

Summerslam Count-Up – 2011: Orton vs. Christian Is Better



IMG Credit: WWE

Summerslam 2011

Date: August 14, 2011

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Attendance: 17.404

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Booker T

This is a pretty big show with the blowoffs to two amazing feuds. The headlining act match is CM Punk vs. John Cena in a champion vs. champion match and the rematch to their masterpiece a month earlier. The match I was more excited about though was Christian vs. Randy Orton in one of the most underrated feuds in recent years. Let's get to it.

The guitarist from Tool plays the national anthem.

The opening video talks about a domino effect, triggered by CM Punk winning the Raw World Title back in Chicago at Money in the Bank. As a result, Vince McMahon was stripped of power (for all of a few months) and John Cena became the other Raw World Champion. Tonight it's champion vs. champion and nothing else is worth talking about.

Kofi Kingston/John Morrison/Rey Mysterio vs. Awesome Truth/Alberto Del Rio

Mysterio had beaten Miz to win the vacant Raw World Champion so Miz attacked him on Raw to help set this up. This is in during the full on Cole Love Miz period and the annoyance begins early. Before the match Miz complains about not being on the show but here's R-Truth to complain about various letters. He doesn't like spiders and Summerslam or Cee Lo Green performing so S and C are on his bad list. Cue Alberto (Mr. Raw Money in the Bank) to cut him off and we're finally ready to go.

Morrison and Del Rio are both WAY over here but it's Kofi vs. Miz to get things going. A double flapjack with Morrison helping out plants Miz and we get stereo nipups. Morrison gets all fired up to hammer on Truth because their partnership from a few years ago just means nothing to him. Everything breaks down for a bit with Morrison being knocked off the top rope to change control.

Miz grabs the chinlock but gets kicked in the head to knock him silly. It's back to Kofi as things speed up and the SOS counters the Skull Crushing Finale for two. Everything breaks down for a bit and Miz hits a Diamond Cutter into a 1%er for two. I'm still not wild on that move but Kofi's selling made it look better. The heels start taking turns on Kofi with Del Rio starting in on the arm and mocking Kofi's clapping taunt.

Miz gets two off a clothesline as Cole sings his praises, even listing off Miz's high school accolades. A double stomp allows the hot tag to Rey, who comes in to a roar. Mysterio starts cleaning house but Del Rio breaks up a double 619. Morrison dives onto Alberto and Truth takes the 619, followed by a top rope splash for the pin at 9:36.

Rating: B-. Take six guys and give them ten minutes to have a fun opener. I like a good six man tag and it can accomplish multiple goals in a short span. For some reason though WWE feels that the only kinds of matches you can have are singles, regular tags and triple threats so we don't get enough of something like this. If nothing else it gave the fans a lot to cheer about in a short time, meaning they're ready to go early on. Well done indeed.

Executive Vice President of Talent Relations Johnny Ace (you get tired just listing his job title) wants CM Punk to publicly apologize for embarrassing him on Monday. Punk says he's sorry and offers a big grin but he turns around to see Stephanie. The champ insults the men in her life but she doesn't seem phased. Stephanie: "But what would I know? I'm just Vince McMahon's clueless daughter." Punk: "Yeah pretty much." Stephanie offers a handshake for luck but Punk says no because he knows where that hand has been. WHY CAN NO ONE BURN STEPHANIE LIKE THIS TODAY???

We recap Mark Henry vs. Sheamus. This was during Henry's rampage over everyone in his path and his Hall of Pain period. No one was left for him to beat so Sheamus, a heel at the time, came out and simply said "I'll fight him." I still really like that line as it sums up everything and gives you a reason to like Sheamus in two seconds. Simple, yet effective.

Sheamus vs. Mark Henry

Henry shoves him around to start but Sheamus comes back with knees to the ribs and forearms to the back. The Irish Curse attempt is easily shrugged away though and Sheamus is tossed outside. Back in and Henry does the running crotch attack to the back of Sheamus' head, followed by a backbreaker for your run of the mill heel offense.

An over the shoulder backbreaker keeps Sheamus in trouble but Henry misses a Vader Bomb. That means it's time for forearms to the chest but a double shoulder puts both guys down. Sheamus is up first and the Brogue Kick knocks Henry to the floor. Ever the not that bright good guy though, Sheamus goes out after him and gets driven through the barricade for the countout at 9:22.

Rating: C+. I like that finish a lot as they made Sheamus look like a real threat with the Brogue Kick and then didn't have him get pinned. The important thing here though was Henry looking unstoppable as he was on the way to the World Title soon after this. Smart booking here and everyone comes out looking like they should.

Christian has an insurance policy for his match against Randy Orton. It's going to be a summer blockbuster and he'll be like Harry Potter. Orton on the other hand will be like Cowboys and Aliens: an overrated, overproduced and overhyped flop. Hey now that movie was underrated.

Cee Lo Green does his mini concert for reasons I don't understand. Bright Lights, Bigger City is catchy though. Some Divas come out to dance during Forget You.

Divas Title: Kelly Kelly vs. Beth Phoenix

Kelly is defending in your standard Barbie vs. monster feud and has Eve

Torres in her corner. Beth on the other hand has Natalya. Kelly goes straight after her to start and fires off some forearms in the corner to send Beth outside, followed by a middle rope cross body to the floor. Back in and Beth knocks her out of the corner to take over before we hit a quick chinlock. An over the shoulder backbreaker (good move for Beth) has Kelly in trouble and Beth ties her in the Tree of Woe to make it even worse. Kelly gets knocked around in the corner but counters the Glam Slam into a victory roll to retain at 6:33.

Rating: D+. Total squash for the most part here with a fluke ending, albeit the same fluke ending to almost every Kelly vs. Beth match ever. Kelly certainly got her push because of her looks but she was getting much better in the ring near the end of her career with matches like this one being far more watchable than some of the disasters that the division had around this time.

Stephanie leaves John Cena's locker room. For some reason we have to see the Cena logo twice for the announcers to catch on.

R-Truth is annoyed about getting ripped off so Jimmy Hart of all people offers his managerial services. Truth agrees but realizes that Jimmy is named...uh, Jimmy, and freaks out. Ron Artest and his daughter are shown watching for a worthless cameo.

Daniel Bryan vs. Wade Barrett

Fallout from Money in the Bank where Bryan won by knocking Barrett off the ladder. Bryan doesn't have his Flight of the Valkyries (yes Flight, which was the name of his WWE theme instead of Ride) theme song yet and it's really weird to have it missing. Daniel starts in with the kicks and works on the arm as Booker talks about Daniel's diet.

Bryan fights out of a wristlock and dropkicks Barrett down before bending Barrett's shoulders around in a variety of painful looking ways. The running dropkick in the corner and a running kick to the chest, only to walk into the yet to be named (or at least not named here) Winds of Change. Barrett fires off his knees in the ropes and kicks Bryan out to the floor.

Back in and we hit the chinlock before Daniel escapes the Wasteland, setting up a running knee off the apron. Barrett's pumphandle slam doesn't work and it's time for the yet to be named YES Kicks. Again, those chants really add a lot. The guillotine goes on and Barrett gets taken down into the LeBell Lock, only to reach over to the rope for the break. Bryan gets crotched on top though and Barrett hits a quick Wasteland for the pin at 11:47.

Rating: B. I still really like this match as it's two guys beating on each other for the better part of twelve minutes until one of them can't get up again. Barrett was the bigger star at this point as Bryan really was just a guy in trunks at this point, albeit one with a huge upside. Sometimes you just need a good wrestling match without a lot of meaning behind it and that's what you got here.

The California National Guard is here.

We recap Christian vs. Randy Orton in a feud that has been going on for months. Christian lost the title less than a week after winning it and then wanted one more match. Orton eventually lost the title via DQ at Money in the Bank, setting up the rematch here with No Holds Barred. This is one of the best feuds in a long time and would have won Feud of the Year had it not been for Cena vs. Punk. It was perfectly put together and one great match after another. The two of them had chemistry together and that's the most important thing you can do.

Smackdown World Title: Christian vs. Randy Orton

Christian is defending and this is no holds barred but first the champ has a big surprise for everyone as he brings out Edge. After an insane ovation, Edge thanks the fans but reminds them that he can never compete again due to his neck injuries. He was kind of glad that he left when he did though because it opened the door for Christian to become champion.

Christian lost the title five days after winning it and then complained about it for week after week. He just whined until he got his way and then won the title via disqualification. Edge might have done some dastardly things in his time but he did it with some style. Somewhere along the way, Christian became a disgrace to himself. Edge isn't going

to help him tonight and leaves Christian all alone.

Orton starts hammering away in the corner and backdrops Christian to set up the circle stomp and a knee drop for two. They head outside but Christian is smart enough to run away from an RK0 through the announcers' table. Christian grabs the title and runs into the crowd but Orton easily catches him (hint: it's the guy in wrestling gear carrying a big gold belt) and sends it back inside.

The champ sends him shoulder first into the post (completely legal remember, even though you'll almost never hear it called a DQ in the first place) to take over. It's kendo stick time as we hit the standard street fight tropes. Christian misses a shot though and has to settle with an elbow to Orton's jaw. There's an interesting story here with Christian not being able to pull off the cheating but doing just fine with the wrestling. Orton grabs a rollup for two but gets caught in a spinebuster for the same.

It's kendo stick time again but Christian dives into a dropkick to the ribs to keep up the subtle story. Orton can't get in a stick shot either as the no holds barred rule hasn't played a big role yet. The elevated DDT is countered into a Killswitch attempt which is countered into Orton's backbreaker. He can't hit the Punt but Christian can't crotch him against the post as Orton uses his legs to pull Christian face first into the post instead.

Now it's time for the real weapons as Orton pulls out some tables but Christian gets in a shot from behind and sets one up on the floor. Back in and Christian goes up top, only to get superplexed down onto an unset table for a unique spot. It also gets a near fall but that's not as important. That table is set up in the corner but Christian has to counter the RK0 by sending him to the floor. Orton sends him knees first into the steps, only to have Christian send him head first into the steps.

Next up it's a monitor off Orton's head to knock him onto the announcers' table. Like any cocky heel would do though, Christian tries an RK0 but gets caught in the real thing through the table for a double KO spot.

Back in and Christian gets two off a Killswitch and you can hear the fans going nuts on the near fall. Well deserved too. With the table still looming in the table and another one at ringside, Christian opts for two chairs.

That's enough for Orton as he takes one away and cracks Christian over the back, followed by a second one to send the champ off the apron and through the first table. Orton brings in the steps and some trashcans but Christian avoids a stomp onto the steps. He can't avoid a powerslam through the table or a DDT onto the trashcan as this is getting brutal. Christian blocks the RKO with a kendo stick shot, only to have Orton hit another one a few seconds later to win the title back at 23:43.

Rating: A. I love this feud and the matches get better and better every time. There was a great story here of Christian being able to compete in the wrestling but being in WAY over his head against Orton, who has that evil streak in him. This started off as more of a wrestling match with Christian poking his toe into the violence but then embracing it full on, only to be destroyed by the more violent Orton. It's a great story with a great match to go with it and that's as good as it gets.

Video on WWE taking over Los Angeles for the week, including an Axxess.

We recap John Cena vs. CM Punk in a narrated video. Punk won the Raw World Title from Cena last month in a masterpiece, only to leave the company with the title immediately after. Cena won the title a few weeks later but Punk came out that night (good thing he just happened to be there), setting up a champion vs. champion match to see who really is the best man. Ignore the fact that they already established that fact at Money in the Bank when Punk beat him in the first place. Due to Punk leaving under Vince's watch, the Board of Directors replaced Vince as boss with HHH, who Punk hates in general.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. CM Punk

Punk is defending and HHH is guest referee. As expected, Punk is now a mega face and gets a big old pop, much to HHH's annoyance. Cena on the other hand is booed out of the building as you kind of have to expect as well. Feeling out process to start with Punk grabbing a headlock for that

horribly blatant spot calling. Punk was on a roll at this point but he was as bad as Shawn Michaels at hiding that stuff.

The dueling chants start up and sound even louder than usual, as they should at a major show. Now it's Cena working a headlock into an armbar before Punk hits a leg lariat for two. Cena takes him down into a chinlock as this is firmly in first gear over five minutes in. The fans tell Cena that he can't wrestle. True but at least he still is a wrestler and not someone who has been waiting two years for a UFC fight.

Punk finally escapes and puts Cena down for a breather, earning a loud CM PUNK chant. Off to a body vice as this match seems to be collapsing under the weight of the expectations from the previous match. Back up and Punk snaps his throat across the top rope to block a superplex attempt, followed by dropkicking Cena out to the floor. That goes nowhere so Punk grabs a seated abdominal stretch, only to have Cena power up into a spinning slam for a breather. Fans: "FRUITY PEBBLES!"

The finishing sequence is countered by Punk's headlock takeover but he gets caught in the ProtoBomb. Punk comes right back with an enziguri and a Koji Clutch (I love that move) which is countered into an STF which is countered into the Anaconda Vice (Not a key lock Booker. Learn your details.). That actually gets some near falls until Cena reverses into a crossface to continue this pretty awesome sequence. Punk gets to the ropes and sends Cena outside for a suicide dive to put both guys down again.

HHH, who has been a total non-factor for the first fifteen minutes, gets to nine but can't bring himself to finish the countout. Instead he throws both of them back inside and it's time for the big strike off. Cena takes over with a dropkick and the Shuffle but the AA is countered into a sunset flip and kick to the head for two each. Cena's sitout powerslam gets the same, as does Punk's middle rope bulldog.

A very weary Punk's springboard clothesline is countered into the STF but they haven't traded enough finishers yet. Speaking of finishers, Cena gets two off the AA. The GTS gets the same result with Punk staring up at HHH in shock. Punk comes up holding his knee though but drops the top

rope elbow for two anyway. Cena pounds Punk down but eats a running knee to the face, setting up the GTS for the pin at 24:08, despite Cena's foot clearly being on the rope.

Rating: B+. This match would be remembered so much more fondly if it wasn't for the fact that they had such a masterpiece just a month earlier. They had to try and follow that up and it just couldn't be done. The screwy ending didn't help things, just like having HHH out there for the sake of waiting on a screwy finish that doesn't seem to mean much since this is a night when instant replay doesn't exist.

HHH applauds Punk post match and raises his hand before leaving. Punk poses...but here's Kevin Nash through the crowd to lay Punk out. That means Alberto time and here we go.

Raw World Title: CM Punk vs. Alberto Del Rio

Punk is defending and loses the title to an enziguri in eleven seconds.

A quick celebration ends the show.

Overall Rating: A. This show is nothing short of excellent with only the Divas Title match being short of good (and seeing Kelly Kelly in shorts is never a bad thing). Orton vs. Christian is great stuff with a great story, the main event is awesome, Barrett vs. Bryan is a hidden gem, the crowd is white hot all night and the rest is all worth watching...until you get to the ending.

That's where the show falls apart as not only did the ending only make limited sense here but it would turn into one of the biggest messes anyone had seen in a few short weeks. Somehow Punk wouldn't get his rematch next month because he was busy jobbing to HHH in the main event of Night of Champions.

Oh and Nash? Yeah he sent himself a text message telling him to come out there right then because he wanted one more crowd reaction. That's how they followed up on the potentially hottest angle in years: Kevin Nash sent himself a text message and HHH pinned CM Punk, setting up HHH vs. Nash, who never fought Punk in this whole thing. Such is life in WWE, or

out of WWE actually and you can't blame Punk after all that.

Ratings Comparison

Kofi Kingston/John Morrison/Rey Mysterio vs. Awesome Truth/Alberto Del Rio

Original: B-

2013 Redo: B-

2016 Redo: B-

Mark Henry vs. Sheamus

Original: C

2013 Redo: C+

2016 Redo: C+

Beth Phoenix vs. Kelly Kelly

Original: C+

2013 Redo: D+

2016 Redo: D+

Wade Barrett vs. Daniel Bryan

Original: B

2013 Redo: B+

2016 Redo: B

Christian vs. Randy Orton

Original: B+

2013 Redo: A-

2016 Redo: A

CM Punk vs. John Cena

Original: A+

2013 Redo: B+

2016 Redo: B+

Alberto Del Rio vs. CM Punk

Original: N/A

2013 Redo: N/A

2016 Redo: N/A

Overall Rating

Original: A+

2013 Redo: A

2016 Redo: A

I think we can call this my definitive thoughts on the show as the ratings were almost identical in the last two reviews. Definitely check this one out.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/08/14/summerslam-2011-that-was-i-need-a-cigarette/>

And the 2013 redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/08/16/summerslam-count-up-2011-a-screwy-ending-isnt-a-bad-thing/>

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