

Lucha Underground – August 23, 2017: When Great Isn't Enough

Lucha Underground

Date: August 23, 2017

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

It's time for a big show with the finals of the Cueto Cup along with the Lucha Underground Title match between Rey Mysterio and champion Johnny Mundo. This has been hyped up for months now and I'm actually looking forward to what they've got in store. If they do this right, it might be the biggest show they've ever done. Well close to it at least. Let's get to it.

The opening video recaps tonight's events, including a mask vs. mask match between Sexy Star and Veneno, which is just a glorified storyline advancement.

The announcers give us a quick opening.

Veneno vs. Sexy Star

Mask vs. mask. Star kicks away at him to start but here's Joey Ryan to unmask Veneno as Cortez Castro, which we already knew. Castro and Ryan get in a brawl and the match ends at 52 seconds....I think with it being thrown out but it could also be a DQ or a countout. Striker says Star wins so we'll say countout as the referee looked like he was counting.

Johnny Mundo and his agent come in to see Dario Cueto because the boss doesn't appreciate Johnny anymore. Johnny could get better offers with one phone call but Dario swears everyone is banned from ringside tonight because he can beat Rey on his own. Mundo threatens to leave with the title if anything screwy happens tonight.

Cueto Cup Tournament Final: Pentagon Dark vs. Prince Puma

The winner gets the title shot at Ultima Lucha Tres, whenever that is. They trade shots to the head to start until Pentagon charges into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. He makes the mistake of bailing to the floor and gets caught with a flip dive to give Puma what is likely to be a short lived advantage.

Back in and Pentagon hits a Backstabber before they trade some hard chops. Puma kicks him in the face again and it's a 619 into a springboard high crossbody for two. A tornado DDT is countered into a backbreaker for two on Puma but he's right back with his rolling suplexes. Puma jumps into a pumphandle driver for a VERY near fall though and Striker starts yelling a lot.

A Mexican Destroyer plants Puma but of course he's right back up and hits one of his own to put both guys down. They slowly slug it out until Pentagon is sent to the apron and then to the top. Puma kicks him in the head again for a super hurricanrana and, after a nod from Vampiro, drops the 630 for the pin and the cup at 9:32.

Rating: B. Sometimes you just need two people to fly around the ring as fast as they can while kicking each other in the head over and over. This was a heck of a match and Puma winning while seemingly going full on evil (though not necessarily heel because Lucha Underground is an odd place) is the right call. Him vs. Mundo (or Mysterio again) would be a heck of an Ultima Lucha main event as Puma has been on fire as of late.

Pentagon leaves as Puma and Vampiro shake hands.

Post break Dario gives Puma the cup but it's time to find Puma's opponent.

Lucha Underground Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Johnny Mundo

Mundo is defending. No seconds to start but you know this isn't going to be a straight match. Rey slugs away to start and a kick sends him outside for a sliding headscissors into the barricade. Back in and a springboard crossbody gives Rey two but Johnny chokes him down and grabs a rear naked choke which switches into a chinlock. The Flying Chuck gives Johnny two and there's a hard running knee to the head.

It's off to a crossface chickenwing of all things until Johnny dumps him outside. Mundo misses a corkscrew dive though and gets ankle scissored down again. Rey's springboard is blocked with a superkick and the kickout makes Johnny panic in a rare visual. A hanging corkscrew neckbreaker gets two on Rey and it's time for the required ripping at Rey's mask.

With that going nowhere, Johnny puts him in the Tree of Woe but crotches himself against the post. Rey reverses an Alabama Slam into something like a Canadian Destroyer (too common of a move tonight) for two. It's off to an Octopus Hold on Johnny (I'm surprised Rey can actually do that move) but he escapes and grabs an over the shoulder backbreaker for two. The End of the World is broken up and Rey drops a split legged moonsault of his own.

Johnny bails outside and gets taken down by a top rope seated senton. They head back in with Striker FINALLY taking a break from shouting about how big and amazing this is. A victory roll takes the referee out (you knew it was coming) and Johnny breaks up the 619. Johnny grabs the belt but Rey's son Dominic takes it away and drops Mundo. Security chases him off and it's the 619 into the springboard splash....so Dario pulls the referee out. That earns Dario a 619 but Mundo takes Rey down and hits the End of the World for the pin to retain at 18:11.

Rating: B. The Dario stuff is interesting as you could have Rey fight the boss for a bit (and only a bit) though the ending wasn't the biggest shock. Puma vs. Mundo sounds like a heck of a main event for the biggest show of the year but that could change as things aren't exactly normal around here. Other than that though, this was what you would expect from Mysterio vs. Mundo: well done, entertaining, and a big fight feel. It's not their Intercontinental Title match from all those years ago but it wasn't supposed to be.

Overall Rating: B+. This is a weird one as the matches were both good (I'm not downgrading a show over a match that didn't last a minute) but it still feels underwhelming. After the tournament being built up over two months, you kind of expected an epic show here and just got a show. This needed to be a pay per view style show with some extra stuff to set up the big matches. It's still very good, but it doesn't feel epic, which

is what they were going for. Still worth checking out though as we FINALLY enter the home stretch for the season.

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