

Impact Wrestling – January 4, 2010: It's A Shame We've Got To Get Old

Impact

Date: January 4, 2010

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Episode Title: Time For A Change

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tazz

This is a show I've been asked to do for a long time and I could have sworn I did it live. It seems appropriate now with the possibility that Impact is ending its run on Spike. People have called this the beginning of the end, and I'm curious to see how poorly it holds up. I remember there being big problems when it was fresh but it could look a lot worse four and a half years later. Let's get to it.

We open with a history of the company with a focus on the first show back in 2002 and the big names debuting. Naturally this all pales in comparison to Hogan arriving because the battle with WWE begins.

Theme song.

Tenay and Tazz run down the card.

Earlier today, new correspondent Bubba the Love Sponge, asked fans what they wanted to see. The general response: more wrestling, more of the old school, Hulk Hogan and clothing optional muscular men. Keep in mind that none of these people actually paid to get into this show.

Chris Sabin vs. Alex Shelley vs. Homicide vs. Kiyoshi vs. Jay Lethal vs. Consequences Creed vs. Suicide vs. Amazing Red

This is a Steel Asylum Xscape match, meaning it's a BIG RED

CAGE and the first person to climb out of a small hole in the top wins. The Guns (Shelley/Sabin), Lethal Consequences and Homicide/Kiyoshi are regular tag partners. Red is X-Division Champion but the title isn't on the line. We immediately see the problem: there are eight people in the ring at once and the red bars are thicker than traditional cages, making it almost impossible to tell what's going on inside.

Tenay tells us that Mick Foley couldn't get through security to get in. Remember that because it's going to be important later. It's a huge brawl to start of course with various people climbing up and quickly being pulled back down. The fans are behind Shelley as he gets to the upper part of the cage (it's shaped like a teapot with a lid instead of a regular cage) but Lethal makes a save before Alex can get to the hold.

Jay hits a Lethal Injection on Suicide but Kiyoshi (I think. You can barely tell) takes him down. The cameras are cutting away so fast that you can barely tell where everyone is. Suicide goes for the hole but Red makes a save. Well in theory as he kind of touches Red to get him down before diving at Sabin with a hurricanrana instead. Homicide busts out a baton and starts beating people.....for a no contest. IN A CAGE MATCH.

Rating: F. None of the spots were anything special, the match ran less than five minutes, YOU COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING, AND IT WAS A FREAKING NO CONTEST IN A STEEL CAGE MATCH. Throw in that this was for nothing but bragging rights because the champion was in the match, meaning there wasn't a title shot or anything like that up for grabs, and this was one of the worst opening matches I've seen in years.

The fans are rightfully livid, but we're not done yet. Homicide goes climbing after the match is over...and he can't get out. To be fair to him it's a horrible design that a trapeze artist would have trouble getting out of but that's why this was stupid. As Homicide is hanging upside down and

trying not to die, the other guys get up so Homicide drops down to the mat.

They keep brawling until Jeff Hardy debuts (coming through the crowd because Hogan bringing him to the ring and saying "LOOK WHO I SIGNED" was too simple) and gets in a fight with Homicide outside (nearly falling over the bottom of the cage) of the ring. Jeff lays him out with a chair shot and Twist of Fate before climbing the outside of the cage and sitting on top. After tonight, he wouldn't appear TNA for over two months.

Hardy and Shannon Moore are glad to see each other after a break.

Hulk Hogan is on the way, complete with a motorcade. Keep that in mind as well.

Kevin Nash makes sex jokes with Christy Hemme (no issue there) and says this is a great night for TNA and for Hogan himself. He talks about being mentored by Hogan and how good it's going to be to have him back. Nash reiterates that Hogan is on his way and not alone.

Knockouts Title: ODB vs. Tara

ODB is challenging and Tara (coming out to the rocking BROKEN song) is actually wearing the belt. ODB takes over with some choking to start, followed by the fall away slam for two. Back up and Tara hooks the Tarantula followed by a slingshot flip legdrop for two of her own. The Widow's Peak is countered into a rollup with a handful of trunks (and a cutaway because they come up a bit too high) to give ODB the title.

Rating: D. I forgot how good Tara looked at this point. The match was nothing to see though as it was mainly just a brawl for a few minutes until ODB cheated to win. This comes off like the US Express losing the Tag Team Titles to Volkoff and Sheik at the first Wrestlemania: give them something to make

it historic. The similarities continue as Tara would get it back less than two weeks later.

Tara lays out the new champion and puts her spider on ODB's face.

Ric Flair arrives in a big surprise and goes into World Champion AJ Styles' locker room.

Earlier today Christy was talking to fans when Mick Foley arrived and tried to get in. He's been barred from the arena though and doesn't seem to care. Security stops him though and Mick just leaves.

Bobby Lashley and his girlfriend Kristal come out with something to say. A loud BOBBY chant cuts Kristal off as she tries to talk about how big of a night this is. She says Bobby wants Hogan to know what a big star he is and how no one can handle him. Unlike MMA, wrestling is full of inbred degenerates that people like Lashley have to put up with. Lashley has asked for his release because they have more important things to do. Both would be gone before the end of the month.

The Beautiful People are playing strip poker because that's what good looking women do. Notice the Five Hour Energies (sponsor) on the table. On the other hand, ignore that Lacey claims to have a flush but seems to have four hearts and a diamond.

Scott Hall (looking BOMBED. DDP truly is a miracle worker) and Sean Waltman beat up security but get stopped.

Hogan is still coming.

After a break the limos have stopped outside the Impact Zone. Someone gets out of one limo and gets into the other one.

Hall and Waltman get into the arena.

It's 9pm so here's Hulk in black. Brooke is of course in the front row. Hogan immediately puts over the roster and the locker room for working as hard as they have. Now we get the infamous line from this promo: "I've been in the back all day." Remember that this is after AN HOUR OF WATCHING HIM DRIVE TO THE BUILDING. That line was edited out of the rebroadcast of the show and it's painful to hear all over again.

Hogan talks about how many new and familiar faces there are here. As he's talking, Hall and Waltman try to get to the ring. Hogan says give them a mic and let them get in the ring. Hall and Hogan do the Wolfpack sign and Hall says the party is back. The boss tells him that's not how it works anymore. Waltman thinks it's the same people so it's the same party, but Hogan shoots him down too. In a laughable line, Hogan says it's time to grow up.

Hall says everything is changing, with or without Hogan. Wait so is everything changing or is everything the same? Nash comes out and wants to know what's going on, but Hulk insists he's not playing a role. Hogan says they need to do this FOR REAL because it's a different time. Hall and Waltman are ready to fight but Eric Bischoff debuts and says they reinvented this business. Dixie Carter is shown watching from the crowd.

Bischoff says this is all about communication and that has broken down recently. Everyone has to earn their position in this company, which Nash hears loud and clear. Nash, Hall and Waltman leave and Bischoff again claims that they can change the business again. Hogan says they've shuffled the deck as Dixie cautiously applauds. Bischoff rips up the format sheet to show how different things are going to be. He hands the producer a new format because they're turning this company upside down. So this basically boiled down to the same "this is new" promo that every indy company starts with.

Sting is shown watching from the rafters.

Knockouts Tag Team Titles: Awesome Kong/Hamada vs. Sarita/Taylor Wilde

Hamada and Kong are challenging. Sarita armdrags Hamada down a few times to start as we cut to the back to see the Motor City Machineguns laid out. Kong comes in and starts cleaning house but Taylor kicks Hamada out to the floor. The champions double team Kong to the floor and hit stereo dives to take the villains out as we take a break.

Back with Hamada hitting a running basement dropkick for two on Sarita. Taylor comes in and is promptly destroyed by Kong with ease. Hamada gets in some shots of her own and it's back to Kong, who actually allows the hot tag to Sarita. The challengers catch a top rope cross body with ease but Taylor makes the save. Kong drops Sarita with a spinning backfist and an Awesome Bomb with Hamada adding a missile dropkick gives us new champions.

Rating: C. I liked this better than I thought I would but I always liked Hamada. There's no story here of course but then again there never were with these belts. This title reign didn't mean much either as Hamada and Kong would be stripped of the titles when Kong left the company due to an altercation with Bubba the Love Sponge.

The Beautiful People are still playing cards when Sean Morely shows up in a towel. He wants to deal.

Security still won't let Foley into the arena. He's in the building now at least. Foley leaves and the Nasty Boys debut but can't get in either. Allegedly this was a rib by Bischoff and Hogan for fans who would ask where the Nasty Boys were.

Matt Morgan/Hernandez vs. Raven/Dr. Stevie

Carbon Footprint ends Stevie in thirty seconds. Apparently this was a #1 contenders match.

D'Angelo Dinero is ready for Desmond Wolfe when Orlando Jordan (not named here) debuts and asks if they've seen Hogan. Pope isn't happy. Somehow this took like three and a half minutes.

D'Angelo Dinero vs. Desmond Wolfe

Wolfe throws Dinero around to start and goes after the arm with a flying hammerlock. The arm is sent into the buckle but Dinero comes back with a knee in the corner and a Vader Bomb elbow. The fans think that THIS IS WRESTLING as Pope escapes the Tower of London and small packages Wolfe for the pin out of nowhere. Too short to rate but the fact that TNA didn't even bother saying Wolfe was awesome tells you everything you need to know about it.

Jeff Jarrett arrives.

Rhino is down in the back. Bubba the Love Sponge shows up and says he'll get to the bottom of this.

The announcers recap the evening and we get a clip of Hogan debuting.

AJ Styles is excited about Hogan arriving and is ready for his match with Angle at Genesis so he can prove how great he is. Bischoff comes in and makes AJ vs. Angle for the title tonight.

Jeff Jarrett makes his big return to the Impact Zone and thanks the fans for being here. He founded TNA seven years ago and the fans said they wouldn't last six months. Instead he's sitting here in a six sided ring on a Monday night. He spent years trying to get Hogan here and now the time is right.

Jarrett talks about doing good and bad things, but the best thing he's done is bring in people like Beer Money, Daniels, Samoa Joe and AJ Styles. The best is yet to come...and Hogan cuts him off. Hogan talks about how Jarrett ran the country into the ground and how he and Bischoff are here to save it.

Hogan is now Dixie's partner and he'll take TNA to the top. Jarrett has no power and needs to lace up his boots and be ready.

Let's stop to recap this for a second. Hogan and Bischoff came into the company as good guys. This should be obvious given how they were hyped up. Jarrett didn't show a single bit of heelishness in the promo and it was all for the fans. They were into it as well, and then Hogan cuts him off at the knees like a heel. It didn't come off like a heel turn, but rather Hogan talking to a heel.

Was TNA expecting Jarrett's promo to get booed? I have no idea why as there wasn't anything but sucking up to the fans in it, nor do I have any idea why Hogan has to oppose Jarrett. Yeah Jarrett did some stupid stuff in real life, but what does that have to do with his on screen character? In theory it's more of Hogan's blurring the lines stuff and this is a good example of how bad it can look.

Daniels is in the back when JB interrupts him (a recurring trend tonight). Apparently Foley is still trying to get in and convinces Borash to open a door. Foley finally gets in and wants a meeting with Hogan.

Jeff Hardy is painting but Shannon Moore says the big man called. They leave.

Abyss vs. Samoa Joe

This is the sixth match of the night and these are the second and third people still actually with the company just four and a half years later. Actually, so far the only people we've seen still with the company are the announcers, Christy, JB, Lashley (who was gone for a four year stretch), Homicide, Joe, two Beautiful People, Hardy and Abyss. That's eleven people out of probably thirty or forty still around and only seven are active wrestlers. That's an INSANE turnaround in less than five years.

Joe hammers him down in the corner to start and hits a quick Facewash for good measure. They head outside and Abyss has to duck a chair being pelted at his head. Back in and Abyss slams him down but charges into a boot to the face. We see Sting watching from the back. Joe follows it up with a middle rope boot to the chest for two. An enziguri staggers Abyss but he chokeslams Joe down with ease. The referee gets bumped and Joe nails Abyss with a chair, setting up the Clutch for the submission.

Rating: C-. Decent power brawl here but more than that it was nice to see a match get nearly five minutes without anything interrupting it. Oh wait there was the Sting deal. I knew it was too good to be true. The match didn't mean anything but that's par for the course on this show.

Bischoff is editing the new format when Kristal comes up and demands a meeting with Hogan. Eric tells her to take a number and wait in line.

Now Beer Money has been attacked. Bubba thinks he knows who did it.

The Nasty Boys still can't get in so Bubba comes in and says let them in.

Kurt Angle (the eighth person still on the roster) says he's been waiting to get his hands on AJ since September.

Jeff Hardy and Shannon Moore get envelopes (presumably contracts) when some teenage girls come up. Jeff gives them the painting and they scream a lot.

The Nasty Boys trash Team 3D's locker room. Team 3D would lose the showdown on PPV.

TNA World Title: AJ Styles vs. Kurt Angle

AJ is defending. Angle quickly suplexes out of a headlock as the fans are split on what to do. Kurt goes outside and gets

taken down by a big flip dive to finally give the fans something good to cheer for. A masked man comes in and attacks AJ but Angle helps get rid of him to save his title shot. Angle nails a buckle bomb and we take a break. Back with AJ nailing some shots to the face and hitting the AA into a backbreaker.

The springboard forearm is caught in an overhead belly to belly but AJ escapes the Angle Slam. A catapult sends AJ into the buckle and it's time to roll some Germans. He's able to escape the Slam again but Angle counters the Pele into the ankle lock. AJ rolls out and hits another Pele for two with Angle getting into the ropes. Now the Angle Slam connects for two but Angle walks into the springboard forearm to put both guys down. The champion takes his time getting to the top, allowing Angle to run the ropes for the belly to belly.

This time it's Kurt going up but missing a frog splash. There's the Styles Clash for two but Kurt is able to fight out of a superplex attempt. The frog splash lands for two and Angle is getting ticked off. Another Angle Slam is countered into a DDT, drawing a WHO NEEDS BRET chant (Bret was returning to the WWE on Raw). Angle rolls out of another Clash attempt but can't get the ankle lock.

A springboard into the reverse DDT gets two for the champion. AJ takes too long going up this time so Angle hits something like the Angle Slam off the top for two. I remember buying that as the finish back in the day. The ankle lock is countered with Kurt being sent into the buckle and a second Styles Clash gets two. Angle rolls through a third Styles Clash attempt and grabs the ankle lock with the grapevine.

AJ becomes one of the only people to escape the hold as Flair comes out to watch. Styles suplexes him down and hits a springboard 450 for two. We take another break and come back with AJ in what looks like a triangle choke. He powers up but gets caught in the ankle lock, only to counter into a third

Styles Clash. A second springboard 450 is enough to retain AJ's title.

Rating: A-. Awesome main event here but unfortunately it came at the end of a horrible show. There were a ton of great near falls in there and I loved that AJ escaped the hold that Angle spent the entire match trying to grab. Flair meant nothing and Daniels meant even less. Oh Daniels was the masked man in case you were wondering. Odds are you forgot though, just like TNA apparently did as he wasn't mentioned after the first two minutes of the match.

Hogan comes out to applaud and give his seal of approval but there's another interruption. Foley is breaking up the poker game (remember that?) and demanding to know where Hogan is. Because THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE AND VAL VENIS are the first people you would ask. He goes into Bischoff's locker room and they go back and forth a bit with Foley saying he wants to stay. Hall, Nash and Waltman come in and lay him out, revealing themselves to be the attackers all night long. Shocking I know. Hogan comes in and sees what happened to close the show.

Overall Rating: D-. I can't call a show with that good of a main event a failure. That being said, that's the extent of the good stuff about this show. Let's see. TNA brags about having the best young roster in the world. Ok, that's cool. Let's look at how it was utilized tonight. The opening match is one of the biggest disasters I've ever seen. Seriously, it's that bad. Hardy didn't make things better as he got on my nerves with one of about two million stories going on throughout the night.

Moving on, Tara vs. ODB was too short to mean much but it was nothing special. The other Knockouts match was better, but is that really the match you want getting the second most time all night? Yeah it was watchable but this is supposed to be TNA's grand showcase show, not any other episode of Impact.

I'll give the girls a pass for this show, but they were really just passable at best.

As for the up and comers, Morgan and Hernandez got about thirty seconds, Pope had a nothing match against one of the best wrestlers in the company who might as well have been any given jobber, and two former World Champions had a four and a half minute match that didn't mean anything. The main event was indeed great because it was given time to be great, but it didn't make up for everything else.

Let's look at the backstage segments. I don't hate him nearly as much as some do, but Bubba the Love Sponge is as big a waste of space as anyone I've seen in a good while. A handful of people might know him, but if you think he was hired for anything other than being Hogan's friend you're missing the point. His main story throughout the night was either letting in the Nasty Boys (more on them later) or saying "Yep, these young guns have been knocked out cold. I think I know who did it but I'm not going to tell anyone."

That brings me to all the old people being brought in to take spots from younger people. Aside from Hogan, Bischoff and the NWO guys, we had Val Venis, Orlando Jordan, the Nasty Boys, Ric Flair, Jeff Hardy and Shannon Moore debut. Of those six full time wrestlers, only Hardy and MAYBE Flair should have been signed. It doesn't help that Venis, Hardy, Jordan and the Nasty Boys all won their debut matches, making the TNA guys look second rate as a result.

That's the line to sum up this whole show: the newcomers made TNA guys look second rate. The old guys' stories looked more important (all 19 million of them), they were treated like bigger stars, they got more time, and their stories all made little to no sense. Also, they can all be summed up as "let the old times roll!" That's the extent of the main story: the NWO guys want to be the NWO again and Hogan is split over loyalties. Tell me: how does this make TNA look good? It comes

off as Hulk N Pals using TNA as a playground instead of actually making them look better.

The whole show came off as “step aside kids and let the big boys show you how it’s done.” Unfortunately, those old guys aren’t all that interesting anymore because they haven’t meant much in about ten years. The problem with that is the same thing that has plagued TNA for years: they would rather be a nostalgia promotion rather than something new. It’s fine once in awhile, but when it’s all you’ve got, it stops being fun and becomes a promotion built around old guys that a lot of fans have no connection to. If you’re under about twenty, this show holds no appeal to you as far as nostalgia goes and that isn’t going to work long term.

This show was a disaster with almost nothing going right. The debuts (other than Hardy and the shock value of Flair) came off like the last minute hires to fill in a roster, the matches were bad save for the main event, and the stories were all over the place. It didn’t make me want to watch any more and the whole thing was just a mess. TNA would waste a few more years on Hogan and Bischoff before they left with more damage than anyone could solve.

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