

NWA Hard Times Preview



IMG Credit: Fite.TV

Somehow the NWA is back with another pay per view and it looks pretty good. I only say somehow because I still can't fathom that this company is alive in 2020, with the fact that they have been entertaining going another step beyond. This time it's about the TV Title, with a tournament to crown a new champion. There's some other stuff too of course so let's get to it.

TV Title Tournament First Round: Tim Storm vs. Ken Anderson

This is going to be a tricky show to preview because there are a lot of matches where we won't find out the participants until later in the show. We'll start here though and it's an interesting one to pick first, as it really could go either way. Anderson barely qualified for the tournament, only getting in via a gauntlet match. Storm has been treated as a major focal point over the last few weeks though, meaning this could go either way.

I'll go with Anderson winning here though, likely due to Strictly Business interfering to cost Storm the match. That's the story that makes sense, though it wouldn't shock me to see it happen later in the tournament. Or not at all as Storm winning the title would be a nice feel good story as Storm has been turned into quite the fan favorite. It's nice to start

off with a match which could go either way and hopefully that continues.

TV Title Tournament First Round: Zicky Dice vs. Dan Maff

This is another one where it depends on how you see the other first round match going. Maff is one of the people over from Ring of Honor and quite the monster, which Dice is someone they seem interested in push. It helps that Maff is also a huge guy and rather tough, which would seem to be a near guaranteed win over Dice.

That's why I'm taking Dice, who is someone with a good attitude and character that makes you want to see more of him. The NWA seems interested in pushing him and it wouldn't make a lot of sense to have him lose here. Ring of Honor will be back later on in the night, but for nice it should be Dice moving forward.

TV Title Tournament First Round: Ricky Starks vs. Matt Cross

Now we might have the first easy choice. Cross is the outsider getting his chance in the tournament and Starks is the one who seems to have been pushed rather well throughout the show's entire run so far. I'm not sure what to expect from the match from a quality standpoint but it isn't hard to guess where this is going.

Starks wins here, as it might be his entire tournament to win. Cross has shown the abilities to have a good match against anyone so hopefully he can give Starks a nice rub. Starks has shown himself to be rather talented so far and hopefully that continues as he could go quite far in this thing. I mean, there are only three matches for the winner so it isn't hard to go far but you know what I'm getting at.

TV Title Tournament First Round: Question Mark vs. Trevor Murdoch

Every now and then a wrestler catches on to something that is so goofy that you can't help but get behind it. That's the case with Question Mark, who has turned into a cult favorite in the NWA despite being quite the goofy heel. Murdoch on the other hand is as classic of a gimmick as you can get with the grizzled cowboy trying to show he can still fight.

Ignoring the gimmicks though, this is pretty clearly Mark's to lose. Murdoch has been little more than a jobber to the stars so having Mark lose makes no sense. If nothing else, having Mark around with more of the karate stuff would make all the sense in the world. He's just great with that whole gimmick and I'm curious to see how far it can go. For now though, it goes on to the second round.

Women's Title: Allysin Kay(c) vs. Thunder Rosa

This is a weird situation as Kay is the long running champion but she isn't the most popular star in the division or even the biggest name. That being said, she's incredibly talented and feels like a big star, though I'm not sure how long she is going to hold the title. Melina and Thunder Rosa come off as the most important people in the entire division and that isn't a good sign for Kay's future.

I think I'll play it safe here and go with Rosa as the next champ. This is a case where it would be fine to go either way, but Rosa has been turned into the most popular member of the division. I know Melina is still lurking, but they could make something out of Rosa and that would start with a title win here. I'm not convinced in the slightest, but I'll take Rosa to win the title.

Tag Team Titles: Rock N Roll Express(c) vs. Wild Cards vs. James Storm/Eli Drake

The Express got their big moment a few months ago on Powerrr and I'm not sure how much longer they can hold the things. It's hard to believe that a pair of guys who could be the

fathers of a lot of the wrestlers are the best tag team in the world, but that presents the other problem: who else is there to take the titles from them? It's not like the division, if there is one, is all that deep.

I'll take the Wild Cards to get the titles back though, which is about all you can go with here. They're in a big story at the moment with Strictly Business and it would be a good idea to give the team some more gold. I could see Storm and Drake winning as well, but at some point you need to get the titles off of the Express and this seems to be a perfect place to do just that.

TV Title Tournament Semifinals: Ken Anderson vs. Ricky Starks

This is more of the right kind of match for Starks. Cross is a name, but Anderson is a former World Champion and someone who can give Starks a real rub. At the same time, it isn't out of the realm of possibility that Anderson could move on and win the whole thing, which makes for a more interesting match here. You really could go either way and that's a nice feeling.

That being said, Starks makes more sense here as the NWA needs stars and reheating the same Anderson that we've seen for years now doesn't seem like the best solution. Just let Starks go forward and make the finals as Anderson is someone who can lose and not really be hurt by it. Starks moves on and Anderson goes to talk about something else.

TV Title Tournament Semifinals: Zicky Dice vs. Question Mark

It's always weird to have a heel vs. heel match but it's also weird to have a heel get some of the biggest reactions on the show. Dice is someone who could go somewhere but he hasn't shown me much more than potential yet. On the other hand, Mark is someone who is riding an awesome wave of popularity so I'm not sure how long it is going to last. Both of those have positives but one makes more sense.

I'll take Mark here, as Starks vs. Dice isn't that thrilling of a final. Mark has been one of the most entertaining things about Powerrr so far and giving him the spot in the finals will get a much bigger reaction. Dice is going to be fine and can find something else to do, but for now it's Mark moving forward, just to hear more about his ka-ra-te skills from Stevens.

National Title: Aron Stevens(c) vs. Scott Steiner

Speaking of Stevens, here's what might be the most amazing match of the Powerrr era as it could be anywhere from entertaining to one of the biggest disasters in recent memory. Hopefully it's more towards the former and given how Stevens has been going as of late, I'd lean in that direction.

I'm going with Stevens to retain here, likely by DQ when Steiner goes nuts. They've done a nice job of keep Stevens as the cowardly champion who talks a big game, which is something that is always going to work. Just let Steiner be insane for a little while and have Stevens be entertaining and everything should be fine. Or it could be great. Or a nightmare. Either way, we could be in for something special here.

TV Title: Ricky Starks vs. Question Mark

So now we get down to what matters and I really could see it going either way. Like I've said before, it's interesting to see where this goes because there are different realistic options. Mark is someone who is already over but I don't know how far his run can go from here. A lot of that energy is likely to be gone with a single loss, but the same thing would be true of Starks at this point.

Give me Starks to win the title though, as Mark is over enough without it while Starks is someone without much of a gimmick or any credibility. The TV Title would help that a lot and he can defend it for a few weeks to come. Mark and Stevens are going to be fine doing their shtick while Starks needs

something a bit more traditional. They'll both be fine, but Starks wins here.

Nick Aldis vs. Flip Gordon

I doubt this goes on last but I can't help putting the World Champion in the final spot. This is part of the NWA vs. Ring of Honor story and that could go well for both sides. The NWA is still finding its footing and Ring of Honor is trying to find a way to stop things from somehow getting worse. Maybe this partnership can help, but it has to start somewhere.

I'm actually going with Gordon on this one, probably in the form of Marty Scurll interfering to cost Aldis the match. Aldis vs. Scurll is where it's at in the near future and they need something to help advance that. I could go for Scurll winning the title, but if Gordon wins here, he'll be getting the shot. Aldis winning doesn't leave as many doors open though, so go with Gordon winning.

Overall Thoughts

I'm not usually big on a one night tournament but the NWA is still brand new at this being around thing and need to do something to get some attention. There are enough names in the field to make it interesting and there is a good chance I've gotten most of these predictions wrong. There are a lot of good choices though and that's a nice situation to have, much like having this show around in general.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the paperback edition of KB's Complete 2004 Monday Night Raw Reviews (also available as an e-book) from Amazon. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2019/08/26/new-book-and-e-book-kbs-complete-2004-monday-night-raw-reviews/>

And check out my Amazon author- page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>