

Summerslam Count-Up – Summerslam 2019 (Original): Time To Fight Monsters

Summerslam 2019

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Location: Scotiabank Arena, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Renee Young, Byron Saxton, Tom Phillips

This is finally the end of the parade of summer shows and we're going out with not quite a bang. The card hasn't felt the most interesting but that has been the case for a long time now. Since two matches were added to the Kickoff Show earlier in the day, we're up to a nine match card, which isn't the biggest lineup in the world. I'm not sure what to expect from the results but the level of interest has some work to do. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Cruiserweight Title: Drew Gulak vs. Oney Lorcan

Lorcan is challenging after earning the shot on Tuesday. Gulak dropkicks him in the corner to start and works on a wristlock before being shoved into a standoff. Lorcan does what he does best and chops away in the corner, only to get slammed legs first onto the ropes for two. Back from a break with Gulak holding a chinlock but Lorcan powers out again. The running Blockbuster gives Lorcan a break and they head outside with more chops keeping Gulak in trouble.

They head back inside with Gulak slapping on the Gulock out of nowhere but Lorcan gets a boot on the rope. The Cyclone Crash is broken up and it's a double clothesline for the double knockdown. Gulak wins a slugout and slaps Lorcan in the back of the head over and over, setting up the Gulock but Lorcan backflips into a cradle for two. Lorcan is ticked off and grabs him by the face for some shots to the jaw. Gulak gets knocked into the ropes but grabs the ring skirt, with the distraction letting him get in a right hand to Lorcan's throat. The Cyclone Crash retains the

title at 8:46.

Rating: C+. There was something positive to be said about the intensity here as these two beat each other up for a few minutes. A title change never felt likely here as Gulak can be a long term champion and Lorcan isn't the right choice to take the title from him, despite a hard hitting effort. This would have been fine as the only Kickoff Show match but since this is a big night, we need to go three times as long.

Kickoff Show: Buddy Murphy vs. Apollo Crews

Bonus match. Murphy hits him in the jaw for two to start and it's time to stomp away in the corner. Crews fights up for a big collision off the double crossbody and they're both down. Crews' enziguri sends Murphy into the corner and the standing moonsault gets two. The gorilla press is broken up and Murphy hits a Cheeky Nandos kick, setting up the running powerbomb for two of his own. Crews grabs a rollup for a breather and Murphy rolls outside. A moonsault misses and Murphy sends him into the steps....and here's Rowan to jump Murphy for the DQ at 5:41.

Rating: C-. Crews was just a means to an end here and that's better than having him do something of note. The Rowan interference makes sense and is probably only half of what we'll be seeing from the big Smackdown angle tonight. Murphy getting a spot in a story is nice, but they might want to let him get a win or two so people have a reason to care about him.

Post match Rowan destroys him while demanding that Murphy keep his name out of his mouth.

Here's Elias for a song because we haven't done that in at least a week. This time, the song is about how he knows he's in Toronto, mainly because local sports teams aren't great. Cue Edge of all people and in a pretty big surprise, he hits a spear to drop Elias. That's it, but it was a cool moment.

Women's Tag Team Titles: IIconics vs. Alexa Bliss/Nikki Cross

Cross and Bliss are defending after winning the titles on Monday. Bliss

is dressed as Buzz Lightyear and Billie has a Maleficent headpiece. As Bliss points her arm laser at Peyton, Graves lists off every Toy Story reference that he can while threatening to drop his Bliss fan club card. Cross comes in to beat up Peyton, who gets in a blind tag so Billie can get in a cheap shot.

The chinlock goes on as I try to get my head around Bliss and Cross as faces, even for one night. A jawbreaker gets Cross out of trouble and it's off to Bliss for Insult to Injury. Bliss stops to yell at Peyton and gets kicked in the face but Cross comes in to take care of Billie. Something close to a Widow's Peak gives Peyton two, sending her into a panic. Bliss punches her in the face to calm her down and Twisted Bliss retains the titles at 6:11.

Rating: D+. This could have been on any given episode of Raw but the Toy Story references made it so much more fun. Granted me being a die hard Disney fan might have a lot to do with that but why let it get in the way of a good time? Bliss and Cross aren't likely to stay faces beyond one night, but it's not like anything else with these titles makes sense anyway.

The opening video talks about how these moments don't come around often and you have to seize them. Tonight is about showing the world who we are.

We recap Natalya vs. Becky Lynch. Natalya won a title shot in a four way (which went on for nearly half an hour and was a complete disaster) and then went all evil/witchy in a rather ridiculous twist. Now it's a submission match with one hold against another.

Raw Women's Title: Becky Lynch vs. Natalya

Becky is defending in a submission match. Natalya has a Canadian flag for reasons of sucking up to the crowd. Becky knocks her into the corner to start and fires off kicks to the ribs as Renee channels her inner Bobby Heenan by talking about how everyone has been talking about this match. An early cross armbreaker doesn't do much good for Becky but she shifts to a triangle.

The referee accurately says Natalya getting to the rope means nothing so they roll to the floor with Becky being driven into the barricade. Some kicks to the leg have Becky in trouble and the fans are rather pleased with Natalya. A suplex sends the leg into the rope and Becky's kick is blocked for another snap across the rope.

Natalya gets the Sharpshooter while sitting on the top rope for a change of pace, even though I don't think it should count since Becky is halfway outside (which is different than a rope break). That's broken up and they head outside with Becky sending her into the announcers' table and then the apron. Back in and Natalya hits a superplex for the double knockdown.

Becky is up first and grabs a Sharpshooter, because that's how you get heel heat in Canada. Natalya kicks her into the corner for the break and grabs the Disarm-Her. With that not working, Natalya switches to the Sharpshooter but Becky crawls underneath the bottom rope. Back in and Becky reverses another Sharpshooter attempt into the Disarm-Her to retain at 12:25.

Rating: B. I was worried they might change the title there so it was quite the relief at the end. I'm over the stealing the Sharpshooter in Canada spot but it's something you just have to expect. The problem now is who Becky faces next, because she's pretty much out of competition on Raw, unless they let Bliss try to be a double champion. The match was the usual well put together Natalya performance but her lack of charisma is still staggering.

Trish Stratus is nervous and excited but she's a Hall of Famer for a reason and thrives on pressure. The hardest part has been the waiting because she wants to prove to Charlotte that the older generation still has it. If Charlotte is the Queen, she is the Queen of Queens.

We recap Dolph Ziggler vs. Goldberg. Ziggler has decided that legends are taking too much time as of late and superkicked Shawn Michaels. This was treated as a horrible moment so Miz signed to face Ziggler...tomorrow on Raw. Ziggler signed the contract without reading it and gets to face Goldberg here instead. Goldberg not having the best reputation in Toronto back in the day is just a detail that WWE doesn't care about.

Goldberg vs. Dolph Ziggler

Before the match, Ziggler says he's the best thing in wrestling today and is about to prove why legends are worthless. Goldberg's entrance is politely received at best, though the chants do start at the bell. A superkick gives Ziggler an early one and then another one but Goldberg hits the huge spear (with Ziggler doing the over the top sell that everyone was hoping for). The Jackhammer finishes Ziggler at 2:10.

Post match Ziggler says that was like getting hit by a baby and Goldberg doesn't have the guts to fight him man to man. Goldberg comes back down and spears him again, Ziggler runs his mouth again and gets speared again.

Big E. and Xavier Woods fire Kofi Kingston up and bring him a surprise: Drake....Maverick. Kofi isn't amused so he turns it into his usual fired up promo.

We recap AJ Styles vs. Ricochet for the US Title. Ricochet won the title from Samoa Joe and then defended it against Styles. AJ lost, sending him to a heel turn and reunification with the OC, who helped him win the title. Tonight is Ricochet's rematch.

During the entrances, we get the international row of announcers, complete with R-Truth and Carmella included in disguise as the....Australian Canadians?

US Title: Ricochet vs. AJ Styles

AJ is defending and has the OC with him. Ricochet is in a full body suit, complete with gloves (I believe it's Nightwing inspired). They start fast with Ricochet sending him outside and walking over the OC's shoulders for a running hurricanrana. Back in and AJ gets him tied up in the corner to take over with Ricochet banging up his knee. The leg holds and twisting begin but Ricochet is back with a spinning kick to the face.

Ricochet gets to the apron for a springboard and since he's Ricochet, uses one leg for a clothesline. The running shooting star gives Ricochet two but AJ knocks him off the apron for a baseball slide. Back in and the

fireman's carry backbreaker gets two but Ricochet manages an enziguri for two. The knee gives out again so AJ goes for the Calf Crusher, which is reversed into an Anaconda Vice of all things.

With that broken up, Ricochet manages a twisting suplex for two but has to take out the OC. That's fine with Ricochet, who knocks AJ off the top and, after kicking Anderson away, tries a Phoenix splash to the standing Styles. That's not the best idea though as AJ catches it in the Styles Clash to retain at 11:57 (that was a great looking finish).

Rating: B. Ricochet is a fascinating case as he does stuff that is ridiculous but makes it believable because of who he is. That spot with the one legged springboard just made me shake my head because of course he can do that. It just makes sense and that's not something that should work, but it just kind of does. I'm sure we'll get some kind of a gimmick rematch at Clash of Champions and that should be fine with everyone.

Post match AJ sends the OC after Ricochet, meaning this feud must continue.

The Street Profits are fired up with Dawkins taking his shot at hitting on Nikki Cross. That's broken up by a Ric Flair appearance, with the Profits being in awe. Flair and the Profits fitting together like a glove is both bizarre and completely appropriate at the same time.

Smackdown Women's Title: Ember Moon vs. Bayley

Bayley is defending with Moon being her handpicked opponent. Bayley takes her down to start and grabs a headlock but Ember starts in on the back. A seated bow and arrow has Bayley in trouble but Ember misses the springboard spinning crossbody. Bayley gets two each off a clothesline and superplex as they're still going pretty slowly. Ember sends her to the apron but a charge is caught in a front facelock. The twisting Stunner rocks Ember again and the Tree of Woe elbow gets two.

Bayley goes Chicago with the Billy Goat's Curse until Ember hits her in the knee for a break. A trip to the floor lets Ember load up the suicide dive, which is blocked with a forearm. Back in and Ember hits a super hurricanrana into a powerbomb spun into a Codebreaker (or close enough to

one) for two more. Ember's powerbomb gets another near fall but Bayley is smart enough to charge at the corner before the Eclipse. That means a super Bayley to Belly to retain at 10:04.

Rating: D+. This was just disappointing and felt like a bad Smackdown match instead of something that belonged on Summerslam. There was no reason for them to be fighting other than one challenged the other and that showed here. All of the mind games from the previous weeks were forgotten and it was just a bunch of moves back and forth with Ember showing some fire. Bayley just isn't the most interesting champion and this showed the flaws badly.

We recap Kevin Owens vs. Shane McMahon. Shane is on another power trip and Owens is standing up for everyone who is sick of him. Tonight it's Owens' career vs. nothing, because Shane is smart enough to not put anything on the line.

Shane McMahon vs. Kevin Owens

Owens' career is on the line. Hang on though as Shane brings out Elias as the special enforcer to ensure fairness. The chase is on early, with Elias offering a distraction for a near countout. They head outside again with Elias getting in Owens' face again, nearly causing a DQ because Elias is an official.

Back in and Owens hits the Cannonball but another Elias distraction lets Shane strike away in the corner. The fans tell Shane that he sucks as he hits some jumping knees and a Russian legsweep for two. A DDT gets the same and Shane strikes a Bret Hart pose (Velveteen Dream did it better last night and LET'S TRY THAT SHARPSHOOTER! That's countered into a sitout powerbomb but Elias' latest distraction means no count.

Elias throws in the chair of temptation with Shane offering Owens a free shot. Shane slaps him but Owens still won't bite so Shane hits Elias by mistake. A superkick into the Swanton into the frog splash but Elias pulls the referee out. Owens bumps both of them and unloads on Elias with the chair to get rid of him. Back in and the referee sees Owens nearly hit Shane with the chair but doesn't see Owens kick Shane low. The Stunner gives Kevin the pin at 9:29.

Rating: D+. The match wasn't very good but egads it's nice to not have to worry about Shane dominating a show or beating a former World Champion every time he's out there. They seem to have finally figured out that the super push was a bad idea and finally pulled the plug, though you can almost guarantee a rematch, maybe even inside the Cell.

We recap the attacks on Roman Reigns, plus Rowan being named as the attacker.

We look at Rowan attacking Buddy Murphy on the Kickoff Show.

Charlotte vs. Trish Stratus

The best of this generation vs. the best of the previous generation. The fans are behind Trish of course and sing O Canada for her as Charlotte powers things into the corner to start. A way too early Stratusfaction attempt doesn't work so Trish switches to a springboard hurricanrana instead. Charlotte goes for the leg so Trish kicks her into the corner to start some confusion.

They head outside with Trish hammering away (Fan: "I am very Stratusfied right now!") but Charlotte sends her into the barricade to take over. Back in and we hit the chinlock, followed by Trish's neck being bent around the rope. Charlotte tries a belly to back suplex, which is reversed into a crossbody for two.

That just ticks Charlotte off so she...adjusts her boot. Charlotte misses the moonsault and gets caught with a facebuster and some chops. Trish charges into a boot in the corner so Charlotte goes up. You don't do that to Trish who tries the Stratusphere, which is caught in a powerbomb, which is reversed into a super hurricanrana.

Just to mess with Charlotte, Trish grabs the Figure Four and even bridges into the Figure Eight for some good humiliation. A rope is grabbed but Trish posts her and gets two off Stratusfaction. Charlotte is livid and says this is hers as they chop it out. The Chick Kick gets two but Charlotte takes her down into the Figure Four. The Figure Eight makes Trish tap at 16:41.

Rating: B. Probably the match of the night so far with the very good storytelling as Trish tried to turn back the clock but just couldn't overcome Charlotte. They started slowly as Trish shook off the rust and eventually got back to where she could hang, but it just wasn't enough in the end. It lived up to the hype as well as it could have and was the first match of the night that felt like it belonged on a major show.

Trish gets the hero's sendoff, as she should.

We recap Randy Orton vs. Kofi Kingston. Kofi has finally gotten his chance at the top of the company, ten years after Orton held him down before. Orton says he sees Kofi as a fluke and is ready to take his title back. This has been the best part of the build so far because they've nailed the story by making you feel for Kofi having to work so hard getting here. Orton is trying and that makes him one of the better performers around.

Smackdown World Title: Kofi Kingston vs. Randy Orton

Kofi is defending. They yell at each other to start with Kofi getting fired up early on. Kofi knocks him into the corner but Orton begs off in a heelish move. A shove sends Kofi outside and Orton sends him into the announcers' table before taking it back inside for some hair pulling on the ropes.

An uppercut puts Kofi on the floor but he dives off the steps to knock Orton down for a change. Orton is right back up with a drop onto the announcers' table as the fans are split again. Back in and Orton slowly hammers away but a top rope superplex is broken up. That lets Kofi hit a tornado DDT and they're both down for a bit. Kofi's dropkick knocks Orton down but Orton does the same to the champ.

The elevated DDT is backdropped to the floor and Kofi hits the big dive. Back in and a high crossbody gives Kofi two but the second elevated DDT attempt connects. Orton takes too long to go for the RK0 and has to duck Trouble in Paradise. Kofi goes up but dives into the RK0....for no cover. Instead Kofi rolls outside in front of his family so Orton glares at them. Kofi snaps and beats the fire out of him as it's a....it could be a DQ or a double countout actually, though either one takes place at 16:24.

Rating: B-. This was rather slow paced and it made the ending didn't do it any favors. Next up is likely a hardcore based rematch at Clash of Champions and that should be fine. Kingston doesn't have much high level competition so having Orton win the title would make some sense. It might not be the most thrilling, but Orton hasn't held the thing in years and is fine for a transitional champion.

Post match Kofi unloads with a kendo stick and hits Trouble in Paradise as Graves talks about Kofi's greatest weakness being exposed.

We recap Bray Wyatt vs. Finn Balor. Bray has been out of the ring for about a year now but has been releasing Firefly Fun House videos, showing that he now has a split personality. The evil side is called the Fiend and attacked Balor, who demanded the match. Normal Wyatt warned him against this as the Fiend is hard to control.

Bray Wyatt vs. Finn Balor

Finn is all in white and Bray....has a lantern with a man's head around it and the light in the mouth. Broken Out In Love is now sung by a group of women and is even creepier than before. Bray, in the Fiend mask, runs Finn over to start as we get a YOWIE WOWIE chant. A clothesline to the back of the head sets up a neck twist and there's the release Rock Bottom. Bray looks conflicted and tries Sister Abigail but the delay lets Finn hit a Sling Blade. The comeback is on but the Coup de Grace is countered into the Mandible Claw to give Bray the win at 3:29. That was a great ending with Balor just going limp to end it.

Rating: C+. The match was a squash but the presentation was a complete home run as Wyatt felt like a monster and something other worldly ala the Undertaker the original Mankind. That's the kind of thing you only get once in a good while and Wyatt nailed it here. Keep this up and you've got a special monster on your hands for a very, very long time.

Post match the lights go out and Bray laughs, before we see a closeup of the Fiend. The lights come back up and he's gone as Balor doesn't know what hit him.

We recap Brock Lesnar vs. Seth Rollins. Seth beat him for the Universal

Title at Wrestlemania but then Lesnar won Money in the Bank and took the title back at Extreme Rules. Since then, Lesnar has annihilated Rollins and injured him pretty badly, but Seth is willing to fight anyway because he wants his title back.

Raw World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Brock Lesnar

Lesnar is defending and he gets PYRO. Brock goes straight for the taped up ribs to start and hits the shoulders in the corner. The German suplex is escaped and the Stomp gets an early two. Brock bails to the floor so Seth hits a running knee from the apron. Back in and Seth flips out of another German suplex. Two superkicks look to set up the Stomp but Brock reverses into the F5 for no cover.

Brock swings him around by the rib tape and declares it punishment time, meaning it's time to roll some German suplexes. They head outside with Brock hitting another suplex on the floor. Rollins manages to post him a few times and a springboard knee to the head connects. The top rope version misses and Brock hits the release German suplex. Heyman looking so happy is a great bonus.

The gloves come off and a waistlock goes on for a bit. Lesnar's charge hits the post though and Seth kicks him to the floor. Two suicide dives connects but the third is caught for a hard ram to send Rollins into the post. Lesnar can't follow up though and Seth knocks him onto the table, setting up the huge frog splash through it for the big crash. Back in and Rollins hits a top rope splash for two more, followed by the Stomp for the same. Another Stomp gives Rollins the title back at 13:26.

Rating: B-. Well I'm rather surprised. Having no titles changing hands until the ending was a bit of a tell tale sign, but I'm certainly not going to say that this is it for Lesnar. WWE likes going with this same idea far too often and I don't see that changing anytime soon. I'll take Rollins as champion over Lesnar though, just for the sake of having a chance of something fresh.

Rollins celebrates, with more pyro, to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. The ending helped but it was one of only a few things

that felt memorable about the whole show. Charlotte vs. Trish felt like a dream match, the Fiend is one of the best debuts I can remember and then you have the title change. Other than that, it was a rather lackluster show without much in the way of memorable moments. It's not a terrible show but it's one that people aren't going to remember beyond a few more days. That shouldn't be the case for Summerslam but maybe now we can move fully into the new era, which sounds like a very good idea after a long summer.

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