

Brian Pillman Memorial Show: They Must Have Really Hated Pillman

Brian Pillman Memorial Show

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Location: Schmidt Fieldhouse, Cincinnati, Ohio

As many of you probably know, Brian Pillman was a high flier who died in October of 1997. There was an annual memorial show held for him from 1998-2001 with proceeds going to his children's education. These cards would have the rare event of WWF, WCW, ECW and independent talent on the same card. This is the third memorial show which is both the most famous and the only one I can find online. Let's get to it.

This is a fifteen match card but I can find no footage of the first five matches. Odds are they weren't filmed.

HWA Cruiserweight Title: Shark Boy vs. Jamie-San

HWA is the Heartland Wrestling Association out of Cincinnati, which served as a developmental territory for both WCW and the WWF over the years. Shark Boy is defending and Jamie-San is Jamie Noble. The footage is pretty low quality and there's no commentary here at all. ECW/WCW goon Tony Marinara is with Jamie here for some reason. They trade wristlocks to start and Shark Boy gets two off an O'Connor Roll, giving us a stalemate. Time for some technical stuff with a nice little chain wrestling sequence leading to stalemate the sequel.

Back up and Sharky armdrags him down and Jamie bails to the floor. Jamie gets back in, only to be bitten on the trousers. Marinara gets the same and it's back to the floor for healing. Shark Boy breaks up their meeting with a nice dive but Jamie pulls him off the apron and sends him into the

barricade. Jamie is supposed to be Japanese but he sounds like a hayseed whenever he talks trash, killing the idea dead. Sharky takes a running clothesline in the corner but comes out with a spinning sunset flip for two.

Jamie kind of misses a middle rope dropkick for two and we hit the chinlock. Really basic stuff so far but it's not bad. It's strange to see Shark Boy as just a guy (who happens to think he's a shark) instead of a cult favorite. The hold stays on for a good while, which is a pretty big waste of Jamie's talents in the time they have. The fans are WAY into Shark Boy here so maybe the cult favorite aspect is still around.

The champion finally comes back by sending Jamie into the corner and puts him down with a facebuster. There are ten punches in the corner and a middle rope hurricanrana gets two for the champion. The Dead Sea Drop (more commonly called Diamond Dust, flipping Stunner off the middle rope) is countered into a reverse layout DDT (Christian uses it a lot) for two. Jamie misses a top rope headbutt so Sharky grabs a sleeper, only to be rammed into the corner, putting him in perfect position for the Dead Sea Drop and the pin to retain.

Rating: C. This was fine. The matches tonight are going to depend on who is in the ring as I'll be harsher on indy guys than I will be on big time talent. It's nice to see indy guys who have talent out there like Shark Boy as some matches from this level can be DREADFUL, which I'm sure we'll hit at some point tonight. This was a nice little match though and both guys looked solid in the ring.

Post match Marinara yells at Jamie and gets beaten up. I guess that's a Jamie face turn?

HWA Title: Chip Fairway vs. Race Steele

This is a tournament final for the vacant title. From what I can tell neither of these guys ever went anywhere. Fairway has a golf gimmick but

dresses like he belongs at a biker bar. Steele appears to be the face and is a well built short guy who looks a bit like Ted DiBiase Jr. in the face. D'Lo Brown comes out for some reason in street clothes holding what I'm assuming is the HWA Title. He talks about being a former champion and says he's going to make sure the best man wins.

They shove each other around out of lockups to start until Steele is armdragged down. The referee looks confused as Steele is sent down with a hiptoss. Steele comes back with a quick gorilla press and some bad looking clotheslines. They botch an atomic drop with Fairway stopping before he got to Steele and basically standing there so Race could do the move. Another clothesline sends Chip outside and Steele grabs an armbars back in the ring. A below average hurricanrana puts Fairway down again and he's looking frustrated.

Race sends him to the floor with a dropkick and Chip stays on the floor way too long. Steele hits a nice dive over the top to take him out but Fairway sends him into the post to take over. Back in and Chip gets crotched on the top but blocks a superplex attempt. A guillotine legdrop gets two on Steele and it's time for choking. Chip hits a sloppy looking Lionsault for a few two counts but misses a top rope elbow. Fairway stops a comeback with a jawbreaker but stops to yell at Brown. Steele hits something the camera completely misses for the pin and the title. Seriously I have no idea how he won the match.

Rating: C-. This wasn't terrible but it felt like an indy match. Steele had a decent look but he needed more to work with than an evil golfer. This also showed the main problem with tournaments: there's no story going on so there's no reason to care about the match. It wasn't the worst match in the world but there's nothing to see here.

Some guys including Shark Boy come out to celebrate with Steele.

Mad Anthony McMurphy vs. Cody Michaels

McMurphy, the good guy, is a taxi driver and comes out to Crazy Train. The fight starts on the floor with Michaels throwing him into the steel. They head inside for a few seconds but Cody throws him right back outside. Michaels is going nuts so I'm guessing there's some hatred here. Cody dives off the top to the floor to take out McMurphy before getting two with his feet on the ropes.

McMurphy tries to get a comeback going but gets tripped throat first into the ropes. A small package gets two for Anthony and a leg lariat gets the same. McMurphy gets two off a vertical suplex and a middle rope elbow but a terrible looking reverse DDT (so bad that it wound up as a regular DDT) gets Cody a breather. McMurphy comes back with something resembling a Rough Ryder for two but gets crotched on top. Not that it matters as he shoves Steele down and hits a top rope sunset flip for the pin.

Rating: D+. These matches are getting progressively worse as the show goes on. This wasn't the worst match in the world but neither guy had anything special going for them at all. There was a nice start to the match with Michaels looking strong but after that it was just two guys doing moves to each other.

Dr. Tom Pritchard vs. Tim Horner

Pretty odd choice here. Pritchard is a WWF agent and used to be a tag team wrestler in the Heavenly Bodies in SMW and the WWF. Tim Horner was part of a low level tag team called the Lightning Express with Brad Armstrong back in the 80s and then was a jobber in WCW in the 90s. This is one of the dangers of indy shows: you have to get ANYBODY you can to fill in a card. Missy Hyatt is with Horner here for no apparent reason.

Feeling out process to start with neither guy getting anywhere. They trade hammerlocks in a short chain wrestling sequence leading to a stalemate. Horner grabs an armbar but Pritchard takes him into the corner for some chops, only to be taken right back down into the armbar. Tom takes him down with a test of strength and keeps him there with a kick to

the ribs. So Pritchard is the heel. Good to know.

Back up and Horner snapmares him down for two but Pritchard hooks one of his own and we hit the chinlock. This is really dull stuff so far. Pritchard throws him to the floor and gets two off a suplex back inside. Back to the chinlock as the match somehow drags even worse. Now to really mix things up, Tom throws him out to the floor. Pritchard picks him up but gets caught in a sunset flip for the pin.

Rating: D-. This felt like two rookies doing wrestling drills instead of a match between two interesting guys. Both guys looked old and out of place on a show like this but again that's one of the problems with a show like this. Absolutely terrible here though and I have no idea why these two were put out there against each other.

Harris Brothers vs. Kidman/Disco Inferno

Everyone is an active wrestler from this point on. At least Kidman has Torrie with him here for some eye candy. Sean Casey of the Cincinnati Reds is guest referee for no apparent reason. Kidman starts with we'll say Ron Harris. We open with a lot of stalling before Ron (in an NWO shirt) shoves Kidman down with ease. Back up and Kidman dropkicks him to the outside for another stop in the action.

Off to Disco vs. Don Harris with the big man being taken down by the arm. Back up and Disco walks into a Boss Man Slam for two, only to be taken down by a bulldog. Ron comes in again and charges into a boot of the now legal Kidman. The heel twins finally cheat to take over and it's Kidman playing Ricky Morton. Ron works over the back but misses a charge into the corner, allowing for the hot tag to Disco. Everything breaks down and Kidman turns on Disco for no apparent reason, allowing the Brothers to hit an H Bomb (kind of a double belly to back suplex/powerbomb) for the pin.

Rating: D. Another nothing match here with a pointless heel turn. It's a

one off show guys, did you really need to throw in something like that? The match had a basic story of power vs. speed to it but the Harris Brothers weren't interesting enough to get us anywhere as a power brawling team. Bad match.

Casey beats up Charles Robinson, again for no apparent reason.

Hugh G. Rection vs. Vampiro

There's no contact in the first minute. Rection is holding his leg for some reason. They lock up seventy five seconds into the match and Rection hits a shoulder block to take Vampiro down. Back up and Vampiro fires off some kicks to send Rection to the floor, followed by a big dive over the top. After some brawling that we can't see, Vampiro is sent into the barricade and chopped into the crowd.

Again we can't see a thing and it's even worse than some ECW shows I've seen. The fans are really impressed by something but the screen is pretty much black. Now the fans tell someone that they screwed something up and the lights come on enough to see Rection being thrown through a table. They FINALLY head back into the ring and Rection misses the moonsault allowing Vampiro to hit the Nail in the Coffin (Michinoku Driver) for the pin.

Rating: N/A. I can't rate a match I could barely see. There was literally nothing to see here at times with the "action" being nothing of note. Vampiro is one of those guys that I never got the appeal of but he certainly has his fans. Rection (Bill DeMott) was probably at the peak of his career around this time, which isn't saying much.

Chris Benoit vs. Steven Regal

That would of course be William Regal and this is the only reason to watch this show. Benoit has only been in the WWF about four months at

this point so he's still a big deal. Feeling out process to start with Benoit taking him into the corner and firing off right hands. Chris cranks on the arm a bit and Regal can't roll free. Instead he grabs a wristlock of his own and cranks on the Canadian's arm as we're still in the technical portion of the match.

They go to a test of strength grip with Benoit on the mat and Regal drops a hard knee to the chest. They keep the grip and Benoit nips up before headbutting Regal away. A hard dropkick and an enziguri send Regal to the floor but he avoids a baseball slide and kicks Benoit in the face. They head to the apron with Chris DDTing him down onto the edge of the ring.

Back in and Benoit suplexes him down for two but Regal trips him up and cranks on a chinlock while laying on Benoit's back. Think an STF minus the leg lock. Benoit makes it over to the ropes for the break so Regal dropkicks him down for no cover. Regal hooks a seated surfboard stretch but reaches up to hook a dragon sleeper at the same time. I haven't used this in awhile but FREAKING OW MAN!

Benoit elbows out of it and chops the tar out of Regal but Steven kicks him in the chest to put him back down. Back up and Benoit tries to roll some Germans but Regal elbows his way out. Regal tries a butterfly suplex but Benoit is all like "YOU DARE FIGHT MY SUPLEXES???" and hits another German. Benoit can't follow up though and Regal takes him to the top for a butterfly superplex for two.

Regal is sent into the corner but they ram heads, giving Benoit two. Regal may be busted open. A pair of rollups only get two on Benoit so Regal fires off even more forearms. Benoit counters a tombstone into one of his own but the Swan Dive misses. Back up again and a dragon suplex gets two for Benoit but the Crossface ends Regal a second later.

Rating: A-. This match got Regal a job in the WWF and it's not hard to see why. This was a very physical match with both guys looking great out there. Until this point, Regal has mainly been known as the blue blood

who could have good matches at times but would usually be there as a jobber. REALLY good match here and worth seeing if you've never seen it. I believe it's on Benoit's DVD.

Post match Benoit praises Regal for the match.

Here's Shane Douglas with something to say. Gee, I wonder if he's going to complain about something. He says he would have been here last year but someone kept him away by pulling strings. Now on to Shane's favorite topic of hatred: Ric Flair, who apparently is the cause of all of Shane's problems.

Shane rants about Hulk Hogan causing every problem in wrestling and about how people like Lex Luger have turned WCW into their own playground. What does ANY of this have to do with Brian Pillman? He talks about Diamond Dallas Page and Page's wife Kimberly, drawing out Page himself. Shane hits him low and stomps Page down but Page comes back and hits a Diamond Cutter before counting the three himself. Shane, ever the gentleman, dedicates the beating he took to Pillman.

ECW World Title: Raven vs. Justin Credible

Raven is challenging. Before the match Justin brags about how awesome he is so Raven says Justin still sucks to get us going. Ten punches in the corner have Credible in trouble and Raven throws him over the top to the floor. Some shots with a stool have Justin screaming and we head back inside, only to have Raven throw him back to the floor. Into the crowd now as is required in an ECW match but thankfully we can see a bit better than the Vampiro stuff.

Justin is thrown through some chairs and we head back to the ring with Raven in full control. A chair is brought in and Justin hooks a drop toehold to send Raven face first into the steel. Back to the floor as Justin flips off the crowd and sends Raven into the barricade. Again, what any of this has to do with Brian Pillman is beyond me. Bird Boy

comes back with right hands but gets caught in a chinlock back inside.

That's too boring for Credible though so he slams Raven down onto the chair and sets up a table at ringside. Back in and Justin puts on a sleeper but Raven sends him through the ropes and onto the table which doesn't break. Raven hits a knee to the head but walks into a superkick for two. A low blow and a rollup get two for the champion and That's Incredible (tombstone, Justin's finisher) gets the same. The chair is set up again but this time it's Justin being sent face first into it for two. Not that it matters as another tombstone retains the title.

Rating: D. If there was a point to Justin Credible I'm not sure what it was. I never saw anything special in him but Heyman would not let him fall down the card no matter what. The match was pretty much junk but that goes without saying for most ECW matches. By this point the company was pretty much done and the dying days were much more dull than bad.

Eddie Guerrero vs. D'Lo Brown

Both guys have a Cincinnati Red with them. Before the match, Eddie and his Red Dmitri Young talk some trash that the audio barely picks up. Apparently Eddie is mad at Brown for using the frog splash without his permission. It's better than no story at all. Brown comes out with Danny Graves who does the D'Lo head shake in a funny bit. Brown and Graves have their own trash talking which I can't understand either. Eddie dropkicks Brown while he's talking and we're ready to go.

They fight over a top wristlock and D'Lo knocks him over with a shoulder (Brown: "YOU SUCK!") before they botch a slide underneath spot. Brown slams him down and stomps away while shouting to the crowd a lot. I think Brown is the good guy here but it's not entirely clear. A HARD chop to Eddie's chest makes the crowd inhale but he comes back with a snap suplex. Brown rolls away from the Frog Splash and slams Eddie down, only to be crotched while loading up the Low Down. A superplex puts D'Lo down but Eddie can't follow up. D'Lo rolls to the floor and here's Dean

Malenko to jump Guerrero for the DQ.

Rating: D. Well that happened. Seriously there isn't much else to say about this one. I liked the idea of the battle of the frog splashes but it was better when it was RVD instead of Eddie. The best part of this match was Graves doing the head shake and that was before the bell ever rang. Nothing to see here.

Eddie comes back on Dean until Perry Saturn runs in to help Malenko. Brown makes the save and, after about three minutes of taunting from Eddie and Brown, it's a tag match.

Eddie Guerrero/D'Lo Brown vs. Dean Malenko/Perry Saturn

D'Lo punches Saturn to the floor to start as Dean and Perry are definitely the heels here. Now Dean and Brown stare at each other so D'Lo brings in Eddie. Eddie dropkicks him down but gets caught in the heel corner to give Dean control. Saturn slams Guerrero down for two and we hit a chinlock maybe ninety seconds into the match. Eddie fights up and makes the tag to Brown, setting up a VERY awkward looking sequence as Saturn and Brown miss each other several times until Saturn finally connects with a clothesline. It looked like they're on different planets instead of in the same ring.

Thankfully Dean comes in to settle things down but a few seconds later it's back to Saturn for some arm work. Saturn hooks a short arm scissors but Brown does the traditional power lift to escape. Back to Dean for a kick in the back and the leg lariat to put D'Lo down. The Radicalz work over the arm for a good while until Eddie comes in sans tag and dropkicks Saturn.

Not that it matters as the arm work continues but I guess Guerrero was getting bored. D'Lo finally hooks a neckbreaker to put Dean down and the hot tag brings in Eddie. The cameraman seems to trip as we keep getting shots of the mat instead of the action. Everything breaks down and Saturn

accidentally kicks Dean, setting up the Low Down for the pin.

Rating: D-. Oh my this was bad. I don't know what the deal was with Saturn and Brown but it looked like some horribly bad amateur stuff instead of two former champions. This match had no flow to it at all and was a near disaster. Eddie looked ok and that's about all there is to say about the match.

Overall Rating: D. The first two matches are watchable, but the rest of the show (minus the classic of course) is DREADFUL. I have no idea what kind of a tribute this was supposed to be but it didn't make me miss Brian Pillman at all. This show is a borderline disaster with only Benoit and Regal saving it from being one of the worst shows I've ever seen.

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