

Summerslam Count-Up – Summerslam 2017 (Original): Hoss Fight Summer

Summerslam 2017

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Location: Barclays Center, New York City, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T., John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton, Tom Phillips

It's finally time for one of the biggest shows of the year as WWE takes over New York City all over again. This time around the big main event is a four way for the Universal Title with Brock Lesnar defending against Roman Reigns, Braun Strowman and Samoa Joe. The rest of the card is too deep to break down in short order so let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Hardy Boyz/Jason Jordan vs. Miz/Miztourage

The idea here is that Miz wants to be defending his Intercontinental Title against Jason Jordan but is stuck in this for reasons that aren't clear. The section opposite the hard camera is MAYBE ten percent full because we're about an hour and a half away from the start of the pay per view.

Jeff takes Axel into the corner to start and hands it off to Jordan to work on the arm. Dallas comes in and gets the same treatment, sending the Miztourage outside for a breather as we take a break (with empty sections of seats being shown on camera). Back with Jeff in trouble with Miz hammering away and working on the arm.

Matt comes in and throws some right hands but the Twist of Fate (with Matt shouting TWIST OF FATE) is broken up. Miz gets in some YES Kicks but gets sent into the corner, setting up the hot tag to Jordan. The suplexes send the Miztourage flying as everything breaks down. Jordan hits the running shoulder in the corner to Axel but Miz makes a blind tag, setting up the Skull Crushing Finale to put Jordan away at 10:31.

Rating: C-. Ridiculous looking non-crowd aside, not much of a match here. In theory you would have Miz lose the fall to Jordan here to set up the title match but it wouldn't shock me if they had Miz beat him and then set it up anyway. This match didn't need to happen and only served as a way to have some of these names on the card.

Kickoff Show: Cruiserweight Title: Neville vs. Akira Tozawa

Tozawa is defending after winning the title on Monday. The crowd is looking far better already with the section opposite the hard camera now mostly full. Neville, in white trunks for a change, gets knocked outside so Tozawa can do his shouting. Tozawa follows him out but gets sent into the LED apron as we take a break.

Back with Neville throwing on a chinlock until Tozawa throws him outside for a suicide dive. A hard belly to back suplex drops Neville and an Octopus Hold has him in even more trouble. Neville makes the ropes and cuts off a charge with an enziguri, only to get kicked down as well to put them back to even. Back up and Tozawa rocks Neville with a right hand but it's still too early for the backsplash. The superplex is broken up but the backsplash hits raised knees. The Red Arrow gives Neville the title back at 11:47.

Rating: C. And that would makes them 2-2 in 50/50 booking on the Kickoff Show so far. Neville lost the title on Monday and gets it back on Monday for whatever reason, despite having no one left to defend the thing against. I'm sure this is going to thrill the fans so far, now that they're at least in the arena.

Here's Elias to sing two songs, one of which insults Brooklyn in general and the other of which insults local singers. No match or anything but this is a thing that happened.

Kickoff Show: Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. New Day

New Day is defending with Big E. and Woods in the ring. Before the match, Kofi (in Red Lantern inspired gear) talks about New Day's history in Brooklyn, which is the first place they sang to the crowd and the birthplace of Francesca. Woods forearm Jimmy down to start and snaps off

some rights and lefts in the corner. A raised boot cuts him off though and we take a break.

Back with Woods fighting out of a chinlock before coming up with a dropkick to Jey. Jimmy pulls Big E. off the apron though and it's a Death Valley Driver into the corner for two. A modified Demolition Decapitator gets the same and we hit the chinlock. Back up with Woods getting in a faceplant for the tag off to Big E. as house is cleaned in a hurry. The Warrior Splash hits Jimmy and Big E. powerbombs Woods onto him for good measure.

In a real twist, Woods puts Big E. on his shoulders for a splash. JBL: "That's what you've come to expect from the New Day!" A move they've never done before? Jey comes in off a hot tag and a double spinebuster gets two on Big E. It's back to Woods who sends Jimmy into Big E. for a Rock Bottom/Backstabber combination and a near fall. Everything breaks down with the twins being sent outside for a dive from Woods, only to have Big E.'s stopped by a superkick.

The Superfly Splash gets two on Xavier but he's back up with a Koji Clutch on Jey. A Shining Wizard gets two more and the Midnight Hour plants Jey with Jimmy diving in at the last second for the save. Woods charges at Jey, who launches him over the top into a Samoan drop on the floor. Big E. spears Jey through the ropes, only to have the Big Ending broken up by a blind tag. Five superkicks and a double Superfly Splash gives us new champions at 19:09.

Rating: B+. Heck of a match here as the three people/teams who won during the week go to 0-3 on the Kickoff Show. I have no idea what the point is in putting the titles back on the Usos as they cleaned out the "division" in recent months, pretty much leaving New Day alone as a good face team. Breezango barely wrestles anymore and we've done the two of them vs. the Usos, but that's never stopped WWE before.

We get a KFC ad featuring various people auditioning to be the next Colonel Sanders. This cuts to the arena where Shawn Michaels comes out in a sleeveless Sanders outfit, dances around, slides over the announcers' table, and nothing else. This is one of the most random things I've ever

seen.

The opening video looks at every match under the slogan Go Big.

No pyro again, but let me introduce you to the ridiculous amount of commentary teams and all their equipment to broadcast live in various languages.

John Cena vs. Baron Corbin

Cena cost Corbin his Money in the Bank cash-in on Monday. For a change of pace, Cena slides to the floor and grabs JBL's hat while saying Corbin is shaken up. Back in and Cena's headlock is broken up with some knees to the ribs. Corbin's slide underneath the ropes into a clothesline gets two and it's time to yell at the referee.

A World's Strongest Slam gets two and triggers a WHERE'S YOUR BRIEFCASE chant. That earns Cena a chokebreaker as this is mostly one sided so far. Cena fights out of a superplex with a tornado DDT but the AA is broken up. Deep Six gives Corbin two but Cena comes right back with the Attitude Adjustment for the fast pin at 10:18.

Rating: D. I don't remember the last time I said this about a Cena match but this sucked. This was Cena getting beaten up for eight minutes and then coming back with a single AA for the pin (which NEVER happens). I don't know if Corbin ran over Vince's dog or something but he's been crushed in the last week for no apparent reason. This was really odd and a big letdown, at least partially due to time.

Smackdown Women's Title: Natalya vs. Naomi

Natalya is challenging after winning an elimination match last month. Naomi starts fast and knocks her outside, meaning it's time to shout a lot. Back in and the champ's leg gets snapped over the top rope and then over the turnbuckle for good measure. A suplex gives Natalya two, followed by a small package to give Naomi the same.

Back up and Natalya blasts her with a clothesline, followed by a Michinoku Driver for two more. The discus clothesline drops Naomi again but she comes back with a Russian legsweep. Naomi declares it GLOW TIME

and does her dancing kicks (the ones that make almost no contact) but Natalya pulls her down to the mat instead. Back up and the reverse Rings of Saturn is reversed into the Sharpshooter for the surprise tap out at 10:49.

Rating: C-. Natalya looked far better out there but sweet goodness this division is getting less and less interesting all the time. The longer we wait for Charlotte and Becky Lynch to be in the title picture, the worse this division seems, mainly because it feels like a big waste of time. This match should have been on the Kickoff Show or not on the show whatsoever, but that might mean someone doesn't make the card and that would just be unforgivable.

There's no Carmella appearance.

We recap Big Cass vs. Big Show. Cass turned on Enzo Amore for running his mouth too much (gee I'm stunned) so Enzo brought in Show to help deal with him. Tonight Enzo is locked in a shark cage and Show's hand is broken due to an attack by Cass.

Big Cass vs. Big Show

Enzo runs his mouth before the match and sucks up to Brooklyn, furthering his status as my least favorite person in the company. I don't think I need to explain to you why Enzo is really annoying but he's been even more so lately. Show slugs away with his left hand as Enzo runs his mouth about how we're going to work tonight while dancing in the cage, causing it to rattle loudly. Show hurts his hand on a missed Vader Bomb as Enzo is now jumping up and down.

Cass hammers on the hand and grabs an armbar for some psychology. The fans think this is boring as Show fights up with a left handed chokeslam for two. Cass knocks him down again and Enzo is taking his pants off. He pulls out some hidden oil and covers himself with it, allowing him to slip through the bars. Enzo gets down so Cass kicks him in the head but the big boot only gets two on Show. A second big boot sets up the Empire Elbow for the pin on Show at 10:28.

Rating: D. I don't remember the last time I couldn't stand someone as

much as I can't stand Enzo. Stephanie maybe? Cass winning helps a lot here and hopefully he can now move on to ANYTHING else. He looked good in his win and now he can move on to a fresh feud. Show is actually really acceptable in this role as he's just putting people over on the big stage and there's nothing wrong with that.

Daniel Bryan comes in to see Kurt Angle to say he thinks Smackdown will steam the show. Bryan: "It's true, it's true." Angle thinks Raw will be better and starts a YES chant. This turns into one heck of a YES/NO battle until both guys get winded.

Randy Orton vs. Rusev

Not much of a story here as Rusev wanted competition and Orton answered him. Rusev jumps Orton during the entrance and beats the heck out of him before the bell. Orton says he can go and it's an RK0 for the pin at 9 seconds.

That right there is the perfect example of why I can't stand these huge cards. This is obviously, and I do mean obviously, a case of cutting something for time. Why is it being cut for time? It's so we could have a Cruiserweight Title rematch and a six man rematch on the Kickoff Show. Neither match was good and both matches pretty much advanced nothing (the Cruiserweight Title match actually took us back in time) but they ate up time that could have gone to this match, which could have been interesting. Instead Rusev looks like an idiot and the match barely exists. Just don't put someone on the card. They'll be ok.

Sasha Banks is coming to the ring when she runs into Bayley, who gets booed while wishing Bayley good luck.

Raw Women's Title: Sasha Banks vs. Alexa Bliss

Banks is challenging as a replacement for an injured Bayley. They brawl into the corner with the fans booing the heck out of Sasha. Bliss hits the hardest right hand she's ever thrown but gets caught with a crossbody for two. Banks gets caught in the corner and faceplanted down to the mat. The New York fans are of course pleased with the woman from Boston getting beaten up, including having Bliss stand on her hair.

Alexa chokes in the corner and hits some double knees to the back. Some more choking ensues but Banks flips her out of the corner for a breather. Sasha makes her comeback with some clotheslines and a dropkick. Bliss tries a sunset flip out of the corner, only to have Sasha flip her backwards and head first into the buckles.

The Bank Statement goes on but it's way too close to the ropes. Bliss takes her outside and sends her hard into the barricade, possibly injuring Sasha's shoulder. Banks is back in at nine so Bliss is right on the arm, followed by Twisted Bliss for two. Some shots to the shoulder break up another Bank Statement, only to have Banks grab it again for the tap and the title at 13:17.

Rating: B-. Bliss did most of the work in the match and looked far better than I ever would have believed just a few months ago. This run has turned her into a completely acceptable worker, which isn't what you would have expected. Banks winning is the right call long term, but they did a pretty lame job of building the match towards the finish. Still though, best thing on the show by a few miles so far.

We see the Shawn Michaels KFC bit again.

Long recap of Finn Balor vs. Bray Wyatt. Bray seemed to think that Balor was a false idol and promised to destroy him. Wyatt beat him this past Monday and then poured "blood" over him for some extra effect. Balor then said that Bray had his demons, but he did too. I think you know what that means.

Bray Wyatt vs. Finn Balor

After Bray's full entrance, a voice starts singing He's Got The Whole World In His Hands. That means the Demon King returns for the first time since last Summerslam to easily the reaction of the night. Finn crawls around and Bray takes an early breather on the still smoky floor. Back in and Balor hammers away, kicking Bray right back to the floor. Balor jumps over him in the corner so Bray leans over backwards for a scary look of his own.

That's fine with Finn who sends him outside for a flip dive but it's too

early for the Coup de Grace. A suplex onto the floor knocks Balor silly though and we hit the chinlock for a bit. Balor pops back up and knocks him outside for a kick from the apron, followed by a Sling Blade back inside. Bray boots him in the face for two and declares that he has him. Balor gets in the shotgun dropkick against the barricade and throws him back inside for a quick Coup de Grace at 9:42 in another weak finish.

Rating: C+. As has been the case all night (and ever for the most part), it's such a waste of a match to do it once on Monday and then again on Sunday. Why should I care that Balor won here when Bray already beat him earlier in the week? Either way, this was hardly a great return for Balor, who was the most obvious winner in the world here. Bray loses on the big stage, again, and it's time to start his cycle all over again.

We recap Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins, which has very little to do with Cesaro/Sheamus. Ambrose and Rollins were tired of getting double teamed and teased getting back together for weeks. It FINALLY happened earlier this week and they were granted an immediate shot at the Tag Team Titles.

Raw Tag Team Titles: Sheamus/Cesaro vs. Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins

Sheamus and Cesaro are defending. Ambrose headlocks Sheamus to start and it's a blind tag from Rollins to set up a knee drop. A dropkick staggers Cesaro and the champs are knocked to the floor without too much effort. Sheamus pulls Dean outside for a Brogue Kick though and Seth gets slammed on the floor for good measure.

Seth grabs a Blockbuster for a breather but hang on a second as Cesaro is running into the crowd. He grabs a beach ball that a fan was batting around and rips it to shreds, drawing a heck of a YES chant. I certainly love him a lot more now. Cesaro suplexes Seth down for two but seems to have tweaked his knee.

Rollins gets taken outside for a double beating, only to have Ambrose come off the top with the elbow to put everyone down. Back in and the champs are clotheslined over the top, setting up the double suicide dives. A Hart Attack with a Sling Blade (not a Blockbuster Cole) gets two on Cesaro and the rebound lariat puts him down again. Sheamus gets caught

on top for a superplex with Rollins tagging himself in for a frog splash and a near fall with Cesaro making the save.

Cesaro breaks up the double bomb out of the corner and Dirty Deeds is countered into the Sharpshooter. Dean is almost in the ropes but Cesaro switches to a Crossface in the middle of the ring. Since that's not going to work, it's a powerbomb/top rope clothesline combination for two instead. White Noise is loaded up but Seth hurricanranas Cesaro off the top into Sheamus for the crazy save. A jumping knee to the face knocks Sheamus into Dirty Deeds for the pin and the titles at 18:35.

Rating: B. Heck of a match here with the ending looking great. That ending was a great touch as the Shield guys worked so well together. I'm not usually a fan of having two guys put together to become champions but it helps to have such a strong history between them. Now all they need is Roman as a surprise and things should be great all over again.

We recap Kevin Owens vs. AJ Styles for the US Title. They've traded the title in recent months but Owens blames his recent loss on bad refereeing. This meant Shane McMahon was appointed as guest referee, so Owens started bringing up Shane's history as a crooked referee and his issues with AJ. The question is will Shane screw someone over and who will it be.

US Title: Kevin Owens vs. AJ Styles

AJ is defending with Shane McMahon as guest referee. Owens jumps him at the bell and hammers away with AJ's comeback being cut off without much effort. The Cannonball gets two and Owens yells at Shane. A chinlock and backbreaker get two more on the champ but AJ says bring it. Styles wins a slugout and hits a belly to back faceplant for two but can't follow up.

Back up and AJ manages the Phenomenal Forearm, only to hit Shane by mistake. That means there's no one to count the Pop Up Powerbomb so Owens yells at Shane. As you might expect, AJ gets back up and knocks Shane to the floor by mistake. The Calf Crusher goes on and Owens taps to no avail.

Everyone gets back in and AJ forearms Owens down, only to get caught in

the spinning superplex for two. AJ comes right back with the Styles Clash for a close two. Owens grabs the Pop Up Powerbomb for the pin but AJ's foot was on the ropes and Shane calls it off. That means an argument and Shane shoves Owens into a rollup for two. The Pele sets up the Phenomenal Forearm and a second Styles Clash retains the title at 17:25.

Rating: B. This was too much about Shane and they're not exactly being subtle about the upcoming Owens vs. McMahon match. AJ retaining is the right call here as there's no need to put it back on Owens if he's going to be feuding with Shane in the coming weeks. It wasn't quite the blow away match I was expecting but it was a good, back and forth fight and a definitive ending, which is the most important thing.

Some fans won a sweepstakes and got to go to the show.

We recap the Smackdown World Title match. Jinder Mahal won the title in May in a huge upset and has continued to defy his critics ever since. Shinsuke Nakamura became #1 contender by pinning John Cena clean. There's also no Baron Corbin to cash-in his Money in the Bank briefcase any longer.

Smackdown World Title: Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Jinder Mahal

Jinder is defending and Nakamura is played to the ring by a live violinist. The threat of some kicks brings Mahal close enough to grab a wristlock, only to have Nakamura spin out and send Mahal outside. Nakamura says bring it on so Mahal gets back inside, only to get caught with Good Vibrations. Shinsuke is getting a little too comfortable so the Singh Brothers offer a distraction, allowing Mahal to pound him down and grab a chinlock.

Back up and Nakamura gets in a spinning kick to the jaw and a cross armbreaker but Jinder makes the ropes. Some hard kicks to the front and back of the head have Mahal reeling but here are the Singh Brothers for another distraction. This time it allows the Khallas to end Nakamura at 11:25.

Rating: D+. And Mahal retains to bore another day. I have no idea what's supposed to interest me about Mahal but it's really missing. Nakamura

might not have been ready to win the title but the Singh Brothers distraction into a Khallas is about as lame of a finish as there is in WWE right now. If he had a great finisher or something it would make a big difference, but sweet goodness this let the air out of the place.

We recap the Universal Title match and simply put, this is going to be chaos. Brock Lesnar is defending against Braun Strowman, Samoa Joe and Roman Reigns with basically a guarantee of pure anarchy. I don't think you need much more of an explanation.

Universal Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Roman Reigns vs. Samoa Joe vs. Braun Strowman

Lesnar is defending, anything goes, and he leaves WWE if he loses. Naturally Paul Heyman handles Lesnar's Big Match Intro and we're ready to go. Joe goes after Lesnar while Strowman and Reigns head outside. The first suplex sends Joe outside but Reigns posts Strowman to set up the first showdown. The first German suplex drops Reigns and Joe comes in to take the second. NOW it's the real showdown though with Strowman vs. Lesnar and the fans are way into this one.

Joe and Reigns cut it off though and we're forced to wait a bit more. The wait is only a few seconds though as Reigns and Joe are knocked outside and it's Strowman LAUNCHING Lesnar into the corner and clotheslining him hard to the floor. Reigns comes back in and clotheslines Strowman, who calmly shoves Reigns away. Joe grabs the Koquina Clutch on Lesnar but sidesteps a spear, sending Lesnar HARD through the barricade.

Joe Rock Bottoms Reigns onto the announcers' table but Strowman runs Joe over, leaving him as the last man standing. Strowman goes to load up the table as Graves hopes he uses Saxton as a weapon. A running powerslam drives Brock through a table but Reigns dropkicks Strowman down. Joe's suicide elbow drops Reigns so Strowman throws a commentator's chair at both of them.

Lesnar is getting back up so Strowman powerslams him through the second announcers' table. Fans: "ONE MORE TABLE!" Strowman obliges by turning the last table over on top of Lesnar, drawing a bunch of referees and agents to save the champ. Heyman: "N00000!" We get a stretcher for Brock

as Heyman is absolutely losing his mind. Lesnar is taken out and Strowman wants to know where the Beast is now.

Strowman picks up some steps and decks both guys but Reigns slows him down with a few shots. A shot with the steps has Strowman reeling and a third sends him outside, only to have Joe come in with a rollup for two on Reigns. Roman gets two off the Samoan drop but the Superman Punch is countered into the Koquina Clutch. Strowman is right back in though and a double chokeslam gets two.

The Undertaker chants start up and here's Brock again. Strowman gets taken down and a running forearm knocks him to the floor. It's Suplex City time with both Samoans being sent flying. Strowman, with a bloody ear, breaks out of a suplex attempt so Brock goes with the Kimura.

Reigns makes the save with a Superman Punch, followed by another one to both guys. A weird looking spear (Lesnar didn't really go backwards) gets two on Brock but Reigns gets caught in the Koquina Clutch. That's broken up by a Strowman dropkick (Cole: "Is there anything he can't do?") for two on Joe. The Pop Up Superman Punch gets two more on Strowman and Reigns is almost scared by the knockout.

Braun gets two more off the powerslam with Lesnar making a save. Lesnar can't F5 Braun but Reigns spears Braun out to the floor, leaving him alone with Brock. Joe is back in with the Clutch on Lesnar but Brock reverses into the F5 for two with Reigns making the save for his only positive reaction of the night. Three straight Superman Punches drop Brock but the spear is countered into the F5 to retain the title at 21:01.

Rating: A. I need a breather. You can tell they're setting up something special for Strowman here as he didn't take the pin, nor did he have anyone really get the better of him all match. Lesnar vs. Strowman is REALLY tempting right now and I'd love to see it happen at some big match. Like at Survivor Series or so.

That being said, WOW what a fight. These guys beat the heck out of each other for a long time and Lesnar looked incredibly vulnerable at times. It's amazing how much better these matches are when he's not the

unstoppable machine and it looks like WWE is starting to learn that. It was great stuff here and Strowman looked like a monster, which is all he needed to be here. The fallout from this is going to be interesting and Reigns taking the fall hopefully means a bit of a downgrade for him.

Lesnar looks like he just fell out of a building to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. The first hour of this show was awful and came as close as you can get to sinking what was an otherwise very good show. For once it helps when you have that much more time after the first hour to save things, but hopefully this shows WWE (it won't) that four hours is too long for a regular show. If you cut out some of the bad stuff, this is a classic. As it is, it's just a very good show with a great main event. In other words, good, but WWE gets in its own way again.

That being said, I really liked parts of this with the main event obviously blowing away everything else on the show. They have some serious options going forward, assuming they can manage to get Lesnar to show up more than once every few months. Strowman looks like the star of stars at this point and if they don't do him vs. Lesnar before the end of Wrestlemania XXXIV, they've lost their freaking minds. Good show, but it needs an hour or so shaved off to bring it to that next level.

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