

Survivor Series 2016 Preview

For only the second time in history, WWE has a pay per view series reach thirty entries as we arrive at Survivor Series 2016. In what is the most important thing a Survivor Series can do, there's actually something on the line here, albeit just bragging rights, as Smackdown faces off with Raw in a series of three elimination tag matches. It's only a six match card (for now) so it should be interesting to see what they're doing with the show. Let's get to it.

We'll start with the ladies in the first Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown match. This looks almost completely one sided on paper as Smackdown has Becky Lynch and Nikki Bella, who are nowhere near enough to counter the combined forces of Sasha Banks, Charlotte, Bayley and Nia Jax. However, never underestimate the power of WWE pushing Bella to the moon and back, meaning she has a good chance of overcoming the odds. She's fearless you know.

That being said, I really can't imagine Raw has much to worry about here. No matter how you look at it, there's just too much talent on the red show, even if they have all their in fighting. This should be a glorified layup as Carmella and Alexa Bliss are such liabilities for the Smackdown team that there's almost no way around their limitations. I'll go with Raw winning here in what shouldn't be much of a challenge for them.

On a side note since I don't have much material to talk about here with such a short card, is anyone else completely uninterested in seeing Bella vs. Charlotte treated as a huge showdown? We saw it last year and it was nothing special but now that Charlotte has become possibly the most successful women's wrestler ever and Bella was on the shelf for months, we're supposed to care? That doesn't make sense, though again, never underestimate the powers of a reality "star" in WWE.

Next up we have a title match as Cruiserweight Champion Brian Kendrick defends against Smackdown's Kalisto. This is a little bigger than your usual title match though as the winning brand gets the entire cruiserweight division. There isn't much to the feud as Kalisto was just

named #1 contender a few weeks back on Smackdown.

I'm really hoping logic takes control here because there's not much of a reason to keep the title and the division as a whole over on Raw. Tuesday night has a little more open space and is better suited for an action based division than Raw, which is almost entirely storyline driven. Couple that with the upcoming 205 Live, which is being taped after Smackdown instead of Raw and there's really no reason for Kendrick to walk out with the title. If nothing else, maybe Kalisto can breathe some life into the title instead of being another mat based cruiserweight.

We'll go back to the elimination tags as we have the tag team version, featuring a staggering twenty wrestlers in one match. This kind of match hasn't been done at this level since 1988 and the previous incarnations were borderline classics and among the best Survivor Series matches of all time. I'm not sure the talent is there to pull that off this time but at least there's a great chance for some exciting action.

Picking an accurate winner here is a lot more complicated though as neither team really stands out. Raw probably has the better lineup from top to bottom but Smackdown has American Alpha and better continuity. Unfortunately Raw has to deal with the Shining Stars and the issues between Cesaro and Sheamus. On the other hand, Heath Slater and Rhyno are playing WAY over their heads at the moment and I don't think they're going to be able to make that last against the Raw teams.

In a pick I'm not entirely confident in, I'm going to pick Smackdown to win here, if nothing else so there can be something on the line in the third match. Neither team looks great but I could certainly go for Cesaro/Sheamus vs. American Alpha with the technique vs. clubbing power formula. This should be a lot of fun if they do it right though and that's what matters in a match like this.

We'll go back to the title matches now with Miz defending the Intercontinental Title against Smackdown's Sami Zayn in another match where the title can switch brands. Miz won the belt back from Dolph Ziggler earlier this week and Ziggler not being on the card seems like a red flag.

At the end of the day though, I can't imagine Raw losing two titles and not having a midcard title to fall back on whatsoever. As much as I'd love to see Sami get a title, this doesn't really seem like the time to pull the trigger. Miz is a great Intercontinental Champion and can pick right back up where he left off after that pesky Zigler run.

That leaves us with one Survivor Series match to go and this one is the biggest tossup of them all. I really don't know which one to pick as you would think Smackdown would be at a disadvantage with Shane McMahon on the team but he went thirty minutes with the Undertaker at Wrestlemania. The rest of the lineups pretty much cancel each other out though and that's rather influential in a match like this.

I'll go with Smackdown as WWE has a long history of putting the blue show over when the two of them go head to head. There's nothing on the line here so it's not like this is going to mean much either way, but the bragging rights are always worth a chuckle at worst. If nothing else we don't have to listen to Matt Striker shouting "IN YOUR FACE! IN YOUR FACE! IN YOUR FACE!" when someone wins.

That leaves us with the main event, which is only somewhat interesting but is the focal point of the show. Twelve and a half years ago, Goldberg and Brock Lesnar had one of the worst major matches in wrestling history and for some reason we're supposed to forget all that and just enjoy them fighting again. It's also Goldberg's first match since that night and I'm not sure how bad this could really get.

Obviously I'll go with Lesnar, but neither guy is really a good option here. You don't have Lesnar set up as this unstoppable monster and then have him lose but at the same time, Lesnar beating Goldberg means as much as Hulk Hogan beating the Ultimate Warrior in 1998. Lesnar wins here after Goldberg doesn't do much besides throw spears. At least there should be some energy here and Goldberg will have a better chance than Dean Ambrose had.

Overall, Survivor Series has a lot of potential but it could be good or bad. If they let these matches have a lot of time (which they should given the four hour run time) and only add one more at most, they could

have the time to build into something entertaining. Unfortunately they could also build into a disaster with the fans getting bored and matches that aren't the most interesting. I've been excited for this since it was announced though and I'm going to try to keep that optimism.

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