

# Best Of 2019: Surprise Of The Year



IMG Credit: WWE

I bet you didn't see this one coming. As the name suggests, this one is about the best moment you didn't expect throughout the year, which could be either good or bad. It might have been a turn, a win, a result or something else, but there are a few options to pick from over the course of 2018.

Note that I'm intentionally omitting Roman Reigns' Leukemia announcement. The idea of a man telling us he has what could be a life threatening illness doesn't scream SURPRISE to me for a variety of reasons.

## Who's That Entering The Rumble?

We'll start with an easy one here. Every year someone returns in the Royal Rumble and it can be rather well done. This was Mysterio's first match with WWE since 2014 and it's really nice to see him back. He's healthy and is moving better than he has in a long time. That's the kind of big return that the Rumble needs and it didn't exactly what it was supposed to do: pop the crowd and give the match some energy.

There's something about Mysterio that is always going to work.

He's high energy and the kind of star who is going to blow the roof off the place every single time he shows up. The fans see him as a superhero with the mask on and while he did some good stuff in the indies (including Lucha Underground), he's the kind of guy who belongs on the big stage, especially in the twilight of his career.

### **Ronda Rousey Is Awesome**

Now notice the way I worded this. Given Rousey's background and love of the sport, I don't think anyone expected her to truly be terrible. She's a natural athlete and could just do judo/MMA stuff to get by for years. That's not what we got though. Instead, she showed up at Wrestlemania 34 in front of 65,000 people and beat the heck out of HHH (not so lucky with noted armbars defensive specialist Stephanie McMahon but I'll take what I can get).

Think about all the rookies that have shown up over the last several years, especially in the women's division. Sasha Banks was just a person, Bayley was a superfan, Charlotte was sloppy and Dana Brooke...has actually gotten worse. Rousey showed up, gets to fight HHH in her rookie match, and has taken to wrestling like few I've seen in a long time. That's a surprise if I've ever seen one, because she's great.

### **Daniel Bryan Turns Heel**

This would fall under the "SERIOUSLY???" category on paper, as Bryan is the biggest face since John Cena's initial push. Armed with the amazing YES chant, there's a reason why Bryan got pushed to the moon and back in 2014. The idea of having the fans book him sounded ridiculous, yet WWE not only went there, but made it work rather well. The explanation made sense and Bryan is NAILING the new character.

It's proof that you can indeed turn someone back the other way no matter how good or bad they are. Bryan was the cleanest,

most natural face ever and now he's this hippie environmentalist who you want to see get hit in the face. That's a hard character to pull off and yet Bryan is doing it incredibly well. I couldn't believe that WWE would pull the trigger on this, let alone have it hit the target.

### **Shawn Michaels Returns To The Ring**

This one ties into the winner, but there's something here that holds it back: I believed it could happen one day. Shawn retired back in 2010 and there was little reason to believe that he would ever come back. His retirement match was great and it came on the grandest stage of them all, so why would he do it again? Well when your best friend runs the company and the paychecks became what they were, you had to believe he could one day.

And then he actually did. While I didn't believe I'd ever see it, I wasn't actually shocked when it happened. It was in a tag match though, which is the kind of match he had mentioned wanting to return for. Yeah the match was bad, but it's not like it meant anything at the end of the day. It's going to be little more than a footnote in the history books, but there was always a glimmer that it could happen.

But that's not true with the winner.

### **Daniel Bryan Returns To The Ring**

I didn't believe it. I did not believe that this was going to happen and I didn't think there was any chance of it ever happening. And yet, somehow it did. Over the years, Bryan talked about going to one doctor after another and getting good reports, but not good enough for WWE. That sounded like the kind of thing where WWE would never say yes...and then they freaking said yes.

I can't believe that Bryan actually got back into the ring because there was no reason to believe it other than Bryan

saying it could happen. That's what the kid in Angels In The Outfield kept saying and this is no whimsical Disney comedy featuring Tony Danza. It's something I never thought I would actually see and yet it's been better than...well I can't say expected because I didn't have expectations. This was the surprise of the year, because I don't believe what I saw.

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