

I Want To Talk A Little Bit About Defining Moments

It's the night of Bound For Glory 2012 and Jeff Hardy won the world title from Austin Aries. That's not really news, nor is it really surprising based on the way the show has been built. However, in a comment about the show, someone said that Aries should have been able to continue with his reign and been given that defining win that his reign needed. This got me to thinking about another growing trend in wrestling which is going on a lot more in the WWE at this point, and it's not really work. Let's get to it.

At the moment, the top story in WWE is CM Punk vs. John Cena over the WWE Title. Going into Night of Champions, Cena said Punk needed to defend the title against him in Cena's hometown of Boston to define his legacy and cement himself as the top guy. The match wound up in a draw, and now the line is that Punk needs to beat Cena in the Cell to define his legacy and cement himself as the top guy.

Now that story makes sense: Punk didn't beat Cena (that time at least) and now he needs to do something else to end the feud with Cena. That's basic storytelling and makes perfect sense. HIAC is in I think two weeks and there's a good chance Punk is going to walk out of the Cell having pinned Cena (again). Let's say that happens and Punk wins as clean as you can in the WWE: so what?

That doesn't define Punk's reign. Punk's reign isn't over yet and we have no idea when it's going to end. It doesn't cement Punk as the top guy. Cena has lost to Punk already at three different PPVs in the last year and a half and Punk has never been the top guy over Cena. Punk can beat the entire roster in a single match while wearing roller skates and

writing the great American novel, but it's not going to define his legacy.

Let's take a look back at history. The most famous reign of the last thirty years is Hogan's four year reign from 84 to 88. What is the defining moment of that reign? If there is one, it would be beating Andre, but there's a catch to that: Hogan already was the top guy and had been for years. However, we didn't know that was what was going to define it because no one knew what Hogan's reign was going to end.

At the end of the day, what defines Hogan's reign is what happened during his reign, which would be the rise of wrestling to the mainstream and the wrestling boom of the 80s. Those things happened when Hogan was on top of the company and was unquestionably the top star in the world. Let's look at the progression of Hogan's title reign with regards to major shows.

Hogan won the title in January of 1984. A little over a year later, there was The War To Settle The Score, which was a huge house show that celebrities attended and had a huge main event of Hogan vs. Piper. It was a HUGE show and one of the biggest moments in WWF history. Then about six weeks later, there was another show called Wrestlemania. This was even bigger and had even more celebrities and a bigger audience. Then two years after that, there was Wrestlemania III, which had over four times the audience of Wrestlemania I.

I could go on and on with countless examples of the same thing happening, but you get the point. Even after Wrestlemania III, there was no way to tell what else was coming for Hogan during his reign. The match against Andre wound up being the biggest single moment of his first title reign, but there was no way to know that until after he lost the belt. There's no way you can define a reign while it's still going on, as the stuff

that happens one day might mean far less by comparison. At the end of the day, the War To Settle The Score was huge at the time, but the stuff it set up blow it away by comparison.

Going back to Punk and his reign now, there's another issue with his reign: no matter how many times he beats Cena, or how many times he beats anyone else, Punk simply is not a bigger star than John Cena. Cena has been the main star in the company for at least six years now (and again, the wins over HHH and Shawn at Wrestlemania didn't define a single thing about him or his reign. They were big wins over big opponents and that's it) and has been pushed like a major star.

On the other hand, Punk has been pushed as a big deal for roughly sixteen months with the majority of his push being based around the idea of him saying that he's better than Cena. Simply saying that he's better than Cena and giving him the title doesn't make him better. Punk's latest thing is talking about how many days he's been champion, but not only has Cena had more reigns, he held the title longer over a single reign. At the end of the day, Cena is a bigger deal than CM Punk.

Again let's look back at Hogan in the 80s. This is basically a carbon copy of the Mega Powers from the late 80s, with Cena and Punk originally being friends (by WWE's standards) in the early days of Punk being champion. Then Punk kept winning and holding onto the title, but no matter what he did or who he beat, he simply wasn't overtaking Cena in the eyes of the fans. Back in the 80s, Hogan was always a bigger star than Savage, Savage eventually went insane, and eventually Hogan and Savage had to have a match over it.

Did Savage's match with Hogan define his reign? Of course not. It ended the reign and Hogan was champion again for another year. Savage's reign

is now defined as being important because it happened during Hulkamania. That's another quick thing: not every title reign has a defining moment. Often times the definition of the reign is determined as a whole instead of a single moment or match.

In short, this concept of saying a moment defines someone or a title reign or anything like that is nonsense. Simply saying that a match or a moment defines the champion's reign doesn't make it so. We have no idea of when the reign is going to end and it could be years to figure out what the reign means. We probably won't know what defines Punk's reign until after Punk's career is over, because we don't know how this reign will stack up to future reigns. He might have another reign that blows this out of the water in terms of length or quality, which is why you can't say that it defines anything about him.

The other thing to remember is that Punk flat out is not a bigger star than Cena and a single win over Cena isn't going to make him a bigger star. Like I said earlier, even if Punk wins over Cena, so what? He's done it before and it didn't make him a bigger star, so why would this make him a bigger star now? I get that it's storytelling, but it's a stupid thing to say because it doesn't make sense when you think about it. Punk isn't going to be the biggest star on the show, at least not while Cena is around, and that's all there is to it.