

Impact Wrestling/NJPW Multiverse United 2: Now For A Very Special Feature

Multiverse United 2: For Whom The Bell Tolls

Date: August 20, 2023

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Matthew Rehwoldt, Tom Hannifan, Veda Scott

This is a special show as it's a battle between Impact Wrestling and New Japan. The original version was held over Wrestlemania weekend and now we could be in for a cool sequel. This includes a main event of Alex Shelley defending the Impact Wrestling World Title against Hiroshi Tanahashi. Let's get to it.

Note that I do not follow New Japan incredibly closely so I apologize for missing any characters, plot points etc.

Kickoff Show: Joe Hendry/Heath/Yuya Uemura vs. Master Wato/Rocky Romero/Ryusuke Taguchi

Heath and Romero start things off with Heath hitting an atomic drop into a clothesline. Taguchi comes in for the double stomping in the corner but it's Heath coming in for some dancing. A hip attack drops Heath though and it's Hendry coming in to face Wato. This doesn't work for the Impact guys either, as Wato gets in a double bulldog and sends them outside.

Back in and Hendry chops away at Wato before hitting a delayed suplex for two. Uemura comes in for a slam as things settle down into the standard rotating beatdown. Hendry's chinlock doesn't last long as Wato fights up and brings Romero back in to pick up the pace. Hendry fall away slams Romero and Wato at the same time, allowing the double tag to Uemura and Taguchi.

Everything breaks down and Uemura hits a high crossbody for the pin at 10:21.

Rating: C+. Nice way to start here with three fun Impact stars getting a win to warm up the crowd. Hendry and Uemura seem to be gearing up for a tag team run and Heath can work well in any midcard spot. The New Japan guys were treated as stars here too, with Wato being a near buzzsaw at times. Entertaining opener and that's as good as you can expect.

Impact – 1

NJPW – 0

Kickoff Show: Digital Media Title: Yoshinobu Kanemaru vs. Kenny King

King is defending. Feeling out process to start with Kanemaru cranking on a headlock before hurting himself on a shoulder block. The headlock works a bit better, at least until King breaks it up and stomps away, setting up a camel clutch. Back up and King misses a charge in the corner, allowing Kanemaru to hammer away a bit more. A DDT plants King for two, followed by a moonsault for the same. King spinebusters him for two more before ducking the miss. A kick to the head sets up the Royal Flush to retain the title at 6:51.

Rating: C. They kept this relatively short as it was mainly a way to get a title match on the show. King's title is about as low down as you can get in Impact and having him defend against a former champion like Kanemaru makes sense. The match itself was fine enough and that's really all it needed to be for the spot they were in.

Impact – 2

NJPW – 0

The opening video looks at some of the bigger matches. Rather simple here and nothing wrong with that.

Chris Sabin vs. Kevin Knight vs. Frankie Kazarian vs. Bushi vs. Yoh vs. Rich Swann vs. Mao vs. El Desperado

Everyone in at once, one fall to a finish. We get a quick eight man lockup before they pair off and go outside. Naturally this means some dives until it's off to Mao (who dances a lot) vs. Swann, the latter of whom kicks him in the ribs. Yoh comes in to clear the ring without much effort but Knight hits him with a spinning splash for two.

Sabin is in with a missile dropkick to Knight before getting taken down by Kazarian. Desperado and Mao are back in to clean house in a hurry until Mao punches him in the mask, as you probably guessed was coming. We get the eight man submission chain until the referee breaks it up for using the rope (Rehwoldt: "Using the rope was the most ridiculous part of that.").

Everyone beats down Bushi before they go after Swann with running splashes in the corner. A Tower Of Doom bring Swann down again and Knight comes off the top for two. Kazarian sends Knight to the apron and pulls him back in with a cutter, setting off the parade of knockdowns. Sabin drops Yoh and Knight at the same time before hitting the Cradle Shock to finish Yoh at 8:24.

Rating: B-. I never know what to say in a match like this, as it's all over the place and complete insanity, with a big parade of spots and dives. That being said, it can be fun to see something like this, as it's nonstop action until someone gets the win. They also did the right thing in keeping it relatively short, which can be a huge problem in matches like this. Fun opener, as they're certainly starting fast.

Impact – 3

NJPW – 0

Post match Desperado mists Sabin to blow off some steam. And some mist.

TMDK vs. Team Impact

That would be Zack Sabre Jr./Shane Haste vs. Moose/Eddie Edwards for your wacky Impact team of the night. Eddie and Sabre start things off with Sabre wasting no time in going after the arm. Haste comes in for two off a dropkick and it's already back to Sabre to work on the arm again. Eddie gets in a shot to Haste and hands it back to Moose, who gets two off Eddie's backpack Stunner.

The Impact guys take turns chopping at Haste, who gets slammed down to make it worse. Haste kicks his way to freedom though and brings Sabre back in. Moose is low bridged to the floor and an armbar over the rope has Eddie in trouble again. A PK hits Eddie, who pops back up with a Blue Thunder Bomb for a double knockdown. Haste and Moose come back in, with the former armdragging his way out of a release Rock Bottom.

The second attempt works but Sabre is back up with a tornado DDT to Moose. Eddie drops Sabre and everyone is down again. Back up and Sabre slugs it out with Moose, with Sabre pulling him into a choke. Eddie makes the save and hits the Boston Knee Party to Sabre. Haste rolls Moose up for two but the spear gives Moose the pin at 13:23.

Rating: B. This was another rather solid match and it was cool to see a makeshift team hang with and even beat an established pairing. Haste taking the fall to a former Impact World Champion is hardly some big slap in the face, though this was quite the upset. If nothing else, Sabre didn't get to snap any limbs!

Impact – 4

NJPW – 0

Video on the four way for the New Japan Strong Women's Title.

New Japan Strong Women's Title: Deonna Purrazzo vs. Momo Kohgo vs. Gisele Shaw vs. Giulia

Giulia is defending and it's one fall to a finish. Purrazzo and Giulia grab headlocks to start but get broken up for a staredown just as fast. Everyone goes or a rollup and I's another four way showdown. Shaw brags a bit too much and gets dropkicked to the floor, leaving Purrazzo to dropkick the other two. Momo is back up with a superkick for two on Giulia, with Shaw making the save.

Shaw takes Momo and Giulia down and covers both of them in a row for rapid fire near falls. Deonna pulls Giulia to the floor so Momo can hit a big dive before Shaw goes after Giulia for a change. Back in and Giulia butterfly superplexes Shaw, leaving to a four way knockdown. They pair off for the stereo forearm exchanges until Shaw's spear misses Purrazzo and hits Giulia by mistake.

An assisted Backstabber puts Momo down again but Shaw gives Purrazzo a super Spanish Fly. Momo makes the save, leaving Purrazzo to Queen's Gambit Giulia and Shaw. Purrazzo and Shaw grab stereo submissions but stop o fight each other. Giulia is back up and hits a northern lights bomb on Shaw to retain at 12:25.

Rating: B-. Another title match to make the show feel more special and in this case it went well. The more I see of Giulia in the ring the more obvious it is that she is a star. It's a good idea to feature someone like that and Shaw has lost enough that another one isn't going to do much damage. Purrazzo vs. Giulia down the line could be a heck of a showdown and that might be the case eventually. For now though, I'll take a Giulia showcase.

Impact – 4

NJPW – 1

Sami Callihan vs. Douki

Before the match, Sami says we're missing the extreme around here so let's make this a street fight. Douki agrees and

wastes no time in knocking him outside before putting Sami in a chair. The kick from the apron takes too long though and as a result, Sami throws in a bunch of weapons.

Back in and Sami whips out an 8×10 of himself and paper cuts Douki's fingers, followed by the arm pit. A t-bone suplex sends Douki onto a chair, which Sami loads into the corner. That takes too long and Douki sends him into it instead, meaning it's time for a kendo stick. Some shots to Sami let Douki stack the chairs on him, setting up a top rope double stomp.

Sami is back up with a neckbreaker onto the chair for two before it's time for a ladder. Douki manages to send him into said ladder though and a slingshot X Factor gets two. The Douki Driver is countered and the Cactus Driver 97 gives Sami two. Sami loads up four chairs and they climb onto them, with a Cactus Driver 97 sending Douki into them for the pin at 12:42.

Rating: C. Pretty basic hardcore match here and since they're in Philadelphia, it would almost have been insane to not include something similar. Sami is the right choice for a match like this too, as he might not be the most polished in the ring, but he knows how to do this kind of thing. Douki more than held up his end, but it was just a bunch of the same stuff we've seen far too many times over the years.

Impact – 5

NJPW – 1

Kosei Fujita/Robbie Eagles vs. TJP/Francisco Akira

Akira and Fujita go to the mat to start and neither can get very far. Back up and Fujita chops Akira up against the ropes but TJP comes in off a blind tag for a double dropkick. Eagles comes in with a dropkick of his own for two on Akira before Fujita grabs a quickly broken leglock.

It's back to TJP for a facewash in the corner, followed by a dropkick to put Fujita down again. That doesn't last long as the hot tag brings in Eagles for the rapid fire house cleaning. The running knees in the corner get two on Akira and the Ron Miller Special (leglock) makes it worse.

TJP makes the save before being sent outside but Akira is back up with a poisonrana. A top rope double stomp/reverse DDT combination puts Fujita down for two and the Mamba splash gets the same. Eagles superkicks Fujita by mistake though and something like a 3D puts Fujita down again. Stereo running knees finish for TJP at 11:30.

Rating: C+. This was the showcase match for New Japan and that isn't a bad idea. There was enough good action here to make the match interesting, with TJP and Akira coming off more like a successful team than Fujita and Eagles. Solid fast paced match here though and I could go on more of TJP and Akira.

Mike Bailey is ready to challenge Hiromu Takahashi for IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title but tonight, they're teaming together.

Bullet Club vs. The World

Bullet Club: David Finlay, Chris Bey, Ace Austin, Alex Coughlin, Kenta, Clark Connors

The World: Josh Alexander, PCO, Tanga Loa, Tama Tonga, DKC, El Phantasmo

Finlay spits at Tama to start and quickly send him outside for the big beatdown. Back in and PCO chops it out with Coughlin with the latter somehow managing a gutwrench suplex. Coughlin is sent outside for the big beatdown from the World as everything breaks down. Back in and DKC runs Connors over until a powerslam takes him down.

Finlay comes in for some rapid fire shoulders in the corner but DKC kicks his way to freedom. The big tag brings Alexander

in (first time in five months) to clean house but Austin/Bey kick him down. It's off to Kenta for some kicks to the back and Austin drops a leg for two. Alexander suplexes Austin and Bey, allowing the tag off to Phantasma.

Everything breaks down and Finlay is surrounded so the beatdown can be on. DKC's frog splash gets two but the Club makes the save. Kenta's GTS to Alexander is countered into an ankle lock, which is broken up as well. PCO dives onto them and then hits a big dive onto the pile. Back in and Finlay hits a quick powerbomb to finish DKC at 14:08.

Rating: B-. This was similar to the opener with all of the chaos and everyone doing their thing at various times. The good thing is that they managed to have more of a structure this time around, with the Club getting the big win, as they should have earned. What mattered here was getting a bunch of people onto the show at once and it was one step away from being total chaos, which makes it pretty engaging stuff.

Impact – 5

NJPW – 2

Mike Bailey/Hiromu Takahashi vs. Lio Rush/Trey Miguel

Takahashi and Miguel start things off with Miguel telling the crowd to be quiet so he can stomp away in the corner in silence. Bailey comes in to trade dodges with Rush and hit a dropkick on Miguel. We settle down to Miguel missing a charge in the corner and getting dragon screw legwhipped by Rush.

Bailey's running shooting star press gets two but Miguel suplexes his way to freedom. Everything breaks down and Bailey moonsaults onto Rush on the floor. Back in and Rush avoids the Ultimate Weapon, meaning Miguel and Takahashi get to chop it out. Takahashi gets double kicked down until Bailey makes the save.

The Lightning Spiral is countered into Takahashi's pop up

powerbomb and Miguel is rocked. The Ultimate Weapon into a Regal Roll gets two with Rush making the save. Rush hits Rush Hour for two on Takahashi, leaving Miguel to Meteora Bailey on the floor. Back in and Rush counters the Time Bomb and hits Takahashi low, allowing a rollup to give Rush the pin at 14:30.

Rating: B. This has been the night of letting people go nuts throughout their match and that is where these people shine. The ending could set up a champion vs. champion (X-Division vs. Junior Heavyweight) and that could be a big showdown at some point. Letting talented people fly around and showcase themselves is always a good idea and that's what they did here at a pretty high level.

Impact – 6

NJPW – 2

Post match Rush says he wants the IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title shot but Bailey brings up asking for the shot, which Takahashi granted.

Quick video on the main event, which is both for the title and teacher vs. student.

Impact Wrestling World Title: Hiroshi Tanahashi vs. Alex Shelley

Shelley, Tanahashi's former student, is defending. Tanahashi takes him into the corner to start and we get an early standoff. A headlock takeover frustrates Shelley a bit, though the air guitar might soothe him a bit. Shelley has to fight his way out of the headlock and gets to the middle rope for a knee to the arm.

The cranking on the arm ensues until Shelley gets taken down, with his knee being sent into the post. Tanahashi starts working on the knee but a slingshot stomp to the arm cuts him right back off. Shelley works on the arm outside and then

again on the apron as he certainly has a target. Tanahashi gets in another shot to the knee but Shelley slugs away and hits a running forearm.

The standing Sliced Bread sets up the Border City Stretch to keep Tanahashi down for a change, but the foot in the rope makes the save. That means a dragon screw legwhip over the rope can put Shelley down again. The Texas Cloverleaf goes on but Shelley escapes and knocks him down again.

They slug it out with Tanahashi getting the better of things until three straight Twist and Shouts take Shelley down. The Sling Blade gets two but Shelley avoids the High Fly Flow. A running knee and ripcord clothesline give Shelley two so Tanahashi German suplexes him for the same. They head up top with Shelley Air Raid Crashing him back down before Shell Shock retains the title at 18:53.

Rating: B. This felt like a title match, as it came off like two stars fighting over a prize. While Tanahashi is definitely a few steps slower than he used to be, there is enough talent there to let him wrestle a good match with the right opponent. Shelley might not be setting the world on fire as champion, but you're going to get a well wrestled match against any opponent. In other words, he is a perfectly acceptable placeholder and that's not the worst place to be. Good main event.

Impact – 7

NJPW – 2

Overall Rating: B-. This felt like a rather cool DVD extra, as it doesn't change storylines in any meaningful way. Instead, it was a nice showcase of the Impact stars against some midcard names from another company. You don't need to watch it to keep up with what was going on, but you'll have a good time with the whole thing, even if it's about three and a half hours counting Kickoff Show. Pretty easy watch though, with a

rather surprising final score too.

Results

Joe Hendry/Yuya Uemura/Heath b. Master Wato/Ryusuke Taguchi/Rocky Romero – High crossbody to Taguchi

Kenny King b. Yoshinobu Kanemaru – Royal Flush

Chris Sabin b. Kevin Knight, Frankie Kazarian, Bushi, Yoh, Rich Swann, Mao and El Desperado – Cradle Shock to Yoh

Moose/Eddie Edwards b. TMDK – Spear to Haste

Giulia b. Deonna Purrazzo, Momo Kohgo and Gisele Shaw – Northern lights bomb to Shaw

Sami Callihan b. Douki – Cactus Driver 97 onto a pile of chairs

TJP/Francisco Akira b. Kosei Fujita/Robbie Eagles – Double knees to Fujita

Bullet Club b. The World – Powerbomb to DKC

Lio Rush/Trey Miguel b. Mike Bailey/Hiromu Takahashi – Rollup to Takahashi

Alex Shelley b. Hiroshi Tanahashi – Shell Shock

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