

Reviewing the Review: Survivor Series 2015

Normally I wait a little bit before writing these things because I want to let the shows settle in a little bit. I don't want to throw up some immediate reactions and miss a few things that I would get with more time. In this case however, I haven't changed what I was thinking since the show ended. This show had a few options to get out of the dilemmas WWE are in at the moment but some of those options are pretty horrid. Let's get to it.

The pre-show did exactly what it needed to do: take a bunch of people and throw them together into a Survivor Series match to give them something to do and warm the crowd up. It was a group of midcarders with the returning Goldust getting a nice reaction. They seem to be setting up Goldust vs. Stardust, which makes little sense given how lame their first match was.

Cesaro was supposed to be here but was out due to his shoulder injury, which adds another name to the long list of injuries. Neville's team won though it might as well have been called "Team midcard good guys". There's nothing wrong with this one and it did exactly what it was supposed to do.

In the unofficial response to the ISIS threats, Lillian Garcia sang the National Anthem. It seems that the rumors of the threats were groundless but there's nothing wrong with being overly cautious. I think everyone was at least a bit worried about this but the song was a nice moment and you knew there was going to be something like this at some point. Lillian Garcia may not be the best announcer in the world and she screws up some times, but sweet goodness she can belt out that song.

First up on the actual show was Reigns vs. Del Rio in the first tournament semifinal. This was the one that people knew in the first place with Del Rio being by far and away the biggest underdog in the whole thing. Reigns winning wasn't in question, but people were hoping

that Del Rio wouldn't put the fans to sleep, which thankfully he didn't for once. The match was a pretty solid back and forth main event style match as they didn't bother with the slow start. Instead they just beat each other up for about fifteen minutes with Del Rio working the bad arm until he ate a spear. This was a nice surprise but nothing we didn't see coming.

Pretty much the same thing happened in the second match as Ambrose and Owens beat each other up for a bit before Ambrose advanced. There was a little bit more drama here but Owens was still a big underdog coming into this. Reigns vs. Del Rio was better, but that's because Reigns is better in the ring. Dean used all his signature stuff (and he has more than enough of it to get him through a long match) and set up the showdown we were waiting on in the main event.

Next up was another Survivor Series match with the wrestlers finally being announced. There weren't any surprises here but we did get to see Sheamus and Barrett being funny. I really don't get why they didn't announce the participants in advance as there was nothing out of the ordinary here and most of the people could be predicted in advance. The match itself was fine but the ending went on too long with Sheamus getting triple teamed and finally losing after New Day walked out.

That's where the show started to fall apart. They knew that Sheamus was getting the title later in the night and could have done a bunch of things to keep him from getting pinned here. Have him do the Honky Tonk Man deal from Survivor Series 1987 and walk out when he realizes he can't fight the numbers. Have him grab a chair and get disqualified. Have him win the thing. Do SOMETHING other thing have him get pinned in the middle of the ring two hours before he becomes World Champion.

WWE just does not get this concept but the fans remember it when people lose. Sheamus was the guy losing to a minor league rookie (albeit an awesome one named Finn Balor) throughout the European tour and he's won one singles match on TV since the beginning of October. Therefore, let's make him the World Champion. You had to know that Sheamus was going to get the title sooner or later so maybe they could have done SOMETHING to build him up in recent months but no, just go off that one big match he

won FIVE MONTHS AGO and assume it's going to be enough. Totally stupid idea here to end a decent match.

Charlotte defended the title against Paige and again sweet goodness they missed the point here. I know they were trying to get out from under the whole Reid Flair mess from Monday but their solution was to have a boring, run of the mill match. Instead of Charlotte trying to kill her, she started the match with a freaking waistlock. As soon as that happened, I knew they were done here. This had the potential to be a big slugfest but we had Paige working on the ribs and Charlotte just wrestling a normal match.

It's a good example of how psychology can cause problems in a match. Sometimes you need to switch from your game plan and go with something different to suit the match. Just because you can wrestle a regular match doesn't mean that's always the way to go. Charlotte should have been out for blood here and Paige should have caught her in one of her mistakes. Instead of telling a good story, the whole thing was a big mess that felt off the entire time.

Tyler Breeze beat Dolph Ziggler in a nothing match. Breeze is still new around here and needed a big win after he got pinned in his debut. Again, WWE seems like they don't get it. Have this be his debut and give him the win to establish him as a threat before having him lose a few times. Breeze feels dead in the water already but to be fair Ziggler has been the same way for years and people seem to love him.

Now we get to the first of two main events and the first of two matches where it's about to come crashing down. The Wyatt Family picked two members to be sacrificed to Undertaker and Kane after Bray stole their souls, which seemed to mean gave them a quick vacation. As expected, the Wyatts were effectively squashed at the Undertaker's 25th anniversary.

I'm fine with Undertaker winning a major match at a major milestone for him, but this was the same Wyatt problem they've had for a year and a half. There was no reason to believe that the Wyatts were going to pull off the upset and ascend up the ladder but this was really just a squash. The only good thing here was that Harper got pinned instead of Wyatt, but

it's pretty clear that the Wyatts are still dead in the water while Undertaker and Kane weren't even on Raw.

So that leaves us with Reigns vs. Ambrose for the title which didn't even break nine minutes. The show ended at about fifteen minutes before the hour (which it almost always does) and the main event gets nine minutes? I mean.....REALLY? Did they need time in case Stephanie needed to get in some more buzz words or strut down to ringside to remind us how sexy she is? Anyway, Reigns won on the second spear (a really good one too) and finally got the title.

Then HHH came out and ate a spear, allowing Sheamus to cash in Money in the Bank five minutes later. This is where the show falls apart because the booking is stupid. So the story making the rounds is that the fans were going to boo Reigns winning the title so they decided to screw him over and build up sympathy, basically taking the Daniel Bryan path.

The problem here should be obvious, but for some reason WWE doesn't get that there's a difference between an average size guy like Bryan who fights with everything he's got and a 6'4 monster with a rich family history who has been anointed as the next chosen one. The logical move here would be to turn Reigns heel and let him fight Ambrose, Cena and Lesnar in big matches but instead here's a midcard guy with one win in the last two months because HAHA MONEY IN THE BANK BABY!

That's the only justification for Sheamus winning the title: they were scared of the fans not worshiping Reigns (again because they've completely missed the idea with him) and one match back in June that gives them a way out. As usual, it seems to boil down to the simple concept of the writers not wanting to actually put in the effort to tell a good story when they can put out a single idea and just build off that for months. It hasn't worked before so they'll keep doing it forever because it's easier for them.

Overall, Survivor Series felt flat. It was a show that could have been something special or at least interesting with all of the potential plot decisions they had before them, but instead they went with the most basic, simplistic ideas they could have with the least effort possible.

That's the problem with so much of what WWE does these days: they would rather stick with the most hackneyed ideas instead of taking a chance (a logical chance) and trying something long term. Almost everything has to be wrapped up in a matter of weeks and that's not good. Mix it up a bit and go with what makes sense, not what's easiest.

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