

CHIKARA Once Upon A Beginning: Never Change Chikara



IMG Credit: CHIKARA Pro

Once Upon A Beginning

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Location: White Eagle Hall, Jersey City, New Jersey

Commentator: Mike Quackenbush

This is from Chikara and if you haven't seen or heard of them....I'm not sure what to tell you. Imagine a comic book come to life as a wrestling promotion with the most ridiculous, over the top stories (mind control, cavemen, a colony of various ants and I don't know where else to keep going) in the history of wrestling. I don't follow the promotion enough to know what's going on here so let's get to it.

Cornelius Crummels/Sonny Defarge vs. CCK

CCK (Chris Brookes/Kid Lykos) are rather big in Europe. Defarge and Crummels look like they belong around 1915 and are former Tag Team Champions. Lykos (under a mask) and Defarge start things off with Lykos calling for a brainbuster less than thirty seconds in. That's broken up but Defarge misses a big boot, allowing Lykos to snap off a hurricanrana. Crummels tags himself in and blocks a hiptoss attempt and it's off to

Brookes for the first time.

A basement dropkick gives Brookes one but a slobber covered finger won't go into Crummels' mouth. Crummels puts it in Brookes' mouth instead and it's Defarge coming in for some cheating. That's fine with Brookes who sends Crummels over Defarge for a sunset flip, setting up a catapult to make Crummels hit Defarge low. Lykos comes back in and gets chop blocked, sending him face first into Crummels' knees.

A dropkick puts Lykos down for two and a running version in the corner gets the same. Lykos finally rolls away from Crummels and it's back to Brookes as the pace picks up. Everything breaks down and Brookes is pulled outside so Lykos hits his own dive. Back in and Lykos' Diamond Dust gets two on Crummels but Defarge sends Lykos outside. One heck of a clothesline gets two on Brookes but Lykos comes back in for a distraction.

Brookes nails a slingshot cutter with Crummels making the save. Back up and Brookes charges at Defarge but gets caught in a hanging piledriver to drop him again. Defarge powerbombs Brookes onto Crummels' knees with Lykos making a save this time. Lykos goes up top so Crummels uses Defarge as a launchpad for a super monkey flip for the pin at 10:15.

Rating: D+. Not great here with the action getting a little messy at times. It doesn't help that Crummels and Defarge look enough alike that it was hard to keep them apart. The other problem is this didn't feel like a Chikara match and could have been on just about any show over the weekend. Not terrible, but run of the mill at best.

Missile Assault Man vs. Boomer Hatfield

Assault Man is rather serious while Boomer (I'm assuming Dash's brother/cousin/mystic spirit dragon given where we are) wears a baseball mask. Assault starts fast and throws him around, setting up a heck of a clothesline. It's time to start stomping on Hatfield's leg but the Sharpshooter attempt doesn't work.

Instead it's a northern lights suplex into an elbow as Assault isn't wasting time here. Boomer armdrags his way out of a fireman's carry and a

headscissors sends Assault outside. Back in and Boomer's high crossbody is countered into a reverse Razor's Edge to send him face first into the buckle (looked rather awesome, though it could go badly at the same time) for the pin at 4:02.

Rating: C-. Pretty much a squash here but I can see why Assault is considered a monster. It helps when Hatfield isn't that big and can get beaten up so easily. They mentioned that he was a rookie as well so it was a rather simple formula. Sometimes you need a squash like this one to make someone look good and it worked well for Assault here.

The win gives Assault three points, meaning he can challenge for the World Title.

Cam Zigani/Arik Cannon/Hallowicked/Hermit Crab vs. Jigsaw/Razerhawk/Stokely Hathaway/Thunderfrog

Everyone here has held the Young Lions Cup before and this is going to be a match where I'm trying to tell who is who. Hathaway is Chuck Taylor, which must be a joke that they're not going to explain. Zigani and Razerhawk start things off with Razerhawk hand walking into a headscissors, followed by a springboard armdrag (required around here). That's enough to send Zigani over for a tag to Cannon, who gets to face Hathaway.

A wristlock nearly has Arik tapping until he reverses into one of his own, which has the fans chanting PLEASE DON'T TAP. The short form technical wrestling sets up a double tag to Jigsaw and Hallowicked, who have a long history together. They go to the mat to start with Hallowicked getting the better of the grappling but not being able to do anything against his bridge on the mat.

A pinfall reversal sequence gives us a standoff and the fans politely applaud. Jigsaw hits a middle rope hurricanrana into a double stomp for two and it's off to Crab vs. Thunderfrog, complete with Thor style hammer. Crab goes with a nerve hold but gets caught in an airplane spin, plus one in the other direction ala Tyler Bate. Thunderfrog's Cannonball (WAY too common of a move in so many promotions these days) looks to set up a Vader Bomb but everything breaks down for the big brawl instead.

That means Thunderfrog's team hitting ten punches in every corner until quadruple atomic drops break it up. We settle down to Cam neckbreaking Thunderfrog and Jigsaw getting the two. Cannon's snapmare gets two as the Thunderfrog beating continues in the corner. Crab gets two more off a suplex but Hallowicked walks into a Blue Thunder Bomb. That's enough for the hot tag off to Jigsaw so things can pick up a bit.

Stokely comes in to take over but he has to beat up Cannon and Hallowicked at the same time. The Falcon Arrow gets two as the fans chant for Hathaway. Soul Food connects but a Sky High gives Hallowicked two. Cannon hits a brainbuster for two on Jigsaw but Thunderfrog sends him to the floor for a big flip dive.

Back in and it's time for the parade of secondary finishers, with Razerhawk handspring elbowing Hallowicked and Hermit Crab. Things slow down a bit as we seem to be getting ready for the big spot. Cannon tells the referee something and the ring mostly clears out. Zigani can't superplex Razerhawk so Thunderfrog grabs his big hammer and strikes the mat to knock everyone down. Razerhawk hits a Swanton to finish Zigani at 17:48.

Rating: C. I'm going to be as nice as I can here and say that this was messy. There were eight people there with a lot of stories and characters that aren't explained, which makes this feel like a joke we're not in on. This is one of those shows that should be designed to draw in some fans and it seemed that we were supposed to know everything that was going on coming in, including that Stokely/Taylor deal. It was a fun spot fest, but it could have been a lot better with a little less time and more explanation.

Hold on though as Thunderfrog forgets his hammer and since no one can lift it, we have to wait for him to come back and get the thing.

Air Wolf vs. A-Kid

This could be good and these two were very familiar faces over the weekend. They hit the mat to start with Wolf working on an armbar to limited avail due to a twisting escape. A-Kid goes with a headscissors on the mat before switching off to a headlock. Some quick flips let A-Kid

hit a dropkick and we take a breather until Wolf can pull himself out of the corner. Wolf is fine enough to hit a kick to the chest and a snap suplex gets two.

The Rings of Saturn have A-Kid in more trouble and Wolf twists the wrist around to make it even worse. That's broken up so Wolf hits a spinning gutbuster for two. Wolf tries some kicks to the chest but A-Kid blocks one and strikes away to take over. The triangle choke is broken up in a hurry and they hit stereo bicycle kicks for a double knockdown. Back up and A-Kid gets two off a northern lights suplex but Wolf kicks him into the ropes.

That means a 619 between the bottom ropes to send A-Kid outside. You know that means the big old dive to the floor and Wolf hits a somewhat messy dive back inside for two. Some attempts at a double underhook something don't work as A-Kid is right back up with a sliding German suplex. A missile dropkick gives A-Kid two and the fans aren't sure who to cheer for here.

The slugout goes to Wolf but A-Kid pulls him down into another triangle choke. Wolf powers him up but A-Kid jumps forward with a Canadian Destroyer in a sweet counter. A-Kid puts him on top, where Wolf hits a swinging butterfly superplex for another double knockdown. They head up top again but this time A-Kid catches him with a super Spanish Fly for the pin at 11:44.

Rating: B. Yeah this was a blast with both guys working as hard as they could and having a competitive match without going too nuts with the high flying. Sometimes a match like this is one high spot after another but they were trading spots here instead of going as crazy as they could. That was a very nice change of pace and I had a much better time with this one than I was expecting to.

Post match, respect is shown.

Here's Juan Francisco de Coronado for a chat, though he breaks with his tradition of coming to the ring slower than Undertaker. He says his name is NOT Juan Francisco de Coronado and he has fallen on some hard times as of late. Fans: "YOU DESERVE IT!" He's been having some personal and

financial issues, including losing his Ecuadorian citizenship and has had to use his body to pay off debts. It has made him do some soul searching and there has been one constant in his brain: maybe he isn't good enough. Maybe he would be better off if he just quit.

The fans are split on that one but one other thing has been on his mind: on this weekend, no one has come here to see him. Maybe it's time for him to make a change. He is no longer Juan Francisco de Coronado. Now he is John Francis of Coronado. And that's it. Given that it's Chikara, I would expect this story to go on for the next three years.

Young Lions Cup: Still Life With Apricots and Pears vs. Carlos Romo

Still Life is defending and is basically an art project come to life, complete with being identified as "they" instead of he or she. The Cup is full of flowers to keep things a little off. Still Life pulls him in by the arm off a handshake offer and it's an early start on Romo's leg. Romo is right back up with a leg lariat for two as the announcers try to figure out where the bullseye is on Still Life considering all the other paint. It's right back to Romo's leg with some cranking on the mat.

Back up and Still Life kicks him in the ribs but Romo hits a chop in the corner, which just seems to hurt his own hand. Still Life dropkicks him in the leg for two but a spinning toehold is countered into a small package for two. A running knee to the head drops Still Life and it's time to strike away at the champ. Romo hits a springboard spinning cutter (cool) but misses a moonsault that would have gone too far, even if Still Life hadn't moved. Something close to a reverse/inverted Figure Four (a modified Venus Flytrap called Venus de Milo) retains the Cup at 5:53.

Rating: D+. This is the kind of stuff that I like to see from Chikara as you could never get away with something like Still Life elsewhere. That's what makes it more interesting: it might not work elsewhere, but it works here. That takes some serious world building and Chikara has done it for a very long time now. Let that go somewhere and they'll turn him into a star, because that's what they know how to do around here.

Princess Kimber Lee vs. The Whisper

They're the reigning Tag Team Champions who don't get along and are fighting each other here. It worked for Mysterio and Guerrero. Whisper is the Innovator of Silence and Lee is from the Suplex Kingdom. Lee doesn't wait for the bell and starts throwing the German suplexes as we have an unlikely Brock Lesnar inspired character. She is on about her twelfth German suplex in a row and Whisper is done.

Another is broken up but Whisper can't hit his own German suplex. Instead Lee elbows him in the face and starts rolling more German suplexes. Whisper finally gets in his own German suplex...and Lee no sells it. A kick to the head sets up a bridging German suplex to give Lee the pin at 3:20.

Rating: D+. It's another storyline match, though this one was a little more charming than most of what you would get out of a Lesnar match. Whisper is similar to Still Life in that he is his own thing who is probably a lot more interesting around here, though he wouldn't work all that well anywhere else. Lee is someone who fits a lot better around here than she did in NXT, which is perfectly fine for a lot of people. Not a good match, but it seemed to advance their story.

FIST vs. The Colony

That would be Tony Deppen/Icarus/Travis Huckabee (Friends in Similar Tights, a stable which has been around for a LONG time with a bunch of different members) vs. Fire Ant/Green Ant/Thief Ant (same thing, but they're humanoid bugs). The brawl is on in a hurry as these teams apparently have a deep history (that's downright terrifying around here) until it's Icarus driving Green into the corner as the proper match starts.

Huckabee misses a knee drop and it's time to start in on some kind of arm hold with Deppen making the save. Thief comes in and starts slowly punching away in the corner but Deppen sends him outside for a nasty looking suicide dive. Green hits his own corkscrew dive onto Deppen and Huckabee, leaving Icarus vs. Fire Ant, with the announcers talking about the long history between the two of them.

Fire sends him outside to set up the launched dive (the Antapult),

leaving Deppen to get superkicked for two. Green and Deppen chop it out with FIST hitting a triple running kick in the corner for another two. Thief and Fire break up a second attempt and it's a triple dropkick in the corner for two on Huckabee. A rollup is reversed into a Brock Lock on Fire but Thief makes the save and puts on one of his own (with commentary explaining that he can steal moves but not do them as well, which is pretty clever).

The Wings of Icarus (Pedigree) gets two on Icarus but Deppen is back up with a jumping knee to Thief's face. Green gets the Chikara Special (pull on an arm and leg at the same time in a specific way) but Icarus makes the save with the Blu Ray (it's a Death Valley Driver, but more dangerous than a DVD) for two.

Something close to Bandido's 21 Plex drops Fire, who no sells the whole thing and kicks Icarus in the face for two. Huckabee takes Fire up top but Green breaks up what looked to be a butterfly superplex. Fire is right back up with a super hurricanrana into a double suicide dive. That leaves Green to try the Chikara Special, which Travis reverses into a Brock Lock with a bodyscissors for the tap at 9:47.

Rating: B-. This is a match where it seems the history would make this better but what we got here was a rather entertaining match. Chikara knows its trios matches and even with commentary talking about FIST getting a Tag Team Title shot soon, I wasn't sure who was winning. The Colony is a very fun act and FIST is a good counterpart to them so I had a good time.

Director of Fun Bryce Remsburg thanks the fans for coming out (Which he does every time you come to a show, including person to person. I've talked to him a few times and he's an incredibly nice guy.) but doesn't think he's right for the job anymore. Therefore, we have a new Director of Fun (GM): Sydney Bakabella.

This doesn't sit well with Bryce, who leaves after a forced hug. Bakabella (WHERE DO THEY GET THESE NAMES???) talks about calling some of the great wrestling presidents, including Jack Tunny, Stanley Blackburn and Jim Barnett, who told him to take the job. He'll be here to have fun

and you can take the to the pay window. Fans: "YOU'RE NOT FUN!"

We recap the main event, complete with a graphic of Kimber Lee vs. Whisper. Mark Angelosetti was Grand Champion but got hurt, meaning he was allowed to choose an interim champion. That would be Dasher Hatfield, his former partner. Hatfield got a lot more confident by winning over and over again, but now Angelosetti is healthy again. Hatfield hit him with the title to go heelish, meaning it's time for the title match between the former friends.

Grand Championship: Dasher Hatfield vs. Mark Angelosetti

Angelosetti is challenging, even though he should still be the official champion and it's a ladder match. Hatfield wears a baseball themed mask and his theme music starts like the SportsCenter jingle. Angelosetti is Mr. Touchdown and somehow doesn't come out to anything resembling the Monday Night Football theme. He does however have a song that seems to be called Welcome To Touchdown City, saying he is "better than Favre in a pair of jeans."

They go straight to the slugout to start as Bryce bails to the floor at the bell in a smart move. They're on the floor with Dasher getting the better of his step cousin in-law (given wrestling relations, I'm fine with it). A chop off goes to Angelosetti and he forearm Dasher in the face. They fight near the ladder with Dasher sending him back inside and the ladder following. Angelosetti goes for the first climb but is smart enough to drop down when Dasher gets back in. Why do so few people figure that out?

Angelosetti whips him back first into the ladder and hits some splashes in the vein of football up downs. Instead of a big one though, Angelosetti puts the ladder onto Dasher and then hits the splash to put in some pain. That's enough to get a hand on the ladder but Dasher tips it over, sending Angelosetti onto the buckles, with Angelosetti sticking the landing. Again, in a way of keeping things simple, Dasher shoves him out to the floor instead of doing something dumb.

Dasher slams him legs first onto the apron and kicks at the leg for a bonus. A backdrop on the floor gets Angelosetti out of trouble and it's

time for the big ladder (required really). Instead of climbing up, Angelosetti hits a Cannonball in the corner as we hear about the history of ladder matches around here. All two of them. Dasher gets whipped into the regular ladder in the corner, which Dasher throws at the big one.

They go up the big ladder at the same time with Angelosetti belly to back suplexing him down for the next big crash. Angelosetti is down as well so Dasher gets in a shot to the leg. A shinbreaker onto the ladder in the corner has Angelosetti in real trouble for the first time. Like a good heel, Dasher ties him in the Tree of Woe for more kicks to the leg, followed by a baseball slide to send a ladder into Angelosetti's face.

Dasher goes up but takes too long (of course), allowing Angelosetti to hit him with the other ladder. They go up a ladder each and the fans request that they don't die. That means a double crash and they both bounce off the ropes for the knockdowns. Dasher is up first and gets creative by tying the big ladder vertically in the ropes, allowing him to whip Angelosetti into it for a cool visual.

Angelosetti sets up the smaller ladder up across from the big one, with Dasher letting him do just that. The ladders are both standing up so they shove each other into them for a cool yet rather contrived spot. Angelosetti gets the better of it here and unhooks the regular ladder, which is knocked into his face for taking too long. Dasher grabs Boomer Hatfield (apparently his son and watching from ringside) and demands help, which Boomer doesn't want to offer. With that not working, Dasher shoves him down and...that seems to be it for Boomer.

It's time to bring in some chairs but Angelosetti manages a spinebuster onto them, leaving a line on Dasher's back for a painful visual. The big ladder is set up in the middle of the ring but Angelosetti takes too long (the plague of ladder matches), allowing Dasher to wrap the leg around the ladder. In a creative spot, Dasher Pillmanizes the leg while Angelosetti is still standing on the ladder. Dasher grabs an elbow pad which apparently he used to cheat in a big tournament back in Season 15.

Instead of going for the belt, Dasher loads up a big elbow from the ladder, allowing Angelosetti to get up for a superplex off the ladder and

the next big crash. The Flea Flicker (belly to back suplex into a pair of knees to the chest) knocks Dasher down again but hurts Angelosetti's knee even more. Angelosetti climbs up the big ladder with the small one wedged in between to help with some bracing. Since that's just dumb in a ladder match, Dasher Batista Bombs him through the regular ladder to kill Angelosetti for good. Dasher pulls down the title for the win at 24:35.

Rating: B+. This went a bit longer than it needed to and some of the spots took too long to set up, but the carnage and anger were both there. That's what they were going for as these two seem to have been rather close before the title got between them. It's worthy of a main event and it's nice to have something of note happen on the show. What matters most here is how brutal this was and I had a good time watching it, though trimming five minutes would have helped a lot.

Overall Rating: B-. It took some time to get going but the big matches delivered and there was more than enough good stuff throughout to make the show work. Chikara is one of, if not the most, unique promotions out there and it's really cool to see some of their ideas in action. The main event feels bigger than anything else as the rest of the show came off as more like a showcase than a major show. To be fair though, that's kind of what Wrestlemania weekend is all about for the indies, and this show would make me keep watching.

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