

Impact Wrestling – February 2, 2016: Matt Hardy Isn't Interesting

Impact Wrestling

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Location: Sands Bethlehem Events Center, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

We're wrapping up the Bethlehem tapings here and the big story is Matt Hardy allowing his brother Jeff to be put out of action thanks to a piledriver through a table at the hands of Eric Young. We'll also be hearing from Ethan Carter III for the first time since he lost the title as well as Tyrus. Let's get to it.

Ethan tells the camera crew to be at a specific place at 4pm for their interview.

Here are Matt Hardy and company to open things up. Matt talks about working with people you hate and says it was karma that sent Jeff through that table. How dare Jeff accuse Matt of tarnishing the World Title? Reby and Matt never believed that Matt wasn't living in Jeff's shadow but it was Jeff' jealousy that caused his injury. This brings out Eric Young and Bram with the former shouting about how he took out Jeff and now the World Title goes through him.

Now it's Kurt Angle coming out to get straight to the point: he gets Hardy tonight for the title. A brawl is teased but here's Beer Money to back Angle up. Cue Abyss/Crazy Steve/the Wolves for a big brawl with the good guys clearing the ring. Roode announces a four on four hardcore fight. Why hardcore? No reason given, but that's the case with almost everything in the TNA main event scene.

I don't even know what to say about these things anymore. Matt Hardy is just out there no matter what anyone thinks of him, we're clearly just waiting around on Jeff Hardy because he's THE STAR and someone we all

care about and Eric Young is just there because he's Eric Young and is in the main event scene because of whatever residual fallout there is from that Daniel Bryan run nearly two years ago. I have no interest in any of these people but this is what we're getting because TNA has decided that Matt Hardy and Eric Young are stars because they've been around for a long time and TNA cannot make new talent.

We recap the Feast or Fired reveals from last week, including Bennett and Maria's interruption.

Drew feels like he's won the lottery. Tyrus comes up and tells him to walk away with the briefcase because it's a target on his chest. That sounds like a challenge.

Lashley vs. Aiden O'Shea

O'Shea pounds him down to start and here's that woman from a few weeks ago, now known as Raquel. How the announcers know that isn't clear but I'm sure I'm an idiot internet fan for wondering about that. A clothesline puts Aiden on the floor but Lashley goes over to ask Raquel who she is. Back in and Aiden's chinlock doesn't do much as Lashley hits a quick spear for the pin at 4:48.

Rating: D. It's nice that they're doing something with Lashley, but the same issue persists: why in the world are they using Lashley for something like this instead of having him in the main event, or at least somewhere higher up? I do like that there's an actual story there though instead of "Here's Lashley. He's really strong."

Post match Raquel says she can bring Lashley pain or pleasure.

Here's Maria to talk about women's wrestling. Women's wrestling may not need a savior but it needs a leader to point it in the right direction. She is the first lady of professional wrestling and she is the arrow and leader. The Knockouts division needs to be saved so out with the old and in with the new. This brings out Gail Kim to proclaim her respect for Maria, as is the custom throughout TNA. Maria says Gail is just a wrestler but that's not all she can be. Gail is even more serious because this division is about wrestling and nothing more. They can fight right

now but Maria leaves.

The Wolves know Beer Money is coming for the titles at some point. Storm shows off the Feast or Fired briefcase but they agree to worry about that later.

Wolves/Beer Money vs. Decay/Bram/Eric Young

This is a Hardcore War, meaning two people (Crazy Steve and Davey Richards) start and fight for two minutes before someone else comes down to make it two on one. Everyone brings a weapon of their choice and it's one fall to a finish. Davey's chair is easily dispatched by Steve's ball bat wrapped in chains but Richards uses the bat to knock the chair into Steve's face.

Bram is in third with a turnbuckle rod and the heels take over on the floor. It's James Storm in fourth with a beer keg that he takes forever to get to the ring. Eventually he puts it between Bram's legs and crushes it with a chair, which the fans implore him to do one more time. Eric Young is in fifth and cleans house with a kendo stick as we take a break.

Back with Eddie in as well and the good guys in control. Bram and Young take over until it's Abyss to complete the villains' team with Janice. Eddie dives on the monster before he can get anywhere but Storm is holding his leg. Pope wants to know how you win this match, which really should have been established before we were fifteen minutes in. Abyss cleans house as he is known to do and it's Bobby Roode to complete the field, though I wonder why there are such strict rules in a HARDCORE WAR.

Roode's hockey stick gives the good guys control again and we start the parade of secondary finishers. A seven man team suplex lets all four heroes do the BEER MONEY shout but that much time being wasted allows Abyss to get us and clothesline everyone. Davey takes a Black Hole Slam as Eddie and Bram fight to the back. Steve mists Davey, allowing Abyss to hit him with a title, allowing Steve to get the pin at 19:30.

Rating: D+. So it's Lethal Lockdown without the cage. The match was your usual example of a way to kill time on a show with no real substance to anything as control would change every time someone new came in. It's not

horrible or a total waste of time but this was way too long and lost any of its interest early on. At least the Wolves have some fresh challengers.

Angle and Galloway suck up to each other as only TNA upper midcarders can do.

Drew Galloway vs. Tyrus

Neither guy gets an entrance. Tyrus gets in a cheap shot to start but Drew hammers away in the corner. We're already in the nerve hold for a bit before Tyrus misses a charge into the post. Drew chops away and drops him with a top rope shot to the head. That earns him a Heart Punch from Tyrus and some BORING chants from the crowd, only to have Drew powerbomb the big man out of the corner. The lights go out and here's Mike Bennett with the briefcase to knock out Galloway for the DQ at 5:41.

Rating: D. The fans were right about that BORING chant. The problem here is how can you get something interesting out of a guy Tyrus' size when he wrestles such a big power style offense? Drew vs. Bennett should be fun enough but I could have gone for something more interesting to get us there.

Post match Bennett looks down at Drew and does his usual "do you believe in miracles" speech.

Angle talks about possibly retiring as champion when Lashley comes up to say how awesome it would be to win the title back from Angle in the same place Kurt took the title from him last year.

X-Division Title: Tigre Uno vs. Gregory Shane Helms

Not so fast actually as Helms never said the match was against him. Here's what we get instead.

X-Division Title: Tigre Uno vs. Trevor Lee

Lee is challenging of course and thank goodness it's someone fresh. Tigre is in early trouble but a dropkick sends Lee to the floor. A running clothesline drops the champ for two and it's time for some mask ripping.

Tigre comes back with a dropkick and dive over the top but that cool standing double stomp puts Uno down again. The fisherman's buster into a small packages gives Lee the title at 4:50.

Rating: C-. So after all that time with Tigre winning match after match, he loses clean in five minutes? I can actually live with that as the division has been dying for some fresh blood for years now. Also it's not like any of this matters until the main event guys remember the X-Divison is a thing at Destination X anyway so this doesn't mean a ton. Lee is rather different too so this is a bit better.

Up next is the World Title match. Or maybe Ethan's interview as they both say "up next".

The big interview with Ethan is a promo about being undefeated for two years and then realizing that he's kind of been a jerk. The winning got to him until Matt Hardy took everything to put him down. It took the thing he loved the most, the TNA World Title, to finally keep him down. He's coming back to be Matt's shadow and take back what belongs to him. Good stuff here as usual, but unfortunately we're likely stuck waiting for Jeff to be the big conquering hero because of reasons.

TNA World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Matt Hardy

Hardy is defending and an early Reby distraction lets the champ get in a bulldog for two. Tyrus rakes the eyes to slow Kurt down again and Matt grabs a chinlock. Angle fights up and scores with an Angle Slam for two we as take a break. Back with the straps coming down and the ankle lock going on until Matt flips him out to the floor. Tyrus runs Kurt over and goes over to mess with Pope for some reason. Both finishers are countered and it's right back to the ankle lock until Matt rolls through into a cradle for two.

The Side Effect gets the same, followed by the Angle Slam for two more. It's time to roll some Germans, drawing the required SUPLEX CITY chant. Matt finally pulls the referee's shirt over his eyes, allowing a low blow to set up the Twist of Fate for two. More German suplexes allow Angle to go up, only to have Reby offer a distraction. A Twist of Fate (Diamond Cutter really) off the ropes allows Matt to retain at 14:00.

Rating: C+. It was good and a solid way to make Matt look like a bigger deal but there's a limit to how far he can go because, at the end of the day, it's Matt Hardy. To be fair, the wrestling is much better than the talking and thankfully this was a good enough match to make up for a lot of bad stuff earlier tonight.

Overall Rating: D+. The second hour was indeed much better but the first really made this a rough sit. Listening to Matt talk about how iconic he is and hearing about how Eric Young is such an important World Title player again and again is rapidly becoming some of the most ridiculous stuff I've heard in a long time.

As was my problem last year, there are so many people that TNA could use in their World Title scene but we're getting these guys who are "names" instead of people who might be interesting. It doesn't help that TNA is incapable of getting through something quickly so this is what we're likely stuck with for a few more very long months. Carter will help, but there's only so much he can do as a filler challenger.

Results

Lashley b. Aiden O'Shea – Spear

Decay/Bram/Eric Young b. Beer Money/Wolves – Title belt to Richards

Drew Galloway b. Tyrus via DQ when Mike Bennett interfered

Trevor Lee b. Tigre Uno – Fisherman's Buster

Matt Hardy b. Kurt Angle – Super Twist of Fate

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