

Better Rumble Save: Morrison Or Kingston?

These two spots both blew my mind at the time and I can't pick which is better. What do you think? Here they are:

Morrison:

Kingston:

Kofi's is more impressive but it's a one move trick. Morrison does about three things in the same sequence. Which do you like better?

Thought of the Day: More Proof Tag Wrestling Doesn't Work Anymore

After the big push last year, we're back down to HELL NO vs. the Scholars again and the same formula that has been used for years now. At the end of the day, the division isn't going to last long term and there's really no way around that. The TNA tag division is dead again now too with just the champions and apparently a thrown together team of two main eventers.

Royal Rumble Count-Up: 2013 Redo – 2005: Cena vs. Batista For The First Time Ever

Royal Rumble 2005

Date: January 30, 2005

Location: Save Mart Center, Fresno, California

Attendance: 12,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross, Tazz

It's time for a new set of guys to take their place on top of the company and what better time to do that than at the Rumble? Other than the Rumble, we've got the final blowoff of Orton vs. HHH in a feud that still makes me shake my head to this day. Also it's Big Show vs. JBL vs. Angle for the Smackdown Title in a match that sounds so uninteresting I'd rather watch last year's show all over again. Let's get to it.

The opening video is designed like a clock counting down in the Rumble. Cool idea there.

I almost forgot: this is the West Side Rumble, which is actually designed on a theme of West Side Story, as in gangs of Raw and Smackdown guys snapping their fingers and singing. Remember that THIS was considered the best idea and that someone received a paycheck for doing this. Let that sink in when you're unemployed next time.

Edge vs. Shawn Michaels

Edge is mad that he didn't get the title shot at Taboo Tuesday and is finally turning heel, which he would be for years to come. Edge jumps Shawn before Shawn can take off his vest, only to get sent back to the floor by Shawn. Back in and Shawn chops away in the corner but Edge comes back with a swinging neckbreaker to take over. Edge is embracing the evil here and pokes Shawn in the eye but it only ticks Shawn off, resulting in a Thesz Press by Shawn.

The Canadian is sent back to the floor but he catches Shawn in an Edge-0-Matic to take over again. A baseball slide keeps Shawn down and we head back inside. The fans are firmly behind Shawn here, which means the heel turn is working for Edge. Shawn tries a standing rana but gets caught in a powerbomb for two instead. Off to a rear naked choke from Edge which stays on for a good while.

As Shawn fights up, Edge slams him right back down to stop the comeback before doing Shawn's pose. Shawn gets guillotined on the top but Edge jumps into a punch to the ribs for two. Shawn counters a belly to back suplex into a cross body for two but Edge clotheslines him right back down. We hit the chinlock again although for far less time here. Michaels comes back with an atomic drop and they mistime something pretty badly with Shawn waiting on one side of the ring while Edge stumbles around on the other side.

Anyway Shawn pounds away in the corner and grabs a rollup for two, prompting Edge to try to walk out. The imbecile of a referee holds Shawn back, allowing Edge to sneak up from behind and spear Shawn to the floor. Shawn finally crawls back in and Edge dances a bit. Edge tunes up the band and spears Shawn down for two more, sending Edge into a fit. He pulls his own hair out and does those awesome facials that only Edge can do.

With nothing else to try, Edge puts Shawn on top for a superplex, only to get knocked down for the flying elbow from Shawn. Sweet Chin Music is countered into an electric chair drop for two more and Edge is very frustrated. Edge rolls through a sunset flip into the Edgeucator (imagine a Sharpshooter but with Edge behind Shawn like an ankle lock) but Shawn makes the rope. After a small package gets two for Shawn, Edge reverses a rollup into one of his own and grabs the ropes for the cheap pin.

Rating: B-. Decent match here but at nearly 20 minutes it's too long. I'm not sure if I like the ending or not either, as Edge cheating shows that he's embracing the heel turn, but I don't think cheating and then hitting a move like another spear would have been a bad choice either. Still though, solid way to further Edge's turn and a very long opener, which isn't a terrible idea.

Teddy and Eric banter about who is going to win. Apparently we're doing the old school tumbler thing to draw numbers with. Flair and Eddie come in (Flair hits on Torrie of course) to draw and Flair is very happy with his number. Eddie is disappointed, so he picks Flair's pocket and steals his number. See, THIS is the kind of stuff we need more of. It enforces Eddie's character and is funny at the same time, unlike the stupid stuff we get today that doesn't help anyone.

Heidenreich is panicking about caskets when Snitsky comes up. Heavy breathing ensues and Snitsky says he has an idea.

We recap Heidenreich vs. Undertaker. Basically Heidenreich wants to replace Undertaker is his chance in a casket match. Most people didn't think much of Heidenreich and they would wind up being proven correct. He would be followed by Great Khali in the long line of strange guys to face Undertaker.

The casket is brought out.

Undertaker vs. Heidenreich

Taker grabs a headlock to start and pulls Heidenreich towards the casket but (Jon) Heidenreich runs away. That works so well that we do it again and Jon is terrified. Since that didn't quite work, Taker hooks the leg with a half crab, causing Heidenreich to crawl towards the ropes in front of the casket. As we ignore the problem of crawling to the ropes, Jon bails to the floor to take the fight out there.

Heidenreich sends Taker into the casket and pounds his head into it, which apparently isn't a problem for him. Back in and Heidenreich pounds away in the corner, only to get caught in a modified triangle choke. Taker pulls the hold down to the mat and Heidenreich is almost out, so here's Snitsky to break up the hold. After a double suplex to Taker, the monsters start pulling him to the casket...which has Kane inside.

Kane, who was feuding with Snitsky over Snitsky punting a plastic version of the baby that Kane's wife Lita (just go with it) lost, destroys both guys and takes Snitsky into the crowd. Heidenreich starts shoving the casket away very slowly before slamming Taker into the steps. Heidenreich

slides the casket into Taker, which looks rather stupid as Taker had nothing behind him to be crushed against but whatever.

Back in and Jon puts on a cobra clutch which chokes Taker out enough to get him into the casket. Well mostly in at least as Taker sticks an arm out and chokes away. With Heidenreich's torso in the casket, Taker drops the apron legdrop in the spot of the match. Back in and Heidenreich is suddenly fine, pounding away on the Dead Man and hitting a Boss Man Slam for a cover. Taker chokes his way out of the casket and wins a slugout, followed by a bad running DDT. Chokeslam and tombstone hit and we're done.

Rating: D. This just didn't work. At the end of the day, Heidenreich just didn't work at all and he never came close to it. This was supposed to be a preview of Snitsky/Heidenreich vs. Kane/Taker at Mania, but thankfully they went with Kane in MITB and Taker vs. Orton in a great match, whereas Snitsky and Heidenreich didn't even make it onto the show.

Teddy yells at Eddie to get Flair's number back. Evolution comes in and a beatdown nearly ensues. Eddie has to give the number back, and he throws in Flair's wallet too. Batista is going to go draw for the Rumble but HHH wants to talk about the match with Orton. Tensions flare but Flair calms things down. I think I smell a showdown.

Christian is here to draw his number and he's well pleased. Cena shows up and hits on Christy but Christian isn't pleased. He says rapping isn't hard and challenges Cena to a battle rap. Tomko won't give Christian a beat so he has to go it alone. Christian actually rhymes a bit but can't rhyme charisma. Cena makes gay jokes and isn't nearly as funny as Christian.

Smackdown World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Big Show vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

This match has a backstory that isn't important enough to explain to us. Apparently Angle had a last man standing match with JBL but the winner is even less important than the backstory. JBL is defending. Angle bails to the floor to start so Show runs over JBL a few times. There's the loud chop in the corner followed by a legdrop which finally draws Angle into the ring for a save.

Now it's Kurt getting a big chop in the corner. Cole says that's like getting hit in the chest with a skillet. My question continues to be: how does anyone know what that feels like? Is that what goes on at WWE headquarters when there aren't any shows on? Show clotheslines both guys to the floor to a surprisingly big reaction. Angle tries a German on the floor which fails completely, so Show picks up the steps.

Show loads up the announce table and climbs the steps to chokeslam JBL through said table. Before he can though, Angle hits Show low and blasts him with a monitor, knocking Show through the table. Back inside and Angle puts JBL in an armbar followed by a keylock. Kurt rolls the Germans but walks into a big boot for two. Big Show gets back in and there's a double clothesline and headbutts all around. He slams Angle onto JBL to a big reaction. When did Big Show get this popular? Both guys get crushed in the corner and another double clothesline puts both guys down.

Show loads up a double chokeslam but the other guys go High/Low to take Show down. Angle Germans JBL down and hits a bad Angle Slam which gives JBL two. There's a chokeslam to JBL but he gets a foot on the rope. Out to the floor and Show spears JBL through the barricade in his signature spot, putting all three guys down.

Back in and Angle goes after Show with a chair but gets flapjacked face first onto the steel. Mark Jindrak and Luther Reigns, Angle's lackeys, come out for the save as JBL's Cabinet try to wake up the champion. Show beats up Jindrak and Reigns as Orlando Jordan puts JBL in the ring for the Clothesline to pin Angle to retain.

Rating: C+. This is one of those matches I was expecting to suck but it wound up being pretty solid. Angle is going to be good no matter what he does and Show had some solid motivation out there for a change. JBL escaping with the title was a recurring theme for nearly a year until he ran into a buzzsaw called John Cena in a few months. Shockingly good match here.

Batista won't sign Carlito's petition to get rid of Teddy Long. Carlito loads up the apple, looks at Batista, and swallows. Funny bit.

Batista goes to draw his number and hears Bischoff bar Evolution from

ringside for the next match. Big Dave seems very happy to tell HHH.

Long video recapping HHH vs. Orton. They hate each other, Orton was never supposed to get another shot, so tonight he gets another shot.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Randy Orton

HHH is defending. This is when Orton was still young and a not quite plucky face. He punches Orton to the floor and gets two off a dropkick back inside. HHH pounds away in the corner but gets caught in Snake Eyes to stop him cold again. Orton tries the RKO again but gets dumped to the floor, which thankfully doesn't break his shoulder again. HHH sends him into the steps and heads back in for some knees to Orton's back.

The Game goes after the taped up knee and wraps it around the post because he can. HHH modifies the cannonball down onto the leg by dropping an elbow instead of sitting on it. After a quick attempt at a small package by Orton, HHH puts on a LONG Figure Four, lasting way longer than almost any other I can remember. Orton finally turns it over, sending HHH retreating to the floor.

Orton sends him over the announce table and pounds away before heading back in for his backbreaker. A swinging neckbreaker gets two for Orton as does a regular one. The powerslam by Orton gets two as he doesn't seem interested in selling the knee at all. HHH counters punching in the corner into an atomic drop to slow things down again. HHH goes up top for no apparent reason and gets armdragged down, allowing Orton to hit a top rope cross body (his old finisher) for two.

Orton counters a Pedigree attempt into a catapult but HHH counters the RKO for at least the third time before hitting the high knee for two. Randy is bleeding from the lip. The Pedigree is escaped again and Orton gets two off a clothesline. The champ rolls to the floor again and gets sent into the steps for trying to hide. Back in and Orton pounds away in the corner, only to miss a DDT attempt and possibly give himself a concussion.

The referee looks at Orton to stall even more, as I think they're going for some big emotional moment where Orton fights through adversity. HHH

charges at Orton and knocks out the referee at the same time. It's hammer time but HHH misses his charge and hits the post. Back inside and Orton gets the hammer, only to have his head taken off by a clothesline. HHH throws away the hammer and hits the Pedigree to retain.

Rating: D+. As usual, these two do not work well together at all. This was one of their worse matches too, as Orton never seemed to have HHH even remotely in danger at all. At the end, HHH had Orton dead to rites for a long time and won clean (he never used the hammer) with a Pedigree. Orton's face push was killed dead here so he had to turn heel and feud with the Undertaker soon after this. Not a good match and kind of headscratching booking.

Angle literally steals Nunzio's number and spot in the Rumble.

Teddy tells JBL and company that Jibbles has to defend the title against Big Show in a barbed wire steel cage match at No Way Out.

Royal Rumble

Eddie Guerrero is #1 and Benoit is #2. Dang Benoit is on a run of bad luck in these things. I think we've got 90 second intervals again here. Feeling out process to start and they get into a technical standoff of course. Eddie hooks one of the few chinlocks in Rumble history until Daniel Puder, the winner of Tough Enough 4 (beating Mike MIZanin in the finals) is #3. He gets on the mic and says that he'll be the first Tough Enough Champion to win the Rumble, drawing "are you serious" glares from Benoit and Eddie.

Benoit and Eddie fire off chops in the corner followed by a double suplex because they can. Eddie hits Three Amigos and Hardcore Holly is #4. Holly asks if he can have some fun with Puder and rips some skin off with chops in the corner. Benoit and Eddie get in some chops of their own before Holly kicks Puder low, hits the Alabama Slam, and throws him out. Hurricane is #5 as Guerrero and Benoit dump Holly.

Hurricane gets double teamed but Eddie tries a double cross, only to get chopped for his efforts. Hurricane hits a Blockbuster on Eddie but Benoit chops him down and whips him into Eddie for the elimination. Kenzo Suzuki

(one of the most forgettable footnotes in wrestling history) is #6. Just like everyone else, Benoit and Eddie pound on him in the corner with chops and suplexes, but Benoit turns on Eddie ala earlier but only throws him to the apron.

Edge is #7 to a BIG pop. He beats on everyone in sight but gets clotheslined down by Benoit. Rey Mysterio is #8 and my goodness does Suzuki look out of place in there. Thankfully Rey headscissors him out about twenty seconds after entering, getting us down to an AWESOME tag match if they ever got around to doing it. Edge goes after Guerrero and here's Shelton Benjamin, the current IC Champion and on pure fire at this point, at #9.

There isn't a bad combination in the ring at the moment. Benoit tries to dump Rey but Eddie tries to put both of them out. Shelton can't eliminate Edge so he walks into a headscissors from Rey instead. Here's Booker at #10 to keep the talent level high. Question for discussion: who is the worst worker in the ring at the moment? Here's Eric Bischoff to cheer on the Raw guys as Benoit puts Eddie in a Boston Crab.

Jericho is #11 to a BIG pop. Teddy Long comes out to cheer as well as various people beat on each other. Luther Reigns is #12 to stop the hot streak dead. With four Raw guys (Benoit, Edge, Jericho and Benjamin) and four Smackdown guys (Booker, Luther, Mysterio and Guerrero), it's time for a showdown ala the West Side Rumble that the show is based on. That's a cool idea in theory, but what happened to the "every man for himself" concept?

Muhammad Hassan is #13 and the match stops cold. Everyone surrounds Hassan and the group beatdown is on. The fans REALLY dig this, which says a lot about Hassan's potential. He was going to win the world title over Batista in Washington DC at Summerslam, but real life issues got in his way. Hassan is out in less than a minute and here's Orlando Jordan at #14. Tazz says we can compare Jordan to Benjamin. Other than a good look, talent, charisma or fan interest, they are indeed neck and neck.

Scotty 2 Hotty is #15 but Hassan jumps him in the aisle, keeping him from ever getting into the ring. Taker beat him down in the aisle in 2002 also

so it's not the best even for Mr. Hotty. The ring is getting too full now but most of the guys are talented enough that I can live with it. Charlie Haas is #16 and Luther is put out by Booker, as is Jordan. That clears things out a bit. Booker stops for a Spinarooni and charges into a low bridge from Eddie to get rid of him.

Renee Dupree is #17, giving us Benoit, Guerrero, Edge, Mysterio, Haas, Jericho, Benjamin and Dupree. The World's Greatest Tag Team hits their Shelton jumps over Charlie spot to Renee but Shelton misses a splash in the corner and gets dumped by Edge. Simon Dean is #18 but he stops to do exercises on the floor before getting in. JR goes off on him in a funny bit. Eddie stops to look at him and Edge dumps Guerrero as a result.

Shawn is #19 and superkicks Simon out, doing some Hindu Squats to celebrate. Edge tries to corner Mysterio in a corner. JR: "Makes a lot of sense." Shawn backdrops Charlie out and Kurt Angle is #20. He hits Angle Slams on everything in sight but tries the ankle lock on Shawn. Michaels rolls through and superkicks Angle out after less than 40 seconds. Coach is #21 and you can hear JR groan. He gets in a single shot on Benoit and runs to hide.

Edge tries to put Mysterio out and here's Jindrak at #22. Angle comes back in and dumps Michaels before blasting him with the steps and putting him in the ankle lock. I'm thinking we need a masterpiece at Wrestlemania to settle this. Viscera is #23 and he pounds on everyone in sight. Paul London is #24 and nearly slides out of the ring from sliding in so far. Dupree takes him down but stops to dance, allowing Jericho to dump him.

London gets sent to the apron but slides back in as Cena (BIG pop) is #25. He gets in a shot on everyone and backdrops Viscera out. Cena and Benoit slug it out as Snitsky is #26. He's still kind of a threat at this point and runs over everyone in sight. London gets knocked to the apron again and hit with a HUGE clothesline for an even bigger backflip off the apron to the floor. That made a lot of highlight reels.

Snitsky and Cena stare each other down and John takes a big boot. Kane is #27 complete with pyro. Tazz: "WHY DO I HAVE TO SIT OVER HERE??? THIS IS NUTS!!!" Chokeslams all around as London is taken out on a stretcher.

Jindrak goes out thanks to Kane and Coach of all people tries to avenge him. Batista is #28 and the pop that Cena got looks like a whimper. Snitsky is gone immediately and it's time for a showdown with Kane. The crowd is WAY into Batista as he powerbombs Kane.

There goes Jericho thanks to Big Dave but Edge hangs on. Christian is #29 and he goes right after Cena. Cena is all like BRING IT ON and stomps Christian down in the corner. Rey hits a 619 on Kane and Cena FU's the monster out. Flair is #30, giving us a final group of Benoit, Edge, Mysterio, Coach, Cena, Batsita, Christian and Flair. Not bad at all with one exception. Evolution teams up for a spinebuster on Coach for the elimination before doing the same to Christian.

Benoit chops away at Flair but walks into a spinebuster and the elimination by Ric. Flair goes for a toss out of Batista but gets glared at in response. Edge and Mysterio dropkick Batista down and Edge dumps Flair, getting us down to Edge, Mysterio, Cena and Batista. Edge spears Cena and Batista down but Mysterio avoids the one coming at him. There's a 619 to the Canadian but a springboard legdrop misses and Edge spears Rey out. Edge charges at Cena and we're down to Cena vs. Batista.

The fans REALLY like this (and they're in red(ish) and blue to match their brands) and the staredown is on. Cena slaps away (clearly open handed) and tries the FU over the top but Batista blocks it. Dave loads up the Bomb but Cena fights out of it and they head to the ropes where both fall out, seemingly at the same time. Seriously, it's so close you can't fairly say one of them went out first.

We have a split decision, so here's Vince to charge out, slide into the ring...and destroy his knees and rip both of his quadriceps at the exact same time. While Vince sits on the mat (and hopefully doesn't seeing Batista dying laughing), both guys throw each other out and Vince restarts the match. Why this means we don't start with Benoit and Guerrero again isn't explained but it's spinebuster and elimination for Batista, sending Big Dave to the main event of Wrestlemania.

Rating: A-. I don't remember liking this as much the first time around but this was really good stuff. That segment in the first part with all

the talent was reminiscent of the 1990 edition where there was a string of incredibly talented guys to start things off. Then things slowed down a bit, but once Cena hit the crowd, who was already red hot all night, got turned up to white levels and things went through the roof. Goofy ending (which wasn't planned) aside, this was great stuff and a forgotten classic Rumble.

Overall Rating: B. This is a solid show overall with only the casket match being really bad. The Raw Title match isn't terrible but it's not worth watching either, especially with Orton's lack of selling being horrible. Batista and Cena would of course go on to Wrestlemania to win both world titles and dominate the company for years to come, making this a truly game changing show. Good stuff here and certainly worth seeing.

Ratings Comparison

Edge vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: B

Redo: B-

The Undertaker vs. Heidenreich

Original: D-

Redo: D

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Big Show vs. Kurt Angle

Original: B

Redo: C+

HHH vs. Randy Orton

Original: D+

Redo: D+

Royal Rumble

Original: B-

Redo: A-

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: B

Like I said, I liked the Rumble a lot more this time around.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/24/royal-rumble-count-up-2005-the-rise-of-the-new-generation/>

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Smackdown – January 18, 2013: Celebrating The 700th Episode With A TAG MATCH!

Smackdown (700th Episode)

Date: January 18, 2013

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Josh Matthews, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're getting very close to the Rumble and there's a new world champion that the winner could challenge. Tonight is Del Rio's fiesta for winning the title which is likely to open the show. Big Show is going to get his rematch at the Rumble so look for the interruption from him. There isn't much else to talk about here so let's get to it.

Apparently the Rock Concert is on Smackdown tonight. That sounds like a replay to me.

I was right as we open with a mariachi band and a dancing girl in the ring. Ricardo handles the introductions of course and I can't help but like Del Rio a lot now. I don't know if it's the white suit or what but this face turn is perfect for him. Del Rio says we haven't always seen eye to eye but we can celebrate that Big Show isn't world champion anymore. They seem to really be cranking up the fake pops tonight.

Cue Ziggler who is here to crash the party. Del Rio says this is his party and apparently doesn't want them here. Ziggler says that Alberto doesn't have the world title but rather a target on his head. Dolph introduces Del Rio and Ricardo to Langston so Del Rio says get out of here. Ziggler says how about I have Langston drop you right here and I leave with the title. Del Rio says try it and here's Big Show. Dolph says Del Rio is outnumbered so here's Sheamus.

The pale one talks about his history with Del Rio, including stealing his car in San Antonio. Del Rio deserves to be champion though and Sheamus shakes his hand. Sheamus offers to be the bouncer for the fiesta and the fight is about to begin when Booker come out. Yep, it's another tag match. I wouldn't mind these as much if they didn't spend ten minutes setting up something that should take 30 seconds. The heels leave and Booker gives us a Spinarooni to mariachi music. Sheamus does the Irish version of the Mexican hat dance.

Kofi Kingston vs. Antonio Cesaro

Non-title and no entrance for the champion anyway. Kofi cartwheels away to start before firing off some forearms. Cesaro grabs the gutwrench suplex to take Kofi down but Kingston starts jumping around and hitting some more forearms to take over. JBL throws in that this is episode 700 like an afterthought. That's certainly a change of pace. The SOS gets two for Kofi so he goes up, only to dive into the Neutralizer (Switzerland,

neutral. Oh I get it.) for the pin at 2:59. Not much above a squash here. Who did Kofi tick off lately?

Cesaro waves an American flag post match.

Miz shakes his head in the back when Epico, Primo and Rosa come in to laugh at him. They talk about Flair and Miz's segment on Raw and suggest a match tonight. Miz doesn't care which it is, which is appropriate as no one cares about Miz as a face.

Great Khali vs. Tensai

They circle each other to start as the announcers talk about monster movies. Khali fires off the chops as Josh desperately tries to make Tensai seem like a threat to anything more than a buffet. Tensai charges into a boot in the corner and the big chop gets the pin at 1:28.

Natalya and Khali dance a bit. JBL: "Does the Anvil know his daughter is a Punjabi princess?"

HELL NO is in the back and wonders why Dr. Shelby thought bringing in the Rhodes Scholars was a good idea. Bryan makes fun of Cody's facial hair and Kane stares at him. This develops into an argument until Orton glares them down. They have a six man tonight. Bryan points out that Orton isn't a champion at the moment which ticks him off a bit. After they win their match tonight, GROUP HUG! Randy: "I'm not much of a hugger." Bryan: "Not yet you're not." That came off a little bit creepy.

HELL NO/Randy Orton vs. Rhodes Scholars/Wade Barrett

Randy wants Barrett to start but gets Cody instead. Off to Kane for his low dropkick which gets two before it's off to Bryan. A double ax to the arm slows Cody down even more and it's time to crank on it a bit. Daniel fires off his kicks to Cody's chest before it's off to Sandow who has to

run away from the NO Lock. The heels regroup on the floor as we take a break.

Back with Sandow working over Kane before it's off to Cody. He's worried about hurting his mustache I guess because it's off to Damien again for the Wind-Up Elbow. Kane slugs Barrett down for a bit but walks into Winds of Change for two. Cody's Disaster Kick jumps into an uppercut though and it's a double tag off to Sandow and Orton. Randy starts cleaning house but gets caught in Cross Rhodes for two. Rhodes gets shoved to the floor by Kane and it's the RK0 for the pin on Damien at 4:21 shown of 7:51.

Rating: C-. This was another short match in a series of them tonight. There's just not enough time to really develop anything here but combining feuds is always a good idea. Then again that's assuming Barrett and Orton are really feuding, because they only had one match and I don't think they had more than about three seconds of contact here tonight. Still though, nothing terrible here.

Orton gets hugged and looks annoyed.

Here's the ENTIRE Rock Concert from Raw and the post concert brawl.

The Miz vs. Primo

Dang that's kind of a drop isn't it? Miz starts by doing the Flair slick back of his hair. Primo gets annoyed by yet another Flair tribute character (please don't let that be the case) and pounds away. A low dropkick to the face gets two for Primo and it's off to a chinlock with a bodyscissors. Miz fights up from his knees as JBL talks about Heath Slater's mom. Josh defends her and the deadpan voice JBL responds with is hilarious. "Do you consider Heath Slater's mom a wrestling analyst?"

Primo keeps pounding away but Miz comes back with left hands of his own. They're both left handed here which is a pretty odd thing to see. JBL

takes a shot at TNA by saying that teams like the LOD, the Killer Bees and the Dudleys never made it as singles wrestlers. Miz rolls through a sunset flip and kicks Primo in the face to take over. JBL says very few people are like him and very few people are like Josh "thank God." Epico distracts Miz to let Primo get in a chop block before being rammed into his cousin. Miz finishes him with the Figure Four at 5:44.

Rating: D+. Boring match but hilarious commentary here. I don't know what they're shooting for with Miz, but pairing him with Flair isn't the answer. Miz's main problem is that he's still the same jerk he was beforehand, and Flair isn't exactly going to humble him. Having Miz use the Figure Four is going to get annoying fast, just like it did when AJ used it in TNA.

The Divas celebrate Kaitlyn's title win and Layla is admiring the belt a little too much. Booker and Teddy come up to congratulate her as well.

Kaitlyn vs. Aksana

They lock up to start and Kaitlyn takes her to the mat with a front facelock. A not very snappy suplex gets two for the champion (this is non-title) and Aksana shoves her to the floor. Aksana hooks a chinlock before I think trying to work on the shoulder. They start brawling on the mat with Aksana keeping control. Out of absolutely NOWHERE Kaitlyn hits a bad spear for the win at 3:30.

Rating: D-. This started off bland and got even worse. Aksana is just horrible in the ring and can't do anything right. You could tell they ran out of stuff to do at about two minutes in and it turned into a sloppy brawl with a bad spear ending it. This division is dying for someone like Finlay to actually teach them how to wrestle a four minute match.

Mick Foley Hall of Fame video. Cool stuff. This is where it helps when WWE owns basically every piece of video ever and can put almost every highlight Foley has ever had into this.

We recap Ryback and Shield from Monday.

Shield does their usual thing and calls out Ryback, Sheamus and Orton. The reason they attacked Foley was because Foley set an example that led to a lot of people trying to be hardcore and injuring themselves in the process. That's not a terrible explanation and makes as much sense as anything else.

Orton and Sheamus are watching the promo and say bring it on Shield. Sheamus apologizes for not being there to help Orton at Main Event when Shield attacked. Orton says he didn't need help and talk turns to the Rumble, which both guys say they'll win.

Big Show/Dolph Ziggler vs. Sheamus/Alberto Del Rio

Ziggy and Del Rio get things going here. After escaping a quick wristlock, Del Rio takes Dolph down and tries a middle rope moonsault. That goes nowhere so Alberto launches him into the air for two. Off to Sheamus to pound away on Ziggler as is his custom. A delayed vertical gets two but White Noise is escaped. Show comes in and pounds away on him in the corner before sending Sheamus to the outside. Langston gets involved and a fight nearly breaks out but the referee ejects Big E before it can go too far. AJ is tossed too.

We take a break and come back with Ziggler holding a chinlock on Del Rio but the champion comes out of it with a German suplex. The hot tag brings in Sheamus and as usual, Ziggler gets beaten up. Show interferes to send Sheamus off the top and out to the floor and actually give Ziggler a chance. Off to Show officially to stand on Sheamus' back and lay on his leg. From his back, Sheamus manages to fire off the forearms to the chest to escape the hold but Show drops an elbow on his back to stop the tag.

A side slam gets two for Show and Show hits his Vader Bomb. He goes up for another one and you know that move isn't hitting twice in one night. There's the hot tag to Del Rio who cleans house on Ziggler. A low

superkick to Dolph gets two followed by the cross armbreaker but Show makes the save. Sheamus pops back in for White Noise on Show to send him to the apron. Del Rio kicks the big man to the floor before throwing a bucket of water in his face (remember what happened on Raw) and Show walks out instead of fighting for the countout at 11:35 show of 15:05.

Rating: C+. This wasn't bad here and it gives us some more friction between Show and Del Rio. Sheamus and Ziggler were just there to fill in two spots in the ring which is fine. This was about setting up stuff for later and there's nothing wrong with that when the card for the Rumble is already set. Good little main event here.

Red, white and green balloons fall to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This is a hard show to grade. The first hour or so of the show is just there and most of the stuff is too short to grade. On the other hand nothing is really bad (other than the Divas but who cares about them anyway) and the main event was fun. This is WAY below what we had last week but a show being ok and having nothing of note being terrible is a step up for Smackdown anymore.

Results

Antonio Cesaro b. Kofi Kingston – Neutralizer

Great Khali b. Tensai – Chop to the head

HELL NO/Randy Orton b. Rhodes Scholars/Wade Barrett – RKO to Sandow

The Miz b. Primo – Figure Four Leg Lock

Kaitlyn b. Aksana – Spear

Sheamus/Alberto Del Rio b. Big Show/Dolph Ziggler via countout

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Royal Rumble Count-Up: 2013 Redo – 2004: They Couldn't Wait Any Longer

Royal Rumble 2004

Date: January 25, 2004

Location: Wachovia Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 17,289

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz, Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is the show where you can really see the next generation rising up. The main events other than the Rumble are Lesnar vs. Holly and HBK vs. HHH. Ok so maybe the next generation only comes up in the Rumble. Other than that we don't have much going on here but this show is all about Benoit in the Rumble. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about Shawn vs. HHH because that's what people are watching the ROYAL RUMBLE for right? The theme of the video is that things can change in the blink of an eye.

Raw Tag Titles: Dudley Boys vs. Evolution

Flair and Batista are defending here and this is a tables match. Coach is ticked off at the Dudleys for putting him through a table six nights ago on Raw, because if there's one man you need to give a reason to be a heel, it's COACH. Batista makes fun of the Eagles because he hasn't broken through to the other side of the glass ceiling yet. The fight starts in the aisle as you would expect. This is one table to a finish, meaning only one guy has to go through to end it.

Bubba slides in a table but shoves it hard enough that it slides across the ring and hits Batista in the ribs on the other side of the floor. Flair gets double teamed to start and caught in a powerslam by D-Von.

There's a table set up in the ring but Batista moves it before Flair gets suplexed through it. D-Von hits a Cactus Clothesline on Batista as Flair chops Bubba against a table in the corner.

Big Dave comes back in with some clotheslines to clean house but misses a charge into the post. The belly to back neckbreaker from the Dudleys puts him down and it's Flair getting double teamed again. According to JR, the Dudleys are the only team to win the (non-vacant) world tag team titles at the Rumble. Coach heads to the ring to distract the Dudleys and prevent a 3D to Flair. Flair saves Coach and Batista hits a spinebuster to put D-Von through a table to retain.

Rating: D. This match fell into the same trap that all bad tables matches fall into: the dull set of spots that fail until one works for the win. You rarely get something that gets around this through sheer carnage such as the match at the 2000 Rumble, but this was just terrible. I have no idea what they were going for here as the fans were disappointed and they only had four and a half minutes to get into it. Also: real smart WWE. This is the right way to start a show in Philadelphia: have some of the most famous ECW guys ever lose.

Cena raps about winning the Rumble when RVD comes in to steal the joke. Weed jokes are made. Josh Matthews looks like the king of all tools here.

There's an empty seat for Mick Foley in the front row.

Cruiserweight Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Jamie Noble

Rey is defending. This is during the Nidia is Blind phase which didn't do anything for anyone. They speed things WAY up to start with Jamie avoiding the 619 and launching Rey into the air to take over. The champ gets draped over the top rope for two and a hard kick to the back gets the same.

Jamie hooks a chinlock which shifts into a seated abdominal stretch. Rey fights up and hits a dropkick and a springboard rana followed by the sitout bulldog for two. He springboards into a gutbuster from Noble for two though and momentum shifts again. Nidia accidentally grabs Noble's foot, allowing Rey to hit the 619 and springboard legdrop....for the pin?

Huh?

Rating: D+. This was fast paced while it lasted, but those three words are the key: while it lasted. This barely broke three minutes which simply isn't enough for a PPV title match. Unless I was missing it there was no sign of an injury or anything like that, but the match ends that fast. I have no idea what they were going for here but it didn't work in any way at all. That's a shame too because they were going well while it lasted.

Noble yells at Nidia post match.

We recap the battle of the Guerreros. Eddie was clearly the bigger star which was fine while they were champions, but once they lost the belts to the Bashams, Chavo blamed Eddie and turned on his uncle for losing his title. The Guerreros almost made up but they lost the rematch, after which Chavo let Eddie get double teamed by the Bashams. This was actually a pretty solid story despite how basic it was. Sometimes less is more. Oh and Kurt Angle was playing peacemaker and Chavo Guerrero Senior is in his son's corner.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Chavo Guerrero

Chavo bails to the floor before the bell and the fans are totally behind Eddie here. They fight over a lockup to start with no one being able to get an advantage. Chavo slaps Eddie in the face and now we're ready to go. We hit the mat for a bit before Eddie starts snapping off chops in the corner. Chavo shoulders him down and we have a standoff. They chop it out again and Eddie goes to the eye like a true Guerrero.

Back to the mat with Eddie working on the arm before Chavo nips up and hooks a rana to send them both to the floor. Chavo sends Eddie into the announce table to finally take over and get some of the aggression going. Back in and they get into a kind of MMA style brawl on the mat until Eddie hooks a cross armbreaker of all things. That goes nowhere so Chavo suplexes Eddie down for two, followed by the Three Amigos. Eddie counters a tornado DDT and hits Three Amigos of his own. Chavo is down so Eddie goes up and hits the Frog Splash for the pin. ANOTHER quick ending tonight.

Rating: C+. This was way better than the other matches, but this felt like it was missing fifteen minutes or so. Three matches so far have combined to be about fifteen minutes long which is pretty lame for a modern PPV, even for the Rumble. This could have been a lot more, but the feud was completely done after tonight. Eddie would become #1 contender on the following Smackdown.

Eddie destroys Chavo post match in a pretty heelish display. Chavo gets busted open.

Ad for Mick Foley's Greatest Hits and Misses. That's the most entertaining part of the show so far.

Benoit likes his odds even though he's #1 in the Rumble. Evolution comes up and says Orton is going to win the Rumble. Flair says Benoit may be great, but this is about Evolution tonight.

We recap Hardcore Holly vs. Lesnar. Brock broke Holly's neck (legit) and Holly gets a world title shot out of it a year later. This is the textbook definition of the Rumble title shot where no one buys the champion as being in any danger whatsoever.

Smackdown World Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Hardcore Holly

Holly jumps Lesnar in the aisle and sends him into the post because he wants to break Lesnar's neck. We get a bell and Holly misses an elbow off the top to give Brock control. They head to the floor where Holly's back is rammed into the apron and Lesnar hooks a reverse body vice back inside. That goes nowhere so Brock hits a Shell Shock for two and it's right back to the hold.

We shift to a bearhug and then one of the most wicked overhead belly to belly suplexes you'll ever see. Off to a kind of rear naked choke by Lesnar to keep things dull. Holly makes his comeback with the dropkick and hits the Alabama Slam but goes for a full nelson and revenge instead of the title. Holly hooks the hold and goes to the floor with it but has to break the count. The F5 hits a few seconds later to complete the inevitable.

Rating: D. This was Brock Lesnar defending the world title against Hardcore Holly on pay per view. If you can't figure out why this got the rating it got, I can't help you.

We recap HHH vs. HBK which is allegedly seven years in the making. I'm guessing THIS is supposed to be the FINAL blowoff to their feud instead of the classic in 2002.

Raw World Title: Shawn Michaels vs. HHH

HHH is defending and this is a last man standing match. They chop it out to start and punch each other in the corner a lot. Shawn tries a backslide before realizing that makes no sense here, so it's back to the chops. Michaels gets caught in a facebuster as things slow down a bit. A HARD whip into the corner has Shawn's back in trouble and a backbreaker makes it even worse.

Out of nowhere Shawn takes out the leg and hooks a Figure Four, because where would we be without a Flair tribute? That gets a five count so Shawn hits a chop block for a four. HHH low bridges Shawn and we head to the floor for a bit. HHH loads up the announce table but Shawn blocks a Pedigree attempt. They slug it out on the table with HHH getting knocked to the floor, drawing a bunch of booing from the bloodthirsty Philadelphia fans.

Back in and Shawn counters a Pedigree with a backdrop to the floor but he injures his back in the process. Shawn tries a springboard cross body to the floor but crashes through the table instead as only he can. Instead of letting the now busted open Shawn get counted out, HHH throws him back in for the count, which reaches seven. The champ pounds Shawn down a few times for a few counts, most of which don't get that far.

A fast spinebuster (literally, as Shawn was flying at HHH and it almost looked like a belly to belly instead of a spinebuster) gets about six. That's the problem with most last man standing matches: it's a big move then standing around for the count. That makes it very hard to get any kind of flow going to the match. HHH cracks Shawn in the back with a chair but Shawn gets up again. A Pedigree onto the chair is countered into a slingshot into the post, busting HHH open as well.

Now Shawn cracks HHH in the head with a chair, allowing HHH to do his weird “my head hurts and I’m not sure where I am” face. There’s the forearm followed by the nipup from Shawn, followed by an atomic drop and the top rope elbow. That gets about seven so Shawn tunes up the band, only to walk into a low blow to put both guys down. Shawn hooks a sleeper which eventually gets an eight count before walking into a DDT to put both guys down.

That gets a double eight count before we head to the corner. HHH tries a belly to back superplex but Shawn counters into a cross body for another double eight count. The Pedigree hits but it’s only good for a nine. Shawn pops up out of nowhere with some more Sweet Chin Music, putting both guys down for ten which keeps the title on HHH.

Rating: C-. The problem here is exactly what I said earlier: this was a lot of laying around. The last seven minutes or so had about five moves combined, as most of the match was “move, lay down, move, lay down, move, lay down.” The idea is supposed to be a ton of drama, but that didn’t happen here. Shawn would turn into a jerk in the next few weeks and insert himself in the Mania main event because of this ending.

Rumble video with a focus on Benoit.

The Fink is ready to start the Rumble but here’s Bischoff to run his mouth. He says that a Raw guy is going to win the Rumble because he’s respected as a GM. He runs down ECW, which brings out Heyman for a brawl. Cue Austin on his ATV to say that these two are both in violation of the law (he was called Sheriff Austin at this point) and wants to know who started it. Heyman and Bischoff: “HE DID!” Both guys get Stunners and the fans love it.

Goldberg, #30 in the Rumble, doesn’t get to talk because Lesnar comes in to interrupt him. Lesnar is called a coward, which will come into play later.

JR has to admit Foley is a coward because he isn’t here yet.

Royal Rumble

Benoit is #1 and the Intercontinental Champion Randy Orton is #2. Two minute intervals here again. They pound away on each other to start with Benoit taking him to the mat to stomp away. Mark Henry is #3 when he was a fat power guy with no direction at all. Allow me to be more specific: he's still with Teddy Long. Benoit gets double teamed for awhile until Tajiri is #4. These intervals don't seem to be two minutes or anywhere close to it.

The handspring elbow takes Orton down but Benoit rolls some Germans on Tajiri to take him down. Tajiri only gets two as I guess Benoit is conserving strength. Henry throws Orton to the apron but stops looking like an idiot. Bradshaw is #5 and he immediately clotheslines down everyone not named Benoit. Benoit takes offense to being left out and puts Bradshaw in the Crossface before pulling Bradshaw out. Eh he would get a nine month title reign starting in the summer so I feel no sympathy for him.

Rhyno is #6 as we're flying through this so far. He goes after the two starters as Tajiri fires off kicks on Henry. Tajiri gets a half Tarantula on Henry but Henry gets Gored, knocking Tajiri out in the process. Benoit clotheslines Henry out and we're down to three again. Matt Hardy is #7 and Benoit throws him to the apron almost immediately. In FAR less than two minutes, here's Scott Steiner at #8. Oh dear it's Scott Steiner at the Royal Rumble. This could be a disaster.

He starts firing off suplexes immediately but at least this time there are some t-bones to go with the belly to bellies. Benoit rolls some Germans on him as if to say THIS IS HOW YOU SUPLEX SOMEBODY. Things slow down a bit and here's Matt Morgan at #9. He takes Benoit down with a Batista Bomb takes Benoit down and pounds away on Orton in the corner.

The Hurricane is #10 and comes in off the top with a cross body to Hardy. He goes after Morgan for no apparent reason and is thrown out in less than twenty seconds. Morgan throws Hardy to the apron again but can't get him out. Booker T, complete with the stupid remix of his theme music with Booker singing, is #11. Booker immediately goes after Steiner in a revisiting of their WCW feud that no one was asking for.

Nothing of note happens until Kane is #12. This is after he buried Taker alive. For the first time. Steiner gets dumped by Booker during Kane's entrance. Kane starts firing off chokeslams and other various power moves for which he is well known. The clock runs down at #13 and there go the lights. A gong goes off and Kane PANICS. Booker uses the distraction to dump Kane and here's Spike Dudley at #13. He never makes it to the ring as Kane destroys him for setting off the gong.

Everyone tries to throw each other out while laying on the ropes until Rikishi is #14. Benoit dumps Rhyno to keep us at six people (Benoit, Orton, Rikishi, Booker, Morgan, Hardy) in the ring. Morgan gets a Stinkface and nothing else happens for a bit. Renee Dupree with the French Tickler is #15. In a surprising moment, Dupree actually knocks Matt out, only to be superkicked out by Rikishi a second later.

A-Train is #16 and goes right for Rikishi. Benoit avoids the yet to be named Carbon Footprint and dumps Morgan. I love that they're keeping the ring from getting full. Orton dumps Rikishi and Booker as Shelton Benjamin is #17. Benoit dumps A-Train during his entrance and Orton dumps Shelton a few seconds later to get us back to two. Orton pounds on him a bit but they crack heads to put both guys down.

Lamont, the announcer for Ernest Miller (complete with the music that would go to Brodus Clay eight years later), runs out to introduce the Cat at #18. After some dancing (and singing by Tazz), Orton dumps him out. Miller would be released in like two weeks. Kurt Angle is #19 and he might be a bit harder to get out. He's fighting for AMERICA here so the fans tell him he sucks.

Benoit and Angle destroy each other with chops and punches as only they can while Orton is content to chill in the corner. Rico, now in his Adrian Street phase, is #20. He fires off some kicks but lasts about as long as you would expect him to in a match with Orton, Angle and Benoit. The RK0 takes care of Rico as Benoit rolls a ton of Germans on Angle. Test is #21....and is nowhere in sight.

Orton RK0's Angle and we cut to the back to see Test unconscious. Austin sees someone off camera and says they're #21. The off camera man and

presumable attacker: MICK FREAKING FOLEY! Orton, the guy who spat in Foley's face and called him a coward, PANICS. The place goes nuts and Foley explodes on Orton, beating him half to death and hitting a Cactus Clothesline to put both of them out. This would lead to some AWESOME matches at Mania and Backlash which put Orton up to the world title in August.

Foley keeps beating on Orton as Christian is #22. Mick picks up the steps and BLASTS a security guy who tries to stop him. Orton comes back with two chair shots and fires back at Mick. They brawl up the ramp and Foley pulls out Socko, only to put it on Nunzio who comes in at #23. We haven't seen anything of the match for awhile but I can live with that for a hot brawl like this. Orton kicks Foley low and runs as we go back to the ring.

Angle is getting double teamed as Nunzio is down on the floor. Big Show is #24 and apparently that's Tazz's pick. Thankfully he's in the singlet and shorts again instead of the one piece swimsuit. Angle immediately goes after him but Show throws everyone around. Jericho is #25 as he's in a weird phase of his career. He wasn't a main event guy anymore but he had feuded with everyone in the midcard already so he just kind of hung around and filled in spots on the card.

All four guys go after Big Show (who has a head like a typewriter according to Tazz) but they can't get him out. Charlie Haas is #26 but gets double teamed by Jericho and Christian. Currently we have Benoit, Angle, Jericho, Christian, Haas, Big Show and Nunzio who is on the floor. Jericho backdrops Christian out for the second year in a row as Billy Gunn is #27. Apparently this is a return for him. It's Fameassers all around and then things slow down again.

John Cena is #28 and that pop is growing at an alarming rate. Show stares him down so Cena throws Nunzio in to kill some time. Nunzio goes after Show for some reason but Cena takes over for him to make it fair. RVD is #29 to a big pop of his own. It's spin kicks all around until things settle down a bit. There's an FU to Angle and Goldberg is #30. The final group: Benoit, Angle, Big Show, Jericho, Nunzio, Haas, Gunn, Cena, RVD and Goldberg. At least the ring didn't fill up until the end so that's

not too bad.

Goldie spears a lot of people down to start before Nunzio jumps on his back like an idiot. Haas is put out and Nunzio takes a HUGE spear. Gunn is out as is Nunzio to get us down to seven. Goldberg loads up a Jackhammer on Show but Lesnar runs in with an F5 to break it up. Goldberg stares down Brock, allowing Angle to dump him out. All five remaining guys not named Big Show go after the one named Big Show but it still doesn't work.

Everyone hits their finishers on Show instead with Cena (Show's feud at the time) hitting the Shuffle instead of the FU, which I'm assuming they were saving for Mania. They try to dead lift Show and realize they screwed up by knocking a giant unconscious. Show shoves them all off and dumps Cena followed by Van Dam a few seconds later.

So it's Big Show, Benoit, Angle and Jericho as the final four. Jericho gets sent to the apron twice and manages to hang on before bulldogging Show down. The Walls go on Show and he taps but Angle breaks the hold up for no apparent reason. Show chokeslams Benoit down but chokeslams Jericho even further, sending him to the floor to get us to three. A side slam puts Angle down and there's another chokeslam to Benoit.

Show breaks up a German attempt from Angle but can't block an Angle Slam. There's a Slam to Benoit (it was a belly to back suplex but whatever) and the ankle lock to Show. Show taps again, but again it doesn't mean anything. The big guy rolls through the hold and eliminates Angle in the process, getting us down to two.

Benoit dropkicks Show but knocks him back into the ring by mistake. A chokeslam is countered into the Crossface and Show taps again, but you know the drill by now. Show shrugs it off and picks Benoit up in a chokeslam. Benoit graps a front chancery though and pulls Show to the apron...then has him teetering on the ropes...AND BENOIT WINS! The crowd kept getting louder as Benoit pulled further and further. Awesome sequence there.

Rating: A. There were some slow spots but this was ALL about Benoit and I can't complain about that at all. The ending sequence here with all three

submission guys making Show tap was a cool idea and different than the ending to any other Rumble. They didn't throw a stupid curve here and made Benoit look like a star here, which is exactly what he was supposed to do. Great Rumble.

Overall Rating: B-. The Rumble is really REALLY good but the rest is horrible. Don't watch the rest of the show, but if you're a Benoit fan and can still sit through a long match of his, this is absolutely required viewing. Things would change a bit more the next year as two REALLY big names would be the stars of the Rumble, but that's not for another year. For now, this was all about Benoit and he nailed it.

Ratings Comparison

Evolution vs. Dudley Boys

Original: C

Redo: D

Rey Mysterio vs. Jamie Noble

Original: N/A

Redo: D+

Chavo Guerrero vs. Eddie Guerrero

Original: C+

Redo: C+

Brock Lesnar vs. Hardcore Holly

Original: D-

Redo: D

HHH vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: C+

Redo: C-

Royal Rumble

Original: A

Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: C+

Redo: B-

Just as last time, the Rumble is the only thing worth seeing.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/23/royal-rumble-count-up-2004-he-who-must-not-be-named/>

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NXT – January 16, 2013: Another Week, Another Good NXT

NXT

Date: January 16, 2013

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: William Regal, Tony Dawson

We're officially in the Langston Era here and if my memory is right, this was filmed recently which means we're actually going to be closer to

being caught up with the current WWE product. It's hard to say what to expect here but the word seems to be that something big is going to be announced soon. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's main event and the title change.

Welcome Home.

Adrian Neville vs. Sakamoto

Neville is formerly known as Pac. Interestingly enough a guy on the forums that I run used to backyard wrestle with him. Sakamoto is in way better shape than you would expect him to be given the robe he always wore. Neville is apparently an amazing high flier and he spins out of a wristlock and grabs a headlock to start. A headscissors puts Sakamoto down and Adrian flips back to his feet. The fans dig him so far.

Sakamoto gets a boot up in the corner and hooks a chinlock to take over for a little bit. Make that a decent bit as the chinlock continues. Adrian suplexes out of the hold and flips forward a few more times before hitting an enziguri to stagger Sakamoto. Neville goes up and hits a HUGE corkscrew shooting star for the pin at 3:25.

Rating: C-. The ending was great but until then, Neville didn't really show off a ton of flying otherwise. It's a very flashy looking move and the rest of his stuff looked fine so I can't say it's a bad debut or anything. Sakamoto has some potential in him too now that he's away from the black hole known as Tensai. The match was pretty dull until the ending though.

Leo Kruger vs. Trent Barreta

Ohno sits in on commentary. This is as a result of Trent getting beaten up and injured by Kruger a month ago. Trent takes over with a fast

clothesline and a knee drop for two. A bridging northern lights suplex gets two for Barreta and it's off to a headlock. That goes nowhere as Kruger fights up and hits a hard knee to the ribs to take over. Trent gets draped ribs first over the top rope for two as we take a break.

Back with Kruger working over the ribs with a knee drop and a half crab. A gutbuster gets two for Leo as Kassius and Regal continue to argue. Regal threatens Ohno so Kassius acts as if nothing has ever been wrong between them. Kruger misses a charge in the corner so Trent comes back with chops and a clothesline. The running jumping elbow in the corner puts Leo down again and a missile dropkick gets two for Trent.

The tornado DDT is countered into another half crab with a knee in the back but Trent finally makes a rope. An enziguri sends Kruger down to the floor, followed by a BIG flip dive from Trent to take him down again. Kassius runs down and decks Trent though, allowing for Kruger to hit the Kruger End back inside for the pin at 7:53 shown of 11:23.

Rating: C+. Why Barreta is released while Ohno gets to keep a job is beyond me. Trent continues to be as smooth as ever in the ring and Kruger is starting to get things working well too. I'd assume we were supposed to get a tag match out of this but with Barreta being released that isn't very likely.

A second referee informs the first one of Ohno's interference and the decision is reversed.

Here's the NEW NXT Champion Big E. Langston with something to say. He welcomes us to the Era of Five but here's Camacho to interrupt him. Hasn't Langston already beaten this guy? A referee comes out and we get a match which I think is non-title.

Camacho vs. Big E. Langston

Camacho pounds away in the corner to start but Langston no sells it and clotheslines Camacho down. The Big Ending finishes Camacho in 1:15.

Langston does his usual stuff post match. This takes longer than the match itself.

Damien Sandow/Antonio Cesaro vs. Justin Gabriel/Tyson Kidd

Before the match, Sandow says that the people here will learn to appreciate him. Sandow and Kidd start things off but it's quickly off to Justin. Damien gets his arm cranked on a bit so it's off to Cesaro. Gabriel dropkicks him to the floor and we take a break. Back with Justin getting two off a sunset flip on Sandow. He cranks on Damien's arm and messes with his hair to really get on Sandow's nerves.

Off to Cesaro for a hard headlock for a few seconds before Gabriel fights back with chops and right hands. Cesaro elbows him down before it's back to Sandow for some knee drops. The Wind-Up Elbow gets two and it's back to Antonio. Off to a front facelock before Justin fights up and backdrops Cesaro to the floor. That's about the extent of his offense though as Cesaro comes back in with the gutwrench suplex for two.

Back to the chinlock but Gabriel escapes for the third time, with this one being followed by a hot tag to Tyson. Everything breaks down as Sandow comes in again with Damien getting two off a rollup. Back to Gabriel as Kidd dives onto Cesaro. A Lionsault and the springboard elbow to Sandow get the clean pin at 8:00 shown of 11:30.

Rating: C+. Basic tag match here with the smaller guys getting to hang with the more established guys with no real problems at all. Unfortunately Kidd is gone for the next eight months or so due to destroying his knee. Cesaro again gets to look strong here by not getting pinned, which is a nice touch from WWE.

Overall Rating: B-. Another good show tonight as we transition to the next stretch of shows. Langston gets to close out an old issue he had while at the same time getting to look dominant over a WWE guy. This wasn't a blow away show or anything and unfortunately two guys here aren't going to be around for a very long time anymore after this show. Good show here with no time wasted, which is the standard procedure on NXT.

Results

Adrian Neville b. Sakamoto – Corkscrew Shooting Star Press

Trent Barreta b. Leo Kruger via disqualification when Kassius Ohno interfered

Big E. Langston b. Camacho – Big Ending

Tyson Kidd/Justin Gabriel b. Antonio Cesaro/Damien Sandow – Springboard Elbow Drop to Sandow

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WWE vs. TNA Lawsuit Dismissed

The whole thing about WWE stealing information to find out what talent they could steal from TNA finally comes to a close. While not confirmed, it looks like a settlement was reached. I never really got why this was such a big deal in the first place.

Royal Rumble Count-Up: 2013 Redo – 2003: Best of Both Worlds And A Boring Rumble

Royal Rumble 2003

Date: January 19, 2003

Location: Fleet Center, Boston, Massachusetts

Attendance: 15,338

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz

To say a lot has changed in the last year is a huge understatement. We have the Brand Split now and there are two world titles. That brings us to the part of this show that is most remembered: the world title matches. We have HHH defending the Raw Title in one of the worst matches ever, followed by Angle defending the Smackdown Title in one of the best matches ever. Also Brock Lesnar is here and has taken Smackdown by storm. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about what you would expect it to be: thirty men wanting to go to Wrestlemania.

Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar

The loser is out of the Rumble. Big Show has Heyman with him, which I'm sure makes him the best wrestler EVER right? Show won the title from Lesnar at Survivor Series after Heyman turned on Brock in one of those matches where they were backed into a corner out of their own stupidity. Show shoves him around to start so Brock snaps off a belly to belly suplex to fire up the crowd.

There's a second suplex and Show is in trouble early. Lesnar loads up a third but Show grabs him by the throat and shoves him to the floor. Show throws Lesnar around the ring which looks awesome when you consider Brock is a massive dude. Lesnar avoids a charge in the corner and hits a release German suplex for two.

A big boot slows Brock down and a side slam looks to set up the chokeslam. Brock kind of rolls through it into a two count, followed by another belly to belly. Heyman gets dragged in but Show saves him from an F5. The chokeslam gets two as Heyman is losing his mind. Show gets rammed into Heyman and the F5 sends Brock to the Rumble.

Rating: C+. As intricate as modern wrestling has become, there's something to be said about having two big guys get out there and throw each other around for five minutes. The power displays here made the fans gasp which is the right idea. At the end of the day, wrestling is a spectacle and having larger than life characters doing larger than life things is a surefire idea. This wasn't so much good as it was fun, which is the right choice for an opener.

Jericho says he'll win the Rumble.

Raw Tag Titles: Dudley Boys vs. William Regal/Lance Storm

Regal and Storm are defending and Regal is STILL doing the brass knuckles thing. Storm and Ray get things going with Lance working on the arm, only to get powered down with ease. Bubba hits one of his LOUD chops in the corner and takes Storm down with a kind of chokebomb. In something I've never seen him do otherwise, Bubba hooks a standing Figure Four. Actually I can't think of anyone who has ever used that.

Off to D-Von for a dropkick (what's gotten into the Dudleys tonight?) and here's Regal to get slammed down immediately. The champs double team D-Von down and we get into the standard tag team formula. Storm takes D-Von to the mat and it's off to Regal for a front facelock. Lance comes back in with a cravate into a sleeper as this continues to meander along.

D-Von rolls Storm away and makes the tag to Bubba who speeds things up. The guy has emotion if nothing else. A big running splash in the corner crushes both champions and a side slam gets two on Storm. The American hits a German on the Canadian for two, followed by a spear to the Englishman. The Bubba Bomb gets two on Lance and Regal takes What's Up. A double flapjack (stupid fans: "3D!") gets two on Storm and here's Chief of Staff Sean Morely. Regal finds the brass knuckles but walks into the 3D. D-Von hits Storm with the knuckles for the pin and the titles.

Rating: D. This didn't work for me. It felt like a Raw match that was trying to be a PPV match but never got near the hump they were trying to get over. The ending was stupid on top of that, as they had Regal beaten with the 3D, so why use the knuckles? Also it didn't help that Bubba single handedly beat up the tag champions for about two minutes straight. Bad match.

Lawler on that match: "I'm as confused as a baby in a topless bar." What is WITH the announcers and their similies/metaphors in this company?

Nathan Jones is coming. Oh geez.

We recap the Torrie vs. Dawn feud. This is one of those stories where you look at it in awe and wonder what they were thinking. Dawn Marie (a gorgeous Diva) fell in love with and married Torrie's fifty something year old dad Al Wilson, then screwed him to death (literally) on their honeymoon. There was some lesbianism (as in kissing on screen and unfilmed other stuff) involved which was there to tease the audience and wasn't bad at all. This is supposed to be a stepmother vs. stepdaughter match. Again, I have no idea what this was supposed to accomplish.

Dawn Marie vs. Torrie Wilson

Dawn comes to the ring in a veil because she's in mourning. Torrie gets blasted in the face to start before spearing Dawn down and things get sloppy. Marie tries an armbar because we need some wrestling in this I guess. Torrie gets beaten on for a bit until they collide and hit the mat. Dawn hits a springboard spinning clothesline for no cover, giving us the highlight of the match. Torrie hits a neckbreaker out of nowhere for the win.

Rating: D-. Anything with these two in those outfits can't be considered a failure, but at the end of the day, there is no real defending this match in the slightest. It was HORRIBLE and the story was borderline insulting to my intelligence, but the girls looked good and I guess that was the whole point. Why not just have a regular match if you want to is beyond me, but it's 2003 so what do you expect?

Stephanie seems to hit on some young guy in the back when Eric comes up

to trade some weak trash talk. They're both GM's at this point. Stephanie has a bombshell for Smackdown which would wind up being Hogan. They argue over money or blood being more important and nothing goes anywhere. That young guy by the way? Randy Orton.

House show ads, including one for 7pm on a Monday night.

Sean O'Haire as the Devil's Advocate promo. Sweet goodness this could have been HUGE.

Nathan Jones is STILL coming. Seriously did we need that twice in 30 minutes?

We recap HHH vs. Scott Steiner as I begin to take deep breaths. HHH was giving a promo about how awesome he was when Steiner interrupted and demanded a title shot. This led to a series of contests like pushups and bench presses which went nowhere. Note that Steiner hadn't actually had a match in WWE up to this point. I wonder why.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Scott Steiner

HHH has red trunks on here for some reason. He mixed them up every now and then and rarely did the other colors work. Stick with basic black Game. Hebner brings them to the middle for instructions which is ultra rare stuff. Steiner wins an early slugout and pounds on the champion in the corner. A gorilla press sends HHH to the floor and Steiner pounds away with those weird looking overhand punches of his.

Steiner suplexes him back in for two and works on the back some more. An elbow to the face puts HHH down and there's an appropriate Boston Crab. HHH powers out of it and hits the facebuster but Steiner no sells it. There's a bear hug which is quickly broken but Steiner snaps off an overhead belly to belly (1) for two. Flair saves HHH from being put in the Steiner Recliner and Steiner charges into a boot in the corner to finally change the momentum.

We head to the floor again where Scott goes into the steps. The fans aren't exactly thrilled with this so far but they've still got time to crank it up a bit. Flair chokes away with his jacket and HHH hits his

second neckbreaker in about 30 seconds for two. Since we didn't allido it properly the first time, Flair chokes away even more. A Pedigree attempt is countered into a slingshot into the buckle. Steiner looks like he's going through labor.

An overhead suplex (2) puts HHH down and I kid you not: Steiner FALLS DOWN due to exhaustion. He's clearly sucking wind and HHH didn't touch him at all. Speaking of HHH, he counters a tombstone attempt into a...I think it was supposed to be the third neckbreaker in about 90 seconds but Steiner took it wrong, causing it to look like a cutter where he fell backwards instead of forwards. That gets two and the fans are starting to boo.

HHH is loudly calling spots to try to salvage this before he hits a vertical suplex. For no apparent reason he goes up and jumps into a belly to belly (3). Steiner can barely punch so he settles for some clotheslines. There's an overhead belly to belly (4) and an overhead belly to belly (5) and an overhead belly to belly (6). The fans are openly booing Steiner now. His response? To hold HHH's hair while HHH rams his own head into the buckles (seriously, Steiner clearly isn't even pushing) and to hit a spinning belly to belly (7) for two and even more booing.

Steiner tries a butterfly powerbomb and literally falls backwards as he does it, causing HHH to land on Steiner's knees. The fans groan at the sight of this so HHH goes up top to get superplexed down. He's handing these spots to Steiner. THANKFULLY HHH tries to walk out but Steiner won't have it, because WE HAVE TO KEEP GOING. Steiner blasts HHH with the belt to bust him open to try to get the fans to care but the match is long past salvageable at this point.

Back in and Steiner hits ANOTHER belly to belly (8), causing the fans to get MAD. They're not annoyed, they're not wanting a new champion, they want Steiner to get out of their ring now. HHH tries to get counted out but Steiner goes after him AGAIN. Back in and Steiner does the pushups to tick off the fans even more as Flair is BEGGING the referee to stop the match.

Now HHH throws the referee to the floor but HEBNER WON'T STOP IT. I mean he pulls his arm up to ring the bell but stops and says keep it going. Steiner hits the NINTH belly to belly suplex (9) of the match for two so HHH hits him low and grabs a fast rollup for two. HHH finally gives up and hits Steiner with the sledgehammer for the DQ.

Rating: H. As in HHH, who I feel sorry for here. Now everyone knows I'm no fan of the guy in 2003, but he was in a HORRIBLE situation here. HHH was trying to keep this a coherent match, but Steiner was beyond worthless here, causing the match to sink to levels far below what any other main event "talent" would be capable of. After about seven minutes (out of eighteen), Steiner stopped doing anything resembling trying to have a match and was just doing suplexes.

Remember that back stuff he did at the beginning? Completely forgotten. Did you see him try his finisher? Not even once. He somehow managed a belly to belly suplex every two minutes, despite being on defense for a good third of the match. This was absolutely horrible and quite possibly the worst world title match I can EVER remember, which is covering a lot of ground.

Post match, Steiner beats up HHH and Flair with the hammer, which gets SYMPATHY from the fans. HHH is getting SYMPATHY from a crowd. Think about that for a minute. And what's worse: THEY HAD A REMATCH! Oh and there's the Steiner Recliner to absolutely nothing positive from the crowd at all. Bischoff has to come get Steiner off HHH.

We cut to Cole and Tazz and even MICHAEL FREAKING COLE has a look on his face as if to say "WOW that was an abomination."

We recap Benoit vs. Angle. Angle won the title from Big Show at Armageddon thanks to Lesnar before revealing that he hired Paul Heyman to be his new manager. Heyman said anyone could get a shot other than Brock Lesnar and brought in Team Angle (Haas and Benjamin) to protect Kurt during a knee injury. Benoit won a title shot over Big Show to set this up.

Smackdown World Title: Chris Benoit vs. Kurt Angle

Team Angle is immediately ejected to make sure it's one on one. Benoit grabs a headlock to start before trying the Sharpshooter to send Angle to the floor. Back in and Angle goes for the ankle but gets dropkicked away. Benoit grabs a kind up reverse Figure Four but Angle grabs the rope. This is all holds/counter holds so far. Benoit gets sent shoulder first into the post followed by an Angle suplex for two.

They chop it out with Benoit taking over and hitting a reverse clothesline to take Angle down. Angle drops Benoit across the top rope but gets guillotined down by the Canadian. They head to the apron with Benoit DDTing him down onto the side of the ring. The champion has a busted nose now. Back in and the Swan Dive misses but Benoit rolls out of the Angle Slam. There's the Sharpshooter to Angle who eventually gets to a rope. A belly to back suplex gets two for Chris but Angle snaps off an overhead belly to belly (just one so far).

Back to the floor where Benoit gets dropped onto the barricade to further mess with his head. Off to a rear naked choke back inside so Kurt can overly loudly call some spots. Angle catches Benoit in another belly to belly followed by a belly to back for two. Back to the chinlock for a bit until a double clothesline puts both guys down. Benoit rolls some Germans but so does Angle. And people wonder why their necks were held together by tape.

Benoit gets the final German but Angle runs the ropes to hit the belly to belly off the top to put both guys down. That gets two but the Angle Slam is countered into the Crossface. Angle gets the rope, so Benoit shifts to an ankle lock. Angle reverses into one of his own and now Benoit is in trouble. Benoit goes to kick off but instead grabs another Crossface. Kurt counters into a rollup but Benoit put the Crossface on the other (right) arm this time. Angle stands up and hits the Angle Slam but can't immediately cover.

Angle takes the straps down but another German attempt is countered into a rollup for two. They trade HARD Germans until Benoit hooks a release German to put both guys down. Before anyone asks, the difference between this and the previous match with the suplexes is how hard these are. Steiner looked like he was at a dance recital but here they look like

they're trying to kill one another. Not to mention there's OTHER STUFF in between the suplexes.

Benoit hits the longest diving headbutt you'll EVER see, but he can't cover because of his head getting jarred like that. Angle counters the Crossface into a reverse powerbomb onto the buckle. The Angle Slam gets a VERY close two as the crowd is losing their minds. Back to the Crossface but Angle rolls through into the ankle lock. Benoit rolls over but can't break the hold. He kicks Kurt off but Angle goes right back to the hold. Benoit keeps trying to kick him off but Angle hooks the grapevine and Benoit has to tap.

Rating: A+. That's your match of the year right there people. Oh wait according to Meltzer there was some match in Japan that no one but him ever saw and that has to be better than this right? Anyway, these two DESTROYED each other with some absolutely amazing counters and awesome sequences out there while suplexing the tar out of each other. This both guy's best match ever, and that's saying A LOT.

Benoit gets a standing ovation, showing that he was ready to be world champion. Naturally that's why he had to wait fifteen months to get the title, because the world was BEGGING for another Steiner match, the Nash feud with HHH, and the Goldberg run of doom. Ok Goldberg I can live with but the other two? Screw that.

Van Dam and Kane say they'll knock each other out to win the Rumble.

Royal Rumble

The intervals are two minutes if you listen to Fink and 90 seconds if you listen to JR. There are fifteen Raw guys and fifteen Smackdown guys this year which would be the norm for a few years to come. Shawn gets #1 and Jericho gets #2, but it's Christian playing the role of Jericho at the entrance, allowing Jericho to sneak in from behind and jump Shawn. Jericho hits Shawn low and starts the beat down before getting a chair to crack Shawn open.

Chris Nowitski is #3 and he's perfectly fine with letting Jericho maul Shawn. Jericho easily dumps Shawn, setting up their classic at

Wrestlemania. Nowitski isn't in the ring yet. Rey Mysterio (still pretty new here) is #4 as things speed up a lot. A springboard dropkick and rana take Jericho down but Nowitski gets in as well...or not as he slid back out. Rey escapes a gorilla press and dropkicks Jericho into the ropes, only to get jumped by Nowitski.

Edge is #5 for a big pop. He would have been world champion by summer if he hadn't hurt his neck. Jericho is sent into the post and Nowitski is knocked down, allowing the two good guys to pound away on each other while both miss finishers. A springboard rana by Rey is countered into a sitout powerbomb and Christian is #6. He hugs his brother but Edge spears him down out of common sense. Nowitski tries to dump Edge and Rey but gets caught by a "double" dropkick (read as Mysterio hit him but Edge completely missed and landed on Chris after he was already down).

The Bronco Buster hits Nowitski and Chavo is #7. He immediately takes Rey down but gets caught in a 619. Rey drops the dime on Chavo and hits a 619 on Christian. He tries a springboard rana on Christian but lands on Nowitski and takes him to the floor in the process. Jericho puts Mysterio out, leaving us with Jericho, Edge, Christian and Chavo at the moment. You can add Tajiri at #8 to that list.

Christian gets the tar kicked out of him and Chavo gets put in a spinning backbreaker. Not bad for the first twenty seconds for Tajiri. Bill DeMott is #9 and no one cares. At this point, he had been a Tough Enough trainer and his gimmick was that the rookies had ticked him off so much that he was basically a sociopath. I've heard of worse. Tommy Dreamer is #10 and he brings some toys with him.

There are too many people in the ring at the moment. Edge gets in some kendo stick shots on DeMott for an elimination. Christian and Jericho hit Dreamer with trashcan lids in a modified Conchairto for another elimination. Tajiri elbows both guys down but tries the Tarantula on Jericho and gets dumped as a result. B2, as in Bull Buchanan as Cena's ex-lackey, is #11. Edge knocks out Chavo as the ring is thinning out nicely.

Jericho gets sent over the top but skins the cat and pulls out Edge and

Christian in the process. Jericho is busted open but he's left all alone in the ring. RVD is #12 and man alive do the fans love him. They slug it out for a bit with Van Dam hitting a slingshot to send Jericho to the apron but not out. Matt Hardy (who strongly dislikes mustard) is #13. The heels (as in those not named RVD) double team the good guy (as in those named RVD) but Jericho is too weak to do much and Matt kind of sucks so Van Dam takes them down.

There's a Five Star to Jericho and Eddie is #14. He pounds away on Van Dam as well and hits a Frog Splash of his own, only to walk into a Twist of Fate from Matt. Jeff Hardy is #15 and Matt tries an alliance, only to get kicked in the gut. Jeff throws Matt to the apron but Matt's MF'er Shannon Moore prevents the elimination. There's the Twist of Fate to Matt but Shannon covers up Matt from the Swanton. Jeff just dives on both of them and Rosey of 3 Minute Warning is #16.

Absolutely nothing of note happens here so Test with Stacy is #17. He cleans house until John Cena is #18 with a rap for us. He manages to rhyme "Explain it to ya" with Wrestlemania so I'm impressed. He spends forever rapping until Van Dam throws him inside. The ring is way too full again. After Cena is in the ring for about eight seconds, Charlie Haas is #19. Van Dam and Jeff slug it out until Jeff goes up top like an IDIOT and gets shoved out. He would burn out and leave the company in about three months anyway.

Eddie walks the buckles and hits a rana on Jericho as Rikishi is #20, giving us Jericho, Van Dam, Matt, Eddie, Rosey, Test, Cena, Haas and Rikishi. Again that's too many people. Rosey and Rikishi square off but nothing happens. Instead they team up and beat up Matt and Shannon because they can, until Rosey clotheslines the heck out of Rikishi. Jamal of 3 Minute Warning (you know him better as Umaga) is #21.

Rikishi superkicks Jamal down almost immediately and there's a Stinkface for him. Kane is #22 and I think we have eleven people in there at the moment. He cleans as much house as you can clean with that many people in there before FINALLY putting someone out in the form of Rosey. Jericho gets thrown to the apron but hangs on. Shelton Benjamin is #23 and Team Angle starts taking over. Booker T is #24 and we DESPERATELY need someone

to clear some guys out.

Booker immediately kicks Kane down and fires up a Spinarooni to a BIG pop. Eddie gets backdropped out and Booker pounds on Rikishi. A-Train (Albert/Tensai) is #25 and the hometown boy gets to beat up a lot of people in a hurry. Shawn Michaels runs in with a bandage on his head and goes after Jericho, causing Test to dump Jericho out. See, that way it's legal.

Maven from Tough Enough (finally with actual trunks) is #26. He goes right for Kane like an idiot and gets punched in the face for his efforts. Goldust is #27 and he barely makes it 45 seconds before Haas and Benjamin put him out. Booker goes off on Haas in the corner but gets thrown out by Team Angle as well. He would get the world title shot at HHH as a consolation prize.

Big Dave Batista is #28 and you can hear the fans react to him. The first guy he hits? John Cena. It's always cool to see the future in there like that. Test takes him down with a full nelson slam but Batista low bridges him for the elimination. Batista takes down Rikishi with a spinebuster before clotheslining him out. At least the ring is clearing out a bit. Brock Lesnar is #29 and is the odds on favorite to win this thing.

Brock immediately eliminates Team Angle by himself before F5ing Matt on top of them. A-Train hits a bicycle kick to take Batista down as Undertaker is #30 to a big ovation. The final grouping: Van Dam, Cena, Jamal, Kane, A-Train, Maven, Batista, Lesnar and Undertaker. Drop Maven and A-Train and that's a pretty stacked field. To the shock of no one paying attention, Taker is returning here. There's a 9 hour DVD of matches and moments where Undertaker returns easily.

Taker punches everyone and dumps Cena and Jamal with ease. Maven dropkicks Taker in the back and celebrates, earning himself a chokeslam. The elimination is academic. A-Train hits the chokebomb on Taker to finally slow him down as Kane chokeslams Lesnar. Kane and Van Dam, the Raw tag champions, start teaming up to beat people up but A-Train takes them both down. Van Dam saves Kane from a backbreaker and the champs double clothesline Albert out.

Kane tells Van Dam to let him pick Van Dam up and drop him on Batista, but Kane turns (not heel) on Van Dam to throw RVD out. We're down to Lesnar, Undertaker, Kane and Batista which is awesome by today's standards. Taker and Lesnar have a showdown but the other two guys break it up. Taker pounds away on Batista in a preview of the feud of the year in 2007.

A big spinebuster puts Taker down and Lesnar fights off the two Raw (Batista/Kane) guys. There's an F5 for Kane and NOW we get Taker vs. Brock. They slug it out and after Taker says big boot, he hits a big boot to take Brock's head off. The F5 is escaped but there's a tombstone for Brock. A clothesline casually puts Batista out to get us down to three. Taker teases an alliance with Kane but dumps him as well. He has to knock away an invading Batista and Brock dumps Undertaker to go to Wrestlemania.

Rating: B-. Good but definitely not great Rumble here. You could see the next generation in the blocks but the problem is they were just that: the NEXT generation. Taker was the only possible winner here other than Brock and that's a recipe for a bad Rumble. You need more than one candidate for the Rumble and as soon as Lesnar's music hit, it was clear who was winning this.

Taker says go win the title but he wants the first shot. Brock says ok to end the show. Did we need that?

Overall Rating: C-. The problem with this show is that the excellent match on the card is brought down by the HORRENDOUS match just before it. The Rumble is good but it isn't good enough to save an otherwise bad card. The show isn't terrible, but it's a sign of things to come for this year, especially with HHH on the Raw side. Not much to see here other than Benoit vs. Angle of course. HHH vs. Steiner is only worth seeing if you want to see a trainwreck.

Ratings Comparison

Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar

Original: D

Redo: C+

Dudley Boys vs. William Regal/Lance Storm

Original: C

Redo: D

Torrie Wilson vs. Dawn Marie

Original: DD

Redo: D-

Scott Steiner vs. HHH

Original: G-

Redo: H (As in HHH)

Chris Benoit vs. Kurt Angle

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Royal Rumble

Original: B

Redo: B-

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: C-

I'm not sure what I was thinking the first time. The show just isn't that good.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/22/royal-rumble-count-up-2003-best->

[match-ever/](#)

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Your Favorite Rock Line

In honor of the debut of his latest great line, what is your favorite Rock line/promo? It can be a single one liner or a full segment or whatever you like. I remember a promo setting up I think the six man HIAC where Rock imitated the other guys in the match with him. Rock was always good at picking out the tiny things that make a wrestler funny but that we miss.

Also, while not a Rock line, this never fails to make me smile.

Thought of the Day: Rock Last Night

Rock did something that you almost never hear anymore which is more proof that he's an old school guy. He did it last week too. Rock constantly says how many days are left until the show. Not the name of the show, not that it's a PPV, but WHEN THE SHOW IS. He lays things out as simply as he can for

the fans and that's how you make people want to buy a show. At the end of the day, you're asking the fans to buy your product. They shouldn't have to do ANYTHING to find out when and where to get it. On top of that, this countdown thing is a tried and true way to make people want to see the match and therefore buy the show. As those numbers get lower, people are going to think that they have to see the match and therefore will put their money down for the Rumble. That's called selling a show and it's a lost art.