

Middle Kingdom Wrestling – December 13, 2015: The Most Important Thing

Middle Kingdom Wrestling Episode 5

Date: December 13, 2015

Location: CWE Gym, Dongguan, China

Commentators: Eddie Strong, Cam Ferguson

This is the first season finale, meaning the finals of the MKW Championship tournament. The show started really slowly but it's picked up a bit in the last few shows. I still wouldn't really call it good but given how different this is, you can only ask so much. It's going to help to get to some different stories aside from the tournament, which is the case in any wrestling company. Let's get to it.

We open with a much needed recap of the tournament as it's been about two months since the last episode went up.

CWE Title: The Slam vs. Black Mamba

Slam is defending and is a much bigger deal than most of the people in the tournament, though I'm still not sure what the CWE is. Mamba jumps Slam from behind to start and gets two off a quick clothesline. Something like an AA into an armbar puts Mamba down as Slam continues to be one of the most polished guys in the promotion.

A quick consultation with bodyguard Da Li Sam doesn't really work as Mamba walks into a Side Effect for two with Sam breaking up the count. For some reason that's not a DQ and neither is Sam CHOKING THE REFEREE. Dude even ECW would have thrown this out already. Mamba sprays something in Slam's eyes to take over before grabbing a DDT for two. Slam pops back up (without selling the eyes) and grabs another AA for two more.

The announcers debate whether a knee drop is legal or not (huh?) as Mamba heads outside again. This time it's the much bigger Sam getting in, which

could be a bit more interesting. Slam beats up Sam and suddenly I feel like I'm in a Dr. Seuss book. Mama comes back in and rakes the eyes (this referee is worthless) to set up a Scorpion Death Drop for two. That's about it though as Slam pops up (again) and grabs a suplex into a cutter (kind of like a TKO) to retain.

Rating: D. This didn't do it for me. The idea of Mamba having to cheat to stand a chance against Slam was fine but they probably should have just done Slam vs. Sam (egads with the rhyming) here. Mamba really doesn't have a character other than he's a guy with a bodyguard and that's not really enough to get me into a big showdown.

Also Slam not selling ANYTHING got old in a hurry. I get that he's a Goldberg style character, but even Goldberg would go down if someone blinded him. This had the structure of something good but needed a lot more thought and a better heel. Oh and the referee sucked. Like really sucked. At least have him get distracted or bumped or something.

Da Li Sam introduces the replacement opponent for Dalton Bragg in the tournament final: Voodoo, a guy in a red mask. Well that's rather simple.

MKW Title: Dalton Bragg vs. Voodoo

The title is vacant coming in and Bragg is pretty easily the crowd favorite. Voodoo keeps saying he's got this. We hit the stall button and as usual, Bragg comes off as the most experienced guy in the company as he tries to get the crowd to boo the cowardly heel. We get the opening bell and Voodoo wants to shake Bragg's injured left arm (Which sends us into a flashback of Len Bai injuring Bragg's arm earlier in the tournament. You don't often see flashbacks on wrestling shows so points for something new, though shouldn't commentary be pointing that out?).

As expected, Voodoo cranks on the arm as commentary finally kicks back in, ranting about how Voodoo has been thrown out of every Chinese promotion. You would think that could have been set up before the match. Now they start talking about various things Voodoo pulled in other promotions. Naturally they don't go into specifics because I highly doubt these things ever happened and that's the best sign I've seen yet from these guys. Wrestling promotions don't seem to get that THEY CAN MAKE

STUFF UP. Do that more often.

Bragg comes back with some cross bodies for two before crotcheting Voodoo on top. Everyone heads to the floor and Bragg gets caught by Sam, allowing Voodoo to get in a kick to the arm. Voodoo stays on the arm and tries to get the fans to cry. Nice touch. Back in and we hit the armbar, followed by some good old fashioned cheating from Sam.

Bragg gets his boots up in the corner but runs into a DDT on the arm to keep Voodoo in control. There's a hammerlock slam to stay on the arm, only to have Bragg nip up and catch Voodoo with an enziguri on top. The high spot of the match is a superplex to put both guys down again. They trade kicks to the arm with neither guy getting the advantage in another sequence that doesn't make a ton of sense.

Commentary is gone for some reason as Bragg nails a spin kick to the head for two but Sam offers more distraction, allowing Voodoo to get in a good looking wheelbarrow faceplant for two of his own. Since he doesn't seem to have a finisher, Voodoo loads up a chain but hits Sam by mistake, allowing Bragg to come back with a springboard Codebreaker for the pin and the title.

Rating: C. Definitely a better match with the arm work, though it kind of disappeared halfway through. Voodoo was much better than Mamba as he actually did something, though again you can see that Bragg is the most experienced guy around here. This probably needed to be two minutes shorter and Voodoo needs a finisher, but the groundwork was much stronger here and it made for a better match. It's also rather surprising that they went with an American champion and actually pushed him as a face, but I'd rather do that than go with an inaugural heel champion.

Bragg gets the title and the credits roll.

Wait we're not done as we get a teaser for season two. The Slam comes out for a staredown with Bragg, presumably making him the first challenger. That's the smartest thing they could do right now.

Overall Rating: D+. This show was watchable but it's still needing a lot of work. Focusing on Bragg and the Slam is the best thing they could do,

but at the same time the rest of their roster really needs the most help. The good thing here though is they have a champion and now they can move on to some other stuff which could do wonders (well ok maybe just some good) for the promotion as a whole. It's a nice effort but the glaring holes are still around.

That's it for season one and I'm really not sure what to think so far. Above all else, it's clear that there isn't a lot of experience on the roster. If there's one thing this company needs more than anything, it's coaching. It really feels like these guys have been given very little direction aside from the bare bones of "you're good, you're bad and you win." Off the top of my head, aside from Selfie King, I can't think of anyone on the roster who has a gimmick. You don't need anything mind blowing, but there's really nothing separating most of the characters.

This is where promos could help, even if they're translated to English. Just tell us something about each person and give me a reason (as moderate as it might be) to be interested in them. On the fourth episode, Ash had a promo about how he was mad about being cheated out of the tournament and wanted a match for revenge. That told me everything I needed to know about the next match and gave me a reason to care about the story. Do more of that and explain who these people are a little more (commentary can do a lot of the heavy lifting there) and things will get a lot better in a hurry.

Also, get these guys on some weights. Save for Sam, everyone looks like they weigh about 150lbs. I know there's a limited talent pool to pick from, but there almost has to be some people with better physiques to pick from. It gets distracting at times as it feels like I could take some of these guys out.

Overall though, this really does feel like the bare bones of a promotion. Now that being said, there was a story being told and I could pick up on it more often than not which is the most important thing a wrestling promotion can do. There's A LOT of stuff that needs to be improved on but this could have been a disaster and wound up being watchable most of the time. Keep the shows short and give us some more stories/characters and things will get better.

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