

2017 Wrestling Observer Newsletter Awards: I For One Welcome Our Returning Japanese Overlords

They're back! So what if it's mid-March? That's totally fine in announcing the annual New Japan is Better Than You Awards and that's what we have here. The Wrestling Observer Newsletter Awards are back and I already have a bad feeling about them. As usual I'll be listing the winners and giving a quick comment about each. I won't list the top five for each unless something stands out to me.

1. Wrestler of the Year – Kazuchika Okada

Yep. Aside from AJ Styles, there's no one in the same universe right now.

2. Most Outstanding Wrestler – Kazuchika Okada

I say it every year and I have it explained to me every year but I still have no idea why these first two both need to exist.

3. Tag Team of the Year – The Young Bucks

Maybe the Usos can win next year if they name a move after Meltzer.

4. Best on Interviews – Conor McGregor

Oh here we go. Again: it certainly must help when you only have to talk when you're getting ready for a fight and have no restrictions. I have no idea why this is considered a fair comparison but maybe I'm just too much of a wrestling fan to understand these things.

5. Promotion of the Year – New Japan

Makes sense. WWE had a good but not great year and New Japan is almost always quality.

6. Best Weekly TV Show – New Japan on AXS

Being a highlight/Best Of show certainly must help. Being the Elite was fourth and Raw was NINTH. It's really not that bad people.

7. Match of the Year – Okada vs. Omega – Wrestle Kingdom

No WWE match in the top five, Okada with four of the top five. You knew this was getting the top spot and nothing else was going to come close, but that's to be expected.

8. Feud of the Year – Okada vs. Omega

I didn't even have to look at the results. UFC had two of the top five spots.

9. Most Charismatic – Tetsuya Naito

Fair enough. I've liked what I've seen from him.

10. Best Technical Wrestler Zach Sabre Jr.

That guy does stuff that I can't even describe and makes it look like the most natural thing in the world. It's rare that I consider someone a treat to watch but that's the case with him.

11. Best Brawler – Tomohiro Ishii

Not my style but I get it.

12. Best Flying Wrestler – Will Ospreay

Yep. Well maybe Ricochet, who came in second.

13. Most Overrated – Jinder Mahal

WWE got four of the top six (with five being a tie). Braun Strowman was ninth. Seriously.

14. Most Underrated – Rusev

I usually scratch my head at this one but there's very little argument here.

15. Rookie of the Year – Ketsuya Kitamura

I've heard good things so sure.

16. Best Non-Wrestler – Daniel Bryan

This is a sentimental pick as Zelina Vega ran away with this thing (and finished second).

17. Best TV Announcer – Mauro Ranallo

You knew that was getting the pick and I can't argue with it.

18. Worst TV Announcer – Booker T.

I'd have gone with Watson, who took second. At least Booker has a resume while Watson is just a person you might remember if you like stupid gimmicks and bad wrestling.

19. Best Major Wrestling Show – Wrestle Kingdom XI

I'd have gone with Takeover: Chicago but this is more than acceptable.

20. Worst Major Wrestling Show – Battleground

It had the Punjabi Prison match.

21. Best Wrestling Move – One Winged Angel

You know, that move that he hits over and over and barely ever wins with the thing.

22. Most Disgusting Promotional Tactic – WWE Promoting Jimmy

Snuka As A Hero

Yeah that's kind of hard to argue.

23. Worst TV Show – Raw

OH SCREW OFF! This award should be named after Impact but it's WWE so we must run it into the ground. Good grief no.

24. Worst Match of the Year – Bray Wyatt vs. Randy Orton – Wrestlemania XXXIII

The title that Bruno, Hogan and Austin wore was involved in a match containing roaches and maggots. Moving on.

25. Worst Feud of the Year – Bray Wyatt vs. Randy Orton

It was either this or Mahal vs. Orton.

26. Worst Promotion – TNA

But remember: they had a better weekly TV show and not as bad of a pay per view!

27. Best Booker – Gedo

Again, didn't need to look.

28. Promoter of the Year – Takaai Kidani – New Japan

Same duh as before.

29. Best Gimmick – Los Ingobernables de Japon

Velveteen Dream got second.

30. Worst Gimmick – Bray Wyatt and Sister Abigail

I'd go with Mahal for longevity as Abigail was only a few weeks long.

31. Best Pro-Wrestling Book – Crazy Like a Fox: The Brian Pillman Story

I need to get that as I've heard good things.

32. Best Documentary – Ric Flair: 30 For 30

Like it was going to be anything else.