

Major League Wrestling Fusion – November 23, 2018: It's Time To Grow Up



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Fusion #32

Date: November 23, 2018

Location: Cicero Stadium, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Rich Bocchini, Tony Schiavone

It's a big night in Chicago as we have Shane Strickland getting his rematch for the World Title against Low Ki. Strickland hasn't been around much lately and seems to be far more distant than he used to be. That doesn't bode well for his future, but stranger things have happened before. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

We look at Sami Callihan jumping Tom Lawlor a few weeks back. Egads enough of that clip. Thankfully it leads into last week's rather good street fight. This set up Simon Gotch turning on Lawlor in a pretty well done angle.

Salina de la Renta kicks a briefcase over to Gotch as a thank you for last week. Gotch is pleased with the money inside and offers his services for any future jobs. Salina doesn't trust him, but offers to double the

pay if Gotch takes out Lawlor in Miami. That sounds nice, but Gotch would rather she trust him. He'll take Lawlor out for no money instead. Salina gives him a bit of an "ok whatever" look and leaves.

Opening sequence.

In Miami, Gotch vs. Lawlor with no ropes and no holds barred.

Trey Miguel vs. Kotto Brazil

Maxwell Jacob Friedman is on commentary and thinks Miguel is Ricochet. I mean...yeah I can get that actually. Friedman laughs off the idea of the two of them being threats to the title and doesn't like Tony asking where Aria Blake is. Miguel shoulders him down to start but gets taken down with a headscissors. Friedman: "You've got two flippy-do guys out here who know a lot of moves. You know what move neither of them have ever learned? Charisma." My goodness this guy is suddenly awesome. Tony: "...Did you just say flippy-do guys?"

Miguel gets kicked out to the floor but catches Kotto with a right hand. Friedman: "What a nerd!" Back in and Brazil gets crotched and it's time to stomp away. Friedman actually sees something in Miguel but doesn't think much of Brazil, who has as many brain cells as teeth. Bocchini comes to his defense and Friedman shoots him down in a hurry. As Miguel takes him down with a chinlock, Rich suggests that Friedman is afraid of Brazil and Friedman bursts out laughing.

Brazil's comeback is cut off by a knee to the face as Friedman wants to hear some of Tony's golden tongue. Miguel sends him into the rope but gets caught with a sloppy looking reverse hurricanrana (not a move you can risk botching that much) and Brazil starts striking away. Brazil sends him into the barricade with a pair of suicide dives and a big flip dive takes Miguel down again. Friedman: "Get out of the way Trey you idiot!"

Back in and Miguel hits a spinning right hand (Friedman: "Is it another flip? SHOCKING!") to the jaw for two. Miguel ties him up in the ropes with Brazil's head tucked underneath the buckle for a 619. Miguel's bottom rope springboard cutter (which looked like he nearly fell down)

has Friedman freaking out but a middle rope version is shrugged off. A standing Sliced Bread #2 finishes Miguel at 10:02.

Rating: C+. The match was your usual entertaining flip based match but Friedman absolutely stole the show here. I haven't been big on his in-ring work but this was hilarious as he pointed out the inherent flaws in most of these matches while talking about how much better he was than Brazil, setting up a match between the two down the line. Good enough match, hilarious everything else.

Shane Strickland had no comment as he arrived earlier.

Rush is still coming.

Confirmed for the first Miami show: the Lucha Bros defend against the Hart Foundation, Lawlor vs. Gotch with wins only coming by knockout or submission, PCO vs. LA Park in a falls count anywhere match, Rush vs. Maxwell Jacob Friedman and Andrew Everett making his MLW debut.

Confirmed for the second Miami show: Lawlor vs. LA Park and Low Ki vs. Konnan for the World Title (I'm still wondering what they're going to do there) and Friedman vs. Jason Cade, Kotto Brazil and a mystery opponent for the Middleweight Title in a ladder match.

Brazil is ready to change the title picture but Friedman jumps him from behind.

The Hart Foundation say Tommy Dreamer is no Dusty Rhodes but he's a little better than Kevin Sullivan. Dreamer is nowhere near Brian Pillman, or any of the other Hart Family members for that matter. Pillman says Dreamer is just trying to be Dusty and he's been trying to make that dream last for way too long. The cane has already gone upside an old man's head so Dreamer's dreams are getting eaten. Pillman is actually a heck of a heel promo, which can serve him well.

Gringo Loco vs. Marko Stunt

Stunt really does look like he's about 12 years old and it's not working. Loco drops to his knees to make things a little more fair and Bocchini says Stunt reminds him of a Wrestling Buddy. With that not going

anywhere, Stunt snaps off some headscissors and hurricanranas, which do look rather crisp. Stunt kicks him to the floor for a suicide dive and a top rope hurricanrana drops Loco again.

Back in and Stunt gets crotched on top, allowing Loco to hit a standing moonsault. We look at the crowd for a bit, making me think there might have been a botch in there. Something close to a Whisper in the Wind drops Loco and a very fast hurricanrana gives Stunt two. Loco tosses him into the air but Stunt spins around into a Codebreaker for the pin at 3:58.

Rating: C. I'll give Stunt this: he's WAY more exciting to watch than Cheeseburger and that puts him ahead. Stunt at least does some cool looking moves instead of running palm strikes, which at least gives you a reason to watch him. At least he finally won something too, as you can only have him lose so many times before it looks stupid.

Salina and Low Ki run into Stokely Hathaway...who doesn't say anything.

MLW World Title: Shane Strickland vs. Low Ki

Low Ki is defending and has Salina and Ricky Martinez with him. Feeling out process to start with Ki taking him down to the mat and winning an early grapple off. Shane finally slips out for a standoff but gets caught in an armbar over the ropes to keep Ki pretty firmly ahead. Back in and Shane tries to pull him down into more grappling and is promptly caught in something like an STF. Shane escapes and scores with a discus lariat as things head outside.

The champ gets sent into the barricade and it's time to head back inside for a quickly broken seated abdominal stretch. An atomic drop into a backbreaker gives Shane two but his suplex is countered into a drop onto the top rope, giving us the always cool shot of a cameraman being knocked down. Ki sends him into various things and drives an elbow into the head back inside. The reverse chinlock goes on for a bit until Shane comes up with some shots to the face.

That's fine with Ki, who headstands in the corner and drops back into a kick to the chest for two more. Now it's Shane caught in a seated

abdominal stretch before Ki switches to a standing version. Shane fights out and we see Hathaway watching from the crowd. The champ gets sent hard into the corner and a belly to back suplex gets two. A reverse sitout gordbuster (cool) gives Shane the same and he loads Ki up on top. Ki shoves him away and clotheslines the referee by mistake.

Another shot to the face sends Ki into the barricade and Shane drops him face first onto the barricade. The Swerve Stomp connects back inside but there's no ref. A new one slides in for the very delayed two so Martinez gets on the apron for a distraction. With no referee, Ki pulls Shane's HAIR out of his head and rolls him up for the pin to retain at 16:22.

Rating: C+. It was good enough but this never felt like a must see match and Shane wasn't exactly hitting the close near falls. You really can see Shane falling from stardom before your eyes and that's not the best thing in the world. He could have been the franchise player around here but there's only so much you can do when WWE comes calling. This was a lot of hard strikes and grappling so it was entertaining, but it didn't feel urgent and that's a problem.

Post match Ki and company head to the back, leaving Shane to rant about the hypocrisy around here. He puts his body on the f***** line around here every night and this is how the company treats him. With Hathaway looking on from the crowd, Shane tells everyone to shut up because they're the big problem with everything. Shane talking to Court Bauer and Bauer alone: Court is the problem around here and Shane is terminating his contract. The mic is cut and security tries to get Shane out of the ring. He finally storms off through the crowd to end the show. Good angle to end Shane's time here with some great emotion.

Overall Rating: C+. The angle at the end was a big deal as you can feel MLW moving away from its roots and growing up a bit. You can only go with the original stars for so long and Shane was the first big name they had. That had to be done at some point and it's what they got done here. Other than that, you had a pretty average show, but the Miami cards have my interest and I'm curious to see where some of these things go. Not a great show, but they have me watching more each week so they're doing something right.

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