

# 2017 Awards: Surprise of the Year

I bet you didn't see this one coming.

As you might have guessed, I've watched quite a bit of wrestling in my day. Over the years, you eventually get a pretty good idea of what to expect from a lot of wrestling shows. I mean, there's only so much that can be done to surprise you when you've been around for a long time, which is what makes this such a hard category to pull off. There were actually a lot of options though and that's always a lot of fun.

In no order, as usual.

We'll start with one of the options that is going to get the most attention and for good reason: Tommaso Ciampa turns on Johnny Gargano. This one worked far better than I would have expected and I'd be shocked if their match doesn't headline at least one Takeover in the coming year. My only issue is they kind of telegraphed it by having the match go on last and leaving the camera on the team for so long. It felt like they were teasing the going away segment but it went the other way. In other words it felt like they were going somewhere, which takes away a bit of the impact.

Given that this is being written as Wrestle Kingdom is taking place, it seems appropriate to put in Chris Jericho appearing in New Japan to challenge Kenny Omega. I know it might not be the best in-ring match but my goodness people: it's CHRIS JERICH0 in New Japan. There were rumors of a surprise at the show but I thought it was going to be a full show in America over Wrestlemania weekend or something. This was a heck of a deal and my eyebrows went up when I saw the announcement.

Everybody needs a Clarence P. Oddbody ASC (Look it up you

heathens.) and Kevin Owens got one in the form of Sami Zayn. While Shane McMahon was on top of the Cell (again) for an elbow drop that missed (again), Zayn came out and saved his longtime rival and sometimes best friend in a heck of a heel turn. It might not have been the biggest surprise, but I'm not sure how many people actually thought they would go this way. It was quite the success though and that's what matters most.

In another moment where I was actually in the house, we have the Hardys return. Now, I really don't know how much doubt there was that the Hardys would wind up back in the company someday and that's normal. Almost everyone winds up back in WWE at some point and the Hardys were on fire. The thing is, even with all that, as soon as New Day came out and said there was another team, I stood up and said out loud "They wouldn't. There's no way." Then I couldn't hear myself anymore because the fans were going so cookaloo. This was a great moment and I could easily see this getting the vote.

Back in May, Jinder Mahal won the WWE World Title. It was shocking, it was something people never saw coming, and it was Jinder Mahal winning the WWE World Title. This deserves no awards so we'll move on to the winner.

Like I said, it takes a lot to surprise me. There's very little that hasn't been done in wrestling but in this case, WWE actually pulled it off. Back in February, Chris Jericho promised to show his best friend Kevin Owens what he really meant to him. Jericho set up the most over the top display of friendship in wrestling history, though it didn't quite go as well as he had hoped. At the end, Owens, looking a bit annoyed, said he had a present for Jericho. Chris opened the box and found a new list! With his name on it! Jericho dropped the box and the back of the list said "The List Of KO". A huge beatdown ensued and the team was done.

They got me with this one and that's quite the feat. Jericho sold the heck out of the thing and it was the absolute perfect

way to split the team up. The List of Jericho had been one of the coolest ideas I had seen in a long time and tying the split all back into that concept was the perfect way to do this whole thing. It's hard to get this right but I bought into it all the way so well done indeed.