

NWA Into The Fire: A Hot Enough Show



IMG Credit: National Wrestling Alliance

Into The Fire

Date: December 14, 2019

Location: GPB Studios, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Joe Galli, Stu Bennett

This is another one that has been sitting on my list for a good while now and it's time to knock it off. What we have here is the NWA pay per view and the big culmination of the first season of Powerrr. The show has been good leading up to this event and now we need to see what the NWA can do on a big stage. The main event is Nick Aldis defending the World Title against James Storm in a 2/3 falls match with guest referees involved. Let's get to it.

The opening video features Stu Bennett reading a poem, which is capped off with the line Into The Fire. Makes sense, just like the words being read over clips of the wrestlers on the card.

The commentators run down the card, which I never understand on a pay per view, but for a cheap show where a lot of people might be getting into the promotion, it makes some more sense.

Eli Drake vs. Ken Anderson

Everyone has music and an entrance now, making the show feel even more important. This is fallout from a triple threat match for the National Title where James Storm retained. A hard lockup takes them into the corner to start, followed by Anderson grabbing a hammerlock. Drake can't spin off the mat early on so he powers up and hammers away in the corner. Anderson whips him back into the corner though and it's a sliding knee to crush Drake's head.

Back up and Drake grabs a hot shot for two, setting up the chinlock. The big jumping elbow gets two and there's a slingshot shoulder for the same. The chinlock goes on again, followed by a quick neckbreaker so Drake can get another near fall. We hit the reverse chinlock until Anderson fights up again for the Regal Roll. Anderson counters the Gravy Train into a rollup and goes up top. That's fine with Drake, who runs up the corner for a superplex, only to have Anderson counter into a sunset bomb, with Drake sitting down on it for the pin at 9:15.

Rating: C. This was a perfectly fine match between two wrestlers who have been in the ring for a long time and done this stuff for a long time. They didn't do a great job of explaining why these two are fighting, but at least they had a watchable enough match. I can go for more of Drake, though he wasn't exactly looking great here.

Here's Nick Aldis to say the NWA went from nothing to something, with forty countries watching live on pay per view. Yeah you can get up and cheer for that and tonight, it's him vs. James Storm as the only men with a chance to live forever. Storm comes out as well and says everyone worked together as a team to get here. Tonight, Aldis is going to learn that he has been through a war with the toughest SOB in the world. At the end of the night though, Aldis is going to hear **AND NEW WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION.**

We recap Melina debut and forming an alliance with Thunder Rosa and Marti Belle.

Here's Tasha Steelz for her match but first, she says how great she is and makes a weird noise.

Tasha Steelz vs. Thunder Rosa

Rosa comes down the steps and looks ticked, despite getting a heck of a reception. Rosa grabs her by the hair to start but misses a clothesline. Steelz goes for the wristlock but gets blasted with the second clothesline attempt, allowing Rosa to tie her in the Tree of Woe. A running corner dropkick gets two so Steelz tries an Irish whip, which is cut off with a drop toehold (I've seen that before and it's still sweet). The surfboard goes on but Steelz gets out and hits some running uppercuts. Some running kicks to the face drop Steelz again and a top rope double stomp to the back finishes Steelz at 4:18.

Rating: D+. As usual, the women's division doesn't exactly seem like much around here and it hasn't gotten much better. The match was just a few steps above a squash and Steelz is one of multiple women who feel interchangeable around here. Rosa continues to look like a star though and the longer she toils with these matches, the less important she feels.

Post match Rosa beats on her some more, drawing out Ashley Vox for a failed save attempt. Rosa dislocates the elbow for a bonus.

We recap Aron Stevens joining forces with Question Mark over the powers of ka-ra-te.

Question Mark vs. Trevor Murdoch

Stevens is here with Mark, who he refers to as Sensei Question. Hold on though as Mark needs to sing the Mongrovia National Anthem, with Stevens unrolling the flag. They stare each other down for a good bit after the bell until Murdoch starts slugging away. A slam puts Mark down again but it's too early to go for the mask. Mark strikes away with chops to the head and chest, followed by a middle rope dropkick for two. Back up and Murdoch grabs a spinebuster before going up top...WHERE HE GRABS THE FLAG AND THROWS IT DOWN! You don't do that to Mark so Murdoch has to chase Stevens off, allowing Mark to hit the chop to the throat for the pin at 5:58.

Rating: C. Mark is one of those guys who the fans have just accepted and

turned into one of the most entertaining acts around here. That's all he needs to be and while it won't last forever, it is something that is rather entertaining for what it is. Murdoch will be fine as the old cowboy as it's a character you can always have around.

We look at the Rock N Roll Express winning the Tag Team Titles from the Wild Cards. Tonight is the rematch.

The Express comes out, flanked by Outlaw Inc., for a chat before their title defense. Outlaw Inc. is here as an insurance policy, which doesn't bode well. Hold out though as here are the Wild Cards, with the Dawsons as their own backup.

Tag Team Titles: Rock N Roll Express vs. Wild Cards

The Express is defending. Morton and Latimer start things off with the champ sending him into the corner. A double back elbow drops Latimer and Gibson sends the Cards into each other. Naturally Morton is fine enough to hit a suicide dive onto both of them but Isaacs gets in a knee to the back to take him down.

A powerbomb connects but the referee won't count because there was no tag. I guess they really do wrestle in the NWA. Morton avoids a charge in the corner and brings Gibson back in to clean house. A missed clothesline drops Isaacs and Morton busts out a Canadian Destroyer of all things. The other teams get in a fight on the floor and in the confusion, the double dropkick finishes Isaacs to retain the titles at 5:01.

Rating: C. This is one of those matches where you have to put it on a sliding scale because the Express are in their sixties and there is only so much that they can do. The match wasn't anything great and I'm not sure why I should think much of the Wild Cards if they can't beat the old Express, but the fans were WAY into the champs here. And they even busted out a dive and Destroyer so it's kind of hard to complain that much.

The NWA will be back on pay per view January 24 and the TV Title is coming back (dig that classic design).

Here's Eli Drake to say he wants a World Title shot. Drake doesn't like

the idea of someone coming out here and trying to pump his gas, so here's Ken Anderson to jump him from behind. Anderson wraps a chair around Drake's neck and crushes it against the post. The Mic Check onto the open chair knocks Drake cold.

Allysin Kay/??? vs. Melina/Marti Belle

Ashley Vox was supposed to be Kay's partner but she was taken out earlier, meaning we need a replacement. That would be...ODB, because we're just that lucky. Good thing she was here and in gear on about thirty minutes notice too. Melina bails from a charging Kay to start so it's Belle coming in instead. That earns her some forearms into the corner so a running knee can get two.

A hard whip into the corner keeps Belle down and Kay hammers down some right hands for two more. There's a neckbreaker for another two as Kay keeps yelling at Melina. That's enough to draw Melina in without a tag so Kay tries the belly to back piledriver (AK47, which is a different move than the one that originally used the same name), allowing Belle to get in a cheap shot to take over.

Now Melina is willing to come in legally and stomp away, with Belle choking from the corner for a bonus. Belle gets two off a DDT but Melina misses a kick to the head, allowing ODB to come in off the hot tag. House is cleaned, including a fall away slam and Bronco Buster to Belle with Melina making the save. Now the AK47 drops Melina and the Bam (usually a TKO but practically a Samoan drop here) finishes Belle at 7:21.

Rating: D. I've never been an ODB fan and this didn't make it any better. The finish looked horrible and I'm still not sure what the point of this feud is. Then again I'm not sure if it's a feud in the first place, as the story just kind of goes on and on. Not every promotion needs a women's division and while Melina may be a star, she's not quite the kind of legendary star that they seem to think she is.

Video on Storm vs. Aldis. Storm has claimed a conspiracy against him so tonight it's 2/3 falls and they both get to pick a referee.

National Title: Ricky Starks vs. Aron Stevens vs. Colt Cabana

Cabana is defending, Stevens has Question Mark with him, and it's one fall to a finish. Stevens bails to the floor to start so the chase is on, with Cabana and Starks hitting elbows to his head back inside. A running kick to the head puts Stevens on the floor so he hides behind a Christmas tree at ringside. Starks takes Cabana down in a hammerlock but Cabana is back with one of his own.

As Bennett tries to figure out what a "Stroke Daddy" is, Starks fights up and shoulders Cabana down for two. With the other two down, Stevens runs back in, poses a bit, and gets punched in the ribs for his efforts. Cabana throws Starks outside and takes Stevens into the corner. Starks comes back in so Stevens hits Cabana low and discus clotheslines Starks for two. A fancy elbow hits Starks and it's time to choke in the corner.

Mark takes care of Cabana on the floor and Stevens knees him off the apron as Starks can't get back up. Cabana gets back in and is sent out again just as fast, allowing Starks to run Stevens over. Everyone gets back in and it's time for some atomic drops to Stevens for the sake of comedy. Starks dropkicks Cabana and lands on Stevens with a backsplash for two, followed by an abdominal stretch to Cabana.

That's broken up as well and the Billy Goat's Curse (reverse Boston crab) has Starks crawling over to the rope in a hurry. The pinfall reversal sequence gives us some near falls each until Starks grabs a tornado DDT on Cabana. Back up and Cabana hits the Superman Pin for two as Mark makes the save with a shot to the throat. Stevens is right back in and covers Cabana for the pin and the title at 12:21.

Rating: C+. This was a fun match and Stevens is going to be fine as a champion who everyone knows they can beat but can't quite do it for a bit. His association with Mark is going to be rather entertaining and hopefully we get some more wacky shenanigans out of them soon. Starks is going to be fine for a long time to come.

Here's Tim Storm, Nick Aldis' referee for the World Title match, to promise that he'll call everything right down the middle. He'll represent the NWA because he's always Mama Storm's little boy.

We recap the World Title match, which is still centered around Kamille,

who whispered something to Storm. The story doesn't exactly make sense, but the match itself does and that's what matters most here.

NWA World Title: James Storm vs. Nick Aldis

Aldis is defending and it's 2/3 falls with Brian Hebner (Storm's pick) and Tim Storm (Aldis' pick) refereeing the first and second falls respectively. If a third fall is needed, a coin flip will determine who gets to referee. They fight over hammerlocks and headlocks to start with Storm having to flip out of a headscissors. Back up and it's a standoff as Kamille comes out to watch. Aldis tells her to get to the back and it's a Last call to give Storm the first fall at 2:17.

James stays on him to start the second fall and hammers away on the floor for a bit, including sending Aldis knees first into the steps. They fight up into the crowd for a bit, followed by a hard suplex onto the floor to keep Aldis down. Tim counts to nine at a fair speed so James throws Aldis right back to the floor. Aldis manages to whip him into the Christmas tree though, meaning it's time to send Aldis into the announcers' table.

Back in and James starts in on the leg, only to go to the middle rope and dive into a belly to belly. James is fine enough to hit the Eye of the Storm for two so it's time for a chair. Believe it or not, he listens to the referee and throws it down, only to get small packaged to tie it up at 11:06.

We get a coin toss with Hebner winning so the third call can start. Aldis grabs a quick Michinoku Driver for two but walks into a Backstabber for the same. Storm gets crotched on top and superplex down for two (with a sloppy cover, causing Gorilla Monsoon to groan from the announcers' booth in the sky). Another superplex attempt is broken up and Storm drops a top rope elbow for two. The Last Call is countered so Storm settles for a Figure Four instead.

Aldis turns it over to escape and hits a Tombstone of all things, setting up the top rope elbow for two. The referee gets bumped though, meaning Tim has to come back out to take over. There's the Last Call to Aldis, who gets knocked into the corner. James grabs an O'Connor roll, with Aldis pulling the turnbuckle pad off with him (it wasn't clear if he

unhooked it or if it broke). The kickout sends James into the exposed buckle and the King's Lynn Cloverleaf finishes the unconscious James at 21:54.

Rating: B. This was a main event that felt like it should have been on a major show and that's a good thing. I could see this being a finish in an old school NWA match as you could argue over whether Aldis cheated or not. Aldis continues to carry himself like a champion every time and that's the kind of thing that should keep the title on him for a long time to come. Good main event here and easily the best thing on the show.

Post match Aldis says this win belongs to all of us because we are the NWA. The title is how he tells the world who he is, and he knows no one can take the title from him. The lights go out and MARTY SCURLL IS HERE! Aldis looks scared and leaves to end the show before anything happens.

Overall Rating: C+. The thing to remember is where this company was just a few months ago. Until Powerrr started, AEW truly was a punchline. They went from absolutely nothing to something that people were talking about in a good way. Now they're putting on a completely competent, if not downright good, pay per view. There were things here that weren't very good, but there were enough positives to make the whole thing a success. It's an easy two and a half hour show and that's all it needed to be. Nice job and considering how far they've come recently, that's impressive.

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