

# Payback 2017 Preview

I've seen every pay per view WWE has ever produced and this is one of the most worthless they've ever put on. The Superstar Shakeup has changed the entire company and that means we have a bunch of pointless matches due to either the title not being on the line, people potentially switching shows and feuds that already have their followups started. Let's get to it.

## Bray Wyatt vs. Randy Orton

Normally I do the Kickoff Show match first but I'm going with this just so we can get it out of the way and forget about it. Remember back in 2000 when Mike Awesome defended the ECW World Title against Tazz and it was a WCW wrestler facing a WWF wrestler at an ECW show? That might be less complicated than what we have here. Here we have the Smackdown World Champion facing off against a "Monday Night Raw" wrestler who had no chance of winning the belt back at first and now that this is non-title, the odds are even lower.

The winner here? The audience, as this feud is going to be OVER, meaning we can move on to.....Jinder Mahal. Three months ago AJ Styles and John Cena were tearing the house down over this title and now we have Wyatt looking like the weakest champion in years, Orton drawing reactions of "Him AGAIN?" and Mahal wondering what kind of a saint he was in a past life to be in this spot. I'll go with Orton winning here, presumably by being the first person to figure out what a House of Horrors match is.

## Kickoff Show: Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Anderson and Gallows

These teams are somehow still feuding for reasons that I have no idea how to comprehend. There's really not much of a reason for them to be fighting anymore so here they are on pay per view. This is a feud where they started fighting at one point and are still fighting because that's all WWE knows how to do.

I'll go with Anderson and Gallows here, as WWE doesn't seem to like Amore and Cass winning. Then again they don't like Anderson and Gallows winning either, but the Hardys are likely going to need some more challengers going forward and the big balds have only lost to the champs once so far. This match really does belong on the Kickoff Show and it's very clear that there isn't much of a reason to have

it other than Amore warming the crowd up.

### **Women's Title: Bayley vs. Alexa Bliss**

This is a natural feud with Bliss looking down on everyone that she's in the ring with and Bayley as the hometown girl who is living the dream. The question here is how important the hometown aspect is going to be. Earlier this month Naomi won the Smackdown Women's Title at "Wrestlemania XXXIII" seemingly on the strength of being from Orlando, Florida. The show is in Bayley's hometown so the question is will they let the hometown girl win twice.

I think they will as it seems that the big match on the horizon is Bayley defending against Sasha Banks in a battle of (former by then) best friends. As good as Bliss is (and she's awesome), there's some real money in Bayley holding the title for several months before losing it to Banks in a big showdown. Bliss will have her day and she's still rolling on the momentum that came with her two Smackdown Women's Titles.

### **Cruiserweight Title: Austin Aries vs. Neville**

They had the Match of the Night at "Wrestlemania XXXIII" and it's not out of the question for them to do it again. These two have an amazing chemistry together and they're going with a different story this time around. In Orlando it was all about Aries being able to hang with and potentially beat Neville, but the last few weeks have been a much more personal feud built on Neville attacking Aries and the hunt for revenge.

This time around though, I think they'll switch the title. Neville hasn't lost a singles match since October and the company has been mentioning that far too often as of late. That suggests to me that they're about to have him lose, which is going to be a huge moment for Aries. He's been treated as the biggest star in the division save for Neville and it's time to bring him all the way to the top.

### **US Title: Kevin Owens vs. Chris Jericho**

Now we hit the first match with next to no drama. It also doesn't help that these two have barely interacted since "Wrestlemania XXXIII" due to the Superstar Shakeup sending Owens over to "Smackdown Live". These two had one of the hottest feuds in the company just a month ago and now it's nothing more than something that exists. Owens has completely moved on and is already looking at

a title defense against AJ Styles later in the month.

Of course I'm going with Owens as Jericho is already booked to head off with Fozzy again almost immediately. Barring a last minute switch to Jericho and then dropping it back to Owens two days later, there's no reason to believe that Owens is dropping the title here. This match feels like filler and that's a real shame given how much effort they put into the build to its predecessor.

### **Tag Team Titles: Hardys vs. Sheamus/Cesaro**

While Jericho vs. Owens feels like it has no steam because of a lack of build, this one feels like it has no steam because it was never anything special in the first place. The Hardys made their huge return earlier this month and...that's about it. Without the Broken characters they're really just a nostalgic act and that's not the most thrilling idea in the world, at least not for too long.

That being said, I'm certainly taking the Hardys to retain here. As much steam as they've lost, Sheamus and Cesaro have all the steam of a frozen lasagna. The only way I can see them winning here is through a good bit of cheating which would send Matt Hardy over the edge to set up a certain gimmick change to set the promotion on as much fire as it could possibly reach in the current environment.

### **Seth Rollins vs. Samoa Joe**

This is the Match of the Night if they're allowed to let it all hang out. I'd assume this match was scheduled for "Fastlane 2017" before Rollins got hurt (though I'm not sure he actually was, especially given how fast he's gone from nearly crippled to just fine) and now it's going to feel a bit bigger as Rollins actually got a big rub off his win over Triple H. Then again Samoa Joe has been on fire since his main roster debut and there's a real chance he could get the biggest win of his career here.

I think I'll go with Samoa Joe, likely thanks to some interference by a returning Triple H. Why would he return? Well that would be because STEPHANIE MCMAHON MUST BE AVENGED and that means the feud must continue for the next three months or so. So yeah, Rollins is about to win with the Rainmaker knee but Triple H interferes to give Samoa Joe the win, setting up a rematch at whatever the next "Monday Night Raw" pay per view is.

### **Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman**

The last two weeks have made this interesting as WWE has decided that the way to follow up on Strowman's amazing destruction of Reigns is to have him go 0-1-1 against Big Show and Kalisto. There was no way Reigns should have been on TV in the last two weeks and thankfully they've kept him away from TV, though I'm more amazed that him RETIRING THE UNDERTAKER has been forgotten a mere four weeks later.

I'll take Strowman as he seems to be the challenger at "Great Balls of Fire 2017" and...stop laughing at the pay per view name. Anyway, Strowman seems to be the next challenger for Lesnar because we need to wait for a year to set up Reigns vs. Brock Lesnar and that would suggest starting with a major loss here.

Overall.....I think you get the idea. I have no idea why they didn't do the Superstar Shakeup this coming week for the sake of avoiding all of the messes that have come from the whole thing happening eight days after "Wrestlemania XXXIII". Almost none of the matches on this show mean anything as we're already setting up everything for later, making this show all the less important. I'm going to have enough issues staying awake during this show, let alone actually making sense of it.

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