

Thought of the Day: Be Patient (Steve Austin In 1997)

I was watching the 1997 Rumble and I realized something. Austin was without a doubt capable of being world champion in April of 1997. He was a beast in the Rumble and pushed harder than probably anyone ever had been in that match. Yet he wasn't world champion in 1997 and wouldn't be for over 15 months. This decision might have been what kept WWF in business.

Instead of being world champion, Austin got to spend a year in the main event Border War with Bret and the Harts, which was his real seasoning. Austin lost the feud, but by the end of it he was ready. There was no question that Austin was the top star in the company and ready for the championship.

The key difference is that today, someone is handed a title almost immediately (see Sheamus for an example) and is thrown into the main event with it. This rarely works and is a horrible idea, as once they can't handle it, they have to spend the better part of a year building themselves up again. In the worst business year the company ever had, they held off on Austin before riding him to heights never before or since seen a year later. Now when they have ZERO competition, they throw everyone into the main event as soon as they arrive and business is steadily going downhill. I'm sure it's just a coincidence right?