

2014 Awards: Moment of the Year

This is a big one.

2014 had some VERY big moments with things that I never thought I'd see in wrestling. This might be the toughest of these all year so let's start with some nominees in no order.

We'll start with the most recent: the ending of Takeover: R-Evolution. Sami Zayn FINALLY wins the NXT Title and has a ten minute celebration to end the show. Adrian Neville thankfully did not turn heel and the locker room came out to celebrate with the new champion. Even Kevin Owens, Sami's longtime friend who followed him to NXT was there to celebrate. Owens put his arm around Sami to end the show....and then leveled him with a clothesline and powerbombed him onto the apron. The moment when Sami comes back for revenge is going to be amazing.

The Ultimate Warrior's farewell speech. I was lucky enough to be in the arena for this and it was one of the eeriest feelings I've ever experienced when I found out he died about 15 hours later. It was as perfect of a farewell speech as I've ever heard and got the reaction that the Warrior deserved. Yeah the guy was nuts but he's a legend of wrestling and deserves to be honored as such.

From the same night, we have the Shield turning face. This was similar to the night Ric Flair returned to Nitro back in September of 1998. Everyone knew it was coming but they let it build and build with the fans chanting HOUNDS OF JUSTICE. The music finally hit and you could feel it. The trio hit the ring and stared down the Authority with HHH trying to calm things down. He turned around for a spear from Reigns and the war was on. Shield knocked them to the floor and Ambrose and Rollins nailed perfect suicide dives to take down Orton and Batista. Bryan kneed HHH to end the show as he finally had some muscle to back him up.

We'll jump forward to Summerslam with Brock Lesnar just mauling John Cena. I know most people were expecting Lesnar to take the title but dear

goodness this was glorious. It was total destruction with Cena only getting in some token offense. I don't impress easily, but that first F5 had me losing my mind and shouting NO WAY at the screen. If they had Lesnar beat him in 30 seconds it might have been the most amazing moment ever. As it was it's just up for moment of the year.

Back to the beginning of the year for the Royal Rumble crowd. Just....my goodness. If there has ever been a crowd like this, I've yet to see it. They absolutely rebelled against the show and were not interested in what was being presented to them. What people tend to forget is that the show really wasn't that bad.

Actually it's a very solid show from top to bottom with a match of the year candidate for Bryan vs. Wyatt, Brock just beating the tar out of Big Show and barely selling the KO Punch, Cena and Orton having a totally watchable match (try watching it with the sound off and see how much better you find it) that calmed the fans down after about five minutes, and a very good Rumble....until the last buzzer sounded.

I've been watching wrestling for a very long time. I've seen a lot of matches and shows and I've heard a lot of interesting reactions. However, I have never, in my entire time watching wrestling, seen a crowd completely turn on a show like they did when Rey Mysterio's music hit at #30. Keep that in mind: this was REY MYSTERIO at #30. It's not like the music hit and "We're a 3 Man BAND!!!" came on. Rey Mysterio is one of the most popular and successful wrestlers in the history of WWE and should walk into the Hall of Fame with ease.

However, he just was not who the people wanted that night. The fans wanted to see Daniel Bryan come out and....that's it. See, that's the interesting part to this show: I don't think the fans needed to see Bryan win the Rumble as long as he was in the match in some fashion. It's a fascinating show and really worth a watch if you can somehow ignore the crowd. That's very hard to do though, as the crowd rose up and said "This is not what we want." in as loud and clear of a voice as I've ever heard in wrestling.

That brings us to our next moment: Daniel Bryan making Batista tap out to

win the WWE World Heavyweight Title in the main event of Wrestlemania XXX. That whole night was a roller coaster with Bryan beating HHH in a great match to open the show, having his arm banged up again, still coming out for the triple threat, and fighting off both guys plus the Authority and getting off a stretcher to come back and win. If there has ever been a bigger one night push for someone, I've never seen it.

We'll jump forward towards the end of the year now with one of the few things that I kept saying I wouldn't believe until I saw it: Sting debuted in the WWE. I mean....IT'S STING IN WWE! The Authority had Team Cena dead to rites and we heard the crowd. Everyone knew who it was but actually seeing him walk down that aisle and laying out HHH to give Ziggler the pin (over Rollins, who had been out cold for about eight minutes after a single Zig Zag) didn't feel real. It was an amazing debut and worth the nearly fifteen year wait.

Back to Wrestlemania for the final two options. First up is the opening of the show, with Steve Austin, the Rock and Hulk Hogan in the same ring at the same time. I really don't think you need any further explanation than that.

And then Brock Lesnar hit his third F5 and conquered the Streak. I mean....Brock Lesnar just conquered the Streak. I have to go with this as the winner because of something I saw for myself in the Superdome that night. The three count went down (with a 21-1 graphic flashing on the screen at the two count) and the place went silent before everyone started screaming. I sat there in my chair and couldn't stand up or speak. I looked around and saw grown men crying their eyes out and running out of the building, not even coming back later in the show. There was so much emotion from that loss that adult men were leaving Wrestlemania and not coming back. Think about that one for a second and let it sink in.

I didn't realize how many major moments there were in 2014 but at the end of the day, the Streak coming to an end just is not going to be topped.