

Wrestler of the Day – September 17: Spike Dudley

Today we have a giant killer: Spike Dudley.

Spike got his start in 1993 and made it to ECW in late 1996. We'll pick things up at Cyberslam 1997.

Axl Rotten vs. Spike Dudley

Spike takes some laps around the ring so Rotten sneaks to the floor and drills him to start. Basically Spike's gimmick was that he was a stoner that would get beaten up for about 99% of the match and occasionally hit an Acid Drop (running Diamond Cutter up the corner) for the shocking pin, usually against a giant. Into the ring for more beatings until Spike hits a few basic moves to get some offense in along with some dives. He blocks a bulldog and gets one of his own as Bubba and D-Von come out. Their distraction lets Axl hit a Dominator to end it. Hey look: it's another boring match.

Rating: F+. Dude, give me SOMETHING of note. The opener was decent at best and since then it's been pointless singles matches that aren't any good. Spike was pretty worthless until he got a cult following (as in a portion of the cult following ECW had) who made him as famous as he got. This wasn't interesting at all as Spike more or less got squashed here but by a guy I have zero interest in watching.

Off to Born to Be Wired for a match that made Spike's career.

Spike Dudley vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

This is before the Giant Killer phase for Spike. Spike beats up a chair before the match due to reasons of drugs. We're eight days from Hardcore Heaven and we're told that we'll learn Bigelow's opponent later in the hour. Bigelow asks the fans what section he should throw Spike into.

Spike grabs a leg which gets him nowhere at all. Well scratch that as it gets him launched halfway across the ring and through the air.

Bigelow picks Spike up again and teases the fans about throwing him into the crowd but just drops him down instead. A BIG suplex puts Spike down and Dudley sells like only he can. The guy can't do much because of his size but he's great at looking like a rag doll. Spike gets posted and he's busted open. Bigelow splashes him in the corner but the moonsault misses. Spike fires away with a bunch of forearms which finally drop Bigelow for two. The Acid Drop is blocked as Bigelow launches Spike to the mat. Spike hits Bigelow low and hooks a victory roll for the shocking upset.

Rating: D+. This is Heyman 101: when a guy is a huge underdog, he'll get slaughtered for almost all of the match and then hit one move out of nowhere for the pin. Watch ECW and see how many times you get that exact ending. Spike would wind up as a kind of a cult favorite (inside the cult that was ECW) and he would be the opponent at Hardcore Heaven, where Bigelow MASSACRED him.

To Hardcore Heaven 1997 for said massacre.

Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Spike Dudley

Spike is 5'7 and 155lbs but recently defeated the 6'3, 360lb Bigelow, setting up this showdown. Dudley's full name is Little Spike Dudley and he wears tye dye and talks about seeing colors. His finishing move is called the Acid Drop if the idea isn't clear enough. Bigelow is a huge bald man who has been a monster for over ten years now. He's also Brian Lee's replacement in the Triple Threat, joining Candido and Douglas.

Spike hammers away to start but is LAUNCHED across the ring with ease. A running splash crushes Spike and Bigelow does a little dance. Dudley comes back with a bulldog out of the corner but his hurricanrana is countered into the biggest powerbomb I've seen in years. Bigelow picks him up and slams Spike onto the turnbuckle, busting him open badly. Back in, Bigelow gorilla presses him up and throwing him from the ring into about the third row. He would do that again in the ECW Arena in a clip that was on ECW highlight reels for years. Back in and Bigelow hits an

over the shoulder piledriver followed by the moonsault for the pin.

Rating: D. This was literally a squash but entertaining despite its low quality. Spike would regularly beat giants in ECW, only to get crushed like this later on. Bigelow was capable of looking great while destroying people and making the fans hate him, giving us a very good pairing between these two. Nothing match but the bumps looked awesome.

Spike would spend a lot of time fighting his brothers, such as here at Heat Wave 1998.

Dudley Boys vs. Spike Dudley/Tommy Dreamer/Sandman

The match is billed as a street fight, which usually applies to most ECW matches. The Dudleys take their sweet time getting to the ring. They now have Jeff Jones in their camp as well. This is Bubba Ray/D-Von/Big Dick if that wasn't clear. Bubba challenges anyone in the WWF or WCW to a fight before moving on to challenge fans. Joel gets the mic and describes himself as hotter than a heat wave and harder than Chinese algebra.

Jones is announced as a referee with hair and is carrying a doll made to look up like Beulah. Sign Guy has a knee injury but is introduced as the Innovator of Silence (as opposed to Dreamer being the Innovator of Violence). The Dudleys are the Intergalactic Six Man Champions. The entrances are funny but take nearly fifteen minutes. Their opponents all come out carrying ladders which are set up on the ramp. Sandman's entrance is shorter at only about four minutes.

There will be tags, at least to start, with D-Von trading slaps with Dreamer. A few pinfalls attempts get two each but the fans get distracted by something in the crowd. Bubba comes in and the fans want Spike, who gets the tag and is promptly thrown all over the place. He's able to get out of a gorilla press and nails Bubba with some forearms followed by right hands in the corner. Bubba responds with a running layout powerbomb to crush Spike.

A hard lariat drops Spike so Dreamer tries to start a Spike chant. Bubba misses a splash and Spike counters a powerbomb with a hurricanrana. The tag brings in Big Dick and he gets to face Sandman so the brawl can get

started. They quickly get to the floor and everything breaks down. All six pair off and they fight into the crowd with Spike hammering away on D-Von and Dreamer sending Big Dick into the barricade.

Bubba crotches Dreamer on the barricade as Sandman brings a ladder into the ring. A bloody Spike climbs the ladder and dives on all three Dudleys. D-Von is thrown back inside and crushed under a swanton from Sandman. Bubba's middle rope backsplash onto the ladder onto Dreamer has Tommy rolling around in agony. Spike comes back with an Acid Drop for two as the fans don't seem to care all that much. Everyone but Dreamer is bleeding now.

The Dudleys all get tied into Trees of Woe and Dreamer puts Sign Guy's bad leg in a Figure Four. Jeff Jones makes the save and piledrives the doll, earning him a piledriver from Dreamer. Gertner gets tied in a Tree of Woe as well and all four get chairs put in front of the face. Referee John Finnegan helps the good guys as they all hit dropkicks to drive the chairs into a Dudley's face. Big Dick is up and chokebombs Dreamer before throwing Spike over the top and through a table. Sandman takes Big Dick down but Bubba lays him out. Bubba misses a splash to Dreamer and gets DDTed on the ladder for the pin.

Rating: D. This was the usual ECW brawl but the wrestling at the beginning brought it down. The problem with guys like Sandman and Big Dick is that they're only good at brawling, making it almost painful to watch them try to do a technical sequence. The other issue is no one believes this isn't going to break down into a brawl, so why waste time on the wrestling stuff, especially when it's supposed to be a street fight?

And again at Guilty As Charged 1999.

Dudley Boys vs. New Jack/Spike Dudley

Spike is dressed like a gangsta to match New Jack. The weapons are brought in and the fight is quickly on with the Boys in early trouble. Jack bites D-Von and Spike hits Bubba low a few times. D-Von and New Jack head to the floor as Spike hurricanranas Bubba out of the corner for two. Bubba comes back with a LOUD cookie sheet shot to Spike's face. D-Von

unloads on New Jack with right hands as Bubba channels Bam Bam Bigelow by throwing Spike over the top and into the crowd.

Bubba goes back to pick Spike up and throws him over the barricade for another big crash. Jack sends D-Von into the barricade before hitting him in the head with the ring bell. Spike is somehow still alive and ripping at Bubba's eyes. Jack and Spike get in the ring and both guys get guitars. The Dudleys have chairs but quickly bail. Big Dick goes down after two guitar shots but the Dudleys come back with the chairs to take over. Jack is thrown to the apron and Bubba hits a middle rope sitout powerbomb to break Spike in half.

Instead of covering, Bubba goes after Jack on the ramp and gets hit in the face with a cookie sheet. D-Von takes it away and nails Bubba by mistake, but is still able to hit a mostly botched 3D (Bubba's arms were around Jack's chest instead of his head). Back in the ring Spike hits an Acid Drop on Big Dick and one on both Dudleys. He tries a second on Big Dick but gets thrown off, setting up a much better 3D for the pin.

Rating: C-. Again, they kept this short and the match worked far better as a result. It also didn't turn into the brawl around the arena which really takes away from what they're doing most of the time. It's still not good, but keeping these things somewhat under control helps them out a lot.

For the Tag Team Titles at Hardcore Heaven 1999.

Tag Team Titles: Dudley Boys vs. Balls Mahoney/???

Mahoney fights them off on his own to start and actually takes Bubba down, only to slip on a top rope elbow attempt and hit Bubba's leg instead of his chest. D-Von is back in now but walks into a belly to belly suplex. Mahoney gets slammed off the top as Spike Dudley's music starts, bringing the match to a standstill. They're waiting at the ramp but Spike comes through the crowd with a double low blow (which clearly didn't make contact with D-Von).

Balls throws Spike onto Gertner and Sign Guy but the Dudleys jump Mahoney from behind. Balls then throws Spike at the Dudleys but they catch him in

mid air and throw him out to the floor. D-Von hits a flying headbutt to Balls' head and they fall outside. Spike limps back into the ring but walks into a big Samoan drop from Bubba. A table is set up and Spike gets kicked in the face. He comes back with a low blow but Bubba counters his hurricanrana with a huge sitout powerbomb through the table.

Balls breaks up the cover but gets caught by a reverse DDT from D-Von. 3D looks to finish Spike but Balls cleans house with the chair. Gertner nails Balls with a chair to no effect. He tries to light a fireball but winds up just throwing the matches in a funny bit. Joel dances in the corner as Balls pulls out a bottle of lighter fluid and sprays it with his mouth. He picks up a match and blows fire at Gertner, only to walk into 3D for the pin.

Rating: D. Where do I even start? First of all, this is the third straight pay per view where the Dudleys have issued an open challenge and Spike has answered with a different partner. Second, we're twenty minutes into this show and two title matches are already done. This is what I was getting at when I said ECW could go nuts at any given moment. Third, the match wasn't even any good as it was basically Bubba vs. Spike with D-Von and Balls running interference.

Then again, with Balls Mahoney against the Dudleys for the Tag Team Titles. Some of you may be noticing a pattern emerging here. From Heat Wave 1999.

Tag Team Titles: Dudley Boys vs. Spike Dudley/Balls Mahoney

Balls and Spike are challenging and Mahoney makes this a street fight where falls count anywhere in the building. Spike is quickly thrown onto the ramp and D-Von goes after him, leaving Balls to hammer on Bubba in the ring. A HARD chair shot drops Mahoney but Spike avoids a similar shot. Spike grabs a bulldog to send Bubba onto the ramp as D-Von sends Mahoney into the barricade. Spike runs down the ramp but gets backdropped into the ring.

The partners switch off again and D-Von hits Spike in the head with the bell. Mahoney hits Bubba in the head with a beer as a bloody Spike hurricanranas D-Von out to the floor. Bubba nails Spike in the head with

a sign that says Dudley Street before carving up Mahoney's head with a cheese grater. Now Balls is bleeding and Joey sounds like he's going to be sick. Mahoney comes back with a superkick and nails Bubba in the head with the cheese grater.

Spike and D-Von are brawling in the crowd with both guys now bleeding. The cameras can't keep up with them but they do see Bubba and Mahoney fighting in the crowd. They head up to a tunnel that leads to the concourse but Spike dives off a balcony to take them both down. Balls pulls D-Von back towards the ring and hits him in the head with a soda.

D-Von stomps away back inside but gets superkicked in the face. Bubba and Spike are back in as well with Bubba going up, only to get hit low. The challengers hammer away in opposite corners until the Dudleys take them down with stereo sitout powerbombs. Bubba and D-Von hammer away while ripping at the cuts on their opponents' heads.

Balls and Spike duck right hands and nail neckbreakers at the same time for two each. An Acid Drop gets two on D-Von before a low blow and another Acid Drop gets two on Bubba. Sign Guy has to make the save so Balls rips Gertner's mask off (revealing that he looks fine). The Dudleys hammer away, but a double rollup is good for the pin to give us new champion.

Rating: D-. This stuff is getting old in a hurry. As mentioned, this is the fourth show in a row where Spike has fought the Dudley Boys and the second in a row where he was teaming with Balls Mahoney. As for the match itself, you could barely follow anything because it was another wild brawl with everyone bleeding and a bunch of weapons. The teams doing the same moves at the same time makes the match look really scripted and hurts whatever good they have going on. Horrible match here which again wouldn't mean anything as the teams would trade the titles twice more each, with no reign lasting over a month.

Somehow this got Spike a World Title program with Mike Awesome, starting at Guilty As Charged 2000.

ECW World Title: Spike Dudley vs. Mike Awesome

Awesome is defending. Spike puts out tables before Mike comes to the ring, including two in a stack. He jumps Awesome as the champion gets into the ring but Awesome throws him through a table less than twenty seconds in. Back in and Awesome throws Spike through the stack of two tables and Dudley is barely moving. Awesome gets two off a slingshot splash back inside and the champion isn't happy.

Spike fights out of an Awesome Bomb and sends Mike to the floor, followed by a running shoulder off the apron. An Acid Drop over the barricade has Mike in trouble and Spike nails him with a few chair shots. Back in and Spike catches his foot on a suicide dive attempt, so the fans are of course merciless. Spike still counters an Awesome Splash with a top rope hurricanrana and hits a quick double stomp out of the corner. A spear puts both guys through the ropes but Mike kicks a chair into Spike's face.

Awesome moves the barricade forward and throws Dudley into the crowd. He nails Spike with a not great looking chair shot but makes up with it off a huge springboard dive into the crowd. Awesome slips on the landing though and is holding his elbow. It doesn't seem to be bad though as he and Jones set up another table, only to have Spike nail an Acid Drop through the table on the floor.

Spike is busted open but nails Awesome with a top rope chair shot. Back in and Awesome counters another Acid Drop by tossing Spike over the top and through a table. Mike brings in another table, blocks another Acid Drop and hits the same clothesline he used on Spike's girlfriend. A super Awesome Bomb through the table retains the title.

Rating: D. Stick this about four slots earlier on the card and cut off about ten minutes from the match and it's way better. There's no real reason to have this as the main event, especially with some of the other stuff they had on this card. Awesome got to dominate, but there was never any doubt as to who was going to win here.

And a rematch from ECW on TNN on January 28, 2000.

ECW World Title: Mike Awesome vs. Little Spike Dudley

Spike jumps Awesome to start and is immediately slammed down to the floor. Spike fires back but gets whipped into the barricade to keep the champion in control. After a quick brawl in the crowd we head back inside for Awesome to charge into a boot to the face. The champion hits a release German suplex for two and a lifting powerbomb for the same. A table is set up on the floor but Spike manages to bulldog Awesome through it instead.

Spike hits a top rope chair shot to Awesome but the champion is down on the floor. The Acid Drop is countered so Spike hits Awesome in the head with a chair instead. The fourth chair shot to the head in a row gets two but Awesome gets his foot up in the corner to block a charge. A BIG Awesome Bomb puts Spike down but the Awesome Splash gets two. Another table is set up in the corner and a running Awesome Bomb through said table retains the title.

Rating: D+. There was some drama here with the near falls but man alive could you have Spike do ONE SINGLE WRESTLING MOVE? I know he can do them because I've seen them use them before, but instead it was nothing but chair shots here. That's a major reason I don't like ECW: they thought swinging a chair in a wrestling ring meant wrestling.

Spike would miss most of 2000 with a bad leg but would come back for a TV Title shot at Massacre on 34th Street.

TV Title: Rhino vs. Spike Dudley

Rhino is defending and Spike is out for revenge for Rhino breaking Spike's leg. The fight is on fast but Rhino breaks up an Acid Drop thirty seconds in. Spike Gores Rhino and goes after the big man's leg but they quickly head to the floor. Rhino sends him into the barricade a few times but Spike gets a boot up to stop a charge. The challenger throws a chair in but Rhino pulls him off the apron to send him face first into a table. A chair to the head busts Spike open and they head back inside where the beating continues.

Rhino sends him face first into an open chair but stops to jaw with the fans, allowing Spike to throw a chair at the champion's face. Another

chair shot to Rhino's head puts both guys on the floor and they head into the crowd. Spike quickly climbs a balcony and hits a dive to take Rhino down. A chair to the back of Rhino's head has him in big trouble and they head back inside.

Rhino avoids a charge to send Spike face first into a buckle before countering the Acid Drop by sending Spike over the top and out through a table. Back in and Rhino nails the Gore but Spike bails to the floor. He's quickly up though and nails Rhino in the knee with a chair. Spike tapes the leg to the ropes but Rhino breaks free and chokes Spike out for the win.

Rating: C-. They did what they could here but Spike's quests for revenge rarely go very well. The size difference is too much to overcome and it would be too much to have Spike actually beat Rhino. He was able to do damage though and that's about as far as they could go. Not a great match or anything but it could only be so good.

Off to the WWF now, starting on Raw, April 9, 2001.

Dudley Boys vs. X-Factor

Six man tag here. They start brawling in the aisle until we start with Justin vs. Bubba in the ring. Off to Spike as the Dudleys control early. Heel miscommunication puts Albert down but Spike dives on him which of course fails. Paul: "Not over here! We're not Spanish!" Pac vs. Spike now. Spike gets beaten down a bit more until it's hot tag to D-Von. This doesn't last long as the bigger Dudleys put Albert on the floor and a 3D ends Credible. More or less a nothing match.

Spike would get a Tag Team Title shot at King of the Ring 2001.

Tag Titles: Dudley Boys vs. Spike and ???

So we needed the interview to bridge the gap of 45 seconds? Well alright then. The Dudleys just won the titles three days before this by beating Benoit and Jericho thanks to Austin hitting Benoit with the title belt. And the mystery partner is

Kane of all people. He's IC Champion here and the pop is great. I'm loving this crowd. No Molly though which is a shame as she was freaking beautiful around this time.

In a cool spot, Kane and Bubba throw Spike back and forth like a ball until Bubba finally goes to the ground. This was one of the few periods when Spike was bearable. He's still annoying, but not as much as. He's like X-Pac. When he was against guys that were average size like D-Von he could put on a passable match, but with guys like Bubba who are bigger, there's just no validating him having a chance at all.

The fans, to the shock of no one, want tables. That's something that's simply never going to die. Heyman goes into one of his legendary anti-women rants that never get old. He'll never top the Medusa one though. Spike is of course getting the tar beaten out of him. At least some things never change. He goes for a rana and gets the living tar powerbombed out of him. He takes that move better than anyone I can ever remember.

D-Von is so far ahead of Bubba that it's scary. He's actually a decent worker and has had better characters over the years. He got rid of all the stupid Dudleys in ECW if nothing else. Kane comes in and hits a sweet sounding punch to D-Von. Bubba actually jumps into a sidewalk slam which looks really bad as Kane can't get him all the way up.

He makes it up with a nice powerslam but they botch the living tar out of it as D-Von misses his cue to make the save so Long has to just stop his count at a long two while Bubba isn't moving at all. The fans boo the heck out of it as no one is fooled at all. Spike gets thrown over the ropes in a reenactment of the Bigelow throw. With both Dudleys on the floor, Kane gets on the top on the opposite side of the ring.

He's never been that smart. Acid Drop hits Bubba but this time D-Von gets the timing right. I types this time D-Von at the

exact same time that Ross said it. Kane takes What's Up, which according to past storylines meant nothing. Spike takes a 3D (for no apparent reason called a DDT by Ross. Heyman corrects him and Ross wakes up) for the pin. They set up a table but Kane stops them, hitting a diving powerbomb of all things on D-Von and Bubba goes through it. Well that was kind of pointless.

Rating: D+. Eh this was about as safe of a match as you could have asked for. That botch on the count was the worst I've ever seen though and it's why this isn't a C or so. I mean it completely made things look fake. No one expected new champions here and that's fine and I'm glad they didn't make the stupid switch. The match was ok at best but it filled in ten minutes, so that's all well and good I suppose.

Spike got a Hardcore Title shot on Raw, December 10, 2001.

Hardcore Title: Spike Dudley vs. Undertaker

Taker won the title last night and Spike sits on his bike on the way to the ring. Pain ensues. Taker puts him in the Tree of Woe but Spike gets in a low blow and some weapon shots but they get shrugged off. A HUGE Last Ride onto a trashcan ends this quick. Taker is still insanely over because he's still the same character he was before his heel turn.

And another Tag Title shot on Raw, January 7, 2002.

Tag Titles: Dudley Boys vs. Spike Dudley/Tazz

This is hardcore for no apparent reason and Stacy is with the Dudleys. It's a brawl to start with Spike being sent into the steps. Bubba sprays him with a fire extinguisher as the fans want tables. Spike tries a sunset flip on Bubba, only to get blasted with the extinguisher again. A HARD trashcan lid to the face puts Tazz down and What's Up Tazz? Bubba wants tables but whispers it because he's evil right now.

Tazz is almost put through but Spike makes the save with a stop sign. There's a Tazmission to D-Von but Tazz has to let it go to move a table.

Stacy flashes Tazz to distract him but Bubba gets the view instead, allowing for a suplex onto a table. Spike puts him through the table with a Dudley Dog for the upset and the titles.

Rating: D+. The match was fast paced but not all that great. The problem here was that at the end of the day, does anyone buy Spike and Tazz as a long term championship team? It was clear that they were transitional champions, which is ok, but it doesn't do much overall. The live crowd loved this though and there was a match before this to set it up, so it was far better than some other angles I've seen that tried to do the same thing.

Here's a defense at No Way Out 2002.

Tag Titles: Booker T/Test vs. Spike Dudley/Tazz

The big guys are the challengers here. There are only one set of belts at this point so for some reason they decided that these two are the best choice for the titles. That's just bizarre but whatever. Their combined weight is 398lbs. That's just amusing. Test and Tazz fight as do the others. Test and Booker were champions back in the Alliance days I believe. Spike comes in with a missile dropkick off the top to take care of Test.

We get kind of a Hart Attack from the challengers but with a side kick instead. Tazz of course stands there and watches it happen instead of making a save or even attempting a save. Why save your tiny partner I guess? Spike as usual takes a beating which is what he is made for it seems. Axe Kick kills him pretty much and we get a spinarooni.

VERY weak hot tag to Taz who puts Booker on the floor. Test goes for a cover but yells at the referee when it's two and walks into the Tazmission for the tap out. For the life of me I don't get the point in putting the titles on these guys and then keeping them with these two for so long. A more traditional team would win them soon afterwards with Billy and Chuck.

Rating: D+. Pretty weak Raw level match here that didn't have much at all going for it. Again Taz and Spike were nice for awhile but in matches like this it was just stupid. I mean really, beating Booker and Test clean? Would anyone buy that at all? I certainly didn't and thankfully they would lose the belts soon after this.

Spike and Taz would lose the titles a few days later so we'll jump ahead to Raw on April 8, 2002.

European Title: Spike Dudley vs. William Regal

Regal is defending, Spike steals the brass knuckles and knocks him out and we have a new champion in 5 seconds.

Time to reform the Dudleys! At Survivor Series 2002.

Dudley Boys/Jeff Hardy vs. 3 Minute Warning/Rico

This is an elimination tables match. Oh and that's Bubba and Spike, not D-Von. Spike and Bubba got put through the same table on Raw Monday to set this up. The Dudleys and Jeff clear the ring to start and Spike is thrown into the arms of the Samoans. It's Bubba vs. Rico in the ring at the moment, because putting Spike and Jeff against Umaga and Rosey is a great idea right? Bubba chops Rico HARD in the corner before things settle down.

What's Up hits Jamal and we get to the tagging section of the match before everything breaks down again. Bubba tells Jeff to get the tables but Rosey runs over Bubba after Bubba sets up a table in the corner. A BIG backdrop puts Jeff on the floor and Rosey rams Spike's head into a table. Rosey misses a charge and drives himself through a table in the corner but that doesn't count because it wasn't someone else putting him through.

Jeff tries a top rope dive at Rosey but literally bounces off. Rico brings in another table and gets caught in a Dudley Dog, but 3 Minute Warning catches him in a double powerbomb to put Spike through the table instead. Jeff and Bubba get slammed down but Bubba knocks Rosey off the

top and Jeff sends Rico flying into a cameraman. Bubba pounds away but Rico hits a spinwheel kick to take his head off. Rico could go in the ring make no mistake.

Rosey and Jeff go out into the crowd and there's a table out there with them. Jeff is put on said table as Bubba gets kicked in the face by Rico. Jamal misses a splash and crushes Rico, allowing Bubba to Bubba Bomb Jamal and go to save Jeff. With Bubba's help, Jeff goes up to the top of an entrance and hits a BIG Swanton through Rosey through the table to make it 2-2.

Back in the ring Jamal has Bubba on a table ready for a Rico moonsault, but he looks hesitant to launch. He looks over his shoulder, shouts "C'MON JEFF!" before staggering. THEN Jeff shakes the ropes and Rico crotches himself. Not the best response but that's on Jeff more than Rico. Bubba tries a belly to back superplex through the table but Jamal moves it away. Jeff hits Whisper in the Wind to Jamal and follows it with a dropkick.

Hardy goes to the floor to get another table which he throws at Jamal. Jeff tries to run the railing but Jamal throws the table at Jeff, who goes flying through it. That doesn't count which I can kind of agree with. Jamal puts Jeff on another table and hits a HUGE splash off the top to eliminate Jeff. That looks awesome. Bubba beats on Rico in the ring but Jamal saves his sideburned buddy. Jamal goes up to try a top rope rana (I guess) on Bubba, only to get caught in a HUGE powerbomb through the table to get us down to one on one.

It's Rico vs. Bubba with the former pounding away and pulling in another table. Rosey comes back in but Bubba pounds away on him too. Now Jamal is in there too and it's D-VON to the rescue! He's on Smackdown at this point so this is a big deal. 3D puts Rico through the table to end this.

Rating: B-. That's likely high but this was what you want to open a show. It helps a lot that this was a fifteen minute match instead of like six minutes like they are on Raw. This was fun and the pop for the reunion of the Dudleys (which would be permanent) was a feel good moment. Good stuff here and a good choice to open things up, especially in New York City.

Spike would get the European Title back and defend it at Insurrextion 2003.

Rodney Mack/Christopher Nowitski/Teddy Long vs. Dudley Boyz

Nowitski has a mask on because of a face injury. He was an imbecile in WWE but given the work he's doing today you can overlook that I think. D-Von and Mack start us off and nothing of note is going on here. You really can tell here how little thought has been put into this. Why are these teams feuding again? Well of course we're not going to be told.

Spike gets thrown over the top onto the heels as we're just waiting on the Teddy beatdown. Bubba and Chris do the test of strength dancing spot which makes me shake my head violently. Spike comes in to waste a bit of our time. Nowitski is in the minority team because a Harvard education makes him a minority. Well that's better than nothing I guess.

Mack was a pretty decent tough guy but nothing ever came of him. Teddy does the Bobby Heenan thing, beating on Spike and then running at the first sign of trouble. Five minutes have passed and not a thing of note has happened. Mack accidentally clotheslines Teddy, D-Von takes down Mack, Spike pins Long. There you go and we're done.

Rating: D-. This was on PPV in the third spot on a card. But hey, Vince says these individual brand shows are a good idea so they must be right? There's no need to have Benoit or Angle or Lesnar on the card when we can have these matches right? Just get on to the next match on this tour of fun please.

Spike won a triple threat match to earn a Cruiserweight Title shot on Smackdown, July 29, 2004.

Cruiserweight Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Spike Dudley

They shake hands to start in a little sportsmanship. Feeling out process to start with both guys running the ropes and diving into a standoff. Rey

grabs a hammerlock and Spike fires off some hard elbows to escape, much to Rey's annoyance. They head outside with Spike choking away. Back in and Rey gets two off a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker before cranking on both of Spike's arms.

Spike fights back with a headbutt to the ribs and a hard clothesline for two. A headscissors sends Rey face first into the buckle but he's able to crotch Spike to prevent what looked to be a double stomp. Dudley's sunset bomb is countered and Rey nails a low dropkick to the face. Mysterio misses a Lionsault press and gets bulldogged for a very close two. Cue D-Von for a distraction, allowing Bubba to nail Rey from behind. A Dudley Dog off the ropes gives Spike the title.

Rating: C. This wasn't bad but it led to Spike turning heel and bossing the Dudleys around in one of the most bizarre booking decisions that I can ever remember. Spike was fine as a Cruiserweight Champion even though he never did much as champion. The match was fine with Spike getting more and more violent before finally using the Dudleys to help when his own efforts didn't work.

Spike would defend at Survivor Series 2004.

Cruiserweight Title: Spike Dudley vs. Rey Mysterio vs. Chavo Guerrero vs. Billy Kidman

Spike is defending and is a heel here. This is one fall to a finish. Kidman hurt Chavo on a Shooting Star Press and seemed to be proud of it, which resulted in a heel turn for him. The other good thing here is that they don't have to tag. That's always a waste of time in these things as you just wait for things to break down. Kidman and Spike form a quick alliance, only to have Kidman dropkick the champ out to the floor.

Rey sends Kidman to the floor and it's off to Rey vs. Chavo who are apparently friends at this point. Oh please, like these two could EVER get along. Rey spins Chavo around with a headscissors before Spike sends Rey into the corner and stomps away while screaming. Chavo comes back in and a double clothesline puts himself and Spike down. With Kidman on the apron, Rey hits a rana to send him out to the floor in a cool looking spot.

Back in and Rey tries the sitout bulldog on Chavo but Guerrero throws him onto Kidman in a seated senton. Chavo dives on both of them, leaving Spike standing ta...short actually. Anyway the champ dives on all of them but they step aside to let him crash. Chavo finally gets his hands on Billy back in the ring but Spike comes back in to break up a pinfall attempt.

Rey misses a moonsault over Spike's head and gets thrown to the floor as a result. We get a Tower of Doom with everyone minus Rey involved, so Rey comes in and tries to steal a pin. Rey charges at Kidman but gets caught in a BK Bomb (Sky High) for two but Chavo breaks up the Shooting Star. Spike hits a running headbutt to Rey's ribs but the Dudley Dog is broken up. 619 hits Spike but Billy breaks up the West Coast Pop. Chavo hits the Gory Bomb on Spike but Kidman hits a slingshot legdrop on Chavo. Rey takes out Kidman and Spike steals the pin on Chavo to retain.

Rating: B-. Not a great match or anything here but it was fine for an opener. Rey was insanely popular still but Spike keeping the title was a great way to tick off the fans. There's nothing wrong with a heel winning, as long as the opener fires up the crowd, which this did. Good choice.

After losing the title, Spike would drop through the floor in WWE before leaving in 2005. He would show up in TNA for a brief run as Brother Runt, including this match at Bound For Glory 2006.

Samoa Joe vs. Brother Runt vs. Raven vs. Abyss

This is Monster's Ball which basically means hardcore. Jake Roberts is guest referee. This is also the third match in a row that isn't a simple one on one or tag match. Everyone jumps Joe to start and knock him to the floor. Raven and Runt team up on Abyss with Runt being knocked to the outside. Runt brings in a chair and Raven hits his drop toehold on Abyss into the chair but Joe comes back in to make people care. Joe hits the Facewash on Raven but walks into a chokeslam.

Abyss runs over the ECW guys and throws Runt into the crowd from the ring to emulate Bigelow's famous spot. Raven clotheslines Abyss to the floor and dives on him, which Abyss shrugs off without even leaving his feet.

Joe hits a BIG corkscrew dive onto all three to put them all down while landing on his feet. Raven pops up and hits Joe with a Silence of the Lambs style mask of his.

They go up the ramp and Joe is knocked through a table off the ramp. Runt and Abyss climb up part of the set and Runt is chokeslammed onto a platform which doesn't have much give at all. Something happens which results in Abyss landing on Runt but the camera is zoomed in on Roberts. The replay shows that it was kind of an elbow drop. Nice production work there guys.

Raven throws Joe through another table in a vain attempt to make us believe he won't win. Is there a point to Roberts being referee at all here? He hasn't done anything. Abyss gets two on Runt but Raven saves. Abyss drops an Earthquake splash down for two on Raven. Joe comes in to break up Shock Treatment by pounding on Abyss. He misses the backplash but kicks Abyss low instead.

Powerslam onto a chair gets two. Raven drop toeholds Joe to the floor but Abyss knocks him down and loads up the tacks. Jake pulls out his bag but Raven jumps him and loads up a DDT on Jake. Abyss pours out the tacks but Joe pulls down the ropes to prevent Raven from going into the tacks via the Black Hole Slam. Joe knocks Abyss to his knees and hits the senton backplash to put Abyss' face into the tacks. Raven breaks up the choke but Jake DDTs him so that the MuscleBuster can give Joe the pin.

Rating: D. I know this is a sweeping statement, but this might be the most questionable choice in TNA history. Why in the world was Joe in this match? Jake added NOTHING here. He counted slow and I guess he didn't hurt anything, but what difference did it make to have a guest referee? The match was your usual garbage but no one bought anyone but Joe having a chance here. Also did Runt fall into the same hole the James Gang and AMW fell into in the previous match?

Spike would head back to the indies and into retirement before returning for One Night Only: Hardcore Justice II.

Team 3D vs. Brother Runt/???

Tables match of course. It's surprising to see Bully as an Ace when that turn wasn't until months after this was taped. D-Von corners So Cal Val in the corner but doesn't shove his crotch in her face at least. Bully Ray cuts a long and dull promo before the match about the awesomeness of Tea 3D while insulting a bunch of fans. Ray takes some jabs at Holly for no apparent reason before talking about using Runt as a pawn during the wedding to Brooke. He makes the same jokes about Dreamer and Sandman while saying Runt has no partner. Runt comes out and has a partner: Jeff Hardy.

The Dudleys send Jeff to the floor before Bubba drives Runt's glasses into his forehead. D-Von beats on Runt with basic power stuff but Runt blocks a suplex, only to be taken down by a clothesline. Off to Ray for a wishbone split before yelling at Earl Hebner in the corner. Ray blocks the Dudley Dog and breaks up a sunset flip attempt but D-Von misses a middle rope headbutt, allowing Runt to make the hot tag.

Jeff cleans house with a low dropkick on D-Von as things break down. Bully kicks Jeff down but the Dudleys can't hit What's Up. Instead it's Runt hitting one on D-Von before calling for the tables. Jeff brings in a table but Team 3D takes over again. A double suplex to Runt misses the table and Jeff hits a Twisting Stunner on D-Von. Runt adds the Dog to put D-Von on the table but Ray makes the save. Jeff and Runt take over again and Hardy splashes D-Von through a table (barely) for the win. It's as lame of a build as it sounds.

Rating: D. This was nothing to see again with and felt like a bad house show main event. I get the idea of Brother Runt having history with the Dudleys, but we've seen this match so many times that it's almost impossible to care about anymore. Jeff getting the win to end the show is the right idea to send the fans home happy but man it was dull getting there.

Spike is a guy that had some severe physical limitations but managed to turn it into a very nice little career. The giant killer stuff was the logical character for him but he was only able to do so much. The stuff when he stopped being all insane was the best time of his career and he and Molly were about as cute of a couple as there has ever been. The guy

wasn't great but given his size he was pretty solid.

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