

Wrestler of the Day – January 28: Sheamus

We continue our international run with a stop in Ireland for the Celtic Warrior Sheamus.

Sheamus started training in New Jersey in 2002 but was badly injured and out of action for the better part of two years. He would get back into things in Irish Whip Wrestling, which I believe is the largest organization in the country. He would become the most popular star in the company and the first IWW Heavyweight Champion on March 28, 2005. This is a match from a bit over a week before that with Sheamus O'Shaunessy vs. Charlie Rage in Dublin.

Sheamus O'Shaunessy vs. Charlie Rage

WOW. Sheamus is 27 years old here, far less muscular and looks to be about 19 with no facial hair and hair longer than he wears it now. Rage jumps Sheamus during his entrance before taking him down with a headlock. The commentator is rather good here with a very clear voice and some fast analysis. Sheamus is nicknamed SOS here and fights out of a test of strength, properly called a Greco-Roman Knuckle Lock. A running powerslam (SOS Drop) gets two for Sheamus and Rage bails to the floor.

The fans are WAY into Sheamus as he pulls Rage back inside. We get a crisscross before Sheamus stops in the middle, points to the ceiling, and slaps the distracted Rage. Charlie tries to do the same thing and gets smacked again in a funny bit. The fans start an OLE chant but Rage calms them down with a low blow to break up a full nelson. Rage gets in an argument with the referee but goes back to Sheamus with a big knee drop for two. Sheamus pops back up and gorilla presses the rotund Charlie for two of his own.

A cross body gets the same and Sheamus says it's over. What appeared to be White Noise is countered with a rake to the face and it's off to the chinlock. Sheamus fights back but walks into a spinebuster for two. Rage tries a headscissors out of the corner but is shoved outside and taken

down by a top rope (told you he was different then) ax handle to the floor. Rage comes back with a delayed vertical suplex for two of his own before laying him out with a Jackhammer but Sheamus won't stay down. Actually he gets up enough for a Death Valley Driver and the pin on Rage.

Rating: C. It's not a great match or anything but you can see the star in Sheamus waiting to come out. He looked very confident out there despite being a totally different wrestler than he's most famous for being. Rage was a generic big heel but that's the kind of guy you have top faces beat up.

Sheamus' biggest feud in Ireland was with Thee (weirdest nickname I've ever heard) Drew Galloway (McIntyre) and I'd be missing a big piece of his history if I didn't include a match between them. From July 1, 2006 in Dublin.

IWW Title: Sheamus O'Shaunessy vs. Drew Galloway

Sheamus is defending and is the huge face here in Ireland. He looks FAR more like he does now with trunks instead of shorts, a mustache and short hair. Coming out to rap music is very strange though. Sheamus shoves him around to start and Galloway is quickly sent to the floor. Back in and Drew grabs a headlock but Sheamus counters into one of his own and takes him down to the mat. One sided so far.

Off to a front facelock as Thee (doesn't work when the commentator says it either) and right back to the headlock. Drew comes back with some forearms and backdrops Sheamus out to the floor. Back in and Drew puts on something resembling a Sharpshooter but instead of pulling on the legs he leans back and pulls on Sheamus' arms. The hold doesn't stay long and Drew drops a knee on the arm. Sheamus comes right back with a German suplex but can't follow up. Drew misses a middle rope legdrop and it's Sheamus with a backbreaker into a fallaway slam. There's the Death Valley Driver but Charlie Rage comes in for the DQ.

Rating: C. I can see why these two would have some solid matches if they had more time and a better story. Sheamus was starting to round into form here with the power game but he wasn't quite to the level he would reach yet. Galloway is the kind of guy that would have been a big deal if he

wasn't crushed all the time, but that's what nasty divorces do for you.

Galloway is declared the winner even though Rage pulled Sheamus off the cover.

It was soon off to the WWE for Sheamus as there was just nothing left for him to do but go to the big leagues. First up on the way to the big leagues: the minor league, meaning FCW. After doing nothing of note for months, he defeated Jake Hager (Jack Swagger) for the FCW Title. Here's a title defense from November 8, 2008 against Carson Oakley (Alex Riley).

FCW Title: Sheamus O'Shaunessy vs. Carson Oakley

Sheamus is a heel here with very tall hair. There's some confusion as to whether this is a title match or not but the announcer described it as one and it sounds better that way. Carson gets a few rollups for two each and hits a nice dropkick but Sheamus (in the shorts again) takes him down with a clothesline. Some knees to the chest and a backdrop have Oakley down as we might be in squash territory. The yet to be named Brogue Kick puts Carson down and a chokebomb called the Firey Red Hand is enough to end this quick. Total dominance.

Sheamus would debut on ECW in June and be on Raw in less than six months, taking part in a breaththrough battle royal with a group of people who had never been world champion (and Randy Orton) fighting for a title shot against John Cena at TLC.

Breakthrough Battle Royal

Cody Rhodes, Ted DiBiase, MVP, Mark Henry, R-Truth, Kofi Kingston, Sheamus, Randy Orton

Vince and Jesse are on commentary for this one. Vince comes out to the theme from SNME which is just awesome. It's great to hear Vince on commentary as he clearly loves what his product is and is a promoter at heart. Legacy stays in one corner and immediately go after Kofi. It's a big brawl but Sheamus stays in a corner to himself. Orton is on the floor but he went through the ropes.

Things slow down before they ever got going. I don't think Sheamus has had any contact with anyone yet. He was biding his time though and picks off R-Truth, throwing him out after a clothesline. Legacy works over Kofi in the corner and Orton is back in. Sheamus Brogue Kicks MVP and tosses him to get us down to six. Henry goes after Sheamus but Legacy makes the save for some reason. Sheamus is on the apron but gets back in.

Henry double clotheslines Legacy to the floor but Sheamus drills him in the back and dumps Henry. We're down to Orton, Kofi and Sheamus. Orton and Kofi hammer away on each other and Sheamus gets knocked down. Jesse goes on a small anti-Chaney rant as Kofi is sent to the floor. He skins the cat though and headscissors Randy out. Sheamus takes Kofi's head off with a double ax, knocking him to the floor to become #1 contender.

Rating: D. Very boring match but it was a great thing to see them really trying to push someone else as a main event guy. That was something that was badly missing at this point and pushing Sheamus was as good a move as they could have made. It gave them some fresh blood in the main event and if 2009 taught us anything, it was that Raw was dying for fresh main event blood.

After losing the title inside the Elimination Chamber, Sheamus lost his first singles match as part of the Raw roster to HHH at Wrestlemania because HHH. The rematch was a street fight at Extreme Rules. Earlier in the night, Sheamus had attacked HHH backstage.

Street Fight: Sheamus vs. HHH

HHH of course controls to start things off which is bearable I guess. He hits the spinebuster but can't get the Pedigree because of the arm being how hurt it is. Now this is more like it. He's just ramming HHH into the barricade over and over again. I forgot this is a street fight. That's not a good sign

at all.

Striker and King are arguing like no other here and it's coming off as great. Striker says he and Lawler have both wrestled hurt. That's rather stupid. Striker wrestled for what, a year or so? Just seems ridiculous to compare the two of them. And of course HHH has the energy to use a DDT with his left arm.

HHH grabs a pipe and smacks HHH in the head with it. Naturally he kicks out. Sure why not? Apparently after a massive Irish man blasts you in the head with a steel pipe you can kick out via instinct. Sure why not? Celtic Cross is blocked. Apparently that's called Pale Justice now. HHH gets a kendo stick and all of a sudden his arm is fine. That makes my head hurt. This has at least picked up a bit. Pump kick hits though. A second kick hits and it's all Sheamus.

Naturally he lets HHH get up and the third and fourth kicks land to FINALLY end him. And remember kiddies: do not attempt making yourself look that strong without a licensed wife with connections. To be fair, the ending makes this a lot more bearable. Post match he fights off a cervical collar and tries to crawl off. He's almost to the entrance when Sheamus hits ANOTHER kick to put him down again. Nice.

Rating: C-. The second half saved this match. The first half was borderline failure but the weapons helped it a lot. Sheamus winning is the right thing though, period. Yes HHH looked very strong, but to be fair he laid down at the end of the match and that's what counts at the end of the day. Not terrible but more about the angle afterwards than the match.

Sheamus would win the WWE Title back in a surprise at Fatal Fourway with the help of the invading Nexus (Sheamus didn't join them), making it clear that there was something to him. He would hold the belt until Night of Champions three months later but would be overshadowed by Nexus. After losing the title Sheamus dropped down to the midcard for a bit but

he had a fresh batch of opponents to face, including John Morrison in a falls count anywhere match on the September 13 episode of Raw.

Sheamus vs. John Morrison

I'm not sure why but this sounds awesome to me. It's Falls Count Anywhere. Sheamus beats him down to start but Morrison does some gymnastics to get out of it. We head to the floor and into the crowd. Irish Curse on the floor and Morrison is in trouble. He gets dropped ribs first onto the railing near the production stuff for two. It was in the ribs of Morrison so of course it didn't hurt.

Sheamus hits the Brogue Kick into a production box and it shoots sparks. Onto the stage and it's all Sheamus. Morrison counters something but winds up getting thrown off the stage. He does a front flip though and lands on his feet. Flash Kick with Morrison getting a running jump up to the stage and using the edge like a top rope, somehow only getting two.

They fight more on the floor and Sheamus finds a chair. He hits the stage but Morrison somehow gets up on the NOC sign and hits a HUGE cross body off of it for TWO. Out of nowhere Jericho pops up and cracks Morrison over the back with a chair for Sheamus to get the pin. He sits in the ring as we go to break.

Rating: A-. That's likely WAY too high but I had a blast with this match. I like this pairing and Morrison's stuff is literally the kind of stuff you see in action movies. The ending with Jericho is a bit annoying because I wanted to see more of this, but I guess Morrison vs. Jericho is your non-title match for Night of Champions. Find this match as some of the spots are just completely insane. Find the warmup too as it's cool stuff.

Sheamus wouldn't be done with Morrison as the two would meet in the King of the Ring finals in November. Instead of doing the same match twice in a row, we'll look at Sheamus' first round match against Kofi Kingston

instead.

King of the Ring Quarter-Finals: Kofi Kingston vs. Sheamus

This is more or less a semi-final match. Sheamus destroys him to start with power moves and the Irish Curse for two. Punk points out that he carried Kofi to his first title in WWE. A graphic on the bottom says Kofi has his own PPV Special all December. He's that big of a deal already? Really? Kofi wakes up a bit I guess to advertise the PPV, hitting the Boom Drop for two.

High Cross is reversed and Kofi gets Trouble in Paradise. The Irishman lands under the ropes to buy time though like a true former champion. Pendulum Kick has Sheamus in trouble. Kofi jumps off the top right into the Brogue Kick and is more or less dead to end it in about 4:30.

Rating: B-. I liked this a good bit here as both guys had the chance to look good. Sheamus looked like he was thinking out there which is always the best thing you can ask for. This worked pretty well and it gives Sheamus a credible win. I can't imagine he'll get anyone but Morrison in the finals but odder things have happened.

After a quick losing streak and meaningless US Title reign, Sheamus would toil around the company until July. Around that time Mark Henry was on a rampage and no one would dare stand up to him. One night on Smackdown, Henry was bragging about how everyone was scared of him until Sheamus came to the ring. With the three simple words of "I'll fight him", Sheamus turned face for the first time in his WWE career. The two would fight at Summerslam with Sheamus losing by countout but there would be a rematch on August 29, 2011.

Sheamus vs. Mark Henry

This is a rematch from Summerslam which they've played up about as much

as humanly possible tonight. Booker says he'd be upset if he had been here 15 years like Henry had and got disrespected. It really has been 15 years. It seems like at least 16 or so. This is what you would expect from these two: a power brawl. Sheamus takes over to start and then Henry uses his power to take him back down.

Henry steps on his chest but Sheamus fires off some right hands. That goes nowhere as Henry headbutts him back down. What would a power match be without the heel throwing on a bear hug? They keep up the idea of Sheamus trying to get some shots in but Henry is too strong. Henry sets for a gorilla press but Sheamus counters into a pretty nice DDT.

He fires off the axe handles and then the forearms while Henry is in the ropes. A flying shoulder block gets two off the top. Henry rolls to the floor and the fun starts. Henry pulls him to the floor and then sends him literally flying into the barricade. Henry loads up the announce table but Sheamus counters the Slam and gets a big old Brogue Kick to send Henry over the table. Sheamus slides in to beat the count at 7:33.

Rating: C. This was really all they could do here and it's the right move. They're even now and Sheamus has a reason to want another crack at Henry because neither has the definitive win yet. This was exactly what you would expect in the form of a brawl and that's what it should have been. There's no need to have these guys try to be something they're not and this match was watchable because of it.

This win set Sheamus off on the roll of a lifetime where he lost only eight singles matches (most of which were by countout or DQ) over the next year. During this stretch Sheamus won the Royal Rumble and beat Daniel Bryan for the World Heavyweight Championship at Wrestlemania 28. He would hold the title for several months, including through October 3 when he fought WWE Champions CM Punk in a non-title match on the debut episode of Main Event.

Sheamus vs. CM Punk

Non-title of course. We get big-match intros at least. Punk grabs a headlock and shouts spots in Sheamus' ear as is his custom. Sheamus puts on one of his own as it looks like we're in for a long match. Punk takes him to the corner but Sheamus kicks Punk away. The Smackdown Champion (Sheamus) pulls himself to the top but gets shoved to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Sheamus guillotining Punk on the top rope and stomping away in the corner, only to get pulled face first into the middle buckle. Punk drops a knee for no cover. That spot between Sheamus' eyes seems to be bleeding. Punk goes after the shoulder and hits a neckbreaker for two. Sheamus gets back up and starts speeding things up with a high knee followed by a powerslam for two.

Sheamus sets for the ten forearms in the ropes but Punk blocks the first one and hits a high kick for two as we take another break. Back with Sheamus holding his arm on the floor. The arm seems to be fine though as he snaps off a forearm and hits a slingshot shoulder for two. Sheamus loads up the Brogue Kick but Punk hides in the corner. The buckle pad is pulled off as Punk is pulled out and there are the ten forearms to the chest.

White Noise gets two and the fans are getting into this. Heyman seems to be praying or muttering to himself at ringside. Sheamus loads up the Cloverleaf but Punk punches his way out of it. There's a running knee in the corner followed by the Savage Elbow for two. The GTS is countered and Sheamus gets the Cloverleaf on in the middle of the ring.

Punk manages to get to a rope and Heyman is panicking even more. They both come out of the corner and Punk charges into the Irish Curse. Sheamus charges again but Punk drop toeholds him into the exposed buckle and rolls Sheamus up with the tights for the pin at 12:18 shown of approximately 18:18.

Rating: B. Good match here and the fact that there was as close to a clean pin as there was is amazing. Sheamus hadn't lost a singles match since like July but at least it was to another main event guy. For a

first match on a new show this was excellent and it was a very good match all around anyway.

He would drop the title to Big Show in October before going right back on another big winning streak. Sheamus would eventually start having issues with the Shield, leading to a six man tag at Wrestlemania 29 with partners Randy Orton and Big Show.

Shield vs. Sheamus/Big Show/Randy Orton

Surprising choice for an opener. Thankfully Shield doesn't come down from the upper deck of the arena. Sheamus and Reigns get us going and the pale one pounds away from one corner to the other. This is already longer than Sheamus' match from last year. A forearm puts Reigns down as does a hard clothesline for two. Off to Orton for the knee drop and some stomping. We get Cole's first error of the night as he says Orton won the WWE Championship at Wrestlemania 24 (he retained).

Reigns gets in some shots to the head and it's off to Rollins. That goes badly as well for Shield as he gets pounded in the corner and suplexed down. Back to Sheamus but Seth gets in a dropkick to the knee to take him down. Ambrose gets the tag and it's time for some evil double teaming. Sheamus will have none of that though and powerslam Ambrose down for two. Orton is ready for a tag but Show tags himself in instead. He rips Ambrose's vest open for the LOUD chop and Dean wants another one. Instead he gets about five in a row and a splash in the corner.

Dean actually comes back and dropkicks the knee out to bring in Rollins. A top rope kick gets two on Show and it's off to Reigns for some hard shots to Show's back. Ambrose is back in now, sans all of his vest and shirt. Back to Rollins as Shield is tagging in and out very fast. A running kick to the face gets two for Rollins and it's back to Roman for the chinlock. Big Show fights up with a belly to back suplex but Rollins takes out Orton to break up the tag. That's fine with Show though as he brings in Sheamus instead for some fast and hard hitting knees to the chest.

Rollins gets his own vest split open and there are the ten forearms to the chest. Ambrose tags himself in from the apron and there are ten

forearms for him as well. The Regal Roll puts Dean down and Sheamus hits one on Rollins as well, this one on top of Ambrose. Reigns breaks up something from Sheamus off the top and everything breaks down. Rollins dives through the ropes at Orton and slams his own head into the barricade. Sheamus is triple teamed in the ring but as Shield loads up the TripleBomb, Show spears them all down for the save.

Ambrose is the only one still in the ring for Shield as Sheamus is crawling to the corner. He reaches for Big Show but Orton tags himself in instead. The powerslam sets up the Elevated DDT and Big Show is ticked off. Orton loads up the RKO on Ambrose but Rollins springboards into the RKO instead. Reigns spears Orton down as Big Show watches from the apron for the pin at 10:34.

Rating: B-. Not as good as I was hoping for here but it was still a good match and a fine opener. This was more about the trio instead of the Shield, which is ok I guess but I'm hoping Shield gets to have their moment later on. The good thing here though is that Reigns got a 100% clean pin on Orton. It wasn't Shield picking the bones. It was a spear and a pin. That's a big help for the team and a good sign for them.

Sheamus would kind of lose his way soon after this and just beat up random people, including Luke Harper on the July 24, 2013 episode of NXT.

Luke Harper vs. Sheamus

They fight onto the ropes to start and Sheamus grabs a quick headlock. Harper actually runs him over with a shoulder and Sheamus isn't sure what to do. Sheamus comes back with a shoulder of his own to send Harper to the outside before dropping some knees back inside for two. A running ax handle to the face puts Harper down again as Wyatt gets out of his chair to shout. Sheamus sends Harper to the apron for the forearms but Rowan gets some as well when trying a save.

Harper FINALLY gets in a shot to Sheamus' back due to the distraction and we take a break. Back with Harper in control and standing on Sheamus' head. We hit the chinlock as Bray is looking much calmer now. The goat mask hanging from the back of the rocking chair is a creepy image. Sheamus gets back up and hits a tilt-a-whirl powerslam to give himself a

breather.

They slug it out and Harper hits a modified Boss Man Slam for two. Harper misses a middle rope splash and gets caught in the rolling senton for two. The Brogue Kick misses and the discus lariat gets two for Harper. Sheamus sends Luke into Erick and hits White Noise followed by the Brogue Kick for the pin at 9:45 shown of 12:15.

Rating: C-. Basic power brawl here and a way to make Harper look good. That's the cool thing about bringing someone like Sheamus in for a set of TV tapings: you can run a short term story like this but it takes so long to air the whole thing that you forget it was taped in one night. Decent match here.

Overall, Sheamus remains one of if not my favorite wrestler in WWE at the moment. The guy isn't complex and there's nothing about him that others haven't done before, but you can see the talent there. I remember once being asked who would be the Expendables if I had to pick from an all time WWE roster. Sheamus would automatically be on the list because sometimes you just need someone to kick a guy in the face. Even watching these old shows from Ireland you can see the star there. The guy has dominated everywhere he's been and will be a big deal in WWE for a long time to come.

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