

Major League Wrestling One Shot – Well It Worked



IMG Credit: Major League Wrestling

MLW One Shot

Date: October 5, 2017

Location: Gilt Nightclub, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 200

Commentators: Rich Bocchini, Tony Schiavone

So every week, I've been covering the MLW TV show called Fusion. The thing is, the TV show wasn't the first iteration of the (reincarnated version of the) promotion as they also had a bunch of stand alone events. I might as well knock off that handful of shows as well, starting here with their return event. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence, which is just a bunch of clips.

Tama Tonga vs. Martin Stone

Stone is NXT's Danny Burch. Tonga (of Bullet Club) jumps him during the referee's weapons check (points for having one of those) and pounds away, only to have Stone come back with a quick suplex. Tony mentions Stone mocking the Bullet Club with some hand gestures, which just makes me confused about Tony knowing what the Bullet Club is. An armdrag gets Tonga out of trouble and he pulls Stone off the apron to make things even worse. Some forearms to the face put Stone on the floor where Tonga grabs a fan's beer for some refreshment.

Back in and Stone gets driven hard into the corner but comes right back out with a middle rope dropkick. Stone starts striking away as well but makes the mistake of headbutting a Tongan. Something like a reverse Cross Rhodes gives Tonga two and they botch what looked to be a lawn dart into the corner. An Alabama Slam gets two more (shades of Cody for a nice

touch) and the Gun Stun (RK0) finishes Stone at 6:48.

Rating: C-. Not much to see here as it's really just a match between two international guys that you might have heard of. Stone is an NXT guy but it makes sense to have the New Japan guy win here. The Bullet Club is the biggest deal outside of WWE in wrestling at the moment and giving them a win, even if it's just in a one off appearance, it makes sense.

Stone gets a nice ovation.

Mike Parrow/Saieve Al Sabah vs. Seth Petruzelli/Rhett Giddins

Parrow is a monster, Petruzelli is the NXT striking coach and a former MMA fighter and the others are unknowns. Giddins, a big old guy in his own right, stares Parrow down to start and punches him in the jaw for good measure. Parrow tells him to bring it and we've got an old fashioned hoss fight. A Rough Ryder puts Parrow down so he German suplexes Giddins near the ropes in a crash that could have looked better. Al Sabah comes in and gets hit in the face as well, meaning it's off to Seth (Like I'm typing that last name over and over.) for a running knee to the face.

Parrow isn't cool with this standing still and powerbombs Seth into the corner to take over. The heels keep working Seth over as the announcers are trying to find something to talk about here as there's no story and we don't really know anything about anyone in the match. Seth kicks Al Sabah away and hits something like a Sliced Bread on Parrow, allowing the hot(ish) tag to Giddins. A cutter gets two on Al Sabah and everything breaks down. Al Sabah misses a moonsault and gets pulled into a cross armbreaker to give Seth the submission at 5:35.

Rating: D+. All four looked fine but there was no chemistry and not much of a story going on. In other words, it felt like a tag match that was thrown onto the card as a way to get everyone on the card and there's nothing wrong with that. The four of them could be fine with some better direction but there's only so much you can get when no one has a character or any sort of a character.

Post match Parrow powerbombs Al Sabah for a great looking bounce.

The announcers plug the MLW Radio network.

Maxwell Jacob Friedman vs. Jimmy Yuta

Friedman is a less toned and tanned EC3. Before the match, he has a speech for us in case we're deaf, dumb blind or poor. I'm not sure what the point of this is if they're deaf but wrestling heels have a tendency to be stupid. Yuta, a pretty standard looking cruiserweight, grabs a rollup for an early two and they wrestle to the mat for a standoff. That's enough to make Friedman want a handshake but Yuta is smart enough to be ready for the kick to the ribs. Friedman: "PUT THE FOOT DOWN!"

Yuta obliges and goes with a springboard armdrag instead. The nitwited referee gets in Yuta's way though and Friedman forearm him in the face to take over. Friedman starts in on the arm with an armdrag of his own but stops to yell at the fans a bit. Yuta fights up for a nice high crossbody and a double springboard hurricanrana sends Friedman face first into the middle buckle in a good looking crash.

They head to the corner but Yuta's arm gives out again, allowing Friedman to come off with a hard stomp to bang it up even further. A pumphandle driver (ala Pentagon) gets two and Friedman freaks at the kickout. Yuta takes him down for some terrible right hands so Friedman claims a broken jaw. The goldbricking allows a low blow and the small package gives Friedman the pin at 6:41.

Rating: D. Friedman is a good heel character but everything else about him is kind of a stretch. He doesn't have a great look and while his talking is fine, it's not exactly a complete package. Then again, anything would be better than more of Yuta's right hands, which really did look terrible. I mean, not Shane McMahon but still not exactly acceptable.

UFC fighter Tom Lawlor is ready to face Olympic wrestler Jeff Cobb. As usual, Lawlor is a rather solid talker.

Barrington Hughes vs. Markos Espada

Hughes is well over 400lbs and barely fits in his singlet. A corner

splash before the bell is good for the pin on Espada at 7 seconds.

We see the replay of the full match multiple times.

Ricochet knows Shane Strickland is good, but he's not Ricochet good. Strickland doesn't like the lack of respect from Ricochet, who he's known for a long time. Ricochet said "who" when asked about Strickland on Twitter and Strickland wants to kick him in the mouth. Not bad for an angle for a one off show actually.

Darby Allin vs. Jason Cade

Allin has half of his face painted white for a demonic look. He sits in the corner ala Raven before the bell but pulls himself up ala Diamond Dallas Page to start things off. A springboard out of a lockup (that's a new one) takes Cade down so he hits Allin in the face instead. Allin takes him down by the arm and flips over into a Fujiwara armbar. Back up and a high angle springboard armdrag keeps Cade in trouble as Allin is doing some nice high flying to start.

Cade's comeback puts Allin on the floor and there's the required big flip dive. Back in and we hear about Norman Smiley's amazing training abilities, unfortunately with the hardcore stuff included. Allin shows off again with a springboard off the bottom rope into a crossbody to a seated Cade. A Codebreaker gets Cade out of trouble but Allin just dives at him to knock Cade off the apron in a big crash.

Tony brings up the apron being the hardest part of the ring, but this is different: theirs is EVEN HARDER than most aprons! Well what in the world are they supposed to do now? How could they possibly survive??? Back in and Cade gets two off a fisherman's buster and a Death Valley Driver into the corner gets the same. Those are some big moves to only get two each. Cade's Five Star hits knees and Allin grabs something like a twisted Figure Four but spins around and lays back on Cade (the Last Supper) for the pin at 8:33.

Rating: C+. Allin felt like someone who is trying to be revolutionary and does have a bunch of unique looking stuff but it wasn't anything that blew me away. The face paint made me think more "another one of these

guys" than anything else, which isn't the best thing in the world. Cade was a fine high flier but I've seen him do far better than this.

Video of Ricochet...shopping? He's a big shoe fan and apparently this show is a fan of vignettes instead of more wrestling. Strickland on the other hand is training more and more.

Larry Zbyszko is in the crowd.

Mia Yim vs. Santana Garrett

Santana is in the Wonder Woman style gear, which is starting to lose some of its charm. A headlock takeover is countered into a headscissors to give Mia some control for a good two seconds. Some rollups get one each as it's a fast paced technical start. Double nipups give us a standoff and Mia is looking impressed for the first time. A Russian legsweep gives Garrett two but Mia cranks it up a bit with a kick to the head.

Mia goes full heel here, despite the fans seemingly being behind her, by raking the eyes and then kicking Garrett in the back. Garrett gets in some forearms but another kick to the back puts her down all over again. Yim slaps on a surfboard for some painful looking stretching and Garrett can barely sit up after the hold is broken. The cockiness sets in though and it's Garrett getting back up, with stereo kicks to the face giving us a double knockdown.

Back up and Garrett wins a slugout, followed by a tornado DDT for a pretty close two. A handspring elbow into a horrible bulldog gets two more with commentary acknowledging that it wasn't going to be enough. Yim is right back up with a German suplex but Garrett pulls her off the top. A handspring moonsault is enough to give Garrett the pin at 12:28.

Rating: C. Both of them are very talented and that made for a good match here. Yim going heel here was the better way to go as she can play the role naturally, even if the fans were read to cheer for her. Garrett is someone who could be a big star in one of the major promotions but for some reason it has never quite clicked. It's not like she doesn't have a lot of time to go somewhere though.

We look at Hughes' win again, this time with a clock. That's a gimmick that has worked before and it can work again here.

MLW will be back with Never Say Never.

Tom Lawlor vs. Jeff Cobb

Lawlor is a former UFC fighter and has a pair of goons with him. Cobb (better known as Lucha Underground's Matanza) on the other hand was an Olympic wrestler who has put on about 70lbs of muscle since his amateur days. They go to the mat to start with Lawlor being outwrestled, which seems to come as quite the surprise.

Cobb takes him to the mat again but this time Lawlor reverses into a front facelock. They get up and Lawlor starts boxing, which is way beyond Cobb's abilities and a rather smart idea. Cobb goes back to what works with a heck of a suplex and then puts Lawlor on top for an impressive dropkick. A very delayed superplex gets an also delayed two on Lawlor so Cobb hits a moonsault but his standing shooting star is pulled down into a guillotine.

Lawlor switches into a cross armbreaker but Cobb is too close to the ropes. A suplex puts Lawlor down as Cobb is bleeding from the nose. They both get up and it's Lawlor winning a slugout before trying the cross armbreaker again. Cobb powers out again, but Lawlor reverses into a rollup for the pin at 9:27.

Rating: C+. The more I watch this promotion, the more I'm getting behind the concept of their TV show. The show is called Fusion, with the name talking about all the different styles coming together. That's what we saw here, with a wrestler against an MMA fighter, which made for a fun match. Lawlor has been the highlight of the promotion since it came back and this was a great starting point. Cobb is a talented guy who hasn't gotten the big break yet, at least outside of Lucha Underground.

A replay shows Lawlor either raking the eyes or rubbing something on Cobb's face like a good cheater should. Post match, Team Filthy gets in the ring to hold up a poster of Lawlor's sponsors, including a condom company. Lawlor says that he won the match so the fans can keep their

mouths shut. He'll be looking for the top challengers and wants to face the top UFC name around here in Matt Riddle.

Sami Callihan has no comment. The interviewer acts like it's a surprise to see Callihan, even though the announcers said we were going to him. Eh chalk it up to a first show mistake.

Sami Callihan vs. MVP

Sami is in jeans and throws some chairs into the ring to start. During MVP's entrance, Callihan sits in a chair at ringside and throws a beer at him. Sami tries a cheap shot during the entrances so MVP kicks him to the floor and hits a dive. So he doesn't respond well to being jumped from behind.

Back in and MVP crossfaces him a few times but Sami gets in a clothesline to take it back outside. The required suicide dive takes MVP down again and Sami buries him underneath a pile of chairs. They both have a seat in some of the chairs and slug it out for a little twist on the trope. A suplex puts MVP onto the chairs and Sami shouts a lot, followed by a pull of the ear.

MVP is back up fast enough to send him head first into a chair and boots him in the face for good measure. Another boot with Sami in a chair has him down as I wonder how high the referee's count should be at so far. Sami pulls the referee in front of another kick and gets in a chair shot...before telling the referee to start counting. There's something funny about counting after they've been brawling for five minutes.

MVP rolls back in so Callihan tries a Ballin splash but hits knees. Another slugout goes to MVP and now the Ballin elbow connects. Callihan's knee to the head looks to set up the Stretch Muffler but MVP is next to the ropes. MVP slaps away and grabs a fisherman's suplex for the pin at 11:59.

Rating: C. The ending was a little flat with such a simple wrestling move ending the brawl but the intensity on the way to the finish makes up for the problems. It makes sense to have Callihan stick with the brawling instead of trying to have a match and this was very well suited to his

style. Not a great match, but a good fight.

Post match MVP is in the back being happy with his win when a woman comes up and offers him a business card.

One more video on Ricochet vs. Shane Strickland, including some praise for Ricochet from Dave Meltzer. They both want to push each other but they might not be friends after this match.

Ricochet vs. Shane Strickland

I know Ricochet is the bigger star but Strickland carries himself like a star in his own right and that makes for a special feeling. We get the Big Match Intros and the announcer actually gives a description of their appearance. Good idea if the people don't know these guys. Ricochet takes him into the corner for a friendly slap to the chest, suggesting that they have a lot of time to work with here.

Strickland tries to do the same thing but Ricochet slips out to the apron in a pretty smart move. Back in and Shane takes it to the mat by tying up Shane's legs. That's reversed into an armbar as Tony talks about JR teaching him to strive to be the best, which is true of wrestlers as well. Ricochet pulls him by the long hair (not the best feature for a wrestler to have) and they get up, with Shane untying his hair.

The tie is flicked at Ricochet and you KNOW it's on now. They hit the "you can't touch me" sequence with a series of flips and misses, including the Benadryller (fireman's carry into a kick to the head) being dodged off a nip up. Ricochet is stunned so Shane sits down and tells him to bring it. Back up and Shane punches him in the face as the match shifts gears in a hurry.

Ricochet accidentally rolls into an armbar and Shane goes even harder by pulling Ricochet's arm back with his leg. A stomp to the arm gives us a cringe inducing sound and we hit a modified Rings of Saturn. Ricochet gets up and grabs the rope so Shane kicks him in the bad arm to cut him off again. One heck of a running dropkick knocks Shane into the ropes, earning Ricochet a nice round of applause. A springboard flip splash crushes Shane and Ricochet bends him around his back for another painful

looking hold.

Ricochet scores with a spinebuster and the People's Moonsault (exactly what it sounds like) as Tony gives a good explanation of why Ricochet isn't annoyed at the kickout (mind games instead of going for an actual pin). A short DDT sends Shane flopping around on the mat for two more but he's right back up with the rolling cutter. Shane suplexes him into the corner for two but misses a 619 to the ribs.

Ricochet shows him how it's done (to the face) and a springboard uppercut puts Shane down again. The fans are behind Ricochet now, despite him being the heel for twenty minutes plus so far. Shane double stomps him for two of his own but gets his head clotheslined off for a double knockdown. They trade some hard forearms to the jaw until Ricochet sends him flying with a release (maybe not intentionally) German suplex. Shane catches him on top and superkicks him into a spike DDT, followed by the top rope double stomp for a very close two.

They take some time to get up and Ricochet is right there with a reverse hurricanrana. The springboard 450 gets two and a reverse inverted DDT driver (it's cooler than it sounds) does the same but Ricochet can't follow up. With Shane on his knees, Ricochet spits in his face. That's fine with Shane, who knees hi hard in the face to even things out. Something like a keylock goes back to the arm but Ricochet powerbombs his way to freedom. Shane pulls him right back into it though and Ricochet taps at 33:58.

Rating: A-. This was the best of both worlds: the great wrestling and high flying spots to go with the story of Shane trying to prove that he's the better man. Ricochet is a top level guy (in NXT pretty soon thereafter) and having Shane go over him completely clean is the right idea. They were one upping each other over and over here until Shane capitalized on the one thing that held Ricochet back. Great match, and the kind of match that this show needed.

Ricochet nods at Shane as he leaves.

After the copyright, we get a video saying Jimmy Havoc is coming to Never Say Never Again.

Overall Rating: B. I had a really good time with this show and that's the kind of response that this show needed. Nothing was bad (some wasn't great but there's a big gap between bad and not very good) and the show moved by quickly. There was a great main event to go with it and you can see the star power in Strickland. I'm already a fan of the promotion but this would have been enough to make me keep watching. The idea of the mixture of styles was on full display here, giving you the something for everyone vibe that you don't get often enough. Well done, and they've already kept it going.

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