

Survivor Series 2018 Preview

We're finally here and odds are the lineups for the matches have changed another 194 times since Tuesday. It's another year focused on Brand Supremacy and things are changing every day for the sake of...I have no idea really. This time there are seven brand vs. brand matches and a lonesome Cruiserweight Title match (the only title match on the whole show), the latter of which you would expect to be on the Kickoff Show so the whole show could be built around one concept. You know, because that's how you do a show like this. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Monday Raw Tag Teams vs. SmackDown Live Tag Teams

Raw: Bobby Roode/Chad Gable (captains), Revival, Lucha House Party, B-Team, Ascension

SmackDown: Usos (captains), New Day, Sanity, Good Brothers, Colons

For some reason this is on the Kickoff Show, with the likely reason of allowing the entrances to not eat up such a ridiculous amount of time. At the moment this is the only Kickoff Show match and I can't imagine that winding up being the case. These teams were literally thrown together over the course of the week and show how low the division is at the moment. How many of these teams really stand out at all?

I'll take the SmackDown Live teams, just due to the amount of talent they have. The Usos and New Day alone could probably take out the five red teams (you know the show shirts will be out in full force) in short order so I'm hoping that everyone at least gets a chance to have some ring time somewhere in there. This isn't exactly a match that interests me for the most part and that seems to be the case for the company as well.

Shinsuke Nakamura (SmackDown Live) vs. Seth Rollins (Monday Night Raw)

Yes indeed Nakamura still is the United States Champion and on Monday will have the longest title reign in over three years. I mean, he almost never defends the thing and is lucky to show up on TV more often than not, but he's still the champion. Rollins on the other hand is one of the top names on his show and someone who is likely going to be pushed as one of the biggest stars in the company now that Roman Reigns is gone.

This is probably the easiest pick of the night as Dean Ambrose is all but guaranteed to interfere here and cost Rollins the match, which is exactly what he should be doing. Nakamura has nothing going on at the moment and it would make sense for him to win here, if nothing else just to give him anything to do. Rollins is destined for the big fight with Ambrose and unfortunately what should be a WrestleMania match is going to be a case of sitting around waiting on interference.

AOP (Monday Night Raw) vs. The Bar (SmackDown Live)

Speaking of champions who you forget have the titles, we have the Bar. I know they're on TV almost every week, but it's not like this reign is any different than any of their others, which is the case with almost all of the SmackDown Tag Team Champions in recent years. Wins and losses, even for the titles, mean very little for them and I think you know where this is going.

AOP wins here as the fresh champions who shouldn't be losing for a long time to come. They're better, more entertaining and just flat out dominant. There's no reason to have them lose to the Bar, who are lucky enough to win half of their matches. You need to give Monday Night Raw a win or two here and there and this is one of their best chances to get on the scoreboard.

Brock Lesnar (Monday Night Raw) vs. Daniel Bryan (SmackDown Live)

Live)

Here's a great example of the card changing at the last minute. Allegedly Bryan won the SmackDown World Title on Tuesday so AJ Styles wouldn't have to lose to Lesnar two years in a row. You know, because taking the title off of him makes infinitely more sense than having him lose a non-title match via countout or something like that. This is the dream match that people have been wanting to see, though I can't imagine it actually working out the way people were expecting. Especially not after Bryan's heel turn.

Of course Lesnar wins here, because Lesnar is allowed to destroy everyone on the show not named Reigns. Why this is the case is beyond me, but it does look like we're coming up on Bryan losing to Lesnar a mere five days after becoming World Champion. It happened last year to Styles and it's happening to Bryan this year. And the title will continue to mean even less for some reason and WWE will seemingly not understand why.

Cruiserweight Title: Buddy Murphy(c) vs. Mustafa Ali

We'll take a break just after the halfway point with a match that should be getting more attention than it's currently receiving. Murphy won the title from Cedric Alexander in his home country of Australia back at Super Show-Down and now it's Ali getting another chance to FINALLY win the title. Ali has been chasing the thing since WrestleMania earlier this year and has become the heart and soul of 205 Live.

I'm going with the title change here, as Murphy is fine for a champion but doesn't need to hold it. He's the biggest and strongest guy on the 205 Live roster and Ali has been chasing the title for far too long now. Ali deserves to win it on the big stage and Survivor Series in Los Angeles would certainly qualify as a big stage. It's long overdue and winning it here would feel like an important moment, especially if it's on the

main card instead of the Kickoff Show for a change.

Monday Night Raw Women vs. SmackDown Live Women

Monday Night Raw: Nia Jax, Tamina, Mickie James, Natalya, Ruby Riott

SmackDown Live: Carmella, Naomi, Sonya Deville, Asuka, ???

Now we'll get to the deeper part of this with the score at 2-2. I'm not sure what to expect here but the interesting point is the mystery partner. While I'd like for the partner to be a debuting Shayna Baszler (Paige would still have some connections down in NXT for it to make some sense), odds are it's going to be Mandy Rose. After what Rose said last week on SmackDown Live, there's a good chance her team will turn on her for the elimination and put them at a disadvantage.

That disadvantage should be enough for the Raw women to win here. If nothing else, who are we to question the powers of Tamina? Asuka can take a countout or DQ elimination and the rest are pretty much interchangeable. I'll go with Jax and Tamina as the sole survivors as they need to keep Jax strong for her upcoming title match against Ronda Rousey, which is pretty much the only story in the division at the moment. Raw wins here and takes the lead for the first time all night.

Ronda Rousey (Monday Night Raw) vs. Charlotte (SmackDown Live)

And you thought WrestleMania was in April. This is another match that could be taking place on a huge stage but instead we're getting it here because Jax doesn't know how to throw a proper punch and knocked Lynch onto the injured list. Rousey is undefeated but Charlotte has a history of ending undefeated streaks after she beat Asuka earlier this year. Again though, there's a reason this one should go one specific way.

That way is Lynch, who is either going to hit Rousey with a chair to cost her the match or come out onto the stage for a

distraction so Charlotte can beat her. Either way, it makes sense for Rousey to lose here, both to set up an eventual Rousey vs. Lynch match (likely at WrestleMania and possibly even in the main event) and to keep the score even because...I'm not even going to bother doing it again. But yeah, Charlotte wins due to Lynch's interference.

Monday Night Raw Men vs. SmackDown Live Men

Monday Night Raw: Dolph Ziggler, Drew McIntyre, Braun Strowman, Finn Balor, Bobby Lashley

SmackDown Live: The Miz (captain), Shane McMahon, Rey Mysterio, Samoa Joe, Jeff Hardy

While I don't think this main events the show, you can forget about what makes sense for the sake of keeping the score even. I'm not sure where to go with this one either as you have Monday Night Raw on a two year winning streak, which should mean SmackDown Live picks up a win for the sake of a surprise. However, that might mean suggesting that Monday Night Raw isn't the most awesome thing ever and I don't know if WWE can live with that.

As little as it makes sense given the lineups, I'll go with the blue guys picking up the win. Baron Corbin will find a way to accidentally get rid of Strowman and you can pencil in McMahon to get at least one fluke win in there somewhere. It doesn't make sense given who is on the shows, but SmackDown Live winning makes a lot more sense than a third straight Monday Night Raw win.

Overall Thoughts

I've spent more than enough time complaining about the battle for Brand Supremacy but my goodness it's completely taken over the show this year with six of the seven main card shows focusing on it. The show could be fun with some elimination matches and as long as they keep the battling McMahons to a

minimum, things should be ok. What worries me the most is some stupid booking decisions in the name of keeping the score even, but I've long since given up on Survivor Series being a show that is meant to help long term storytelling.

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