

Hard To Kill 2022: They Nailed It

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Date: January 8, 2022

Location: The Bomb Factory, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Tom Hannifan, D'Lo Brown

The company is back on pay per view for one of only four times this year. The show has some big matches set, including Matt Cardona and W. Morrissey challenging Moose for the World Title in a three way, plus Knockouts Champion Mickie James defending against Deonna Purrazzo in a Texas Deathmatch. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Madman Fulton vs. Jake Something

Fulton forearms him to the floor to start but can't chokeslam him off the apron. Instead, he settles for knocking Jake into the ring and unloading in the corner. A neckbreaker gets two on Jake and a high crossbody gives Fulton two. Jake fights up in a hurry and clotheslines him outside though, setting up a big dive. Back in and a Batista Bomb gets two but Fulton grabs him by the throat and nips up from the mat (that was cool). The chokeslam gets two but Fulton tries it again, allowing Jake to slip out. Into the Void gives Jake the fast pin at 5:26.

Rating: C. Perfectly fine way to warm up the crowd as Fulton was getting to show off and Jake pulled off a come from behind win. That being said, Fulton was getting to showcase himself even more here and continues to look like a star. He's fine as Ace Austin's enforcer, but that ceiling could break rather soon.

Pre-Show: Mike Bailey vs. Ace Austin vs. Chris Bey vs. Laredo Kid

One fall to a finish and this is Bailey's debut. Bailey offers handshakes to start but only Kid accepts. Bey and Ace are kicked out to the floor, leaving Kid and Bailey to run the ropes. Kid clears the ring of Bailey and the returning Bey but Austin dropkicks Kid out of the air. Bey comes back in and kicks Kid's leg out but Bailey dropkicks Bey and Austin down at the same time.

Bailey and Kid hit stereo dives to the floor but Bey, not to be outdone, flip dives onto all three. Austin Fosbury flops onto everyone too, only to have Kid catch Bailey on top with a springboard Spanish Fly onto Austin and Bey (because of course he can do that). Back in and Kid hits two moonsaults on Bailey but Austin breaks up the third. Bey cutters Austin down and Kid adds a springboard splash but Bailey is back in to kick Bey down. A running spinning kick catches Austin in the face and shooting star knees to a standing Austin's back gives Bayley the pin at 8:10.

Rating: B-. This was your get to know Bailey match and he showcased himself rather well. Sometimes you need to let someone go out there and show what they can do, which is what you got here with Bailey. Pinning Austin is a big deal so Bailey should be fine going forward. Kid continues to look like a star while Bey is doing well too. The X-Division continues to look good, so get one of these guys after the title.

The opening video features a bunch of people (Eddie Edwards, Rosemary, Rich Swann etc.) talking about various horrible injuries they have suffered. All of them have come back though, because they will never forget and are hard to kill.

Chelsea Green vs. Tasha Steelz vs. Lady Frost vs. Jordynne Grace vs. Alisha vs. Rosemary

It's the first ever women's Ultimate X match and the winner gets a Knockouts Title shot. Alisha is a last minute addition,

replacing Rachael Ellering for no given reason. Everyone stares at each other for a bit before Steelz and Grace go straight for the X. That's broken up of course and it's time for a bunch of quickly broken climbs. Grace and Rosemary are left alone in the ring as Savannah Evans (Steelz's partner) comes to the ring.

That doesn't matter as Havok gives Rosemary a boost towards the X, only to have Green break it up with a missile dropkick. Green and Alisha climbs the same structure but then dive down onto everyone else instead of going after the X. Frost hits a dive of her own but Grace is right there to cut off a climb. Grace goes for the X instead so Frost jumps on her...to no avail as Grace hangs on. Well of course she's that strong.

Rosemary's powerbomb to Frost is countered into a hurricanrana though, meaning Steelz has to pull Grace down instead. Green goes for the X this time but falls, landing on Steelz for a scary crash. Alisha whips out Kendra and beats up a variety of people before going up herself. Rosemary cuts that off with a spear, which winds up being a flapjack as Alisha lands face first.

Steelz goes up but Grace goes with the chase to pull both of them down at the same time. With everyone else down, Frost goes up and moonsaults off the structure onto a bunch of people (who can be seen checking on each other). Back up and Grace, Steelz and Green all go up, with Grace falling down in a crash. The X is pulled down but it's Steelz crashing down with possession for the win at 9:13.

Rating: C+. This was about making history and having the women get the chance to do something like this for a change. The spots were big, but there are only so many things you can do in a match like this one. Steelz winning is a big of a surprise, but she could be fine as a one off challenger on a monthly special. They had a good first time here though and it's cool to see the women getting a chance in a match like

this.

Trailer for the movie Free Fall, the show's sponsor.

We run down the rest of the card.

Mickie James is ready for the Royal Rumble (this continues to be weird) but tonight, she is ready to put Deonna Purrazzo down for ten.

Deonna Purrazzo is ready to walk out as the Knockouts Champion because she has a plan B. Cue Gail Kim to say if Matthew Rehwoldt (presumably plan B) interferes, he's fired and Purrazzo loses.

X-Division Title: Trey Miguel vs. Steve Maclin

Maclin is challenging in his final shot at the title and dives on Miguel in the aisle. Miguel manages a dropkick though and gets inside for a suicide dive DDT. They get inside for the opening bell, with Miguel getting tied in the Tree of Woe. That doesn't really matter as he escapes in a hurry and hits a heck of a suicide dive to the floor, landing in the crowd on the crash.

Maclin isn't having this and sends Miguel hard into the barricade. Back in and a Rock Bottom backbreaker has Miguel in more trouble, setting up a running clothesline to knock him silly. Another Rock Bottom out of the corner gets two and Maclin is getting confident. There's a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two on Miguel, who rolls outside, allowing Maclin to hit an elbow off the apron.

Back in and Miguel manages a quick headscissors into a double stomp to the ribs to get a breather. A springboard Downward Spiral sends Maclin onto the apron but he ties Miguel in the ropes for a heck of a spear to the banged up ribs. Mayhem For All is loaded up but Miguel reverses into a headscissors driver. They slug it out on the apron with Miguel getting the

better of things. That's enough to let Miguel go up top for a crazy Meteora out to the floor in the huge crash. Back in and a brainbuster sets up the top rope Meteora to retain Miguel's title at 12:55.

Rating: B-. This was a nicely played formula, as Miguel got beaten up but held on and fought back for the win. It's a good way to wrap up Maclin's time as the main challenger as there are probably half a dozen wrestlers ready to come after Miguel's title. Maclin is someone I could go for more of, as he is a perfectly fine midcard hand, which can always be used in some way.

The Influence say the Inspiration not showing up for their Tag Team Title match isn't very professional. The title match can happen, but it is only going to be on January 27 in the company's debut in Fort Lauderdale.

Ian Riccaboni joins commentary for the next match.

Ring of Honor World Title: Chris Sabin vs. Jonathan Gresham

Gresham is defending and it is under Pure Rules, meaning each wrestler only gets three rope breaks, closed fist punches are not allowed (warning for the first, DQ for the second) and 20 counts on the floor. Gresham flips out of a wristlock to start as they're going technical early. Sabin flips him over and that's good enough for a handshake. A takedown lets Gresham work on the leg but Sabin pulls him into a cradle for two.

You don't do that to Gresham, who ties up the arms and cranks on the leg at the same time. Back up and Sabin sends him outside, setting up a hard kick to the chest to drop Gresham hard. They get back inside and fight over a backslide until Sabin plants him with a DDT for two. A hanging swinging neckbreaker drops Gresham again so he uses his first rope break to escape.

Gresham is fine enough to moonsault Sabin down and stomp on

the arm, setting up the armbar with elbows to the head. Sabin has to use his first rope break to escape an armbar so Gresham slaps on the Octopus. That's broken up as well and Sabin hits the Cradle Shock for three...but Gresham's foot is underneath the rope for the second break. After the premature celebration ends, they lock hands to trade a bunch of chops. Make that overhand chops to the chest before they exchange enziguris. Sabin tries another enziguri but Gresham pulls him down into something close to a European Clutch to retain the title at 12:40.

Rating: B. That's the kind of match you can expect from Gresham and it was another good one. He can work with anyone and the fact that it was someone like Sabin, who can hang in there with that style very easily made it even better. It's so nice to see the Ring of Honor World Title sticking around, though I'm still not sure what the future holds for the whole thing. This was quite good though and a nice bonus for the pay per view.

Respect is shown post match.

Tasha Steelz is proud of her win and is ready for either Deonna Purrazzo or Mickie James.

We recap Josh Alexander vs. Jonah. Alexander won the World Title at Bound For Glory but lost it to Moose the same night. That sent Alexander into a rage but Jonah debuted and attacked him, leaving Alexander injured. Then Jonah did it again to leave Alexander laying again.

Josh Alexander vs. Jonah

They stare each other down until Alexander kicks him in the face to start. Alexander hammers away in the corner but gets knocked down for his efforts. Jonah's backsplash misses so Alexander knocks him outside, where Jonah scores with some hard chops. Alexander ties the leg in the ropes and stomps down to take over, sending Jonah back outside. That goes badly

for Alexander again, as Jonah drives him ribs first into the apron.

Back in and Jonah drops him ribs first onto the top turnbuckle before tossing Alexander around with ease. Neither of them can get a backslide so Jonah drops him ribs first across the top rope instead. The over the shoulder backbreaker stays on the ribs but Alexander slips out to chop away. Some slaps to the face earn Alexander a heck of a forearm, but he's fine enough to start kicking at the leg.

Alexander dumps him over the top, with Jonah landing on his leg again. A hard right hand knocks Jonah into the front row and Alexander hits a huge dive to take him down again. That's only good for a nine so Alexander goes right back to the knee. Alexander takes way too long going up so Jonah crotches him down.

One heck of a top rope superplex drops Alexander again before a powerbomb plants him hard. Jonah's clothesline turns Alexander inside out and a brainbuster gets two more. Some headbutts have Alexander busted open but he's able to avoid a moonsault. Alexander manages a powerbomb before stomping on the ankle. The ankle lock makes Jonah tap at 17:07.

Rating: B. This was the best way to have the match go, as Alexander fought through an injury to overcome the monster. Alexander needed this win after dropping the World Title in about five minutes, so while it's annoying to see Jonah lose so soon, it is probably the best outcome. Alexander vs. Moose is going to happen at some point and this should clear the path for the April pay per view. Good match too, as Alexander can do no wrong at the moment.

Rich Swann, Willie Mack, Eddie Edwards, Rhino and Heath are ready for their Hardcore War against Violent By Design and the Good Brothers.

We recap the Hardcore War. Everyone is sick of Violent By

Design but the Good Brothers see a chance to get rid of two tag teams. Eddie Edwards is here because he has nothing else to do.

Violent By Design/Good Brothers vs. Rhino/Heath/Eddie Edwards/Rich Swann/Willie Mack

This is basically WarGames with one ring and no cage. Two men start for three minutes and every ninety seconds, someone from the winning team (Violent By Design/Good Brothers) joins in for an advantage. Ninety seconds later, someone from Team Edwards ties it up, with the teams alternating until all ten men (or eight according to the graphic) are in. After that, first pin or submission wins.

Deaner and Rich Swann start things off with Swann missing an early chair shot. Instead Swann punches him down and hits his rolling splash. The chair is wedged in the corner but Deaner gets in a trashcan shot. Swann is sent face first into the chair in the corner and it's a Russian legsweep with a flag pole to drop him again. Karl Anderson, with a golf club, gives the villains the advantage but Swann kicks him in the face. The golf club goes into Anderson's ribs but Deaner is back up with a chair shot.

Willie Mack ties things up and it's time to bridge a door between two open chairs. Something close to a 3D sends Deaner through the table but Doc Gallows gives the villains another advantage. Deaner is back up to pelt a piece of door at Swann's head and they do it again for a bonus. Eddie Edwards ties it up again and it's time for some rapid fire suicide dives to the villains. Everyone heads outside to pick up the brawling and a table is set up.

Cue Eric Young with trashcan lid shots to Eddie though as the advantage is back. Edwards gets group choked in the corner and a trashcan lid to the head makes it worse. Heath comes in to even it up again, complete with a pipe to take over. Mack's

moonsault with a trashcan only hits trashcan and here is Joe Doering to complete Violent By Design and company. Mack and Swann get powerbombed off the top at the same time and the bloody Eddie gets a chain raked across his face.

Rhino completes the field and cleans house with the chain on his hand. Everyone gets up for the big NXT WarGames style standoff as the last seventeen plus minutes are completely forgotten. Edwards is left alone in the ring with Young so he breaks Kenny the kendo stick over Young's head. Young is sent to the apron, where he manages a piledriver to send Edwards through a table.

It's time for the barbed wire board, because that's always a good idea. That's fine with Doering, who hits a running Death Valley Driver to send Swann through said board. Rhino is back up to clean house with his chain though and Heath adds a mini Dallas Cowboys helmet shot to Anderson. The Gore gives Heath the pin on Anderson at 23:27.

Rating: B-. Your mileage is going to vary on this as it was a wild brawl, as promised, but the short intervals and huge crowd hurt it a lot. This is a match that would have been much better off with eight, or even six people, but bigger means better is the motto of modern wrestling. There is a good chance that this is the beginning of the end of Violent By Design and that might be for the best, as they have kind of run their course. What we got was good, but this needed to be trimmed down a bit.

Post match the winners celebrate...but Mike Bennett and Matt Taven from Ring of Honor jump them from behind. Cue Ring of Honor's Vincent and PCO to decimate the winning team. A spike piledriver plants Mack and PCO flip dives off the top to drive Swann into the apron. Maria Kanellis comes in to pose with the Ring of Honor guys as we have an invasion (and an interesting one at that).

Scott D'Amore didn't know that was coming and is off to call Baltimore (Ring of Honor's headquarters).

We recap Moose defending the World Title against Matt Cardona and W. Morrissey. Cardona earned the title shot by pinning Moose in a tag match while Morrissey attacked Moose to say he wanted in too. It's about Cardona proving he belongs and Morrissey wanting the title.

Impact World Title: Moose vs. Matt Cardona vs. W. Morrissey

Moose is defending and it's one fall to a finish. Cardona gets sent outside to start and Morrissey boots Moose down for an early two. Everyone winds up outside, with Moose powerbombing Cardona onto the apron. Back in and Morrissey hits some running splashes in the corner until Moose crossbodies him down. The middle rope chokebomb gives Moose two, with Cardona making the save. A bunch of Reboots rock the giants so Cardona goes up, meaning it's a Tower of Doom for the big crash.

Moose takes Cardona outside for a hard whip into the barricade but here is Chelsea Green to dive onto Moose for a save. They head back to ringside where Morrissey runs them over and sends Cardona back inside. Cardona manages a Codebreaker to send Morrissey outside so Moose takes his place. For some reason Moose goes up top but gets shoved down hard through a table at ringside.

Someone sends in a prosthetic leg and Morrissey beats on Cardona with it. A quick Radio Silence gives Cardona two but he walks into a chokeslam to give Morrissey two. Cardona is right back up and hits a quick middle rope Radio Silence for another near fall. Moose is back in and gets rolled up for two but the referee gets bumped. Back in and Morrissey hits a powerbomb on Moose for no count so let's bring in some chairs.

Moose hits Morrissey low for a breather and chairs him down, but Cardona is back in with chair shots of his own. Cardona gets caught by a chair shot from Moose though, drawing Green

in to protect him. That lets Cardona get up and nearly chair her down again, only to have the replacement referee get bumped as well. The spear cuts Cardona down and the original referee counts the pin to retain Moose's title at 15:57.

Rating: B-. This was about as good as it could have been as it was kind of hard to imagine a title change. Cardona was trying and they were going for the Cinderella story, but that is only going to get you so far when you have a dominant champion. Morrissey was just kind of there and this would have been a little more interesting as a one on one match, but it was still fine for a co-main event.

Rebellion is April 23.

We recap Deonna Purrazzo vs. Mickie James for the Knockouts Title. James won the title in an upset at Bound For Glory and Purrazzo isn't handling it well. It's time for a rematch, but in a Texas Deathmatch.

Knockouts Title: Mickie James vs. Deonna Purrazzo

Mickie is defending in a Texas Deathmatch, meaning Last Woman Standing, but a fall has to be scored to start the ten count. They lock up and go to the mat to start with James grabbing a very early rollup for two as the mind games are on. A hot shot cuts Mickie down and the Venus de Milo goes on, so Mickie taps out in a hurry to escape (that's smart). It's time to throw in some chairs (because doing that in the last two matches wasn't enough) and Mickie manages to chair her across the back.

The golf club from earlier is brought out for a shot to Purrazzo's ribs but she posts Mickie for a breather. They fight up the ramp with Purrazzo hitting a suplex on the stage, allowing her to roll an anvil case into Mickie's face for the pin. Mickie is busted open but beats the count and they head back inside. A half crab sends Purrazzo to the ropes, which means nothing, but Mickie lets go and dropkicks her to the floor.

Mickie takes her chaps off so she can hit Purrazzo in the face with her braced knee. A table is brought in but Purrazzo sends her face first into it instead. It's time for thumbtacks, because those are required these days. Mickie gets dropped onto the tacks for the loud screaming portion and some choking with the chaps are good for a submission. Purrazzo isn't waiting on Mickie to get up and dives off the apron to take her down again.

Back in and Purrazzo gets smart by chairing Mickie in the legs over and over. For some reason Purrazzo goes up top, allowing Mickie to blast her in the head with a chair (though Mickie collapsing into the tacks takes away some of the positives). A Thesz press off the apron pins Purrazzo but here is Matthew Rehwoldt to help her up, which doesn't count as cheating (I guess?).

Back in and Purrazzo hits the Queen's Gambit through a table for the pin but Mickie is up at 8. Mickie is fine enough to grab a guitar...so Purrazzo hits her low, allowing Mickie to the Wrestlemania XXII finger lick. Ok then. The guitar hits Rehwoldt and the MickieDT plants Purrazzo for the pin. Just to be sure, Mickie covers her with a table and chair for the ten count to retain at 19:45.

Rating: B+. They got extra violent here and it played up their hatred, though the quick falls and submissions were a little strange (logical, but strange). Mickie retaining makes sense as you want your best going into the Royal Rumble, which really will be the best exposure the company has had in a long time. This was a heck of a fight and the right choice for the main event, though Last Woman Standing might have been a better call (as would dropping the finger lick thing, which was a weird callback).

Overall Rating: A-. I'm not sure if I should be surprised but Impact just put on one heck of a great show. There is nothing bad on the entire card with one very good to great match after

another. Impact tends to be at its best when they cut out all of the nonsense and just go with the straight wrestling. The show isn't perfect as it went a bit too hard with the violence during the last hour or so, but this is absolutely worth a look as they nailed this one on almost all counts. The Ring of Honor stuff has me intrigued too, which is more than I can say about almost anything Impact has done in a long time. Great job.

Results

Tasha Steelz won Ultimate X

Trey Miguel b. Steve Maclin – Top rope Meteora

Jonathan Gresham b. Chris Sabin – European Clutch

Josh Alexander b. Jonah – Ankle lock

Eddie Edwards/Heath/Rhino/Willie Mack/Rich Swann b. Violent By Design/Good Brothers – Gore to Deaner

Moose b. Matt Cardona and W. Morrissey – Lights Out to Cardona

Mickie James b. Deonna Purrazzo – MickieDT

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