

NJPW Strong Style Evolved 2018: A Very New Japan Show



IMG Credit: Ring of Honor Wrestling

Strong Style Evolved

Date: March 25, 2018

Location: Walter Pyramid, Long Beach, California

Attendance: 4,372

Commentators: Jim Ross, Josh Barnett

This was a fairly heavily requested show and I remember liking last year's show so it's worth a look. New Japan very rarely comes stateside so it's cool to see their expansion. As is usually the case, this show is built around the Bullet Club, which is having some major issues. The main event is the Golden Lovers (Bullet Club leader Kenny Omega and old partner Kota Ibushi) vs. the Young Bucks. I don't watch Being the Elite so odds are I'm going to be a bit lost in the bigger parts because Heaven forbid I just watch wrestling. Let's get to it.

Ross (who looks nearly asleep) and Barnett open things up and offer an explanation of strong style. I really don't like listening to Barnett at almost any point so thankfully this is short.

We get a long, well done video on New Japan, looking at what has happened since their previous appearances in Long Beach. Each match gets a quick look, with the wrestlers being listed by name. The big matches do get some longer attention, which is perfectly acceptable. It's nice to see

everything get a look instead of only looking at the top stuff. I'm also warming to the idea of announcing the matches in advance. You don't get that in America and it lets you know when you can expect a match you want to see.

Roppongi 3K vs. So Cal Uncensored

There are American and Japanese announcers here, which is a very smart move. What's not a smart move is getting the name graphics under each wrestler wrong. Like, seriously, how hard can that be to pull off? And yes I know WWE did it at Wrestlemania, which is even less excusable. Romero wristlocks Sky to start as Josh sounds confused about Sky starting for some reason.

Sky claims a hair pull despite a high level of baldness. A neckbreaker gets Sky out of trouble and the fans are very, very pleased. Makes sense that So Cal Uncensored would be popular in So Cal. Kazarian and Yoh come in with Kazarian getting clotheslined down and it's Sho coming in for some speedy double teaming. Now why didn't they do this in ROH? The fans shift over to Sho as he works on Kazarian's ribs in the corner. Daniels offers a trip from the floor but Kazarian slips off the rope on the springboard spinning legdrop attempt. Thankfully he seems fine and So Cal takes over for the first time.

Romero tags himself in but the referee didn't see it so it's Yoh being draped over the top rope to keep him in trouble. It's Daniels knocking him to the floor for a big springboard flip dive, because of course he can do that at his age. Sky gets two off a slingshot cutter but Yoh rolls over and brings Romero in to speed things back up.

The forever lariats have Daniels and Kazarian rocked and a springboard dropkick to the back gets two on Kazarian. Everything breaks down again and Sky takes Daniels out by mistake. Sho is smart enough to pull Romero to the corner for the tag off to Yoh and there's a slingshot dive to Kazarian. A Dominator/sliding cutter combination gets two on Sky but 3K (a 3D into a Downward Spiral instead of a cutter) puts him away at 10:24.

Rating: C+. Not a bad match at all here, even if it's odd to see the ROH Six Man Tag Team Champions lose clean. But hey, that might imply Ring of

Honor being on New Japan's level and that just can't happen. It's rather impressive that Sho and Yoh are already this much better than they were in ROH. I used to dread their matches but now they seem to be putting on good performances. It's almost like they learned and evolved.

As Roppongi 3K leaves, we hear Josh say that he agrees with JR: "They need to get out of the f***** ring." And so we continue the production issues.

David Finlay/Juice Robinson vs. Hirooki Goto/Gedo

Taguchi Japan vs. Chaos. Goto and Robinson fight over a wristlock to start and a shoulder doesn't get Goto anywhere. A shot to the face drops Goto for two (Josh: "I wonder what kind of juice that was." I would have guessed Josh was the biggest expert on juice around. Certainly in MMA at least.) and it's time to trade more clotheslines. Goto kicks him down and suplexes the invading Finlay onto Robinson.

Forearms to the back of the head have Robinson in even more trouble as Goto is bleeding from the mouth. Robinson easily loses a slugout and it's off to Gedo for some dancing around. This slugout goes a lot better for Robinson and Finlay adds in another right hand from the apron, which is enough for the hot tag. Finlay comes in to clean house and everything breaks down. Robinson gives Goto a full nelson slam and a right hand to Gedo. A dive takes Goto out and Finlay's jumping Stunner puts Gedo away at 7:26.

Rating: C-. Totally standard tag match here with four guys who have no connection that you would know of based on this match. I knew the stables because of Wikipedia and that tells me that either the commentary isn't great or the stables don't mean much (with both being true in this case). Not bad or anything, but definitely felt like a preliminary match.

Killer Elite Squad vs. Chuckie T./Toru Yano

Oh yay, it's Yano time and that means "comedy". Suzuki-Gun (Davey Boy Smith Jr./Lance Archer) vs. Chaos here, with Josh at least telling us that the Squad is part of the stable. Archer throws his hat into the ring to make it clear that they're the heels. Nothing wrong with some basic

villain stuff and it worked here too. Yano's entrance consists of plugs for his various merchandise so at least he's living the gimmick.

The Squad wastes no time in hammering away like the monsters that they are. Chuckie gets in Soul Food (Eat Defeat) on Davey (who Josh calls Harry, his real name) but misses an enziguri. Yano gets kicked to the floor and it's off to Archer for some heavy forearms in the corner. An Undertaker rope walk crushes Chuckie as you can hear JR's disdain for Yano's shtick. Smith grabs a chinlock and then a Liontamer, followed by some heavy right hands to the head.

With Yano walking up the aisle and talking to the fans, Archer runs Chuckie over as the beating continues. A DDT finally gets Chuckie out of trouble and it's off to Yano, who lays in the ropes to hide. Yano's atomic drop to Archer doesn't work (Archer is too tall) so this time Archer kicks him out of the ropes. Yano pulls him outside though and it's a collision to put both Squad members down.

After teasing a dive, Yano takes the turnbuckle pad off and Archer misses a charge into the exposed steel. Chuckie's sunset flip gets two and a stuff piledriver is good for one. Yano and Smith go outside, leaving Archer to chokeslam the heck out of Chuckie for two. Chuckie even reverses into a crucifix for a heck of a near fall but the Killer Bomb (Batista Bomb/full nelson slam combination) ends Chuckie at 10:50.

Rating: D+. I'm really done with Yano as it's the same stuff time after time in a TNA Eric Young/Santino Marella way and that's not good. Archer looked great here and is rapidly becoming another name on WWE's "How did we screw him up?" list. I wouldn't be surprised to see the Squad get the titles back soon, as should be the case given how dominant they looked here.

The Squad is coming for the titles.

Cody/Marty Scurll vs. Guerrillas of Destiny

It's amazing how much better the combination of Cody's theme and Brandi can make things. We're not quite ready to go yet as Cody grabs the mic to say Bullet Club is fine, which doesn't exactly please the audience.

What's not fine is this match's booking, which is why the match won't take place. Why should there be a match when they're all friends? Tama Tonga is an original Bullet Club member and the Guerrillas are a great team that made Bullet Club cool in the first place.

Now it's Cody that makes it popular today, which the fans REALLY don't seem to find accurate. The fans think they're chanting TEAM CODY, which everyone here must be. Tonga says the match is happening no matter what and Tonga Loa says they're not on Team Cody. That's enough for Cody, who jumps Loa but gets pounded down by Tonga. Scurll gets all fired up with the Guerrillas, earning himself a double shoulder to the floor where he hides in Cody's arms.

We settle down to Marty tagging Cody in to face Loa. That goes nowhere so it's back to Scurll, who gets punched in the space in front of his face. Cody gets splashed in the corner so Brandi pulls him out to the floor for a pep talk. The distraction lets Scurll hit the apron superkicks to take over for the first time. Tama gets double teamed in the corner and a delayed gutbuster gives Cody two. Scurll superkicks the knee and loads up the chickenwing, only to have Cody tag himself back in.

As you might expect, this doesn't go so well as Tama grabs a neckbreaker and brings Loa back in. A Disaster Kick cuts Loa down in short order but Tama superplexes Cody. Scurll does the same thing to Tama and everyone is down for a bit. Cody is up first and does Kenny Omega's Terminator pose but Loa spears him down. Back up and the Tongans are sent into each other, allowing Cody to hit Cross Rhodes on Tama for the pin at 10:53.

Rating: C. This was, again, about the Bullet Club, which is the case far too often in wrestling. Cody was quite the jerk here though and that's the best thing that he can do. Instead of relying on ref bumps and all the cowardly heel shenanigans, sometimes you just have to be a horrible friend who you have to have around for the sake of winning. Not a bad match, as the Guerrillas are always fun.

Los Ingobernables de Japon vs. Taguchi Japan/Dragon Lee

Taguchi is Ryusuke Taguchi/Hiroshi Tanahashi/Kushida. The fans go nuts for Los Ingobernables, with Naito getting the biggest reaction of them

all. Naito and Tanahashi start things off but, as you might expect, Sanada and Evil come in to jump Tanahashi from behind before anything can happen. Naito hits Sanada in the face by mistake though and it's a headlock takeover/headscissors to give Tanahashi a breather.

Lee comes in to face Takahashi to a heck of a reaction. The chop off is on and gets one of the best reactions of the night. Lee cartwheels out of a running hurricanrana and suplexes Takahashi out to the floor.

Everything breaks down and Takahashi gets crushed in the corner over and over. La majistral gives Kushida two and it's time to work on the arms. Takahashi fights up and brings in Bushi for a middle rope moonsault into some breakdancing to his feet. Take that Booker T?

We hit the sleeper before Bushi switches over to a choke with the shirt. Shouldn't that be Evil's job? Kushida finally gets in a handspring elbow and that's enough for the hot tag to Tanahashi. The fans hit the GO ACE chants as Tanahashi cleans house and hands it off to Taguchi for the hip attacks. Takahashi has to come in and break up a triple submission attempt so Tanahashi goes with a Sling Blade on Sanada. Lee gets suplexed into the corner and Naito hits Destino for the pin on Taguchi at 12:15.

Rating: B-. I was getting into this one, as tends to be the case with most Ingobernables matches. They work very well together and Naito is as smooth in the ring as you're going to find. Taguchi doesn't do much for me but his partners were all worth checking out. I could go for more Kushida, who has kind of fallen off the radar in recent months. That's a shame too as he's my favorite New Japan guy, but the rest of the division is so stacked that it's understandable.

Post match Los Ingobernables do the big group pose for a cool visual.

Here's Rey Mysterio, who was scheduled to face Jushin Thunder Liger but had to pull out due to an injury. Mysterio explains the situation and says he wants to face Liger again someday (they had a match in WCW in 1996). He will be back to wrestle for New Japan when he's healthy. It's a shame but there's nothing that can be done here. At least he made an appearance too, which often wouldn't be the case. We do have a replacement on hand though and Mysterio is sitting at ringside.

Jushin Thunder Liger vs. Will Ospreay

Non-title. They shake hands with Ospreay bowing deeply and JR sums up the difference here: the day Ospreay was born, Liger had been wrestling for nine years. Liger wastes no time in grabbing a surfboard to get the fans even more into this. Back up and Ospreay hits a running corner dropkick before taking Liger down for an armbar. It's off to a chinlock for a bit before Liger sends him outside for a flip dive from the apron, followed by a brainbuster on the floor.

Thankfully Ospreay doesn't pop back up and Liger gets to go inside for some posing. JR: "There's no reason for the match to continue if you've just been dropped on your head on the concrete." Ospreay gets up and makes a very improbably dive underneath the ropes to beat the count (at nineteen so it's not as bad as usual). The Liger Bomb gives Liger (duh) two but Ospreay sticks the landing on a super hurricanrana. He comes up favoring the knee but is fine enough for a Sasuke Special to drop them both again.

Back in and a standing shooting star gives Ospreay two with grumpy JR talking about the sloppy covers. A 619 misses Liger so he comes back with the rolling kick to the face. That's fine with Ospreay, who grabs a standing C4 for two more. The spinning kick to the back of the head rocks Liger again but the Oscutter is countered into another brainbuster.

Liger gets two off a super brainbuster with Ospreay having to put his foot on the rope. That's a good way to show how beaten down he is. Liger's palm strike gives him two more but Ospreay is right back up with a Batista Bomb for two of his own. The Oscutter is good for the pin at 10:37.

Rating: B-. They were trying here but there's only so much Liger can do at his age. That being said, he was still doing things well enough and certainly didn't look terrible. Ospreay getting this kind of a spot is a good idea and while the fans may be disappointed by the lack of Mysterio, this is about all they could do given the circumstances.

Post match Ospreay praises Liger for wrestling like that at 53 years old (fair enough) and thanks Liger for everything he's done over the years.

Ospreay says he has to go through legends to make a name for himself with this title so he wants Mysterio. That seems to be cool with Rey but here's Scurll to jump Ospreay with the umbrella. Mysterio tries to make a save but loses his mask, leaving Liger to make the real save.

Minoru Suzuki/Zack Sabre Jr. vs. Kazuchika Okada/Tomohiro Ishii

This could be a lot of fun and it's Suzuki-Gun vs. Chaos again in a preview of Okada vs. Sabre for next Sunday. Suzuki and Ospreay's British Tag Team Titles aren't on the line though they're carrying the belts here. Okada, with his awesome robe, goes face to face with Sabre before we're ready to go. They even start things off for a nice bonus and the fans are behind Okada.

Sabre pretty easily slips out of a wristlock attempt and sneers down at the champ as only a pompous heel can. The fans start singing for Sabre, though another group adds that he sucks. Sabre cranks on both arms at once but Okada reverses into a crank of his own. You can see the calculations going through Sabre's head for a cool visual. An early Rainmaker attempt misses and Sabre needs to think about things a bit. It's off to Ishii vs. Suzuki and that means we start the slugout.

That goes on for a long time until a running shoulder takes Suzuki down as JR is starting with the football analogies. Oddly enough, that's the first real energy he's shown in a long time. Suzuki chokes him over the ropes as Sabre stretches Okada's abdominals on the floor. The fights head into the crowd before Suzuki chops Ishii into the corner, allowing Sabre to grab an armbar. That's fine with Suzuki, who comes in to add an ankle lock, followed by a double Fujiwara armbar. The fans are all over Sabre again so he flips Okada off, leaving Suzuki to kick Okada to the floor.

Suzuki comes in and slaps Ishii in the face before handing it back to Sabre for some mocking kicks to the head. Harder kicks to the chest just wake Ishii up and it's a release German suplex to drop Sabre. There's the hot tag to Okada so house can be cleaned in a hurry. Something like White Noise is countered into an armbar, because of course Sabre can pull off that kind of a counter.

Sabre grabs the Octopus Hold to stay on the arm, followed by a heck of a

painful looking armbars. Ishii makes a diving save and the fans are split over Sabre again. The Rainmaker is countered with a kick to the arm and it's off to Suzuki, who can't hit either of his finishers. Ishii comes back in and slugs away at a screaming Suzuki in the corner. More yelling and more slugging out ensues with the fans going quiet for the hard forearm. Ishii even sticks his face out for more because he's kind of out there.

A hard one staggers him but can't put him down, with Suzuki doing the same. Suzuki knocks him into the ropes so Ishii muscles him over with a suplex. Back up and Suzuki hits a hard clothesline and everything breaks down. Sabre's running kick is countered as Ishii headbutts the heck out of him. A powerbomb gets two but Sabre is back up with a guillotine choke.

Okada makes the save and hits the great dropkick, followed by Ishii's clothesline for two. Another Octopus Hold has Ishii in trouble and Suzuki grabs a sleeper on Okada. Sabre twists around into an armbars and kneebar at the same time (just because). With that STILL not being enough, Sabre turns it into something like a bow and arrow at the same time (Orientating With Napalm Death. Seriously that's what it's called.) for the referee stoppage at 19:55.

Rating: B+. This is a good example of a match with people who do things that no one else are doing/can do. Suzuki and Ishii beat the heck out of people and Sabre's holds are so insane that you have to give them those wacky names. Okada is probably the best in the world right now and his match with Sabre has some major, major potential. For now though, we'll have to settle for a great tag match.

Post match Sabre puts Okada in another Octopus Hold. Suzuki and Sabre beat up the referee for fun.

On July 7, New Japan is back in the US with the G1 Special: Fighting Spirit Unleashed at the Cow Palace in San Francisco.

We recap Jay White vs. Hangman Page. Kenny Omega tried to bring White into the Bullet Club to right the ship but White turned him down, instead wanting to take the Club apart instead. He won the US Title and now it's

Page's chance to take it back for the Club.

US Title: Jay White vs. Hangman Page

Page is challenging. They go with the hard chops to start until White charges into a raised boot. A dropkick gets White out of trouble as this seems to have a lot of time to work with. JR doesn't think White is known as a dropkick guy. I'm not sure how you define such a thing so we'll go with White working on the leg, including a Muta Lock. Since that holds is kind of hard to maintain, they head outside for more chopping.

White gets sent into the barricade and then the post as JR remembers that you can lose a title via countout. That probably should have been made a bit more clear. Page pulls him back in and JR explains why that was a bad idea. A fireman's carry backbreaker gives Page two and it's time to talk some trash. White grabs a suplex for a breather and rolls some suplexes to keep Page in trouble.

The back gives out on a Kiwi Crusher attempt so White settles for a Downward Spiral and a German suplex for two instead. A hanging DDT gets Page out of trouble but he can't follow up as they're certainly selling some beatings after about twelve minutes. The Buckshot Lariat is broken up with an ax handle and that means more chops to Page's very red chest. They head to the apron and White can't hit the Blade Runner (Sister Abigail) so he GERMAN SUPLEXES PAGE OFF THE APRON for a sick landing.

Back in and they both head to the top (since Page is somehow still alive) which can't possibly end well. It's Page with a super swinging neckbreaker (not a cutter Josh) for a delayed two and both guys are spent. They get up for the slow motion into a fast motion slugout until Page is suplexed to the floor in a heap. A Saito suplex on the floor rocks Page again and somehow he's still getting up.

Back in again and Page elbows his way out of another suplex, followed by a piledriver for two on the champ. White is rocked and heads outside, only to have Page bust out a running shooting star shoulder block. The Buckshot Lariat is only good for two and the Kiwi Crusher gives White the same. White loads up the Blade Runner so Page spits in his face to break it up. With nothing else left, Page loads up the Rite of Passage, only to

be reversed into the Blade Runner to retain the title at 25:00.

Rating: B. The clock hurt this as a lot of these spots felt like they were there to fill in time and the point had already been made. Page continues to look like a future star while White already looks like one. I like both of these guys more and more every time I see them and it's quite a compliment to put them in a spot like this. Good match, but cut out seven or eight minutes to really make it work.

Post match David Finlay spears White down, with Josh acting like this is completely expected. Finlay wants a title shot against his former partner on April 24.

We recap the Golden Lovers vs. the Young Bucks. Kenny Omega has risen up the ranks of the Bullet Club but now Cody has come in and shaken things up. As a result, Kenny has reformed his old team with Kota Ibushi and the Bucks are caught in the middle of the whole thing. Tonight isn't so much about hatred, but rather who is the best tag team in the world.

Golden Lovers vs. Young Bucks

Matt and Ibushi start but Matt wants Omega instead. Omega comes in and trash talking ensues until Matt decks Ibushi off the apron. Now Nick comes in and Ibushi wants in as well. We're over two minutes in here with no action between the legal men. Nick grabs a headlock at two and a half minutes but has to duck Ibushi's kick and avoid the standing moonsault. Ibushi sticks the landing anyway though and the fans are way behind him. A kick to the chest puts Nick down and a kick to Matt's perpetually bad back drops him as well. Omega checks on Matt but gets shoved away, much to Omega's shock.

Matt's running neckbreaker into a backbreaker from Nick drops Ibushi and there's a double dropkick to Omega. Back up and Omega sends Nick into Matt's back but Nick's superkick breaks up Omega's big dive. Nick scores with a big rope walk flip dive onto both Lovers and it's time for a table. We'll save that for later as Matt hits a slingshot swanton onto Ibushi but holds his back. Ibushi pops up and avoids a Nick charge, followed by a big dive to take out Matt.

Omega gets dropped again though and the buckle bomb into an enziguri rocks Ibushi again. A dropkick allows the hot tag to Omega but the Bucks drop both Lovers again, because you know the Bucks aren't going to spend that much time selling. Omega is back in and kicks Matt's bad back to take over again and the jumping Fameasser plants Nick. Moonsaults to the floor drop the Bucks (with the camera missing Ibushi's, which apparently missed anyway) and it's Matt in trouble again.

A running shooting star from Ibushi into a middle rope moonsault from Omega (whose legs hit Matt in the face) gets two and a shot to the back makes Matt cringe. Matt gets whipped hard into the corner and tells Nick to get him out of here. I know I don't care for the Bucks but Matt can sell the heck out of a back injury. Back up and Matt spits in Ibushi's face so it's off to a chinlock. I guess revenge comes in the form of slowing things down.

Matt is sent outside for a belly to back suplex onto the apron but he slips over for the tag to Nick. Kicks abound in a hurry to get in some much needed offense as everything breaks down again. A Blockbuster into a running knee to the face gets two on Ibushi. Both Bucks head up with Nick getting knocked down and Omega coming in for a double superplex (with Ibushi having to move his feet in a fairly scary moment) to wreck the back even more. The Golden Shower (stereo 450 splashes) are broken up with Nick hitting a German suplex on the apron to rock Omega.

The table is bridged between the apron and the barricade and Matt has to pick whether to go for the pin on Ibushi or to take out Omega on the table. He takes too long picking Omega and gets kicked in the back, allowing Ibushi to take Nick out. Omega loads up a One Winged Angle through the table but Ibushi springboards to the top for a German superplex with Matt landing on his head in a scary crash. Somehow Matt isn't dead (must be a Bullet Club thing) and gets in a superkick to slow Ibushi down.

That just earns Matt a V Trigger and a Golden Star Bomb for two. Another V Trigger gets the same with Nick diving in for the save to let the fans breathe one more time. Nick gets sent outside so Ibushi kicks the heck out of Matt even more. Somehow that's reversed into a Scorpion Deathlock

(not a Sharpshooter) so Omega is back in with hard right hands. Matt BEGS Omega to hit him in the face but it's Nick in with a superkick to drop Omega again. A big flip dive to the floor drops Omega and this time it's a Sharpshooter on Ibushi). Matt's back gives out though and the hold is broken to put them both down.

More Bang For Your Buck looks to finish Ibushi but Matt dives onto Omega, who happened to be laying on the table, instead. Back in and Nick hits the 450 while Ibushi is hanging in the ropes for two more. Stereo low superkicks have Ibushi down again and there's another one to Omega. That's fine with Ibushi, who hits a backflip into double kicks to the head. It's Omega and Matt up for the slugout (JR: "There's some face punching alright.") with Omega grabbing the Snapdragon. Matt pops up with a jumping piledriver though and Omega looks a bit dead.

The weightlifting belt comes off and Omega takes a whipping but manages a shot to the back to cut Matt off in a hurry. Omega throws the belt down and knees Matt in the face instead but a very fast spear cuts Omega off. Ibushi breaks up the Meltzer Driver and powerbombs the heck out of Nick, right through a table. A spike Tombstone gets two on Matt, followed by a gutwrench sitout powerbomb for the same.

Omega can't believe it and begrudgingly hits the V Trigger and Matt makes him hit the One Winged Angel (you read that right) with Nick diving in for the save. The near fall FINALLY draws the old JR out as Matt is dead but Nick swears that it's not over. Nick is willing to fight on his own but it's a V Trigger into a half nelson Snapdragon from Ibushi. Omega takes the kneepad down and the Golden Trigger ends Nick at 39:22.

Rating: A. This felt long in the middle but the emotion at the end was very good with Matt admitting defeat but Nick never saying die no matter what. The Bucks having individual personalities helps a lot and Matt's selling was very good. The Lovers looked awesome as well and this should do a lot for advancing this part of a much bigger story. Outstanding match here with the emotion being better than the very good action.

Post match everyone checks on Matt. An exhausted Ibushi leaves and here's Cody to shove Matt down. He yells at Nick but here's Omega to chase Cody

off. The Bucks are back up and Nick accepts a handshake but Matt leaves instead. Omega says that it's a shame when war makes friends go to war with each other, but the silver lining is the Golden Lovers are back. The Lovers are going to be back on July 7 and one day he'll beat the heck out of Cody. Omega says he might have a broken orbital bone and wishes us all goodnight (muah) and goodbye (bang) to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Overall, this felt like a very New Japan show: much more good than bad but it overstates its welcome by a hair, with the Finlay/Robinson vs. Goto/Gedo match being expendable to take some of the length down (note that it's just slightly longer than it needs to be and nowhere near as major of an issue as WWE has in the same area). The main event is excellent and the Bullet Club Civil War, while being on more platforms than I would prefer, is an interesting story, even if you don't know all of the parts. I'm not sure how it ends save for a match at Wrestle Kingdom or some other big show, but it's fun while it lasts.

New Japan is a very good promotion and feels like another major league (which it is), which makes these shows feel important. It's cool to see these shows stateside and if they ever come much closer to me, I'd definitely check one out. It's a bit longer than it needed to be, but that's a pretty minor complaint. Just get a better commentary team (I've never liked Barnett and JR sounds like he's getting ready for a painful medical procedure all night long) and cut the length down a bit and it's that much better.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the paperback edition of the NXT The Full Sail Years Volume III (also available as an e-book) from Amazon. Check out the information here:

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