

Impact Wrestling – January 2, 2014: TNA Shows Some Fire

Impact Wrestling

Date: January 2, 2014

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tazz

The main story tonight is the coronation of Magnus as the new world champion, which screams AJ Styles return. It's clear that they're setting up a unification match in the near future which should be interesting, even if the result has been spoiled by the latest news with Styles. Other than that we could see more of whatever Bully Ray was talking about last week when he promised to be more evil than ever. Let's get to it.

Aries vs. Sabin for the X Title tonight.

Here's Angle to open things up. He talks about 2013 being the worst year of his career which is why he declined the Hall of Fame induction. Angle promises to make up for it in 2014 but here's Bobby Roode to interrupt. Bobby thinks Angle is going to announce his retirement because he knows he can't beat Bobby Roode. If that's the case, Roode wants Angle to admit that Roode is the better man face to face.

Kurt says he's here to make it clear that he'll dominate 2014. That's why he wants one more match with Bobby, which sends Roode into fits of shouting WHAT. He turns Angle down because he has nothing left to prove to either Angle or the fans. Roode finally agrees to the match at Genesis, but if Angle loses, he can never go into the Hall of Fame. Angle agrees as long as the match can be in a steel cage. Roode shouts a lot more and says it's on. They brawl again until referees and Spud come out to break it up. Spud gets shoved down so he says both guys can find a partner for a tag match tonight.

Dixie says she's spent eleven years trying to find the perfect champion and she'll find it tonight. She walks through a door and is given a note saying See You Tonight.

After a break, Spud is tasked with finding out who sent the note.

Gail Kim vs. Madison Rayne

This is part of the Open Challenge. Madison poses on the middle rope but dives off with a cross body to get us going. Gail gets stomped down in the corner but comes back with some mounted right hands. Madison armdrags her down but Tapa pulls Rayne out to the floor. Back in and Gail puts on a surfboard with a dragon sleeper to bend Madison in some very impressive directions.

Gail lets go of the hold and it's a double clothesline to put both girls down. Eat Defeat is countered into a backslide for two before Madison goes to the middle rope, only to be slammed face first into the mat. Another Eat Defeat attempt is countered into a side roll by Madison for the pin at 5:08.

Rating: C-. The match was fine from a technical standpoint but there's no emotion or interest in this division anymore. It's just insert challenger here facing off with whoever the champion is that month with no significant story at all. Madison is a nice breath of air but it's nothing that's going to make things better long term.

Chris Sabin shushes Velvet Sky and threatens to leave her if she doesn't do what he says tonight.

Angle gets Gunner to be his partner tonight when Storm comes up to say that's interesting.

X-Division title: Chris Sabin vs. Austin Aries

Aries is defending. Sabin hides in the corner to start until Aries takes over with a running dropkick. The Last Chancery has Sabin in early trouble but Aries lets go of the hold. Chris goes to the floor to yell at Velvet who says it's not her match. Back in and Aries gets two off an elbow before busting out a stump puller of all things. A slingshot splash and Lionsault get two each for Aries but Sabin comes back with a belly to back suplex.

Aries gets caught in the Tree of Woe but does a situp to grab Sabin by the face and pull him down with a Diamond Cutter. Nice counter. Sabin bails to the floor and gets taken down with a double ax handle. Back in and Sabin tells Velvet to get on the apron as a distraction, allowing Chris to low blow Aries and grab a small package for the pin and the title at 5:45.

Rating: C+. This was fun while it lasted but it makes Aries' title reign seem completely worthless. TNA is usually better about not changing titles back and forth at the drop of a hat so hopefully this doesn't become a trend. I could however go for more of Velvet Sky in tight blue dresses.

Spud keeps looking for information about the note when he gets a call. No one is on the phone and Spud says he's gotten four calls from that number. It's a 678 area code, which Google says is the area code for Gainesville, Georgia.

Samuel Shaw vs. Norv Fernum

Shaw is in dress pants and a long sleeve shirt with black gloves. He escorts Christy to the floor and looks almost bored. A powerslam and Orton backbreaker have Fernum in trouble and a standing choke (imagine the start of a Rock Bottom but Shaw clasps his hands and chokes) gets the win for Shaw at 1:38.

James storm is going to show Angle why he made a mistake in picking

Gunner. He opens a door and sees someone he's been looking for.

Post break and of course Storm was talking to Roode. Storm says he hates Roode but needs to be his partner tonight to send a message. Roode says that's not his problem and he doesn't need Storm, just like always. Storm says he'll be out there tonight one way or another.

Video on Magnus getting to the title.

James Storm/Bobby Roode vs. Gunner/Kurt Angle

Storm and Angle get things going with Kurt elbowing James in the face. Off to Roode vs. Gunner with Gunner going face first into the buckle. That seems to just make Gunner mad as he comes back with a slingshot suplex for two on Roode. Bobby comes back with a spinebuster but Storm tags himself in for some two counts and right hands to the head.

Beer Money hits the double suplex for a flashback as the old team starts getting their game together. Kurt has enough of standing on the apron and comes in to clean house with rolling Germans on Roode. There's an overhead belly to belly on Storm followed by the ankle lock until Roode makes the save. Gunner picks Roode up in the Gun Rack but Storm Last Calls Gunner, allowing Roode to hit the Death Valley Driver for the pin at 6:40.

Rating: C+. Beer Money continues to have chemistry but I'm hoping this is a one off thing. Storm has been ready for a singles run for years now but they keep putting him into tag teams because that's what he's done before. The Gunner team was a step back for him and Beer Money would be an even bigger one. Both singles matches should rock though.

Spud accuses Sting of sending the note but Sting blows him off.

Here's EC3 to brag about getting rid of Jeff Hardy. Even though Jeff is

gone to write songs about the Creatures, EC3 tells Christy to introduce Jeff for a match. Naturally there's no Jeff so Carter "wins" by forfeit. Carter counts to ten ("One, two, EC3") but here's Sting to interrupt. Sting calls Carter a dog who can't do anything without his Aunt Dixie there to save him. Carter is just Dixie's lap dog but Sting wants him to get off the leash and prove he's a man. Ethan bails so Sting calls him a lap dog again. The fans agree with Sting's nickname so Carter agrees to fight Sting at Genesis.

Joseph Park doesn't remember turning into Abyss so it can't be real. Eric Young has put him in a match with Bully Ray because Abyss wrestled Ray two years ago this week. Eric leaves and Ray comes up to say Park will be all alone tonight, just like Ray is now. Ray threatens to set Park on fire.

Joseph Park vs. Bully Ray

Ray stands in the corner in a hoodie, jeans and sunglasses. He looks up at Park and kicks him low for the DQ at 57 seconds. That was the only move of the match.

Post match Ray pulls out a bottle of lighter fluid and covers Park before pulling out a lighter. Mr. Anderson runs out for the save but Ray sprays him with fluid as well. There's the lighter again but Ray turns it off and walks away.

It's time for the coronation with Spud and Ethan in the ring in front of a throne, ferns and the Union Jack. Spud calls this bigger than the royal wedding and says Dixieland is a place where dreams come true. Ethan, the Master of Ceremonies, brags about how awesome he is and talks about how Magnus rules the world. He finally brings out Dixie who is booed out of the building. She talks about being on a plane to England and seeing a magazine article on AJ Styles. Then she saw a piece on Magnus who was a huge star in the United Kingdom and was all that (her words).

Here's the champion in a nice suit with the title over his shoulder. Magnus: "This is your champion speaking. Please return your women to their full and upright positions." Before Magnus goes anywhere he has to thank Dixie for everything she's done for him over the years. Magnus knows that the fans expected Roode, Angle or even Hardy here but he proved everyone wrong. It wasn't him that turned his back on the fans but rather the fans who turned on him. He'll be world champion for a VERY long time but here's Gunner with the briefcase as we go to our last break.

Back with Gunner saying he's cashing in right now. Dixie says this isn't happening but Gunner cleans house anyway. Magnus is the only one left standing but Spud gets in a cheap shot to take him down. Magnus loads up a belt shot but AJ Styles runs in through the crowd for the showdown. They hold up their belts and AJ lays his on the mat like a line in the sand. Magnus bails with Dixie and AJ says come get your intellectual property.

AJ isn't here because Dixie wants him here but rather because Dixie screwed the people. He needed to come back here because Magnus is a farce. Magnus will never be a world champion until he beats THE world champion. If Magnus wants to be what he says he is, he'll have to accept the challenge. The fans chant YOU'RE A PUPPET, taking away a lot of the intensity they're going for here.

If Magnus doesn't accept, he'll always doubt himself as the champion. However, if AJ walks out those doors again, his offer goes with him. Magnus agrees to fight next week (instead of at Genesis for some reason) and tells Dixie if he doesn't fight, he's leaving too. Dixie says over her dead body but Magnus says give AJ a one night only contract. They shake hands and the match is official.

Overall Rating: B-. This wasn't a perfect show tonight but they did a good job with what they had. The Bully Ray stuff has me intrigued and the AJ return can get them on to something new. Tonight was about the

storytelling instead of the matches and there's nothing wrong with that. We're headed towards Genesis which has a stacked card that should be one of their better PPV shows in awhile. Good effort tonight, though I have very little faith that they can keep it up.

Results

Madison Rayne b. Gail Kim – Side roll

Chris Sabin b. Austin Aries – Small package

James Storm/Bobby Roode b. Kurt Angle/Gunner – Last Call to Gunner

Joseph Park b. Bully Ray via DQ when Ray kicked Park low

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