

Summerslam 2017 Preview

This is going to be a long one. We're less than two days away from "Summerslam 2017" and there are a staggering thirteen matches on the card. I know three of them are going to be on the Kickoff Show but sweet goodness that's a lot of wrestling in one night. The card has grown on me in recent weeks and I'm more excited about it than I used to be so hopefully it's going to be good. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Hardy Boyz/Jason Jordan vs. Miz/Miztourage

Let's get this one out of the way first because we've already seen it. This is a case of just trying to get people on the card, which is rarely a good idea. I have no idea why we're seeing this match on pay per view just six days after we saw it on "Monday Night Raw" but that's WWE for you. I get why we're seeing the match but watching it twice in a week is a bit of a stretch.

I'll take the Hardys and Jordan to win, likely with Jordan pinning Miz to set up a future Intercontinental Title match (it wouldn't surprise me if it was as soon as the following night's TV). Jordan hasn't exactly been thrilling in his singles run (but hey, at least it wasn't the predictable choice of Chad Gable, because surprising people is better than going with the right move) but putting him with the Hardys is a good idea. That being said, the fact that Jordan needs support less than a month into the new run.

Kickoff Show: Smackdown Tag Team Titles: New Day(c) vs. Usos

This is the third match in their trilogy and the previous two have both been quite entertaining. I'm not sure why this feud is continuing (well outside of having no one else to go after the titles) but it makes sense to get someone as popular as New Day on the show. The might not be as big as they used to be but the merchandise sales alone validate keeping them

around.

I think New Day retains here as there's no reason to put them back on the Usos. Unless Breezango suddenly wraps up their story and moves on to the title picture again (like they probably should), there's no major face team for the Usos to fight. Hopefully this wraps up the feud though as there's no reason to keep this going, especially if some new teams could be put together out of necessity.

Cruiserweight Title: Akira Tozawa(c) vs. Neville

Speaking of matches we've seen recently. Tozawa won the title just six days before the pay per view and Neville has already shown signs of unraveling from the loss. My guess is we'll be seeing another hard hitting, entertaining match but the question is whether or not this is the ending of the story.

Tozawa should retain here and I think he likely will, sending him forward to have some fresh matches for the title. The problem with Neville as champion was that he was so awesome that he prevented a lot of wrestlers from being realistic challengers. That's not the case with Tozawa, who is still good but feels like someone who the masses could threaten. This should be entertaining, though it needs to wrap up the feud already.

Randy Orton vs. Rusev

We'll start the main card with a match that I don't think anyone is actively looking forward to. This is a great example of a match where it feels like both guys are thrown into the match due to a lack of anything else for either of them to do, plus a need to get them onto the card. That's going to happen on almost every show but it feels like it's happening multiple times on this particular show.

I'll actually take Rusev to win the battle of losers of last month's terrible gimmick matches. Orton has the RK0 and that's

really all he needs to bounce back. Rusev on the other hand still needs some extra support to get higher up the card and a win over Orton would help him along the way. Then again never underestimate the amount of time and effort WWE will put into Orton. It actually goes somewhere in his case but it gets a little tiring after awhile.

Big Show vs. Big Cass

Enzo Amore, who is apparently scared of heights, will be hanging in a cage over the ring and the word on the street is that it's due to a punishment for him being so annoying backstage. As someone with a similar fear, allow me to say SCREW OFF WWE. Now that the personal bias is out of the way, let's get down to the problem with this feud: we've established that Amore isn't a threat to Big Cass but the feud is continuing anyway. Big Cass needs to move on to something else and hopefully this wraps up the feud once and for all.

If it's not clear, I'm taking Big Cass to win here. Unfortunately I could imagine them getting there by having Big Show turn on Amore after the match for the sake of mentoring Big Cass. That story seems played out, which is why WWE is even more likely to go with it. As long as it gets Big Cass away from Amore though, things will be picking up in a hurry. Big Cass wins, as he should be doing.

Smackdown Women's Title: Naomi(c) vs. Natalya

This is a thing that exists as well. The match has next to no heat and it's clear that Natalya isn't an interesting challenger. I have no idea why Naomi, who has turned into a much better champion than I was expecting, is stuck fighting her while Becky Lynch and Charlotte are both on the roster. Either of them would offer ten times the match on their worst day but for some reason we're getting Natalya.

I'll go with Naomi to retain, though I don't think they'll do the Money in the Bank cash-in. They've been teasing it far too

much lately and as a rule, that means we won't be seeing it just yet. Naomi needs better challengers and until we get to Lynch or Charlotte, that's just not going to be the case. If nothing else give us Carmella, who has some charisma and personality to her, neither of which Natalya has ever been able to claim.

US Title: AJ Styles(c) vs. Kevin Owens

Shane McMahon is guest referee and somehow this seems to be a way to set up Owens vs. McMahon down the line. Styles and Owens have been feuding for months now and they haven't quite gotten up to the top level that I think we all believe they're capable of reaching. I have a feeling this is going to be the match where they do it, though the time issues might cause them some issues.

I think Styles retains, likely due to some kind of shenanigans with McMahon. Odds are we'll be seeing those two fighting in the near future, which doesn't do much for me though I've calmed down a bit on my dislike of McMahon getting in the ring. Styles retaining and fighting various challengers over the next few months is a great way to set him up for another World Title push and there's nothing wrong with that.

Raw Tag Team Titles: Sheamus/Cesaro(c) vs. Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose

This has somehow turned into one of the biggest stories on the show with Ambrose and Rollins finally reuniting for the first time in a few years. That granted them an immediate shot at the titles, which actually works for a change. I can live with the idea of two former World Champions with a strong history together being pushed as a top team in such a hurry, especially two as over as these guys.

Ambrose and Rollins should get the belts here with the only possible reason not to go that way being a potential singles feud between the two. I don't think WWE would set them up like

this for the sake of splitting them again this fast, but you can never give WWE that much credit. Sheamus and Cesaro never felt like long term champions anyway so Ambrose and Rollins getting the belts would be the best move, if nothing else just for some fresh blood.

John Cena vs. Baron Corbin

This match took on a new life this past week when Cena cost Corbin his Money in the Bank cash-in attempt. When you also factor in Cena pretty certainly leaving for "Monday Night Raw" as soon as this show is over, it should make for an obvious ending. That being said, never underestimate WWE's ability to do something overly stupid.

I'll go with Corbin getting the biggest win of his career but Cena just lost a clean fall to Shinsuke Nakamura a few weeks back and WWE probably isn't too gung ho about having him lose so soon again. Corbin needs to win this one far more than Cena (who could go his whole career without ever winning another big match) as he looked like a moron earlier this week.

Raw Women's Title: Alexa Bliss(c) vs. Sasha Banks

Now this one depends on how you look at it. If you're looking at the long term story, you go with Banks winning the title for the sake of building towards Banks vs. Bayley for the title at "Wrestlemania XXXIV". If you want to go short term, you have Banks win the title for the sake of Bliss running out of potential opponents.

So yeah, this is all about Banks winning the title and I see next to no reason for Bliss to retain. She's defended against most of the important women on the "Monday Night Raw" roster (yes I know that means all of two people) and there's no reason to have her hold the title much longer. That's the danger of such a thin division: you're only going to get so far with so few people on top, especially when one of them is injured.

Finn Balor vs. Bray Wyatt

We've seen this one already but now there's a bit of a twist. After Wyatt defeated Balor earlier this week, Balor promised to bring the Demon King back on Sunday. Why WWE went this straightforward with the idea instead of letting it be a surprise isn't clear, but my guess would be that they didn't think its fans were smart enough to put the idea together for themselves.

Of course I'm going with Balor, as you don't bring out the Demon King character for only the second time ever on the main roster and then have him lose. Besides, Wyatt has won his last few big matches and that means it's time to rip the carpet out from underneath him and turn him back into a choker all over again. Balor wins, as he should, though it should be in the first match between the two of them instead of the rematch.

Smackdown World Title: Jinder Mahal(c) vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

I know this is supposed to be one of the biggest layups on the show but it seems that WWE is pushing it a bit too hard as the big layup. Nakamura seems to be ready to win the title but I could see WWE letting Mahal keep it just a little longer for the sake of a surprise. Nakamura hasn't exactly lit the world on fire since he came up to the main roster but at least he would be a change of pace.

I'll go with Nakamura winning the title as Mahal just isn't working as champion. He's held the title for three months but his biggest issue continues to be the firm ceiling he's stuck underneath. On his best day, Mahal is little more than average either on the microphone or in the ring. Nakamura might not have been the best in the world so far, but he's a lot better than Mahal no matter how you look at it.

Universal Title: Brock Lesnar(c) vs. Samoa Joe vs. Braun Strowman vs. Roman Reigns

And then, there's this, which is what the show is almost entirely built around. If they let these four go nuts and tear the house down, there's a good chance that this will be one of the best matches of the year. These four have some amazing energy and chemistry together in any form and the idea of getting rid of Lesnar no matter how he loses the title is a great incentive. Now the question is where you think this is going.

I'll go with Strowman winning the title, with the eventual goal of Reigns facing Lesnar in the main event of "Wrestlemania XXXIV". Lesnar can come back at the Royal Rumble (perhaps winning the thing) and get the shot at Reigns (who can be champion by that point) with Reigns winning the one on one match to dispatch Lesnar once and for all. I could see Samoa Joe winning as well, but I'll go with Strowman here, as he's been built up very, very well.

So that's going to be "Summerslam 2017" and sweet goodness there's a lot of stuff to get through. It's almost tiring to just look at the whole card but hopefully that doesn't become a problem tomorrow night. The key to the whole thing is going to be how well they pace the thing, though there's only so much you can do with this many matches in one night. There's a lot of potential though and if they can live up to it, everything is going to be great.

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