

Impact Wrestling – February 1, 2018: Here We Go For The Latest Time

Impact Wrestling

Date: February 1, 2018

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Jeremy Borash, Josh Matthews

It's time for a new fresh taping cycle but also a fresh regime in charge of things. I mean, to be fair it had been a few months since everything was shaken up. This is the start of the taping cycle to take us all the way to the next pay per view in April, meaning it's likely time to shake up a lot of things. Let's get to it.

Someone's legs arrived earlier today. As usual, panning up is out of the question.

Opening sequence.

We look back at last week's show, showing every result including Matt Sydal winning the Grand Championship, Laurel Van Ness cheating to retain the Knockouts Title, Lashley losing to Moose and destroying Dan Lambert in retaliation and Eli Drake retaining the World Title in a triple threat. Only the triple threat involves someone who hasn't left the promotion since the matches were taped.

Opening sequence.

The four sided ring is back, thank goodness.

Grand Championship: Matt Sydal vs. Fallah Bahh

Sydal is defending and it's just a regular match again. Before the match, Matt gives credit to his new unnamed spiritual adviser. Bahh shoves him around with ease to start and knocks Sydal away for daring to throw some kicks. Sydal tries a sunset flip but is smart enough to pull himself up

before he can be crushed. A sliding dropkick puts Bahh down and a spinwheel kick does the same.

Sydal starts in on the leg and it's a YES Kick into a standing moonsault for two. Bahh gets back up so Sydal hits some top rope knees to bring him down again. Back up and Bahh scores with some big fat chops and a Samoan drop despite not being Samoan. That rolling splash gives Bahh two but Sydal kicks him over the top to break up a Banzai drop. Back in and Bahh misses another drop, setting up the shooting star press to retain Sydal's title at 7:34.

Rating: C-. I still don't get the appeal of Bahh but he seems to be gaining one of those cult followings. That being said, this wasn't at all about Bahh as Sydal gets a first title defense under his (newly won) belt and can wait around until he gets a big time challenger. The spiritual adviser screams heel turn, which wouldn't exactly surprise me given how often TNA likes to go in that direction.

We look back at Lashley turning on American Top Team, including spearing both KM and Dan Lambert. About time but that's kind of an anti-climactic ending to the story.

Trevor Lee assures Caleb Konley that he's five steps ahead of everyone so the team will be fine. I just want to know what was up with the semi-Hawaiian shirts.

KM vs. Bobby Lashley

Lashley slugs away to start and let's plug that list of people you can't see in TNA anymore but CAN see if you buy their Network! KM talks some trash but gets taken down twice in a row. An early spear attempt sees Lashley go shoulder first into the post and we take a break. Back with KM grabbing a chinlock and demanding the referee ask for a submission a few times.

Lashley misses another charge and falls to the floor, allowing KM to actually hit a running flip dive. KM misses a slingshot splash back inside though and gets taken down by a crossbody of all things. Lashley's powerslam gets two but he walks into a pumphandle slam for the same. Not

that it matters as Lashley spears him down for the pin at 11:58.

Rating: C. KM was better than usual here but that's not exactly covering a lot of ground. The guy isn't interesting and putting him in American Top Team for a few weeks didn't do him any good. At this point he's just a warm body who can't do anything special and that's not exactly the kind of thing that this company needs at the moment.

We recap Kongo Kong destroying Chandler Park two weeks back.

Joseph Park is on the phone with Grandma Jenny when Jimmy Jacobs comes up to say he wants Abyss back to face Kong. As usual, Kong is worthless.

Lashley is going to focus on wrestling and MMA but blows off Eddie Edwards.

Laurel Van Ness vs. Kiera Hogan

Non-title. Laurel works on the arm to start and pulls her down by the hair. A right hand gets two, followed by a running forearm in the corner for the same. Hogan actually gets in some right hands and a low superkick for two, only to eat a curb stomp. The Unprettier is loaded up but here's Allie for a distraction, allowing Hogan to grab a rollup for the pin at 4:14.

Rating: D. Pure angle advancement here and there's nothing wrong with that. Hogan looked fine here and it's always good to get some fresh talent into the promotion. Allie getting another shot makes sense after she was cheated out of the title match last week, and it's not like there are a ton of options at the moment.

The mystery man is now in the building.

Alberto El Patron thinks he should be in the main event as champion but his partner tonight, Ethan Carter III, says follow his lead.

Here is LAX for their first comments since Barbed Wire Massacre. Konnan says they're still the revolution and you can't stop that. As for Sami Callihan (Konnan: "The guy was midway through a sex change operation when the doctor said just leave him like that"), they're always ready for a

fight so here's OVE. Egads FIND A NEW TEAM ALREADY!

Callihan hits the mic against his own head and says they hate everything. They do respect LAX though and things need to end before one of them winds up dead. Sami promises to get the titles back at some point but for now, they have more important things to worry about. Konnan follows them up the aisle and says there are no bigger fish to fry because "we are the whole d*** tuna". As I ponder the meanings of that line, Konley and Lee jump LAX and beat them down. They're not exactly a great team but they're different at least.

Moose and Johnny Impact (who Moose almost calls by all of his old names) are ready to win the tag match.

This week's old clip: Drew Galloway debuts and beats up Ethan Carter III. Again: STOP SHOWING THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T WORK HERE ANYMORE BEATING UP YOUR (then) CURRENT TALENT!

Eli Drake thinks Chris Adonis brought the mystery man but Adonis says no. Tonight is all about the life of Eli though.

Cage is coming.

Ethan Carter III/Alberto El Patron vs. Johnny Impact/Moose

Johnny and Ethan start things off with Impact spinning out of a wristlock and into one of his own. Moose does his pose and comes in for a dropkick to keep Carter in trouble. The double teaming begins, setting up Impact's breakdancing legdrop for two. Alberto gets in a cheap shot from the apron, allowing Carter to get in a knee to the ribs so the villains can take over.

Carter drops an elbow and grabs a chinlock for a few seconds before throwing Moose outside. That means a few rams into the barricade, followed by a double suplex for two back inside. The solo suplex is reversed though and it's a lukewarm tag to Impact. It's way too early for Starship Pain so Impact settles for the Flying Chuck. Unfortunately that only knocks Carter into his own corner, allowing Alberto to come right back in.

We take a break and come back with Alberto sending Impact into the corner over and over to keep him in trouble. Carter pulls Moose off the apron before coming in for the TK3 and a near fall of his own. A top rope ax handle gives Alberto two but Johnny reverses a belly to back superplex into a crossbody to put both guys down.

That's enough for the hot tag to Moose, who comes in with a series of running corner dropkicks for two. Alberto ducks the Game Changer and scores with the Backstabber for two of his own. Johnny gets caught in the Tree of Woe and the top rope double stomp connects. Not that it matters as Moose is right there with a hard clothesline to put Alberto away at 18:53.

Rating: C. Totally standard main event style tag here but it's nice to see Moose getting a big pin like this. The main event scene needs some fresh names after that three way feud ate up the last several months and Moose would be a good addition. I'm rather tired of Alberto vs. Johnny and it would be a good idea to keep them apart for a long time.

Here are Drake and Adonis for the big closing segment. Adonis has a few facts for Drake, starting with Drake being the greatest champion ever. We see a quick highlight reel, followed by the second fact: Drake is greatest dresser to ever live. Finally, we have fact #3: Drake is the greatest friend that ever lived.

For some reason the clip is from Thanksgiving where Adonis had to wear the turkey suit and he's not happy. Drake says the pie from Thanksgiving was delicious and Adonis rocked the turkey suit. The champ adds up the facts that Adonis laid out and there's only one conclusion: Drake is the greatest man that ever lived. I think you know where this is going.

Cue the returning AUSTIN ARIES (with banana) to interrupt, earning a loud WELCOME BACK chant. Aries says he missed the fans too but he heard Drake refer to himself as the greatest man that ever lived. After listing off his own resume around here, Aries throws the challenge out for anywhere anytime. Drake takes off his jacket and says the best thing that Aries has ever done is sit behind a desk and talk about the matches. There's no match right now but Adonis cheap shots Aries with the belt. That's enough

to change Drake's mind and the title is on the line RIGHT NOW.

Impact Wrestling World Title: Austin Aries vs. Eli Drake

Drake is defending and covers for a very quick two. After an argument with the referee, Drake misses a charge into the post, setting up Aries' corner dropkick. The brainbuster gives us a new champion at 50 seconds.

As expected, the announcers soundly undersell the title change to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. The show was fine enough but egads I didn't like that ending. Drake has held the title for about five months and he just loses it in no time in an impromptu match because Aries is freshly available. This company has a really bad habit of not building stories up over time and going for the big shock instead of setting something up in the name or proper storytelling. At least Aries has his own history here and it's not some total newcomer winning the title.

Overall the show was watchable enough but I can't really go beyond that. For a show that was supposed to be the latest restart, only the title change felt like something new. A lot of the feuds and stories seemed to be taking their next step and none of the felt like a big deal. It's not a bad show by any means but, last five minutes aside, this really wasn't eventful.

Results

Matt Sydal b. Fallah Bahh – Shooting star press

Bobby Lashley b. KM – Spear

Kiera Hogan b. Laurel Van Ness – Rollup

Johnny Impact/Moose b. Alberto El Patron/Ethan Carter III – Clothesline to El Patron

Austin Aries b. Eli Drake – Brainbuster

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