

Joe vs. Punk II – Not As Good As It's Cracked Up To Be

Joe vs. Punk II

Date: October 16, 2004

Location: Frontier Fieldhouse, Chicago Ridge, Illinois

Attendance: 700

Commentators: Jimmy Ballard, Mark Nulley

I don't usually do ROH but this was a request. The main event of this show should be obvious. Joe is champion and this is Punk's rematch after a time limit draw in their first match. We're in Punk's hometown so expect the crowd to be rabid. The whole show is about that match and it's about 1/3 of the show so I wouldn't expect the rest of the matches to mean much. Let's get to it.

Punk talks about how his first match with Joe was a draw and the monster known as Joe couldn't stop him. He talks about growing up in Chicago and fighting every day when he was a kid, even when the bullies would come to his house and he'd be the one left standing at the end. This is his home and with everyone looking, he's going to be ready in his home town.

Generation Next (heel stable) talks about how Ricky Steamboat cost them their match last night against the Second City Saints (Punk's team). Austin Aries, part of the team, isn't here tonight because of the beating last night. Oh that's Alex Shelley talking. He has an I Quit match with Jimmy Jacobs tonight. The other two guys are Jack Evans and Roderick Strong and tonight they team up to face the Rottweilers (Homicide/Rocky Romero).

Davey Andrews vs. TJ Dalton

No idea who either are but from what I can find, neither have wrestled for any company of note in over four years. Andrews

was in ROH for awhile and Dalton was in OVW for awhile. Yeah that's all I've got. And never mind as two other guys run in and beat them both down about 20 seconds after the bell.

Their names are the Carnage Crew and their names are Tony DeVito and HC Loc. They yell about Mick Foley and how they're hardcore. I'm guessing this is leading to something later.

Delirious vs. Jay Lethal

Lethal is 19 here and is VERY young looking, probably because he is young. Delirious starts off with his usual insane stuff. Wait. DELIRIOUS WAS THE LIZARD MAN??? I heard about this for years about how ROH had a lizard man and it was Delirious? I've wondered who that was for years. Delirious hasn't won a singles match yet so this is a big deal for him. Lethal takes him to the corner but is knocked off and takes a rana for two.

They exchange forearms which is a required sequence in ROH. There are the chops and the W00s. Out to the floor and it's kind of cool to see them using handheld cameras. Delirious hits a front flip dive to the floor to take Lethal down again. Lethal reverses a rollup for two. Delirious shouts a lot but gets caught in a neckbreaker but catches Lethal coming off the top in a Cutter. That's not worthy of a pin though. Well to be fair Delirious is supposed to be insane. Shadows Over Hell (splash to the back and not called that yet) gets two. Delirious yells some more and gets caught in a dragon (full nelson) suplex for the pin.

Rating: C-. There wasn't much of a point to it but for the opener this was fine. Lethal would get a lot better and Delirious would get a lot funnier so this is one of those matches that would be much better about 3 years later. Nothing great here but they were trying and for guys who didn't have much experience, this worked well enough. Just not that interesting though.

Joe says tonight we've got a sixty minute match and all Punk

has proven is that he can't beat Joe. Tonight, Punk will fail again.

At this point on the card there's a match listed as Dixie vs. Matt Stryker (not that one) but there's no mention of it here. Maybe it's coming later.

Tracy Brooks vs. Daizee Haze

Brooks you know from TNA and Haze is currently too skinny to wrestle for awhile. They haven't had much women's wrestling lately since Alexis Laree left (more famous as Mickie James). They do some basic stuff as the announcers point out that they can be just as good as the men. A forearm gets two for Haze as does a missile dropkick. In a weird ending, Haze tries forever to get a Stunner and finally hooks it but Brooks totally no sells it and hits a clothesline for the pin.

Rating: D-. And no that's not because they're girls. It's because this match was really boring and the ending was awful. It's like they were supposed to be having a big match and in short, they didn't. There was nothing here that was interesting and there was nothing that made me think this was better than the Divas or what would become the Knockouts. The ending was as awkward as I've seen in a very long time.

Angel Dust vs. Matt Sydal vs. Josh Daniels vs. Trent Acid

Daniels is some indy guy that I've heard of and that's about it. Angel Dust is an indy guy known as Azrieal and had a one off appearance in the X-Division Showcase on Impact as Federico Palacios. Acid is an indy guy that died last year and Sydal is Evan Bourne and a heel here. This is called a survival match but it's one fall to a finish. Ok then. Acid is in the shirt, Dust is in the bandana and Daniels has the gold/yellow trim. Got it.

Dust is part of a team called Special K which I believe was a bunch of drug addicts. This is a fast paced match but Dust

loses a headlock for a second on Sydal in a bit of a botch. Acid sends Sydal (who I might call Bourne) to the floor and it's off to Daniels. I think if you go to the floor it's the same as a tag. Daniels sets for a dive but runs into a forearm from Acid. Dust tries a huge moonsault to the floor but misses everything.

The announcers have no idea who is legal here. Everyone is back in now and it's a big brawl still. A Blue Thunder Bomb gets two for Acid. I think it's Daniels vs. Acid who are legal but Dust tags himself in. Daniels is like cool man and fires off some kicks. Sydal comes in out of nowhere and tries a shooting star but lands on his feet. Everything breaks down and Acid hits a reverse inverted DDT on Sydal but Daniels hits a German on Dust and they're legal so Daniels gets the win.

Rating: C. Fun match but it was totally insane. The fans liked Acid the best and were MAD when he lost. Still though, this one got too insane and it was hard to tell what was going on at all by the end of it. That can get very annoying and it did so here. Not a horrible match or anything but it was too big of a mess to make much sense.

Chad Collyer/Nigel McGuinness vs. BJ Whitmer/Dan Maff

Collyer/Nigel have Ricky Steamboat with them while Whitmer/Maff have Mick Foley. It's the whole wrestling vs. hardcore jazz. Steamboat and Foley started to hook up in WCW but I guess they figured that one of the best heels vs. one of the best faces would make too much sense and therefore money so they bailed on it immediately. Steamboat asks the four wrestlers to get on the floor because he wants to talk to Foley.

The audio here is AWFUL and I had no idea what Steamboat was talking about for part of it. Ok now I can a bit. The fans are saying speak up. Last night Foley issued a challenge for this tag match and Steamboat says it's not about skill but it's

about the style the guys use. Steamboat calls it garbage wrestling because you use things like garbage cans in it. "In fact Mick I got an e-mail today from the Chicago sanitation department that says when your next novel fails they have a job for you cleaning up the garbage." BURN.

Foley gets on the mic and makes fun of Steamboat for being too serious and not an entertaining talker. Foley talks about Steamboat winning the title in 1989 right here in Chicago from Ric Flair (Chi-Town Rumble, well worth checking out). Steamboat may be the greatest pure wrestler of all time. I'm not sure "may be" is needed here. However, saying someone is the greatest pure wrestler of all time "is like saying someone is the greatest softcore adult actor of all time."

Foley defends hardcore wrestling because it's about toughness and giving it all you have. He wants to know how long Steamboat plans to ride Flair's coattails (even though Flair is a washed up loser). The fans are split here. Steamboat comes back with I know Flair, I've worked with Flair and you Mick Foley are no Ric Flair. Foley blasts Flair, saying he has a banana nose, orange teeth and looks like Barbara Bush in drag.

Steamboat says those were funny when Funk said them 20 years ago. Foley comes up with some new ones, like Flair says the same things time after time and carries Batista's bags and sucked up to HHH. Oh and Flair has botox. This is HILARIOUS. Here's the real burn: "I'm no Ric Flair because I knew when my time was done, I stepped aside for the sake of younger guys." Bear in mind that about three and a half years later Foley won the TNA World Title, although TNA was still pretty awesome at this point.

Oh hey we have a match to get to. Everyone shakes hands pre match. Ok so it's Nigel vs. Whitmer to get us going. We go over who has the best trainer in this and Maff is kind of left out in the cold. This is under pure rules, which is an overly

complicated system that means you have a limited amount of rope breaks and no punches. Off to Maff as the pure guys are dominating with a lot of arm drags in a nice touch. And here are the Carnage Crew to jump Foley and a brawl breaks out. Not long enough to grade but it was pretty basic up to this point.

Steamboat goes off on the Carnage Crew for ruining the match and even calls them a bunch of dickheads. Announcer: "STEAMBOAT SAID DICKHEADS!!!!!"

Ok so now the match is starting again but it's under hardcore rules. Well sure why not? It's a bit brawl to start and once they're on the floor Foley drills McGuinness with the mic. They're into the crowd already. The Crew is gone. Maff cracks a water bottle over the head of Collyer and McGuinness gets taken down by a chair. Ok so now we're into the ring and there are a few chairs involved. This is a total brawl and Steamboat is back now. Ok he wants it to be pure wrestling again. McGuinness gets all technical and such and gets a slick rollup on Whitmer for the pin.

Rating: C+. That's for the whole thing. Steamboat and Foley were by far the best things about this but I don't think that surprises anyone. The idea of mixing both styles was interesting but it needed more than it had here. The main conclusion I can draw from this though: MAN WCW was stupid for not following up on Steamboat vs. Foley in 92.

Steamboat rubs in the win post match.

Acid yells at Dave Prazak because he had a pin and says he feels like an outcast here.

TJ Dalton/Davey Andrews vs. Caranage Crew

Nice to see them following up on the angle from earlier in the show. The non-regular tag team takes over early with some nice double team stuff. And never mind as Dalton gets caught in a Doomsday Device as we finally get into a regular match. The

Crew settles into rhythm and beats the tar out of Dalton. Andrews comes in and fights back. He's one of the first graduates of the ROH Wrestling Academy. Not that it matters as the Crew hits a bunch of violent double team moves, finally killing Andrews with a double team middle rope piledriver. Total squash.

Rottweilers vs. Generation Next

This is heel vs. heel. It's a big brawl to start which leaves us with Homicide vs. Evans and you know Evans is going to start diving. Romero and Strong have a fast sequence in the ring and everything breaks down quickly. Ok so now we're into an actual tag match, in this case Strong vs. Romero. Romero is half of the tag champions but his partner (Ricky Reyes) isn't here tonight.

Strong finally shoves Homicide into the corner and brings in Evans to a moderate pop. Generation Next (I keep wanting to say Gen Me) double teams a lot and gets two off a double team splash in the corner. Middle rope elbow gets two for Strong. Strong Hold (Boston Crab) goes on but Strong walks to the corner on his own for some reason. Weird.

Homicide grabs a DDT on Evans to take over and bring Romero back in. Camel clutch goes on but Strong comes in and chops the back of Romero's neck HARD. See that's how you break something up: in a surprise and with something other than a weak stomp. The Rottweilers keep hammering away and Evans is such a tiny man that it works more effectively than it normally would.

An Alabama Slam into a slingshot into a backbreaker into a double stomp (there was some double teaming in there too) has Evans in trouble. A reverse double gorilla press sends him flying over the top and onto Strong. Evans finally avoids a swan dive and makes the tag to bring in Strong. Here's some double teaming with flips but since this is an indy company

the selling lasts all of 8 seconds.

A Steiner Bulldog gets no cover for the dog enthusiasts. Evans comes in via a springboard kick where the springboard and spinning weren't needed at all. Everything breaks down and Homicide hits a piledriver for no cover on Strong. Homicide kills (get it?) Evans but he's not legal. This is one of those matches where there's too much going on to keep track of. A top rope splash gets two on Strong. Strong fights back and takes out both Rottweilers with a Razor's Edge into a Diamond Cutter which lets Evans hit a 630 for the pin.

Rating: C+. Fun stuff here and Generation Next would become a huge force in the company in the next year or so with Aries winning the title soon after this, I think in December. I'm not a fan of this style as the lack of a story and the total lack of selling hurts it a lot. Either way, I like Strong and him being on the winning team helps somewhat. Not exactly bad but I couldn't get into it.

The Rottweilers want to shake hands post match and yeah they beat up Generation Next because they're idiots. Romero grants them a title shot post match.

Jimmy Jacobs vs. Alex Shelley

This is an I Quit match. Oh and for all the people that said Ryder was original for the one long leg and one short leg in the tights, Jacobs has him beaten here by about 3 years. They slug it out and then head to the floor quickly with Jacobs hitting a rana off the apron. Shelley tries to throw him back in and takes another rana for his efforts. Jacobs chokes Shelley with a chair but takes a spinning downward spiral into the barricade instead.

Shelley takes over and works over the neck of Jacobs because...well I guess he has to work on something. Oh ok these two are former partners. See how easy it is to explain that? "Jacobs has frustrated Shelley ever since this team split up."

See it's not hard. Back in the ring now and it's almost all Alex. Jacobs manages a clothesline and Shelley's head is rammed into the chair on the mat. That looked good. Or bad. I wonder which one it is.

Jacobs pulls a spike out of his boot which would become one of his trademarks later in his career. Shelley gets it away and rams it upside Jacobs head. "That thing has got to be 12 inches long!" That's what she said? Now the spike is driven into Jacobs' head and he's busted. A tombstone onto a chair half kills Jacobs but he won't quit. Here's a kendo stick which always makes me think of the things they put newspapers on at the library.

Shelley uses duct tape and ties Jacobs to the top rope with his back exposed. LET THE BONDAGE AND TORTURE PLAY BEGIN!!! Jacobs gets a low blow in and gets his feet up to his hands where he pulls another spike out to cut himself free. Announcer: "How many spikes can you have in a pair of furry boots?" Jacobs gets the stick and wears Shelley out with it and chokes away. A senton misses and Shelley beats him back and forth with the spike and stick.

Off to something like half of a Regal Stretch minus the leg trap and Jacobs is out cold. His hand only drops twice though and Jacobs fights out again. Something like a Killswitch puts Shelley down but Jacobs is spent. The senton (the backplash, not the bomb) hits this time and he wears Shelley out with the stick and puts the same hold on Shelley. Jacobs takes forever to set up a pair of chairs with a third bridged over it. And of course he winds up going through it himself in a brainbuster and then back to the Stretch. Jacobs shouts he's better than Shelley but gives up.

Rating: B. Pretty good and violent match here. When these kind of matches are on they can be very on and this one worked pretty well. Shelley is a guy that can be interesting when you let him do something other than being half of the Machineguns.

Jacobs would become a very interesting character who was mentally tortured by a lot of things. Cool match here.

Shelley goes off on Jacobs post match and Strong comes in to help with the beatdown. Steamboat comes out for the save. The Carnage Crew comes out and beats Steamboat down but finally Maff/Whitmer/Foley come out for the save.

ROH World Title: Samoa Joe vs. CM Punk

Punk is blonde here. The fans are split as Joe is the most popular guy in the company but it's Punk's hometown. They shake hands and here we go. It's weird to see Joe using power moves. The idea is that Joe proved he could go long distances and now Punk needs another idea to fight Joe. Feeling out process to start with not much of note going on so far. They go into the corner and Joe breaks clean to tick off the crowd.

Joe hooks a hammerlock and into an armbar. Punk takes him to the corner and it's another clean break, almost shocking everyone. Punk cartwheels out of a wristlock and Joe is like boy please and takes him down into a camel clutch. Man and he cranks on that thing. He's channeling his inner humbler. Punk rolls out into a headlock which he used a lot in the first match. They have a ton of time to work with here so this is fine.

In a nice looking move, Joe has Punk in a Pedigree position but they're on the mat and it's a submission hold. I like the plug from the commentator as he talks about the shopping site where there are DVDs and all that jazz. That's all normal and fine but at the end of it he says "Ok we got that out of the way. It's important but I want to get back to the match." I don't know why but I found that really refreshing.

This has been almost all on the mat or in a technical style and I'm digging it. Punk has used a bunch of headlocks here but the idea is he used that in the first match to wear Joe down and had success with it. That's some higher level

psychology and the announcers did their part by explaining it in like two sentences. See it's not hard. Even a belly to back suplex can't get the hold broken.

They exchange shoulder blocks and Punk is getting fired up. We hit the strikes and Punk speeds things WAY up, grabbing a rollup and Joe bails for a bit which stuns the announcers. Back to the mat game and man are they fast down there. After Punk chills for a bit on the floor he tries a test of strength because...uh....why would you try that against Joe? They fire off chops in the corner and while it's not exactly Flair vs. Steamboat it's not bad.

They go to the corner now and Punk walks the ropes to start in on the arm. Joe's arm gets worked on for a long while and now it's back to the headlock. This has been going on about half an hour now and it's pretty solid stuff, almost like a chess match. Out to the floor and of course Punk is in over his head out there. Joe is a big power brawler to go with his submission stuff here so he was really more like Benoit actually.

Over to the corner and Joe fires off some face washes but Punk avoids the running boot. Now Punk washes Joe's face in the other corner. Nice little touch there. Foley is watching from the crowd. Thankfully they don't cut to him and miss part of the match. A driving knee from the top (knee on the back of Joe's head and Punk drove him down) gets two. Joe grabs a very modified STF out of nowhere and DANG. They were up on their knees but then Joe bent him back so that Punk was laying on his back but his legs were underneath him. FREAKING OW MAN!!!

Punk goes up but Joe just walks away like only he does. I love that realism thing. Delayed vertical suplex (about twenty seconds) gets two for Joe. Punk goes for the arm but Joe cuts the knees out and hooks a Boston Crab. Joe fires off a bunch of kicks to the head but Punk fires off some forearms. Joe is like whatever and pops him in the face for two. This time Joe

gets the Facewashes and the running boot.

Punk finally gets a boot up in the corner and then a rana to the floor. A suicide dive puts both guys down and Punk gets control back. Punk, ever the jerk, hits Joe's Ole Kick on the floor. He tries another rana off the apron but Joe catches him in a powerbomb position and spins Punk around into the barricade. Now Joe fires off the Ole but Punk blocks. They slug it out on the floor and this time the Ole hits.

After a quick skirmish in the ring they go back to the floor....and the announcers walk off. They say they want to watch it as fans and say the match speaks for itself. Joe gets a DDT onto the apron and I'm assuming the fanboy announcers are pleased with that. Were they paying them by the hour and run out of money or something? Back in and a spear gets a very fast two.

We're at 45 minutes. A top rope splash misses for the fat man and they do the slugging it out from their knees spot. A snap powerslam gets two for Joe and it's off to a cross armbreaker. Punk just can't get away from that, even today. A big boot gets two for Punk. There's someone at ringside but since the announcers ran out for guacamole and gram crackers, we're on our own as to who he is.

Punk gets a tornado DDT and the Anaconda Vice which he lets go for no apparent reason. Joe takes over with a clothesline and follows it up with a pair of busters (gut and brain) for two each. Joe does his powerbomb into a crab into the STF into the crossface sequence. Sunset flip gets two for Punk as does a kick to the head. They do the whole exchange submission finishers and Punk winds up putting the Clutch on Joe.

That gets him nowhere and a double clothesline puts them both down. Two Pepsi Plunges are blocked into a superplex by Joe for a delayed two. Joe sets for the MuscleBuster but Punk goes insane pounding on Joe's back to break it up. Another Plunge

is attempted but Joe counters into the MuscleBuster...and that's the time limit as Punk is out cold. Uh...shouldn't the match end with Joe out cold and Punk needing 5 more seconds to win the title?

Rating: B. It's good, but the feeling I got here was "we have to have a classic", not "this was a classic". The first 15 minutes of this were all about the headlock and wearing Joe down and all that jazz, but it never went anywhere after that. The last half an hour or so didn't really have much drama for my taste.

The problem was they were going for regular moves instead of trying to finish. The problem with that is that you have Joe and Punk who have already gone an hour before and you know that's not going to finish either guy. This was reminiscent of Hart vs. Michaels, where a lot could have been condensed and the match would have improved a lot. It's still good, but it's not the epic classic that it's supposed to be.

They shake hands post match.

Punk is sure he can beat Joe but he's not sure if Joe can beat him. Punk wants a no time limit match. That match would happen and Joe would win.

Joe says that was your second and last chance. The job was to beat him, not survive him. He's right.

Overall Rating: B-. The show is good but other than the last two matches there's not much to see here from a wrestling standpoint. Steamboat and Foley are great and the Flair jokes are hilarious. I know someone is going to rip me for the Joe vs. Punk stuff and I have a feeling I know who it's going to be. It's good, but it's not the classic it's said to be and I'm sure the ROH bots are going to explain to me why I don't get it and I don't know real wrestling. Let's get it over with.