

Best Of 2019: Surprise Of The Year



IMG Credit: WWE

As wrestling fans, we like to think that we know everything that is going to happen in the sport. It's a nice sentiment but at the same time, it really isn't all that accurate. A lot of the time we're just guessing about what we think might happen and then get surprised when it does. Those surprises are some of the best parts though and that's what we're looking at here.

Kofi Wins

We'll get one of the biggest out of the way first because it was such an awesome moment. I don't think I'm breaking any new ground when I say how many people loved this. It was the kind of thing that you only see once every few years and it was one of the best moments that WWE has put together in a long time. The build was great, the match was great...and then they actually did it.

In the weeks building up to Wrestlemania, there was a glimmer of hope that WWE could actually pull the trigger on this but it was hard to believe that they would really go through with it. That's what made the moment so special: they actually did it, which made the pop that much louder. It's a great moment and I wish I was there for it, as this one felt special.

Firefly Fun House

You're probably sick of hearing about this one but sweet goodness it was incredible stuff. This one isn't so much about one individual edition but more about what the whole thing wound up being. It started back in April and by the end of the summer, it was the hottest thing in WWE and saw Bray Wyatt becoming something new and interesting. Then he wound up winning the World Title and not dropping it almost immediately. Who even knew that was possible?

What worked so well about this was how WWE actually tried something new. They ran with it for a change instead of having it die off almost immediately and that's a great thing to see. I can't shake the feeling that this is all setting up another Roman Reigns coronation at Wrestlemania, but at least we had something great over the course of 2019 to show us that this kind of stuff can still be done.

Bayley Turns Heel

Are they allowed to do that? I mean,...as the introduction says, it's BAYLEY. How in the world do you turn her heel? I know her heel run hasn't exactly gone well due to the haircut, being stuck with Sasha Banks (again) and the general mess that is the Smackdown women's division, but they got us with a great moment of shock when the heel turn actually went down.

The moment that made this was slashing the Bayley Buddies. It's the symbolism of the whole thing and that's why it worked. Bayley was one of the most innocent and fun characters you could have and she literally destroyed a big part of what made her who she was. It was great stuff and that's the kind of thing she needed. Now she needs better execution, but you can't expect WWE to be able to do something like that.

Dakota Kai Turns Heel

You can't really separate these two as they're rather similar

in a lot of way, though Kai's might have been a bit better. What mattered here was they set up a perfectly logical reason for Kai to turn but then they actually did it. That's the case a lot of the time with some big heel turn: you can have the setup done all the time but it's the big step of actually going through with it. They did it here and Kai sold it to perfection.

The reason that it clicked for me was how aggressive Kai was. She DESTROYED Tegan Nox at Takeover and it was a really well done turn, even if you probably knew what was coming in the first place. The turn worked very well and Kai sold it to perfection, which is all you can ask for in something like this. What makes it a little better than Bayley's though is how much better the aftermath has gone. That says a lot as Kai's hasn't been anything outstanding, but it's better than Bayley's.

Finn Balor Returns To NXT

I thought about putting NXT going to USA but the idea of WWE putting something on TV is hardly new. What is new is WWE actually putting in this kind of effort for NXT. Balor is someone who has main roster credibility but is an absolute NXT legend. That makes him all the more valuable to the new NXT because they're going to need some star power to go up against Dynamite.

Again though, it's a case of them actually doing it. We've talked about big stars moving down to NXT for a long time now and this time it really happened. Balor is someone who fits perfectly in there and has been a hit since his return. Above all else though it gives you the question of who else might be showing up, which makes you want to keep watching. That's kind of the point, and it worked.

But then, they did this.

NXT Wins At Survivor Series

I was there in person for this one and I'm still not sure I believed it happened. I know WWE loves this whole Brand Supremacy thing and it really doesn't mean much in the long run, but this was the symbolic moment that WWE had to pull at some point. Whether WWE wants to admit it or not, NXT is now equal to the main roster shows, but they went a step beyond that and actually gave NXT the win.

I would have put money on Smackdown winning the whole thing as it is the biggest show of the week due to the FOX contract. You could see them getting the win or maybe Raw just because of their history. But NXT? They really did that? I couldn't believe it when I saw it and I'm still not sure it really happened two months later. It was a great moment and genuinely got me, so well done on the Surprise of the Year.

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