured some unique spots in there. Sometimes you

just need two people to beat the heck out of each other with reckless abandon and that's exactly what you got here. There's even some psychology with the arm work and that's all you could ask for. This isn't a match that needs a lot of analysis because you get everything you need out of just watching the thing.

Carey meets Trish Stratus who isn't all that interested when he hits on her (Drew Carey isn't that bad of a catch actually) because she's involved with someone. That someone would be Vince, who doesn't seem thrilled to meet Drew. The pay per view is plugged and Vince has an idea to promote the show: Drew can be in the Royal Rumble! Drew: "I don't wrestle. Of course I don't act but I have a show."

Chyna doesn't want to hear from Billy Gunn about her match with Ivory. She tells him to worry about the Rumble. I'd worry about being Billy Gunn.

Jericho says he proved Benoit wrong.

We recap Chyna vs. Ivory. The Right to Censor gave Chyna a spike piledriver to put her out of action, meaning her career might have been over. Now she's back to destroy Ivory for what she's done to them in what should be a squash.

#### Women's Title: Ivory vs. Chyna

Chyna is challenging and hits some quick clotheslines to begin the dominance. A toss off the top keeps it going and Ivory gets stomped in the corner. Ivory gets tossed outside so Chyna follows her into the crowd for the quick stop. Chyna cleans house, including tossing Steven Richards. Back up and a handspring elbow into the corner crushes Ivory...but Chyna collapses and grabs her neck. Ivory gets the quick cover for the pin after no offense.

**Rating:** D-. Of course the wrestling isn't the point here as this was an angle disguised as a match. There are only so many ways you can book Chyna vs. Ivory, or Chyna vs. any woman for that matter, and this is the kind of trick booking you have to use. It's barely a match of course and what we got was nothing worth seeing of course.

Lawler goes in the ring to check on Chyna and Billy Gunn (who comes from opposite the entrance for some reason) joins him. A long stretcher job ensues.

After someone seems to have her neck horribly injured, we go to Stephanie needing her hair fixed. She runs into Trish and things get catty, as expected.

Harvey Wipelman gives Drew some gear when Kane comes in. I think you know where this is going and it's starting to wear thin.

Tiger Ali Singh and Low Down (D'Lo Brown and Headbanger Mosh in, shall we say, an ethnic gimmick, which is probably more offensive than funny) are arguing over who gets the spot in the Rumble. Vince comes in and says never mind because Carey is getting their spot. This is the kind of detail that makes the entry a lot easier. You're not left wondering whose spot Carey is taking because the name is officially give. Also, who is going to remember Brown or Chaz in the match as cannon fodder for a big name? Put Carey in instead and give us a fun moment instead. It's not like it's going to change anything.

Fans at WWF New York give their picks for HHH vs. Kurt Angle.

We recap Kurt Angle vs. HHH. Angle won the title a few months back but HHH said he could get the title back whenever he wanted it. A few family strings were pulled and Vince's son-in-law got the title shot. Since Angle couldn't have a McMahon in his corner, he got Vince's mistress Trish. This set Stephanie off and the ladies are in a bigger feud than the men. Oh yeah the men don't like each other either.

#### WWF World Title: HHH vs. Kurt Angle

Angle is defending. They fight over the arm to start as JR has to point out that this is heel vs. heel for a really weird setup. Lawler of course would rather talk about the women at ringside (to be fair, Stephanie looks great here). Angle throws HHH outside but the fans think the champ sucks. The signature chant hasn't started yet so that's still some fresh thinking.

Angle follows him out for some right hands to the face, only to get sent into the barricade for his efforts. Back in and HHH starts on the knee as the announcers discuss Drew Carey. Lawler actually brings up a good point by saying he made a huge name for himself by piledriving Andy Kaufman. What kind of attention would someone get for taking out Drew Carey? Angle whips HHH over the corner for a big crash and more "acting" from Stephanie. Another whip sends him into the steps and it's Angle being even more aggressive.

A missed charge allows HHH to wrap the leg around the post though and a chair to the knee makes it even worse. HHH follows it up with a chop block and it's off to the Indian deathlock. Well you knew he was going to work that one in somehow. The Figure Four follows up and JR is talking about all the things Gordon Solie would say about the hold. Trish tries for a save but Stephanie pulls her out for the catfight. Vince comes out to break it up as HHH looks on. Maybe getting some ideas for later?

HHH finally snaps back into it and drops some elbows on the leg. A DDT cuts HHH off though and a bridging German suplex gets two. Kurt goes up but gets low blowed, followed by a Razor's Edge of all things for two more. You know it's serious when HHH is using the Kliq moveset. Angle is back up with a suplex and the moonsault, only to bang his knee up some more.

They head outside and the ref gets bumped, with Lawler referring to Hebner as one of his best friends. Back in and HHH goes up, allowing Angle to run the ropes for a super armdrag. There's no referee so HHH grabs the belt but walks into another suplex. Naturally the Pedigree connects for no count so here's Austin to lay HHH out with a belt shot.

**Rating:** B. A little too much overbooking for my taste but the ending makes sense given HHH costing Austin the title a few weeks back (which the announcers finally bothered to mention after the match was over). Angle retaining is fine too as HHH vs. Austin doesn't need the title and we can get to Rock vs. Austin at Wrestlemania that much easier. Angle still isn't quite capable of hanging move for move with someone like HHH but he's certainly able to do enough to cover up his few faults. The fact that he was only about fifteen months on the main roster at this point is

almost scary.

The Rock, looking a little stoned, compares the Rumble to a big pot of jambalaya: there's a bit of everything in it. The big question is whether the Undertaker and Kane are together and you know Rock isn't letting an easy line like that get by. After talking about Undertaker tickling nipples, Rock says the Rumble could come down to him and anyone from Bull Buchanan to Perry Saturn to Steve Austin. He'll win either way. Standard Rock here, with crazy charisma and presence without saying anything more than "I'll win and don't care who I have to beat".

Long recap video on the Rumble. Does this really need an explanation? A bunch of people are in and about 25 five of them are kidding themselves into believing they could win.

### Royal Rumble

Two minute intervals this year so they have a lot of time. Jeff Hardy is in at #1 and Bull Buchanan (of the RTC) is in at #2. Buchanan throws him into the corner but gets punched up to the top for his efforts. That goes nowhere so Matt Hardy is in at #3 in one of those old Rumble tropes. It's kind of amazing how often this happens isn't it? Buchanan is tossed without much effort and a fist bump gets us ready for the brother showdown. Matt can't get him out in the corner so a suplex drops Jeff instead. Faarooq is in at #4 and it's time to run over some Hardys.

Poetry in Motion into the Twist into the Swanton is enough to dump Faarooq though and it's back to two. There go the shirts (and the schoolgirl cheers) as it's time to slug it out. Drew Carey is in at #5 and the Hardys don't even bother stopping their fight this time. They actually eliminate each other and Drew climbs in, much to the fans' appreciation. Then the clock runs down and it's Kane at #6, giving us the only thing JR could possibly say: "Oh my God oh my God oh my God."

Drew tells the Hardys to get back inside and save him as Kane takes his sweet time in a logical move. Carey keeps up the intelligence by offering cash but it's Raven coming in at #7 with a kendo stick for the save. In the smartest thing he could do, Carey eliminates himself and manages to not have died.

I've said this before but that's one of the best celebrity appearances in WWE history. He came in, he did his thing, he took a spot from a nothing wrestler who would have been tossed in short order and we get a fun moment. About nine months earlier, WCW took a lesser celebrity and made him the World Champion. Now which of these two did things the smart way?

Anyway we're on to the hardcore section now with Raven spraying Kane with a fire extinguisher, only to have Al Snow jump the gun at #8 and attack Raven from behind. The buzzer, uh, buzzes, and it's Snow coming in legally this time. That means a bowling ball between Raven's legs with JR saying it seems like a hurricane blowing through New Orleans. I'll be leaving that one alone as the hardcore guys beat the heck out of Kane.

Perry Saturn is in at #8 with Lawler and JR losing their minds over Terri's top. Saturn starts in on Kane's knee as there are weapons all over the ring. Kane has finally had it with this getting beaten up thing and slams Saturn down but everyone gangs up on him to get Kane down. Then reality sets in that they have to get him back up and throw him over the top. There's a reason these guys are stuck in the hardcore division. Steve Blackman is in at #9 and WHAT A COINCIDENCE THAT IT'S ANOTHER HARDCORE GUY! I know the line is it's completely random but these things get hilarious at times.

The brawling continues until Grandmaster Sexay is in at #11. Weapons are swung until Kane has enough of the nonsense and eliminates Sexay with the trashcan. Everyone else follows him out and Kane is alone to face the Honky Tonk Man of all people at #12. For some reason he decides to ask Kane to stand back so we can have a song. One guitar shot later and Kane has his sixth elimination in about four minutes. Again: great usage of a legend there, if nothing else just to give the fans a breather and a transition between the sections of the match.

That next section begins with the Rock coming in at #13 so the slugout can begin. They knock each other down in short order though and it's Goodfather in at #14...and being eliminated in thirteen seconds, counting entrance. Kane chokes Rock on the ropes with JR getting in the...I'm not sure what the right adjective is but he calls Kane a carnivore and Rock a big piece of Rock Burger.

Tazz is in at #15 and manages to last even shorter than Goodfather. Rock can't get Kane out either so he settles for a Samoan drop. It's Bradshaw in at #16 and both Kane and Rock are clotheslined down in short order. Rock takes Bradshaw down but walks into a clothesline from Kane as things stay slow (fine in this case as Rock and Kane have been fighting for a few minutes now and Bradshaw is getting beaten up by both of them). Albert is in at #17 and gets double teamed by Kane and Bradshaw.

Lawler of course asks about Trish and Stephanie with JR cutting him off as fast as he can. The four pair off but no one is eliminated until Hardcore Holly is in at #18. Rock has to survive an elimination attempt as Albert bicycle kicks Kane down (that looked impressive). A running clothesline takes Bradshaw down (for a change) but Rock can't get Kane past the apron. K-Kwik (R-Truth, who is somehow STILL AROUND seventeen years later) is in at #19 and is promptly stomped in the corner.

Rock can't get K-Kwik out (Seriously?) and it's Val Venis in at #20, giving us Kane, Rock, Bradshaw, Albert, Holly, K-Kwik and Venis. The brawling continues with no one coming close to an elimination until William Regal is in at #21. Bradshaw manages to hang on this time as it's Test in at #22 to keep filling the ring up. Regal is tossed to keep things even though with JR saying he was molested.

The returning Big Show is in at #23 to get rid of Test and K-Kwik, followed by chokeslams to Albert and Bradshaw. Venis and Holly go up and down next, followed by one to Kane for a BIG pop. Rock is smart enough to kick him low though and a spit punch eliminates Show in short order. That was quite the sequence and has the fans right back into things after a bit of a lull. Smart booking, again. Show isn't done though and loads up the announcers' table as Crash Holly is in at #24.

The chokeslam puts Rock (not eliminated) through the table and the fans are quieted again. Everyone left in the ring goes after Kane but it's Undertaker in at #25 to save his brother. The ring is cleared in all of thirty seconds and it's Kane vs. Undertaker in a staredown with Rock still down on the floor. Scotty 2 Hotty is in at #26 and I'm not even going to bother describing his painful experience. Undertaker and Kane look at the ramp for the next entrant and it's Steve Austin in at

#27...only to have HHH jump him in the aisle.

Rock gets back in to fight the giants as HHH sends Austin into the barricade, busting him open somewhere in there. With Austin down on the floor, Billy Gunn is in at #28. Right hands abound but Undertaker and Kane stomp Rock and Gunn down into the corners. Undertaker DDT's Rock and punches him in the head but it's HAKU (the reigning WCW Hardcore Champion but not under contract because WCW WAS STUPID) in at #29.

Austin is still down on the floor and my goodness that's a lot of blood. Undertaker and Kane beat on Haku, who is nice enough not to eat them. JR and Lawler get in an argument over Austin being attacked because of course they do and it's heel Rikishi in at #30 (which was already announced). Austin is up to hammer on him in the aisle though and we have a final grouping of Austin, Kane, Undertaker, Rock, Rikishi, Haku and Billy Gunn. Right hands and a clothesline get rid of Haku and we're down to six.

Undertaker chokeslams Rikishi and sends Rock to the apron but hurts himself headbutting Rikishi. A superkick actually gets rid of Undertaker in probably the biggest success of Rikishi's heel run. I mean, it's also one of the only ones but it counts. For some reason Rikishi tries the Bonzai Drop on Rock, earning himself one of the dumbest eliminations of the year. We're down to four as Undertaker's motorcycle revving is rather distracting. Gunn hits a Fameasser on Austin and is eliminated for general purposes.

Rock gets in a DDT on Kane and finds himself in an opposite corner from Austin, meaning we have the modern Hogan vs. Warrior moment. The Wrestlemania preview is on and you can actually see the fans standing to watch it. There's a Stunner to Rock and the Thesz press to Kane, followed by a low blow. A Rock Bottom cuts Austin off but Rock sends Kane through the ropes by mistake.

The big time slugout is on again but Kane comes back in and dumps Rock. Now THAT is a big deal for him...yet he was in a triple threat hardcore match at Wrestlemania. Wrestling is funny that way. Kane chokeslams Austin, only to walk around for a bit. A low blow gives Austin a breather

so Kane grabs a chair. No worries though as a Stunner and some chair shots send Austin to Wrestlemania.

**Rating:** A-. This was the Rumble formula at a very high level with Austin not being a lock to win here (Rock was very much an option) and Kane as the story throughout the match. There were also some long sections in there, along with several stories being set up for the future. The company was on a roll at this point and it's no shock that the Rumble was excellent as well. Great stuff here and one of the best ever.

**Overall Rating:** A. When the worst part of the show is an angle disguised as a match, it's pretty clear that you have a winner. The Rumble and the ladder match here are both top notch and it's no surprise that things are rolling along as well as they are here. The company was just on a roll at this point with no turning back (until they managed to botch the biggest storyline in wrestling history but that's a story for later). Just a great show top to bottom here with the only weak spot being a three and a half minute match. That's some pretty sweet territory and the amazing thing is Wrestlemania blew this away.

### Ratings Comparison

Dudley Boyz vs. Edge and Christian

Original: B-

2013 Redo: B

2018 Redo: B-

Chris Jericho vs. Chris Benoit

Original: A

2013 Redo: A+

2018 Redo: A

Ivory vs. Chyna

Original: N/A

2013 Redo: D

2018 Redo: D-

Kurt Angle vs. HHH

Original: B

2013 Redo: B

2018 Redo: B

Royal Rumble

Original: B

2013 Redo: B+

2018 Redo: A-

Overall Rating

Original: A

2013 Redo: A

2018 Redo: A

It always interests me when the first and third ratings are the same and the middle is different. Still though, great show all around, as it always has been.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/20/royal-rumble-count-up-2001-drew-carey-could-go-to-wrestlemania/>

And the 2013 Redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/01/15/royal-rumble-count-up-2013-redo-2001-two-masterpieces-in-a-row/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the

Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume VI: July – December 1999 in e-book or paperback. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/11/22/new-book-kbs-monday-nitro-and-thunder-reviews-volume-vi/>

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# Royal Rumble Count-Up – 1999 (2016 Redo): WCW Flash Forwards

## Royal Rumble 1999

Date: January 24, 1999

Location: Arrowhead Pond, Anaheim, California

Attendance: 14,816

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole

What did I ever do to you people? I try to give you all a variety of stuff and somehow I always wind up with freaking Russo. Isn't me freaking out over 2000 WCW enough for your bloody thirsty evildoers? Anyway, it's Austin vs. McMahon at #1 and #2, along with Rock being borderline criminal against Mankind in an I Quit match. Let's get to it.

The opening video makes no secret of the fact that this is all about Austin vs. McMahon. The World Title match isn't even mentioned.

Of note: the theme song here would become Vince's theme for pretty much

ever.

### Road Dogg vs. Big Boss Man

Road Dogg is Hardcore Champion after beating Boss Man (half of the Tag Team Champions and part of the Corporation) to win the title. Therefore the solution: let them have a regular singles match. Ah the powers of Russo. Even Cole is trying to figure out why the Corporation wouldn't want a chance to get a title. Boss Man is still one of the only people I've ever seen who stands on the bottom rope for his pre-match posing.

Dogg gets shoved down to start and we get an early hair pulling complaint. I hope he files the proper paperwork for that. Or he could just punch Boss Man in the face instead. Boss Man misses a charge in the corner and gets crotched as Lawler tries to explain why this isn't a title match. I'll give him points for trying but it really makes no sense. Boss Man gets more aggressive but is told this isn't a hardcore match.

The distraction lets Dogg crotch Boss Man against the post but he punches and kicks Dogg down with ease. They're clearly trying really hard to have a regular match but neither guy seems to know how to do it. We hit a bearhug from...well from the person you would expect to use a bearhug in this match. Dogg actually raises the roof to get the crowd on his side but gets dropped with a knee to the ribs.

The referee checking on Dogg allows Boss Man to unhook the turnbuckle pad and we're just waiting on it to come back and cost him. Boss Man wins another slugout but gets caught in a sleeper. That goes nowhere so Dogg has to slam him off the top and it's slugout the fourth. A flying forearm and the shaky knee get two for Dogg but he walks into the Boss Man Slam for the fast pin.

**Rating:** D. So their big idea was to have one of their most popular acts wrestle a style out of his element against an opponent not capable of wrestling that style and then lose. I've said it before but it deserves repeating: Vince Russo is really not that bright when it comes to putting together shows.

We recap Billy Gunn vs. Ken Shamrock. Gunn had, ahem, exposed himself to Shamrock's sister Ryan. Ken went psycho (again) and set this up with his Intercontinental Title on the line.

### Intercontinental Title: Ken Shamrock vs. Billy Gunn

Gunn is challenging but has a bad ankle coming in. Shamrock is the part of the Corporation and the other half of the Tag Team Champions. It's actually Gunn being the aggressor to start by choking Ken down while Lawler is in full on heel mode here, completely supporting Shamrock for wanting to destroy Billy. A clothesline and delayed vertical get two for Gunn but he misses a charge and goes shoulder first into the post.

Shamrock slowly kicks away until he ducks his head and gets caught in a Fameasser for two. So what exactly is Gunn's finisher then, as that was treated like a nothing move. Gunn misses a charge and falls out to the floor so Ken can send him hands first into the post. I say first falsely implying that any other part of his body hit the post as well.

Shamrock takes some time to jaw with the fans, allowing Billy to come back with something like a Stroke off the apron and onto the announcers' table. Well at least that looked good. Back in and Ken starts going after the ankle nearly ten minutes into the match. We get some very slow kicks to the ankle as Cole can't remember Gunn ever submitting. Uh, right. Anyway, Shamrock pulls him down by the hair and gets two off a fisherman's suplex.

The referee gets bumped and a double clothesline puts Gunn and Shamrock down as well. Cue Val Venis, who had recent issues with Shamrock, to take the champion down with a DDT. Gunn makes his comeback as there are fans in towels doing Val's gyrations in the crowd. Billy hurts his ankle again coming off the top and the ankle lock retains Ken's title.

**Rating:** D+. Off the top of my head, I can't remember a less necessary run in. It didn't change anything and they could have done the exact same finish without Venis coming out there. On top of that, the fans are actually pretty quiet. Believe it or not, there isn't a lot of interest in thirty five minutes of a thrown together nothing team beating one of the most popular teams of all time in back to back matches.

Shane McMahon tries to fire up his dad for tonight.

#### European Title: X-Pac vs. Gangrel

X-Pac is defending of course. Feeling out process to start, which isn't the smartest move in the world for a match that isn't likely to go more than six minutes. X-Pac quickly takes him down and drops a leg for two. It's already time for the rapid fire kicks in the corner but the Bronco Buster only hits corner. Gangrel is smart enough to follow up with a belly to belly for two and we hit a quick chinlock.

That goes nowhere so Gangrel throws him into the air and into a big crash, only to miss a top rope....we'll say elbow. X-Pac starts his comeback with a pair of spinwheel kicks because he's a man of limited awesome. The champ tries a high cross body but Gangrel rolls through for a three but the referee says two anyway.

Lawler actually has a good explanation by saying the first count was for X-Pac's cover and the other two were for Gangrel. That's not what happened but it's as logical of an explanation as they were going to find. Back up and Gangrel tries to throw X-Pac into the air, only to get pulled down into the X Factor to retain the title.

**Rating:** C-. Actually not bad here with Gangrel being a totally serviceable worker most of the time. That being said, there's almost no story here as the announcers didn't have any reason for these two to be fighting. At least the fans finally had something to cheer for a change though as it's been a lot of energy killing losses so far.

DX says they're a family but tonight it's every man (and woman according to Chyna) for themselves.

Here's Shane McMahon to introduce Luna Vachon, who he says is winning the Women's Title due to Sable having a bad back. Sable comes out and says ring the bell. I have no idea what connection Shane has to this feud and the announcers didn't seem to bother explaining the story.

#### Women's Title: Luna Vachon vs. Sable

Sable is defending and this is a strap match. Luna bails to the floor to

start but gets pulled face first into the post. Back in and Sable chokes away as Shane calls Luna hot. Sable can only get two buckles though until Luna pulls her down. That earns Sable a whipping and some kicks in the corner, only to have Luna hit a quick backbreaker.

Luna starts dragging her around to three buckles with Sable slapping them as they go. Of course Luna doesn't notice because wrestling logic is screwy. Sable flips over Luna and goes for the fourth buckle but Shane gets on the apron for a distraction, which somehow doesn't count as a break in the momentum. Not that it matters as Sable's insane fan jumps the barricade and decks Luna, allowing Sable to hit the fourth buckle and retain the title.

**Rating:** F+. I really can't stand these gimmick matches getting less than five minutes but they're a Russo staple. The problem here is there's no real reason to have all these stories going on, along with no time to build up any drama and advance the story of the match. In other words, it's too little material in too little time and it drags the whole thing down.

The Corporation debates over who gets to eliminate Austin and win the \$100,000 bounty Vince has put on his head tonight.

We recap Mankind vs. the Rock. Mankind won the title on January 4 and Rock wanted a rematch. He offered various stipulations to Mankind before saying he quit trying. That was enough to get Mankind to agree because he knew he would never quit. Therefore it's time for an I Quit match for the title. Mankind summed it up very simply with a question to Rock: "How does it feel to be in a match you can't win and I can't lose?"

A fired up Rock guarantees to win because he's just that awesome. Watching Beyond the Mat has kind of ruined this for me as it showed Mankind standing about two feet away while Rock was talking here.

#### WWF World Title: The Rock vs. Mankind

Mankind is defending and this is an I Quit match. Also of note, Mankind had to face Mabel (Viscera) on Sunday Night Heat, resulting in a bad rib injury. Rock gets pounded into the corner to start and Mankind hits his

running knee to the head. Some right hands won't make Rock quit yet though so Mankind hits him with the microphone. They head outside with Mankind going knees first into the steps in one of his trademark bumps. Is there any shock that he can barely walk around today?

Rock goes over to do commentary so Mankind blasts him in the head with a chair, only to draw another no. The Mandible Claw knocks Rock mostly out but he won't quit. Mankind tries to take him into the crowd but charges into a belly to belly right back over the barricade for a big crash. Back to ringside with Rock loading up a Rock Bottom through the Spanish announce table but it quickly breaks under their weight. Since it wasn't really worse for either guy, Mankind is right back up and sending Rock into the post.

The fight goes up the aisle with Rock shrugging off right hands and DDTing the champ on the floor. For some reason Rock thinks it's smart to bring in a ladder but a hard shot still won't make Mankind quit. Rock climbs the ladder next to the technical area and Mankind follows him up to a little catwalk. A low blow stops Mankind and Rock rams him off the stand and onto the equipment, causing an explosion and the loss of the arena lights.

The match basically stops as Shane comes out but Rock says there's not going to be a doctor because Mankind is going to quit. Mankind can barely move so Rock drags him back to the ring as this is now a much slower pace. With nothing else working, Rock handcuffs Mankind behind his back and it's about to get ugly.

Some right hands and rams into the buckle have Mankind bleeding but he kicks Rock low to get a breather. Another low blow has Rock in trouble (and the receding hairline doesn't do him much good either) but of course he won't quit. A clothesline puts Mankind down and now it's time to get scary.

Rock puts a chair over Mankind's face for a People's elbow but he still won't quit. Now we get the infamous part of the match as Rock hits him a ridiculous eleven straight times in the head with Mankind not being able to defend himself in the slightest. Even Lawler says that's enough after

two shots. Mankind is completely out as Rock puts the mic to his mouth and a recording of Mankind's voice from weeks ago says he quits to give Rock the title back.

**Rating:** B-. That ending is too much to take and is almost more brutal than the Cell match against Undertaker. The beating just kept going and going with Mankind looking weaker and weaker every time. Apparently Rock hit him about three times as much as he was supposed to and Foley's family was terrified (justly so) over what they saw. The rest of the match is good enough but the ending is one of the scariest things you'll ever see in wrestling, or anywhere for that matter.

We recap Austin vs. Vince which just happens to be taking place in the Royal Rumble. There's no secret about the fact that this is all about those two and to be fair that's the only thing anyone wanted to see. Austin is #1 and Vince is #2, meaning we're going to see them for at least ninety seconds. Vince has also put a \$100,000 bounty on Austin's head, in case you didn't have enough stories going on yet.

Also earlier tonight, Austin crushed some cars with his monster truck and then beat up the Stooges in the arena. I'm not sure what that adds to anything but it's a thing that happened. As usual, such is life in Russo's WWF.

### Royal Rumble

Austin is in at #1 and Vince is in at #2 and the intervals are ninety seconds. Fink takes FOREVER to do the full rules and Lawler is telling him to shut up. Fair point too as he's explaining what does and does not constitute eliminations. Of note here, we get the debut of Vince's chiseled physique which was a real shock as no one had ever seen his arms before. Austin pounds away to start (shocking I know) but opts not to throw Vince out as Golga (Earthquake in a mask as part of the Oddities, which is one of the most bizarre character changes I've ever seen) is in at #3.

Golga goes after Austin but gets dumped in fifteen seconds. Vince bails under the ropes and goes into the crowd to give us a chase scene. They fight into the concourse as Droz is #4 and this is where the match starts

to fall apart. If Austin and Vince are going to fight through the back, why have Golga get eliminated when you could do Golga vs. Droz? It's not much (save for a battle of really strange names) but at the moment, the fans in the arena are paying to see Droz stand around doing absolutely nothing.

This is even more proof that Russo is a good idea man but has no idea how to run an actual show. It's not even a complicated concept: you need to give the fans something to watch. I know there are more people on the other side of the camera but you can't forget the people who paid money to come see you. It's poor planning and shows a severe lack of thinking, which is Russo in part of a nutshell.

Speaking of Russo, we see Austin getting beaten down by the Corporation until the camera cuts off. That means we cut back to Droz who is...standing there. Yeah this is really what you're paying to see: a guy standing in the ring doing nothing. Edge comes in at #5 to give us something but the fans are now dead because they've lost Austin and Vince (neither of whom were eliminated) but they're stuck with two uninteresting guys that have no chance of winning.

After nothing of note, here's Gillberg (with full Goldberg entrance) at #6 to keep this stupid. Gillberg is out in just a few seconds as we cut to Austin unconscious in the ladies room. Steve Blackman is in at #7 as Austin is stretchered out. The clock is flying by now as they need to get some action going to revive the crowd. Dan Severn is in at #8 as the lack of star power is already making this horrible.

We see Austin going into the ambulance, which to be fair is more interesting than four nothings (remember that Edge wasn't a big thing for a long time to come) wasting time in the ring. Tiger Ali Singh, one of the biggest misfires you'll ever seen, is in at #9. Blue Meanie is in at #10 and we're somehow a third of the way through this.

After Austin and Vince, the biggest name in the match so far has been....geez I guess Droz. What this match needed was a midcard act to clean out the deadwood (Shamrock perhaps) until some popular act (maybe the Outlaws) came in to balance him out. Put Shamrock in at about #8 and

the Outlaws in at about #13 and #16 respectfully, then pick up the pace again later on. But no, let's have this huge bunch of nothing in the ring to kill the crowd until we get back to Austin vs. Vince at the end because Heaven forbid Russo come up with anything besides one idea.

There's no one at #11 but we cut to the back (again) to see Mabel destroying Mosh and taking his spot. Blackman and Severn are quickly put out with Singh following them a few seconds later. Road Dogg is in at #12 to FINALLY give the fans someone they care about. Meanie is dumped as well, leaving us Edge, Mabel and Road Dogg in the ring.

Edge is eliminated a few seconds later but there go the lights because we haven't had an angle in a few seconds. It's the Ministry of Darkness (is there a reason Undertaker isn't on this card?) to eliminate Mabel and here's Undertaker to hypnotize him, leading to Mabel becoming Viscera. Therefore, we have ANOTHER lull as Dogg is all alone.

Gangrel is in at #13 and doesn't last thirty seconds, giving us the third lull of the first half of the match. Add that to the fact that save for Austin and McMahon who haven't been seen in twenty minutes, the first eleven entrants are already gone, making the first third of the match completely worthless. Kurrigan is in at #14 and beats on the Dogg until Al Snow is in at #15, only to be eliminated in less than a minute.

Goldust is in at #16 to interrupt Dogg vs. Kurrigan II. Dogg knocks both of them down and gets the fans breathing again with a SUCK IT. Here's Godfather at #17 as it occurs to me that three of these people will be Intercontinental Champion in less than three months. They go from boring everyone here to having a title in that span of time. Again, only Russo.

Kane is in at #18 to FINALLY give us someone who might have a prayer of a chance at winning this thing. He clears the ring in thirty seconds but here are people from the mental institution to reclaim Kane, who eliminates himself and runs through the crowd. So yeah, we now have NO ONE IN THE RING, meaning that when Shamrock comes in at #19, he has nothing to do but stand around as we wait for an opponent. Oh wait Vince comes back to do commentary as we're just sitting around.

As we wait, allow me to point out that save for the first two, the first

eighteen entrants have all been eliminated, making nearly two thirds of the match completely worthless. Billy Gunn comes in at #20, wearing one boot. Heaven forbid we get anything going through as Shamrock takes him down with a kick to the bad ankle. Gunn throws him into the corner for a break but Ken goes after the ankle again.

Test is in at #21 but let's cut to Mabel being put in a hearse. As luck would have it, an ambulance pulls in with Austin driving, because he was able to wake up, commandeer the ambulance, and drive back here in the span of half an hour. We FINALLY go back to the ring where Gunn low blows both guys. Big Boss Man is in at #22 to line up the Corporation members for Austin, who comes down and chases Vince off. Shamrock is quickly dumped and Vince is back on commentary.

It's HHH at #23 as you can see the star power starting up because we couldn't have them in there earlier in the match because of whatever reasons. People start taking worthless shots at Austin, who blasts Gunn with a hard clothesline. Val Venis is in at #24 and Austin dumps Gunn, giving us Vince, Austin, Test, Venis, Boss Man and HHH. X-Pac is in at #25 as Lawler wants to know why no one is going after Austin. Fair point, but the answer would be "because the script says they shouldn't."

X-Pac kicks Austin in the face and it's Mark Henry at #26 to a far bigger reaction than you would expect. Jeff Jarrett is in at #27 as there's just nothing going on between these entrants. The stupidity continues as X-Pac is the only one going after Austin and it's likely not even due to the money. D'Lo Brown is #28, still feeling guilty for making Terri Runnels suffer a miscarriage. Austin easily dumps Test and Boss Man gets rid of X-Pac a few seconds later.

Henry clotheslines HHH and Jarrett goes after Austin, prompting Vince to praise him in something that sounds bizarre today. HHH gets rid of Jarrett and it's Owen Hart taking his place at #29. Owen and Brown double team Austin until HHH makes the save, presumably to get all the money for himself. Austin slips to the floor and throws water at Vince. Chyna is the first woman in the history of the Rumble at #30 and immediately dumps Henry. That earns her an elimination from Austin and we're down to Austin, Vince, HHH, Venis, Brown, Boss Man and Owen.

We get Austin vs. HHH in a fall preview but HHH has to eliminate Venis. Austin uses the distraction to Stun HHH and toss him, leaving us with four in the ring. Brown misses a dropkick on Austin (why are these two fighting in the final five of the Royal Rumble?) and everything slows down AGAIN. Owen enziguris Austin but gets backdropped out. Boss Man punches Austin down and D'Lo hits the Low Down, only to have Boss Man throw him out.

A Stunner is enough to get rid of Boss Man and we're down to Austin vs. Vince. Well of course we are. They fight on the floor (read as Austin beats him up even more) before Vince hits a quick low blow instead. That earns him a Stunner but Rock comes out for a distraction, allowing Vince to dump Austin and win the Rumble.

**Rating:** F. Do I even need to explain this one? You had Austin, possibly at the peak of his popularity, and even he couldn't get anything out of the fans. It's further proof that you can't just treat your fans like garbage the entire night and then expect them to pop for your one idea.

On top of that, these shows continue to not be able to hold up. Can you imagine if this happened today? No one would buy Vince as keeping the title shot because there was no way that could happen. This result was designed to get people to watch Raw the next night to see how Austin was going to get out of this one. That's fine at the time, but it really doesn't hold up on a second viewing in the slightest.

It really is amazing when you consider that Russo somehow put together the worst Royal Rumble ever, followed by maybe the worst Wrestlemania of all time just two months later. Why in the world would someone think that he should be given even more power and authority? This was one of the biggest disasters I've ever seen and it's almost painful to sit through all over again.

Shane and the Stooges come out to celebrate, meaning it's time for beers. This goes on for a bit until a two minute highlight package takes us out.

**Overall Rating:** F+. Let's recap here. On a six match card, you had two face wins with X-Pac and Gangrel. In other words, the face wins came in the most meaningless matches on the card. As I said in the redos of some

WCW pay per views, you have to give the fans something to cheer for. This was one of the worst major shows I can remember in a long time and it's almost all because of Russo not knowing how to write a wrestling show. This is one of those rare shows with almost nothing positive going on and it's really amazing that they actually put this on and expected people to be entertained.

### Ratings Comparison

Big Boss Man vs. Road Dogg

Original: C-

2013 Redo: C-

2016 Redo: D

Ken Shamrock vs. Billy Gunn

Original: D+

2013 Redo: C+

2016 Redo: D+

X-Pac vs. Gangrel

Original: B-

2013 Redo: C+

2016 Redo: C-

Sable vs. Luna Vachon

Original: F

2013 Redo: D

2016 Redo: F+

The Rock vs. Mankind

Original: B

2013 Redo: B

2016 Redo: B-

Royal Rumble

Original: F

2013 Redo: F

2016 Redo: F

Overall Rating

Original: D-

2013 Redo: D

2016 Redo: F+

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/18/royal-rumble-count-up-1999-please-make-it-stop/>

And the original redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/01/12/royal-rumble-count-up-2013-redo-1999-disturbing-to-watch-for-multiple-reasons/>

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# Pick A Royal Rumble For Me To Redo

We'll be starting the annual count-up towards the 2023 Royal Rumble soon so I need some redos. As always, I'll be redoing the most recent but you all get to pick my other redo. Any are eligible, save for those listed below, with the count-up starting on December 24 with 1988. Vote in the comments for which you would like to see me take another look at this time.

The following are ineligible (did them recently/too much over the years)

2000

2007

2008

2014

2021

Vote away.

KB