Cruiserweight Classic – September 14, 2016: Grand Finale

Cruiserweight Classic

Date: September 14, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Daniel Bryan, Mauro Ranallo

It's already the grand finale as we're live tonight for two hours. We have three tournament matches to go tonight and at least one other as Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa vs. two cruiserweights to be named tonight. There's always the chance that they'll add in another match, as well as the potential of something involving the Cruiserweight Title. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at the tournament, narrated by HHH.

Opening sequence.

The announcers talk about the show a bit.

Preview of the first semifinal match.

Video on all four semifinalists.

Semifinals: Gran Metalik vs. Zack Sabre Jr.

Mexico vs. England. Metalik dropkicks him at the bell to put Zack on the floor for a flip dive. A springboard Swanton Bomb gets a VERY close two but Sabre ties him in the ropes for some kicks and knees to the back. Sabre starts in on the neck to slow things down and puts Metalik's head between his legs to crank on a leg.

Back up and Zack fires off more uppercuts but gets caught in a weird standing leglock until Sabre dives over to the ropes. Zack comes back with a dragon sleeper with his leg pulling Metalik's arm back as he stays on the neck. They fight over a double arm crank until Sabre just kicks him in the face. Metalik does the same and gets two off a running shooting star press. Both guys get near falls off some

rollups until Metalik gets something like an octopus hold.

Sabre reverses into a guillotine which is reversed into a Boston crab which is reversed into a rollup for two on Sabre. A slugout goes to Sabre so Metalik takes his head off with a clothesline for two more. Sabre's running PK gets another near fall but Metalik kicks him in the face again. Something like an octopus hold has Metalik in more trouble but it breaks down so Metalik can survive. Sabre goes to the ropes but gets crotched and hurricanranaed down for a very close two. Metalik gets caught in a triangle until he flips over into a rollup for two more. Back up and a quick Metalik Driver eliminates Sabre at 13:14.

Rating: B. The ending surprised me a bit as Metalik has been pretty quiet throughout the whole tournament but is somehow in the finals. He's very much your standard luchador and that's the kind of wrestler who is always going to have a spot around here. Sabre might not be coming to WWE but he'll be a big star around the world with the skills that he has.

William Regal comes out and gives Metalik a big medal for winning.

With the help of a translator, Metalik thanks the fans and says he's going to win the tournament.

Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa are out to prove something tonight against Noam Dar and Cedric Alexander. All that matters to them is a rematch with the Revival.

Semifinals: Kota Ibushi vs. TJ Perkins

Japan vs. Philipines. Feeling out process to start with Perkins actually checking one of Ibushi's kicks. The fans are mostly split as Perkins works on an armbar but tries to pull Ibushi in for the kneebar. Ibushi sprints over to the ropes so Perkins gets him on the mat in a headscissors. A running kick to the chest drops Perkins and a springboard missile dropkick makes it even worse.

Ibushi tries a running springboard moonsault but gets kicked to the floor for a nasty looking crash. Back in and a double underhook crank stays on Ibushi's neck for a bit until a good looking dropkick

hits Perkins in the mouth. Now the springboard moonsault to the floor works just fine and Ibushi follows up with a springboard missile dropkick. A running powerslam sets up a middle rope moonsault but Perkins gets the knees up.

The kneebar goes on and sends Ibushi over to the ropes for the save. Ibushi is right back with a snap German suplex for two and it's time for the hard kicks to Perkins' chest. TJ breaks up the middle rope German deadlift suplex and counters the Golden Star Bomb into a DDT. That's only good for two (Mauro: "CONJOINED TWINS CLOSE!") and it's off to the kneebar in the middle of the ring.

Ibushi flips out of that too and the Golden Star Bomb plants TJ for one of the hottest near falls I've seen in a long time. Perkins rolls away from a Phoenix splash but gets caught in a wheelbarrow slam driver. Yet another Golden Star Bomb attempt is countered into the kneebar and Perkins even leans up to pull back on the neck for the huge upset at 13:51.

Rating: A. I was losing my mind on those near falls and that just does not happen to me very often. Perkins is someone that I never saw much in but this match here more than won me over. He had a logical game plan here and he stuck with it until the ending while Ibushi was throwing everything he could. I had a blast with this match and it never stopped being a blast.

Perkins says he's won one and now he needs to win one more.

Sasha Banks, Bayley, Kalisto, Jack Gallagher and Rich Swann are in the crowd.

Noam Dar/Cedric Alexander vs. Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa

Just an exhibition match. After some handshakes all around, it's Alexander throwing Ciampa around in a bit of a surprise to start. It's quickly off to Gargano for a knee to Dar's jaw. They already tag off again so Cedric flip dives over the top to take Ciampa out. Everything breaks down and Gargano superkicks Dar before spearing Alexander through the ropes for two. A wicked Michinoku Driver gets two on Gargano and we settle down to Ciampa kneeing Dar in the face

until Cedric springboards in with a clothesline.

Everything breaks down again and a series of clotheslines and superkicks puts all four down. Dar reverses a kick and grabs an ankle lock on Johnny, only to have Ciampa go all psycho while stomping to break up the hold. Dar dives onto Johnny and Alexander hits a very hard brainbuster for what looked like three but the referee says keep going. Gargano comes back in with his superkicks to both guys, setting up the running knee/superkick combo for the pin on Dar at 9:42.

Rating: B. Totally wild match here to give us a little change of pace from the tournament matches. These guys beat the heck out of each other and there were some great near falls even though there was little doubt that Gargano/Ciampa were going to win due to their upcoming match with the Revival. Still though, this was a very entertaining match and a good idea after the two great matches we saw earlier.

Regal talks about helping to put the tournament together and trying to find people who weren't as well known but could handle the rigors of this competition.

Corey Graves comes in to talk a bit as we fill in time before the main event.

We recap the semifinals.

Quick look at the trophy.

Cruiserweight Classic Final: Gran Metalik vs. TJ Perkins

Mexico vs. Philipines. Wait a second though as HHH comes out to say this is going to be for the new Cruiserweight Title. That's quite the jump up though it was the only logical way to introduce the title.

Cruiserweight Title: Gran Metalik vs. TJ Perkins

The title is vacant coming in of course. They trade some early rollups before Perkins grabs a modified octopus hold. Metalik rolls out and sends Perkins outside for a suicide dive with their heads crashing together. Back in and we hit a surfboard with Metalik's

boot in TJ's back for extra pressure. Perkins gets over to the ropes and tries a suplex, only to have Metalik get a running start and hurricanrana Perkins off the apron for an awesome spot.

Metalik follows him out with a big springboard flip dive to keep Perkins in trouble. The running shooting star misses though and Perkins grabs the kneebar, sending Metalik over to the ropes again. A dropkick to the knee looks to set up the Metalik Driver but instead it's a DDT for two on Perkins.

The reverse Backstabber sets up another kneebar and Perkins pulls him back to the middle. He can't get the leg crossed though and Metalik counters into a rollup for a close two. The Metalik Driver plants Perkins but the knee gives out again and it's only good for two more. Perkins takes too long going up top and gets caught in a super Metalik Driver but that's reversed into a full on kneebar to make Metalik tap at 17:45.

Rating: A-. Just like before, Perkins won me over here. He really has no business being in there with names like this and he's more than shown he belongs at the top of this division. I had a blast watching him through and you can add him to the list of names that TNA managed to screw up and let go over to WWE. Another great match here to cap off a great night.

Perkins is presented with the trophy and title but he needs to see someone about his chest, which is terribly, terribly bruised. He talks about how this trophy is for everyone and he can't believe he's here. Perkins celebrates to end the show.

Overall Rating: A+. You think this one needs an explanation? This tournament was absolutely incredible and one of the best displays of wrestling I've seen in a long time. For me, the whole thing works for how simple they kept things. This started two months ago yesterday and we're DONE. No three months of round robin before we get to the actual tournament, no waiting around with people who had no chance being teased and nothing that was ever boring.

This tournament flew by and was so much fun that I started looking forward to watching it every week. I don't think it's something that

would work all the time but it’s going to be a great addition to Raw for a match or two a week and that’s all it needs to be. Excellent tournament and an outstanding finale.

Results

Gran Metalik b. Zack Sabre Jr. – Metalik Driver

TJ Perkins b. Kota Ibushi – Kneebar

Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa b. Noam Dar/Cedric Alexander – Running knee/superkick combo to Dar

TJ Perkins b. Gran Metalik – Kneebar

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