

Reviewing the Review — Summerslam 2015

We're past what is still called the second biggest show of the year (I've been swayed to the idea that the Raw after Wrestlemania has taken that spot) and things were.....there. I've had the better part of a week to digest the show now and I'm still not sure how I feel about it, so maybe I can figure it out by writing a long winded recap. Let's get to it.

There was no match on the preshow for reasons that aren't clear. I'm sure this will in no way cause the show to feel rushed because there's an extra match packed in.

Host Jon Stewart came out and said he was here to fight Brock Lesnar, with assistance from Mick Foley. The gag was that Foley thought it was to deal with his friend Rock instead of Brock so this isn't happening. Stewart is all "ok" and that's it. This was straight out of the Bundy vs. Gatorwolf days of Saturday Night's Main Event to remind you that Stewart is in fact here.

Sheamus pinned Orton clean in a watchable opener. I say opener because I have issues calling anything these two do good or interesting. There are some people who simply do not have chemistry and Orton vs. Sheamus is one such pairing. I like both guys, but I don't need to see them fighting, especially after Orton pinned Sheamus clean last month. It's a classic case of "why are these two still fighting" and I've yet to hear either of them give a reason other than "we were fighting last month so we should fight again because clean endings mean nothing". Not a good match but the lack of caring really hurt it.

So after that pretty lame opening, let's crank things up a bit by taking eight guys and have them fly around the ring for ten minutes after New Day sang a version of Jay-Z's New York (which might get WWE in trouble because copyright claims have reached the point where a parody song is somehow infringing on someone's intellectual property because.....well because America is obsessed with lawsuits that's why.).

This is one of those matches where you can't bother calling the action because it's all about the frantic pace. Well that and Xavier Woods NOT SHUTTING UP, and that's the entire point. Woods is supposed to be the most annoying guy in the world and fans getting fed up with him proves that he's doing his job exactly right. Eventually New Day got the titles back and oh sweet goodness am I glad they did as the comedy is just excellent, much like their celebratory dance upon getting the titles back. This was a really fun match and probably should have opened the show.

Undertaker walked past Jon Stewart and Stephen Amell and had smoke following him. It's not 1994 and Heaven help us if that's what WWE thinks we should be doing again.

Rusev and Dolph Ziggler had a long TV match that ended in a double countout so we can have the mixed tag that they wanted to do instead. Ziggler and Lana have about as much chemistry as a history book, which makes the story odd as everyone else works pretty well together. If nothing else, Lana in the 80s jeans attire works very, very well so there's something positive here. The match could have been on any given Raw though and that's not good on Summerslam.

Next up was a very nice treat as Stephen Amell and Neville beat Stardust and King Barrett. This worked far better than I was expecting as you had Amell give one of the best performances of all time by a celebrity. It was clear that he wanted to be out there and was having a blast, while also showing off some awesome athleticism. You would think Amell would pin Stardust here but there are rumors that another match might take place, which wouldn't be the worst thing in the world. However, why bother having Stardust take a fall when Barrett can instead?

The Triple threat match for the Intercontinental Title was exactly what I was expecting: nothing great, a way for Ryback to look good, and short. This seemed like the match that was the most hurt by the lack of a match on the preshow as it didn't even get six minutes. That being said, I'm really not sure how much more time would have helped here, as there was no reason for these guys to be fighting other than "I want your title!"

I'm assuming we'll get Miz vs. Ryback for the title soon, because Ryback beating Miz in a non-title singles match in less than three minutes warrants a title match, since, as the Divas Champion would say the next night on Raw: "wins and losses don't matter." And WWE still has the nerve to wonder why no one watches their shows.

Jon Stewart and Paul Heyman traded lines. This was what you would expect.

The Shield guys beat the Wyatt Family in about what you would expect, minus the heel turn. This was done exactly as it should have been: as a fight instead of a match. These guys are capable of having a very hard hitting and energetic tag match so just let them do that instead of trying to make something into whatever it's not supposed to be.

That being said, I never, in my entire life, need to see Roman Reigns and Luke Harper in the same ring again. Not even counting the tag matches, they had 40 minutes worth of singles matches in a month and almost all of them were the same. Factor in all the tags they've been in and my goodness. This may not have been the highest quality match, but it was a lot of fun.

Now we get to one of the major matches of the night. I'm not going to bore you with the details of the match (It's John Cena vs. Seth Rollins for twenty minutes. You know the wrestling itself is going to be good) because this is all about the ending. For reasons that are much easier to comprehend than they seem on the surface, Jon Stewart came in and attacked Cena with a chair (after the required ref bump of course), costing Cena the match and the US Title.

I didn't get this one at first but it became very clear the next night on Raw, which I'll get to when I look at that show gain. That being said, gah. I knew something wacky was coming but that doesn't make it any less annoying. I like the idea of Rollins holding the title though, as he had to vanquish Cena at some point to legitimize his reign. This was basically fighting to a draw until Stewart came out though, and that's the best possible thing for Rollins at this point. Heck of a match too, as you had to expect.

So then we got to the nightly "THE BELLAS ARE AWESOME AND EMPOWER WOMEN"

segment of the night, which makes whatever feminist there is in me cringe more every time they speak. PCB beat the other two teams in another match that means absolutely nothing. Unfortunately this meant that we had to sit through the Bellas being in control for about eight minutes and the match just died.

The Bellas are very good at generating heat, but like the old villains of WCW, that all goes away as soon as the bell rings because they're just so boring between the ropes. The match was begging for Sasha Banks, the crowd favorite by a mile, to come in and clean house, so of course she was on offense for about thirty seconds.

This was another moment that made me realize that the Divas Revolution isn't going anywhere. It's another way to feature the Bellas, who started their big story (kind of) a year ago at Summerslam. This is of course ignoring the stuff that led up to Nikki turning heel, meaning they've been the top story for roughly fifteen months now. It's another Bellas story and that's all it was really ever destined to be. As usual, WWE is great at creating false hope, but the fact that their fans are suckered into it every single time should be much more telling.

The next to last match was Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro, which was almost a no win situation. Owens got the pin, which is a good thing as far as him regaining some momentum, but the fact that he beat Cesaro a night after a brutal ladder match really doesn't make Cesaro look good. That being said, Cesaro has gone from red hot to just Cesaro again, because WWE is fine with treating him like a breakout star for a month and then using him to get someone else over time after time. You really have to expect it at this point and that's sad.

Now we get to the main event, which is getting more talk than anything else, albeit only for the last thirty seconds. Instead of just talking about the ending, I'd like to talk a little bit about the match itself, which is being forgotten due to how messy the finish was. This match was what they wanted Wrestlemania XXX to be with the two guys just beating the tar out of each other. Well that and Undertaker's head not being scrambled but I thought that was obvious.

I liked the match more than I was expecting to with the spot of Undertaker sitting up and laughing at Brock before they slugged it out on the mat being a major highlight. However, you could see that Undertaker was getting weaker and weaker out there and I really don't need to see him trying to pull off one more miracle in one more match. Wrestlemania XXX was bad, Wrestlemania XXXI was passable, and this one was a borderline miracle. Just let it go, but you know we can't do that because of how this match ended.

As I'm sure you know by now, Undertaker tapped out in the Kimura but the referee didn't see it. Instead the timekeeper rang the bell, allowing Undertaker to hit Brock low (so much for selling the hold) and put on the Hell's Gate to make Brock pass out. So yeah, this was a way to set up a third match, likely at Wrestlemania, because we need a trilogy because those are cool. It didn't work in the HHH feud and I really don't see it working here either, though this could be better. I'm beyond the point of caring about Undertaker though, as he already lost the Streak and now he's tapped out. What's his career worth now anyway?

So that's Summerslam and my big takeaway from it is that people are talking about how the matches ended, now what the endings mean or lead to. The big stories have been the timekeeper and Jon Stewart, not Seth Rollins beating John Cena or what is likely going to be a featured match or maybe even the main event (Heaven help us). I liked the show well enough, but there's just something about this show that makes me wonder what it accomplished. This felt like a big build to other shows, which isn't what the second biggest show of the year should be about.

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