

Bound For Glory 2023: Bound For The Old Name

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Location: Cicero Stadium, Cicero, Illinois

Commentators: Tom Hannifan, Matthew Rehwoldt

It's the biggest show of Impact's year and things are getting interesting around here. The main event here will see Josh Alexander challenging Alex Shelley for the World Title that he never lost. Other than that, we have Trinity defending the Knockouts Title against Mickie James, who never lost her title either. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about the quest for glory through victory. The main matches get attention of their own.

X-Division Title: Chris Sabin vs. Kenta

Kenta is challenging and is driven against the ropes for a clean break. They go to the slugout with Kenta getting the better of things and sending Sabin outside. The dive is knocked out of the air though and Sabin hits a high crossbody for two back inside. Kenta bails to the floor and manages to drive Sabin back first into the apron.

Back in and Kenta gets four straight near falls before we hit the chinlock. Sabin gets up and they slug it out until Sabin hits a running shot to get a breather. The missile dropkick puts Kenta down again and a middle rope tornado DDT gets two more. The Cradle Shock is broken up though and Kenta hits his tornado neck snap across the top.

Some running kicks in the corner rock Sabin again but he kicks Kenta in the face. Kenta has to grab the referee to escape the Cradle Shock and then knocks Sabin down for a double stomp.

The GTS is blocked and Sabin scores with a superkick. The missile dropkick to the back sets up Cradle Shock to retain the title at 11:28.

Rating: B. As usual, the X-Division stuff is a good choice for an opener as the matches are fast paced and hard hitting enough to get the audience into things. It was a good test for Sabin as Kenta is a known star and now I wonder who is next to come for the title. This worked well and as usual, Sabin can go with anyone.

Here's what's coming on the show.

We recap Monster's Ball, which is a hoss fight that was mainly started over who was supposed to get the Feast Or Fired briefcase. Rhino cost Maclin the case, which Moose wound up getting. PCO is there because he's a monster and Bully Ray is lurking around as well.

Moose vs. PCO vs. Steve Maclin vs. Rhino

Anything goes and they do the whole "they've been locked up for twenty four hours" deal. It's a brawl before the bell and Moose beats people up with the briefcase. As the spear is loaded up, here is PCO to brawl with Moose instead. Moose backdrops PCO over the top and through a ladder but the other two get back in to keep up the brawling. Maclin Death Valley Drivers Moose into a trashcan in the corner and hits PCO in the back with a chair.

Back in and PCO chokeslams Maclin and hits a suicide dive on Rhino. A middle rope legdrop hits Maclin and the Deanimator makes it even worse. Moose is back in with some release Rock Bottoms to PCO, who keeps popping right back up. With that not working, Moose plants CO onto some cinder blocks covers with thumbtacks (because that's a thing).

Rhino is back up and wants tables, which the fans seem to like. Naturally it's a barbed wire table but Maclin posts

Rhino to cut him off. Cue Bully Ray to shove Maclin off the top and through the barbed wire table for the huge crash. Back in and PCO DDTs Moose, who catches him on top with some chair shots. Rhino Gores the chair that Moose is holding but it's enough to put Moose down so that the PCOsault can finish him off at 11:11.

Rating: B-. This was exactly as advertised and that is not a bad thing. Sometimes you need to just let some big people go out there and hit each other really hard which is what we got here. PCO winning is a bit of a surprise but it does make sense given how much this match would suit him. Fun stuff here and they did what they needed to.

Mickie James is ready for Trinity.

We recap ABC challenging the Rascalz for the Tag Team Titles. ABC got cheated out of a title shot and the Rascalz won the belts, but now it's time for the rematch.

Tag Team Titles: Rascalz vs. ABC

ABC is challenging and this is Chris Bey's Feast Or Fired cash in. The Rascalz try to jump them to start and we settle down to Miguel vs. Bey with neither being able to hit their big kick. Austin comes in to kick Miguel down for two but Wentz is back in with a neckbreaker. A standing shooting star press gets two on Austin and Miguel neckbreakers him on the apron for a nasty crash. The chinlock goes on back inside but Austin manages to send both champs to the floor for the big dive.

Back in and it's Bey getting the tag to clean house, including a Downward Spiral/reverse DDT combination. A brainbuster gets two on Wentz and a torture rack neckbreaker/springboard kick to the head combination gets the same. The 1-2-Sweet is broken up and a backbreaker puts Bey down for two. Miguel hits a top rope Meteora so Wentz's Swanton can get two more. Wentz loads up the spray paint but sprays Miguel by mistake, setting up the 1-2-Sweet to give us new champions at 9:48.

Rating: B-. These guys work well together and we get some history to make the show feel more important. It was a good results too as ABC getting the titles back feels right as they are probably the best team in Impact today. They get their nice moment to win the titles back while having a good match in the process. Nice stuff here, which tends to be the case for ABC.

Quick video on Will Ospreay vs. Mike Bailey, which is more or less Ospreay being a big star and coming in to face one of Impact's best.

Will Ospreay vs. Mike Bailey

Ospreay takes him up to the ropes to start so Bailey kicks away. A monkey flip puts Bailey down but he knocks Ospreay out to the floor for the moonsault dive. Back in and a hot shot into a big boot puts Bailey on the floor and Ospreay hits a dive of his own. The abdominal stretch goes on for a few seconds before Ospreay chops the heck out of him. Bailey is right back with a missile dropkick into some strikes for two.

A delayed kick to the head rocks Ospreay again but it's too early for the Flamingo Driver. Ospreay isn't having that though and scores with a spinning kick to the head for a breather. The Cheeky Nandos kick looks to set up the Oscutter but Bailey backslides his way out of trouble. A poisonrana puts Ospreay on the apron but he's fine enough to kick him in the head.

The Oscutter connects to send Bailey outside with quite the crash. Back in and the regular Oscutter gets two but it's too early for the Hidden Blade. Bailey gets back up for a hard exchange of kicks and forearms until the Hidden Blade puts Bailey back down. A top rope Oscutter is cut off by knees to the back though and the Ultimate Weapon gives Bailey two.

Ospreay elbows him in the head but Stormbreaker is countered into a hurricanrana for two more. They go up top where

Bailey's super fisherman's buster gets another near fall. The tornado kick connects for Bailey but Ospreay pulls him into the Styles Clash of all things for two of his own. Ospreay's Storm Driver 93 gets two more and the Hidden Blade into another Stormbreaker finishes Bailey at 17:28.

Rating: B+. Yeah this worked, if nothing else because it was two people beating the fire out of each other. They didn't really need a story here as this was about tearing the house down in something close to a dream match. Bailey was bringing it here and Ospreay is one of the best in the world at the moment so it was going to be a heck of a match no matter what they did. Very good stuff here and worthy of a spot on the biggest show of their year.

Various wrestlers are ready for the Call Your Shot gauntlet.

Call Your Shot Gauntlet

This is basically a 20 person Royal Rumble (two minutes for the third entrant, one minute for every other entrant, regular match when they get down to two) for the title shot of your choice. Jake Something is in at #1 and Eddie Edwards is in at #2. Edwards chops away and Something tells him to keep going before hitting some running shoulders. Something has him in trouble and it's Kenny King in at #3.

Edwards and King double team Something down until Juventud Guerrera of all people is in at #4. Guerrera takes over on King and Edwards but the former hits a spinebuster to put him down. Johnny Swinger is in at #5 but King plants him with a fireman's carry facebuster. Guerrera tosses King for the first elimination but here is Crazy Steve (not in the match) to jump Swinger from behind.

Gisele Shaw is in at #6 and tosses the banged up Swinger. Cue Tommy Dreamer to brawl to the back with Steve as Jody Threat is in at #7. Shaw gets dropkicked off the apron but her goons are there for the save. KiLynn King is in at #8 as Edwards

knocks out Guerrera. The debuting Sonny Kiss is in at #9 and gorilla presses Shaw out as Bully Ray is in at #10. Ray and Kiss...have a dance off until Ray punches King.

Matt Cardona is in at #11 as a big surprise but Kiss plays D-Von for a What's Up. Jordynne Grace is in at #12 as the ring is getting too full. Brawling ensues along the ropes and it's Eric Young in at #13. Young gets to clean some house and even knocks Edwards out. Joe Hendry is in at #14 and grabs a delayed suplex on Cardona. Brian Myers is in at #15 and quickly gets rid of Hendry. We get the Cardona/Myers reunion and they toss Kiss.

Heath is in at #16 and Wake Up Calls abound...until Myers throws Heath out. Frankie Kazarian is in at #17 but he gets double teamed as well. Rich Swann is in at #18 to save Kazarian and Jonathan Gresham is in at #19. Gresham knocks Threat out but has a staredown with Grace (his wife). Dirty Dango is in at #20 to complete the field...and is immediately eliminated by Something.

That leaves us with a field of Something, KiLynn King, Ray, Cardona, Grace, Young, Myers, Heath, Kazarian, Swann and Gresham. Hold on though as Dango's goon Oleg Prudius gets to wreck a bunch of people, allowing Myers and Cardona to dump Kazarian. Swann is tossed as well and Young follows him as the field thins a lot. There goes Gresham as well but Something fights out of a double suplex and gets to clean house.

Myers hits Something low to save Cardona though and Something is out. Cardona then tosses Myers and we're down to King, Cardona, Ray and Grace. King and Cardona are tossed as well so now it's Grace vs. Ray in a regular match for the title shot. Grace forearm away but gets put down by a single chop. It works so well that Ray does it again but the elbow misses. Instead Grace strikes away and manages the Juggernaut Driver for the pin at 28:57.

Rating: C. This match has yet to be anything that would be seen as good and that was the case again here. Instead, we had another long match with some nice moments and a heck of a reunion between Cardona and Myers. At the same time though, Kiss was only so interesting and that's about it for the surprise entrants. There were a lot of people here who could have had another match on the show and it isn't so interesting to see them coming in, doing nothing and then being eliminated. Finally, this match just takes up so much time on the show and it always makes me wonder what else they could have done.

Post match Grace says she's getting the Knockouts Title shot at Hard To Kill. Well at least they didn't waste time.

We recap Mickie James challenging Trinity for the Knockouts Title. James had to vacate the title earlier this year due to injury and Trinity has become champion in her absence. Now James wants the title back, though they're cool with each other.

Knockouts Title: Trinity vs. Mickie James

James is challenging and they fight over wrist control to start. Trinity tries to pull her down into Starstruck but James is right out with with a headscissors. James powers her way off the mat and kicks her in the head but charges into Trinity's kick to the head in the corner. Back up and they strike it out with stereo crossbodies putting both of them down for a breather.

They crash out to the floor and both beat the count back in with a less than dramatic moment. Trinity hits the Rear View for two and does that annoying wiggle in the corner. James is back with the finger lick to even (?) things up before Trinity hits another kick to the head. The split legged moonsault gives Trinity two but the Mick Kick gives Mickie the save. Trinity's Bubba Bomb into some rollups get two each so Mickie

catches her with a tornado DDT. A slingshot X Factor misses for Trinity and Mickie plants her down again. The MickDT is countered though and Trinity pulls her into Starstruck to retain at 11:24.

Rating: B-. It was good but this didn't feel like a big time title showdown. They were doing the big moves and felt like they were trying to have the epic fight but it just didn't work. It didn't help that they didn't have any personal issue and went with a straight match. That makes sense for the story but it doesn't make for the most interesting match.

Respect is shown post match.

Moose is going to cash in his Feast Or Fired briefcase at Hard To Kill. There are two of the biggest matches on the card covered, though having them be cash in matches might not be the best idea.

We recap Alex Shelley defending the World Title against Josh Alexander. Yet again, Alexander never lost the title and is trying to get it back. At the same time, Shelley seems to be insecure despite being an Impact legend who won the title. Alexander is playing into that and Shelley is getting a little edgy.

Impact Wrestling World Title: Alex Shelley vs. Josh Alexander

Alexander is challenging. They go to the mat to start with Alexander getting the better of things before they're back on their feet. It's too early for Shell Shock as Alexander sends him outside for a breather. Back in and Alexander grabs a front facelock but Shelley reverses into an armbar. That's broken up and they forearm it out until Shelley goes after Alexander's arm (the one that caused him to vacate the title).

A backbreaker gives Alexander two and we hit the double arm crank. Shelley breaks that up as well and stomps on the arm, followed by a backdrop to break up a C4 Spike attempt. The bar

arm gets posted and Shelley wraps it around the post again. Alexander chops his way out of trouble and grabs Bret Hart's Hartbreaker Figure Four around the post. With that broken up, they head back inside where Alexander rolls some German suplexes.

Shelley breaks them up but can't get the Border City Stretch. Shelley ties up both arms instead but Alexander powers out again. That earns him a face first ram into the middle buckle and Shelley loads up Sliced Bread. That's countered into another German suplex to give Alexander two and it's time to go after Shelley's leg.

They head outside with Shelley Shell Shocking him into the barricade. Back in and a frog splash sets up the Border City Stretch, which is reversed into a quickly broken ankle lock. Shelley hammers away and, after countering a C4 Spike attempt, hits a pair of Shell Shocks to retain at 22:33.

Rating: B+. They had a personal issue here and it helped a lot, though they also kept the match pretty much completely clean. What matters is it felt like a showdown between the two tops tars and now Shelley doesn't have Alexander's shadow hanging over him. It might not feel like the biggest match of the year, but it was a heck of a match on the big stage and that worked well.

Post match Alexander puts the title on Shelley and leaves in peace.

Oh and one more thing: Impact is going to be TNA Wrestling again starting at Hard To Kill in January. Because if there is one thing this place was missing, it's nostalgia for the days when they felt like the most inept promotion in the world a good deal of the time. This is announced in a big video showing a bunch of wrestlers saying they need a change, meaning it's time to go back where it started.

Scott D'Amore and a bunch of wrestlers are in the ring, with

Scott saying WE'RE BACK to end the show with TNA chants. I'm sure there's some ridiculous branding argument to do this change but...egads man this feels like a very unnecessary step.

Overall Rating: B. As usual, the wrestling worked, which has become the new norm around here. It felt like a big closing point for a lot of stories while also setting up things for Hard To Kill. We still have about two and a half months until the show but there will likely be some smaller shows to bridge the gap. What matters is they delivered on the biggest night of the year and there was only one match that wasn't rather good. Now just find a way to move forward from here, which is often their biggest problem.

Results

Chris Sabin b. Kenta – Cradle Shock

PCO b. Moose, Steve Maclin and Rhino – PCOsault to Moose

ABC b. Rascalz – 1-2-Sweet to Wentz

Will Ospreay b. Mike Bailey – Stormbreaker

Jordynne Grace won the Call Your Shot Gauntlet last eliminating Bully Ray

Trinity b. Mickie James – Starstruck

Alex Shelley b. Josh Alexander – Shell Shock

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