

I Want To Talk A Little Bit About John Cena

I was listening to ESPN Radio about ten days ago before the World Series began. The analyst said that he hoped we were realizing what we were seeing with Albert Pujols (baseball player for any confused readers). He's the best player in the game today and is putting up numbers that other players probably dream of. This got me to thinking about wrestling (as almost anything does) and I started thinking about John Cena.

I'm pretty much in the minority on John Cena, in that I'm pretty neutral on him. I have never once been what you would call a Cena hater. I've never reached the point where I'm sick of him and want him gone. I've also never been a huge fan of his. However, and this is partially the whole point of this entire writing: he is without a doubt one of the greatest stars that we'll ever see and one of the greatest wrestlers ever.

Now let's take a look at this from a few angles. First and foremost, John Cena has more detractors and more supporters than anyone else in wrestling right now. That is indisputable. When you watch a show, be it on PPV, TV, DVD or in the arena, one thing is always certain: people react to John Cena. You often read about the size of the pops that someone gets. When is the last time you remember people being silent for anything related to John Cena? The answer to that would be never.

The whole idea of wrestling is to get the fans to care about you. You have to establish a character that people are going

to want to watch and when you put that character up against another one and develop a conflict between them, you might be able to get the fans to pay to see the resolution of that conflict, which is the whole point of wrestling. That being said, John Cena is one of the few guys that people are always interested in. Think about this for a second.

John Cena is the face of the company. He's the guy that is put out as a spokesman, he's the guy you see on the posters, he's the guy that you see in K-Mart on WWE merchandise, he's the guy that goes on talk shows, he's the one (current) wrestler everyone knows and he's the guy that Wrestlemania is built around every year. That puts him in rare company: Hogan, Austin, HHH, Cena. In WWE history (as in post-Hogan's first title win), there aren't any other people that are the undisputed top guy in the company.

After that, let's look at what everyone thinks is the most important thing in wrestling: the matches. Let's get the biggest piece of evidence out of the way: when was the last time you saw a bad John Cena match? I don't mean a match you weren't into. I don't mean a match that you didn't care about. I mean a match that was flat out bad. Cena is one of very, very few men that have had a match rated 5 stars by Dave Meltzer. Also on that list: Shawn Michaels, Razor Ramon, Bret Hart, Owen Hart, Steve Austin, Undertaker, CM Punk. Cena was in the first match to get such a rating in almost 14 years. Think back over 14 years. It's the first match in that long to get a perfect score in this company (I'll save a Meltzer rant for later. I'm by no means a follower of his but his opinion is highly valued online).

The main argument against Cena matches is that he uses five

moves and that's it. Let's think for a minute and realize why this is stupid. We'll start with AA, STF, Shuffle, Top Rope Fameasser, Protobomb, Shoulder Block. There are your six moves right there. That being said, if you believe the amount of moves that someone uses determines whether or not you're a talented wrestler, you have no idea what you're talking about. If it was about the amount of moves a wrestler knew, Dean Malenko vs. William Regal would have headlined about 8 Wrestlemanias in a row.

Speaking of multiple Wrestlemanias, let's look at Cena's career span. Let's say he became an A-list guy the night he first won the title, which was at Wrestlemania 21. For the sake of math, let's say we take this up to Wrestlemania 27 where he was in the main event. That's six years with him on top and he's going to be there longer than that. By comparison, let's say Austin was on top from Mania 14 through the day he walked out on the company in 2004. That would be 4 years on top, including his year out for neck surgery. Shawn was on top for about 2 years. Rock got let's say 4 (99-02, which is being VERY generous). Other than Hogan and Sammartino, a guy being on top for that long simply does not happen.

Cena has been in a main event/featured match at 7 Wrestlemanias (not including the upcoming one). By comparison, Mr. Wrestlemania Shawn Michaels was in (arguably) 6 main event/world title matches at Wrestlemania. Austin had 4 or so. Rock had even less than that. The only person in the same league as Cena is Hogan who had 8 (I don't count WM 9 as one of these as it was a surprise match and lasted all of 40 seconds but again that's arguable). Even if you count that match, that record will come down in a few years.

Getting to records, we reach the world title record that Cena is going to break one day. As everyone knows, the record is currently held by Ric Flair with 16. You have Hogan with 12, Edge with like 13, HHH with about 13 and Angle with ten I think (don't bother telling me what the actual numbers are as that's not the point). Yes, having two titles makes this a lot easier to reach. Yes, Flair usually held the title longer (except for the two NWA Title reigns that didn't last two months, the five WCW Title reigns that didn't last three months each (with two reigns combining to last 7 days) and the 2 WWF Title reigns that didn't last three months because we don't like to talk about those), and yes that means a little something.

However, Cena wrestles in an era with potentially 9 hours of programming (Raw, NXT, Superstars, SD and a PPV) a week. This isn't the days of the NWA where you saw the stars in town once a year at a house show and the title changed hands twice in three years. The amount of title reigns doesn't mean a thing but people like to complain about Cena and Edge and HHH and the amount of quick title changes they have without thinking about it so who cares about stuff like consistency right?

This brings us to the present: John Cena vs. The Rock. It's no secret that Rock is the biggest mainstream star the business has ever produced. He's a big time movie star, he's hosted SNL, he's been the lead guest on the Tonight Show, he's going to be in the new GI Joe movie, he's a legit celebrity. And now he's coming back to wrestling. Who do they put him with? John Cena. This match is going to be one of the biggest in the history of wrestling and it's going to be built up for over a year when it finally happens.

These are two of the biggest stars of all time and this match is literally going to be over a year in the making. When has there EVER been a match with that kind of build? Off the top of my head, nothing is coming to me. I mean there were matches we knew would be happening at a certain show, but I don't ever recall being told that a match would be happening a full year in advance with build lasting even longer than that. Cena is the one being trusted with this and that says something to me.

Speaking of the build, let's take a look at Cena's mic skills real quick. One of these guys is always talking about childish things, making funny faces and cracking jokes while the guy he's feuding with is being serious. The other is named John Cena. Think back to the night when Rock came back. He cut a promo on Cena and imitated John in a funny voice while talking about Fruity Pebbles. Cena replied in a rap, pointing out that Rock has made some silly movies (true), that he's never around the People he claims to be champion of (true) and how we've barely seen him for seven years (true). Rock's reply: more funny voices, more cereal jokes, more making fun of Cena's clothes.

Cena has responded to everything Rock has said and has made sense the entire time. Every word he has said about Rock has been true. It's been Cena here the last seven years. Rock has been out in Hollywood (and please, spare me the nonsense about Rock turning his back on wrestling. You would have done the same thing and it was smart of him to do). In short, Cena has been the mature one here and Rock has talked down to him like a bully the entire time.

In summation, John Cena isn't the devil in a pair of jean shorts. He's a star the likes of which we haven't seen in a very long time. Is he Austin or Rock or Hogan? No he isn't, but to say he's awful or he has to turn heel to save his career is ridiculous. When the Summer of Punk happened and Cena was having the hottest angle he's had in years, he was the same John Cena we had seen every time and I didn't hear anything but rave reviews for him. Whether you think it's going to be good or not, Rock vs. Cena is going to probably break 1 million buys on PPV and make a fortune for the company and it's going to be the same John Cena. Like him or not, he's the best there is and one of the best ever and that's all there is to it.