

AAA Triplemania XXIII: The Mexican Barely Legal

Triplemania 23

Date: August 9, 2015

Location: Arena Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico

Attendance: 22,300

Commentators: Hugo Savinovich, Matt Striker

This is a show that was talked about quite a bit back in the day as it featured English commentary from Matt Striker (oh yay) and Hugh Savinovich (oh....yay) but was plagued by some horrible technical issues. I'm kind of curious to see how bad things get here but it's probably going to be even worse as I have almost no idea what's going on coming in. Let's get to it.

Before we get started, my usual disclaimer: my Spanish is conversational at best so there's a very good chance I'm going to get some history or backstories wrong. I apologize in advance and I'll be going mainly off what I'm told here and what information I can find online.

As is customary, we open with the widow of company founder Antonio Pena being introduced to the crowd.

The announcers are introduced.

Video on the history of Triplemania. In a bad sign of things to come, the video is airing on the screens and the camera is just pointed at them. The video has a Mission: Impossible theme, which is likely a tie-in to the latest movie. How did that licensing meeting go? "Hey movie studio: we want to tie your blockbuster in with a Mexican wrestling show!" I'm sure the producers were thrilled by the concept. The audio issues are already kicking in before the video ends.

An older man comes to the ring, flanked by a group of good looking women holding some flags. I believe this is another Antonio Pena tribute but apparently he's the ring announcer, at least for the first match.

Dinastia/Drago/Goya Kong/Pimpinela Escarlata vs. Mamba/Daga/Sexy Star/Mini Psycho Clown

The audio cleans up a bit during the entrances but good night this could be a long show. Sexy Star is one half of the World Mixed Tag Team Champions, Goya is about Nia Jax's size, Dinastia and Clown are both minis and Escarlata is an exotico. After hearing what sounds like the production truck, we can barely hear Striker doing English commentary. He sounds like he's standing five feet away from the microphone and Hugo isn't much better.

The minis get things going with Dinastia (the Minis Champion) headscissoring Clown around with ease. Off to Mamba (who might be another exotico) vs. Drago as everything breaks down due to the lucha rules (going to the floor is the same as a tag). Dragon hits a BIG flip dive to take Daga down on the floor, leaving Mamba vs. Escarlata. Star comes in but gets armdragged down as this is all over the place. Goya armdrags down Star and Mamba before she and Escarlata load up double dives, only to stop to dance. There is no sense of order or story to this other than Goya getting quadruple teamed in the corner.

Daga launches Star onto Drago for two before it's back to the minis. When I say back to I mean they fight while almost everyone else is in the ring at the same time. Now it's Kong getting quadruple teamed again but she actually fights them all off (so she's the Roman Reigns of this match?) as her teammates come in to help her a bit. Goya gives Star a Stinkface as Striker talks about the show trending on Twitter. The much smaller Daga is run over by Goya as the match has actually settled down for a chance.

Drago kicks Mamba to the floor and hits a huge corkscrew dive, allowing the minis to fight even more. Star corkscrews onto Mamba and Drago with Escarlata following. The audio starts glitching again as Goya does a dance, followed by an apron flip dive. Back in and Escarlata kisses the referee before grabbing a freaky submission on Star (as in he ties up the legs and bends her over his back) for the win.

Rating: D+. These matches have always been lost in translation for me. I

know they're supposed to be a fun mess to get the crowd going but I've rarely been a fan of this much insanity. Really all this made me want to do was watch Lucha Underground, though it wasn't the worst thing in the world. This just isn't my thing and I don't think it ever will be.

Escarlata kisses Striker on the cheek after the match.

Referee Pepe Tropicadas gets a special presentation for what might be his retirement ceremony. It seems that he's going to be refereeing here, despite being in his early 70s. There's going to be a second referee in the ring though, which could either help or make things even more complicated.

Los Psycho Circus vs. Los Villanos

This is a battle of famous wrestling families with Los Villanos being VERY established veterans who you might remember from WCW. This is Villano III's (partner of IV and V here) last match, meaning we get a video package (again with the camera just pointed at the screen) on the family's history.

Los Villanos have titles with them but of course Striker and Hugo are too busy drooling over history to explain what's going on right in front of them. Or maybe they do explain it but the audio issues flare up again. The Circus has a full theme entrance which is a bit more energized than the Villanos (with a combined 160+ years between them). Before the match, Villano IV says he and V lost their masks but get to wrestle with them one more time, only to guarantee to take them off post match.

Psycho (of Psycho Clown, Murder Clown and Monster Clown) starts things off with I believe IV but everything breaks down into a chop fest with Tropicadas looking annoyed. The Clowns are all beaten up as this is in slow motion so far. Striker apologizes for the technical issues as all three Villanos go for Murder's mask. That only goes so far so they send him into the post instead before going back to the triple teaming. Just like in the first match, this is all over the place but going far more slowly. It doesn't help that the announcers seem to have no idea who is who for either team.

Los Villanos are in full control with their ancient looking offense, meaning it's time for another clown to start honking a horn. Now a buzzing comes over the audio feed as two Clowns dive on two Villanos. Hugo tries to explain something but the audio is almost completely drowned out by the buzzing. A triple splash crushes one of the Villanos (at least in WCW they had numbers on their attire) and Psycho hits What's Up to make it even worse.

One of the Villanos mostly loses his mask as Striker is currently doing audio on his own. You can hear Hugo's voice at just above a whisper but it's impossible to make out. Striker seems to get annoyed at the fans for letting them know about the buzzing on Twitter. Striker: "Just pretend I'm calling a Killer Bees match." Psycho and Monster break up a double superplex with cookie sheets and turn it into a Tower of Doom, only to hurt Murder in the process.

Commentary is virtually non-existent at this point, with Striker saying that makes it feel more special. I know it's a stupid line but I can excuse it a bit in this case as he's basically helpless out there. Two Clowns are taken out by the slowest suicide dives you'll ever see, leaving I believe Psycho to hit Villano III with what looked like a yellow belt.

They salute each other (a sign of respect) and VERY slowly chop each other as we can hear Hugo for the first time in a good stretch. We get the "showdown" between Villano IV and Psycho, which apparently restarted this feud. The others are held back, leaving Villano IV to get in a low blow for the pin.

Rating: F. There's really no defending this one on almost any level. The commentary issues aside, this was WAY too slow and treated as something for the live audience instead of the fans at home. I get that this is the AAA show but you're presenting it to an American audience who doesn't know the history and the backstory here.

They were trying to explain things, but at the end of the day you had three guys at least 50 years old beating up a much younger team and looking every bit of their age. That's really not something I wanted to

watch and it was made even worse by the buzzing. Really bad stuff here and a lot of that can't be blamed on the technical issues.

Villano III and Villano V take their masks off, which has to be done to satisfy some wrestling commission rule. Villano III looks older than Tropicadas. Members of the Villano family come to the ring and we get a retirement presentation to Villano III and Tropicadas because this hasn't dragged on long enough yet.

Here's Pena's widow again but this time she just waves to the crowd. Did I mention she's carrying her husband's urn?

The next match is announced as a cage match, which I believe is a surprise. It's for the Trios Tag Team Titles, but since this is AAA, you can leave the cage at any time and it's basically an Ultimate X match inside a cage. Only one belt has to be pulled down to win the match.

Trios Titles: Los Hell Brothers vs. Fenix/Los Gueros del Cielo vs. El Hijo de Fantasma/El Texano Jr./Pentagon Jr.

There's quite a bit to get through here. Los Hell Brothers (Chessman (Latin American Champion here)/Averno/Cibernético) are defending and are fighting against Konnan's La Sociedad stable (Represented by Pentagon Jr./Texano Jr./Hijo de Fantasma (King Cuerno and Cruiserweight Champion), who you probably know from Lucha Underground. If you don't stop reading this and go marathon the first season because it's AWESOME.) as well as against the evil bosses of AAA.

Fenix/Los Gueros (the White Boys From Heaven, comprised of Angelico and Jack Evans, both of whom appear with Fenix in Lucha Underground as well) are just good guys who want the titles. Got all that? It's a lot of backstory but my goodness it's nice to see a match where I know who almost everyone is.

The entrances take their sweet time but we're entertained by the sound testing stylings of Matt Striker. The whistle blows (yeah AAA doesn't use a bell) and we immediately go to a wide shot of the arena, meaning we can barely see anything. The buzzing is back as Striker does a pretty good job of telling us who everyone is. Of course it's still early in the

match so it's still everyone going at it at once but I appreciate the effort.

Pentagon drops a top rope leg to low blow Evans and it's time for the cookie sheets. Angelico has a camera on him which could be cool if we actually went to the feed. Evans goes up for the title but is quickly pulled down into a cutter. Fenix gets quintuple stomped as Striker tells us to "use the Google" to learn about some of the names he's dropping. Evans is beaten up and of course does flips off the simplest bumps.

Angelico fights back with his running knees but Cibernetico drops him with a clothesline. Things speed up a bit with Fenix getting backdropped, only to land on Texano with a hurricanrana. In a cool attempt, Evans flips up onto Angelico's shoulders but can't reach the belts. Evans goes up again but opts to dive down onto Pentagon and I believe Averno. Fantasma and Chessman climb to the outside of the cage and Chessman is knocked onto a table at ringside.

Back inside, Cibernetico spears Texano through a table, leaving everyone else to climb the cage. Most of them fall outside and it's Fenix and Pentagon going at it inside. Fenix moonsaults off the top of the cage onto Pentagon for the insane spot of the match, which was only mostly insane. That leaves Averno and Fantasma to go after the belts but Angelico pulls himself up to fight Averno. Fantasma kicks Angelico in the face and knocks him down, only to get shoved off by Averno, leaving him to pull down the belt to retain.

Rating: C+. Match of the night by about a mile here but it's still nothing that hasn't been done better before. Some of the dives were good and you started to get a feel for it, but this really needed to be a six man match instead of having everyone in there. It felt like nine people who happened to be in the ring and I never got a sense that any of them had a personal issue with anyone else in the match. It's a fun match but too chaotic to really work.

Now the Spanish audio bleeds over the English before the English disappears all together.

It's been too long since we focused on an old guy so here's a match

dedicated to Blue Demon's thirty years in wrestling.

Electroshock/El Mesias vs. La Parka II/Blue Demon Jr.

Mesias is Mil Muertes sans mask. He and Electroshock used to be big deals but time is passing them by. This means it's time to fight two old guys who are loyal to AAA because why use the old guys to put over young talent when you can put over Blue Demon's thirty year career and La Parka, who is even older?

Demon and Electroshock get things going with Demon using more old man style offense and looking like he should have retired years ago. The buzzing gets louder than it has all night and it's off to Mesias vs. La Parka. They're quickly on the floor and out into the crowd with Mesias getting the better of it. Mesias gets kicked outside again so it's off to Electroshock as we're lacking commentary again.

Back to Mesias for a right hand to the skeleton face but it's a quick double tag to Demon and Electroshock. Demon headscissors him down and ducks a charge to send Mesias outside for the third time. It's off to Mesias vs. La Parka for a slugout with La Parka getting dropped off a few shots to the face.

Mesias is sent outside again (ok we get it already) and La Parka hits a weak dive, leaving us with Electroshock vs. Demon again. A powerbomb gets two on Demon, followed by Demon standing there so Electroshock can chop him a few times. Demon shrugs those off, hits something like a cross body, and grabs a Sharpshooter without turning Electroshock all the way over for the submission.

Rating: D. Blue Demon is another guy that I just don't get. He's old, he's slow, and he keeps getting pushed like this god for reasons that I can't understand. The rest of the match was just kind of there and again, there was no backstory given or a reason we should care other than "BLUE DEMON IS A LEGEND!!!" I only knew the story I mentioned earlier because I saw it elsewhere online. As has been the case with this whole show, it's all about the old guys and if you didn't see the shows that built this one, you're going to be mostly lost.

Demon gets a plaque. Electroshock shock comes back, flips off the fans, and then leaves again.

It's time for the Hall of Fame inductions, starting with Hector Garza. We get his family on stage, a video package, and a bunch of statements from various legends.

Second is Perro Aguayo Jr., who passed away earlier this year.

Brian Cage vs. Alberto El Patron

Patron's (Alberto Del Rio of course) Mega Championship isn't on the line because Cage has already used his title shots so instead it's hair vs. hair. Cage has Hijo de Fantasma in his corner while Alberto has Fenix. Patron comes out with a full mariachi band and a modified version of his WWE theme music. Cage one ups Alberto's robe with a Trump 2016 shirt.

Alberto starts fast with right hands in the corner and starts pounding away with a chair. Thanks for telling us that it's No DQ after he started swinging. Cage bails and gets taken down by a suicide dive so it's time to pose on the table. The armbreaker almost goes on but Cage powerbombs him down for an early break. Now it's the very muscular Cage with chair shots of his own before he wedges the chair in the corner. Really why would you do that? Have you ever watched a wrestling match before?

They head outside where Fantasma is stomping on Fenix while Cage rams Patron into the table. Back in and we get a cookie sheet upside Alberto's head, followed by a nice slingshot splash for two. Cage really shouldn't be able to do something like that. Cue Fantasma to choke a bloody Del Rio on the ropes but Fenix comes in for a save off some kicks. Fenix dives onto Fantasma and Striker goes on a rant about how international that was.

Cage apparently doesn't care for it as he powerbombs Fenix against the post, sending the seconds up the ramp. Alberto grabs a quick armbreaker over the ropes for the exact same break it always gets, even though this is No DQ so there's no reason to break the hold. Cage takes forever jumping from the middle rope to the top rope for a moonsault (again, shouldn't be able to do that) and only hits the mat. A Backstabber gets

two for Alberto but it's time for Fantasma to send in the tables with the referee helping to set them up.

Alberto breaks up a superplex and hits the double stomp but since this is Mexico, Cage doesn't have to sell it and sends Patron through a table instead. The low superkick gets a heel one count from the referee so Alberto gives him a backbreaker. Del Rio's top rope hurricanrana is countered with a low blow and a super bomb through another table for two off a fresh (well as fresh as someone that old can be) referee. With nothing else left, Cage pounds away at the head with a chair, only to be sent into the wedged chair (you knew that was coming). The armbreaker makes Cage tap.

Rating: B. Match of the night by a mile here and one of the most predictable endings due to the nationalism angle but still fun. Del Rio continues to be WAY more interesting as a face, which is why WWE makes sure to push him as a heel every single chance they can. I'm almost sure Cage is going to be back in WWE at some point and I'm really not sure why they let him go in the first place.

Post match Alberto has something to say but can't find a working mic. Apparently he swears in Spanish and Hugo won't translate it. Alberto grabs the Mexican flag and says this is his house. Until WWE calls again that is.

Cage gets his head shaved and goes after Alberto, only to get beaten down again and covered in the American flag. Dang it Alberto now we have to get it cleaned.

Actor Simon Pegg introduces Myzteziz (formerly Sin Cara), who comes out to the Mission: Impossible theme and repels from the ceiling like Tom Cruise did in the first movie.

Rey Mysterio vs. Myzteziz

Dream match main event. Rey comes out with black wings and looks like Hawkman. Myzteziz on the other hand is in half white and half black. We get a reluctant handshake and they take turns posing with Myzteziz getting annoyed at the lack of cheering. Striker and Hugo take shots at

WWE because they think those mean anything these days. I mean, I know JBL and Cole aren't the best commentary team in the world but they're better than Striker and Hugo as you can actually hear them on big shows.

Rey sends him into the corner three times in a row to start and there goes Myzteziz's shirt. Myzteziz gets tired of this waiting and punches Rey in the face, only to get taken to the mat for a headlock. Back up and Rey is sent outside for his stomach first crash, followed by a powerbomb onto the table. I guess Mexican tables are tougher than American ones too.

They get back in and Rey snaps off a headscissors with the announcers going on about traditional lucha libre. A seated senton off the apron sets up a hurricanrana to send Myzteziz into the post. That means it's time for blood under the mask and Rey is in control. Naturally there's already a fresh table set up at ringside. Even ECW would say tone it down with those things already. Back in and Myzteziz grabs a quick suplex to send Rey through said table and both guys are down again.

Matt can't remember the Spanish word for blood as Myzteziz (dang I can't stand having to type that name over and over) buckle bombs Rey for two. Myzteziz tries it again so Rey hurricanranas him to the floor, setting up a big seated senton from the top. Back in and Rey gets two off a La Mistica rollup (nice touch), giving the announcers something to actually get excited about. Rey actually starts going after the mask but opts for two off a sunset flip instead.

Myzteziz flips him face first onto the mat instead, setting up a twisting Swanton for two. These slow counts may be traditional but they're getting annoying in a hurry. Rey's high cross body is countered into a spinning Side Effect for two more and both guys are down. The 619 is broken up (Hugo: "Wrong number!") so Myzteziz uses it himself. A frog splash (minus the frog) gets two on Rey so he comes back with La Mistica, followed by the real 619 for two.

Back up and Rey uses La Mistica again for the submission. That was kind of weird but even more out there was Striker freaking out that the two main events both ended in submission. It's really not that big of a deal

dude, though to be fair neither is Striker and he's never gotten that either.

Rating: B. This was a lot less messy and the match was much better as a result. It felt like a big deal and the idea here was much simpler but it's still only so good. Rey can still go with the right kind of opponent and Myzteziz didn't botch anything major. For these two at this point, this was just a step beneath a miracle and one of the best matches of the night.

Post match Rey goes to be with the fans but Los Perros Del Mal (Joe Lider/Pentagon Jr.) and Averno run in to go after Myzteziz's mask. Rey makes the save but gets a staple gun to the head for his efforts. Myzteziz gets up and fights them off with Rey's help. The heels are all gone....so Myzteziz shoves Rey down and sprays something in his eyes to go full heel. Oh sorry rudo. Myzteziz wants a mask vs. mask rematch, presumably at the next pay per view. The blind Rey gets powerbombed through the table.

Cue Rey's friend Konnan and his super heel stable La Sociedad...and the show goes off the air early as Konnan is giving Myzteziz a sales pitch. Myzteziz would turn it down after the show was over and would leave AAA in about two months, meaning no rematch.

Overall Rating: D+. The last two matches are good but they're nowhere near enough to save the show. Between the horrible technical issues and the old guys being almost universal disasters, there's really no way to validate this being seen as a good show for the American audiences. The bad things here are just too much for the limited good to overcome and there's little any company can do to get around that.

Above all else, this show reminded me of the biggest problem with ECW's first pay per view Barely Legal (which just missed going off the air early by about ten seconds). The problem with that show was ECW assuming you knew everything that was going on so they didn't bother recapping most of the stuff on the show. That becomes a big problem when you're presenting your first pay per view to an American audience in a very long time. You can't assume that fans have watched TV leading up to the show

because the more lost they are, the less likely they are to buy another show.

This show was putting in an effort, but it was WAY too focused on honoring legends. It's cool if you want to do that, but at the same time you risk the problem of fans getting really bored watching a lot of the lame action. That's the style that dominated most of the first half of the show and really made me want this to be over. The last two matches helped a lot and it's no coincidence that they were the matches with the most detailed backstories. This was a pretty strong misfire that could have been made much better with some strong adjustments, but it really doesn't work as is.

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