

Impact Wrestling – December 28, 2023 (Best Of 2023 Part 2): The Other Half

Impact Wrestling

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Commentators: Tom Hannifan, Matthew Rehwoldt

Hosts: Tom Hannifan, Matthew Rehwoldt

So last week we looked at the best of 2023, so this week we're looking at the best of 2023. Yeah it's Part II, as we are still waiting for any regular television show to take place after Bound For Glory. It wouldn't stun me to see nothing new until Hard To Kill next month and that's quite a gamble. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Note that I'll be posting the full versions of the matches rather than the edited versions shown on the broadcast.

Opening sequence.

Commentary welcomes us to the show and we're starting with our first match.

From Slammiversary.

Impact Wrestling World Title: Nick Aldis vs. Alex Shelley

Shelley is defending and spits water in Aldis' face to start fast. Aldis powerbombs him hard out of the corner and the King's Lynn Cloverleaf is on in less than a minute. With that escaped, Aldis grabs some suplexes but Shelley dragon screws the leg. Aldis is knocked to the floor but cuts off the baseball slide by tying Shelley in the ring skirt.

Shelley gets posted and sent into the barricade but manages a Stunner over the ropes for a needed breather. It's off to Aldis' arm for a change, with Shelley wrapping it around the post to take over. Aldis' fingers are bent into the turnbuckle but he rakes the eyes for a needed breather.

Shelley is right back to the bad arm but Aldis clotheslines him down. The top rope elbow is countered into a superplex, followed by a standing Sliced Bread to plant Aldis. Shelley snaps the fingers, which are good enough to piledrive Shelley for two. The top rope elbow gets the same so let's bring in the title. With the referee taking it away, Aldis hits a low blow into a Michinoku Driver for two but Shelley kicks the belt away. A DDT onto the belt busts Aldis open and Shell Shock retains the title at 16:33.

Rating: B. It was another rather good match but I don't know if it was going to draw in that much interest. Shelley winning the title was a very cool moment, but he doesn't quite feel like the top star. The same is true for Aldis, who has made a career out of having the tools without making fans care all that much. The wrestling was fine and Shelley using Aldis' cheating against him was good, but I never really got pulled into it.

In addition, Shelley is named Male Wrestler Of The Year and thanks the fans.

From Slammiversary.

Tag Team Titles: Subculture vs. Rich Swann/Sami Callihan vs. ABC vs. Moose/Brian Myers

The Club (Chris Bey/Ace Austin) is defending, Subculture (Mark Andrews/Flash Morgan Webster) has Dani Luna in their corner and it's one fall to a finish. Bey and Andrews start things off by trading some flips until Austin comes in for a headscissors. Webster comes in for a pair of flipping dives and a near fall. A standing moonsault drops Austin so it's off

to Callihan to throw Swann at Austin.

Moose and Myers both come in but stereo powerbombs are broken up. The Club clears the ring but Bey's running flip dive is countered into an apron powerbomb from Moose. Austin knees Moose in the face from the apron but Callihan shoves people onto the pile on the floor. We settle down to Webster striking away at Swann and Callihan until the latter grabs a Death Valley Driver.

Swann misses his middle rope 450 and the Club hits a springboard kick into a torture rack neckbreaker. Moose and Myers are both back in to clean house until Andrews kicks both of them away. The Stundog Millionaire hits Moose and Webster's Shadows Over Malice (Swanton) gets two. We hit the parade of strikes to the face until Swann and Bey cutter Moose out of the air. The 1-2-Sweet is broken up and here are the Rascalz to go after the Club. Webster hits his standing Sliced Bread #2 on Austin, setting up Fall To Pieces (shooting star press) to give Andrews the pin and the titles at 10:35.

Rating: B-. A few weeks ago, Subculture's match against the Motor City Machine Guns seemed to be enough to get them a job and that seems to be the case. If nothing else it got them the titles here in an entertaining match. Much like the Ultimate X match, there was only so much to be seen here with so many people flying around, but what we got was a lot of fun.

From Bound For Glory.

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.

Mike Bailey is X-Division Star of the Year for the second year in a row. Bailey puts over the division and is ready to embody the no limits philosophy.

From Bound For Glory.

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.

From Bound For Glory.

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.

Mike Bailey introduces the Match Of The Year. From Bound For Glory.

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.

The hosts wrap it up, with promises of a Best Of TNA next week. Oh boy that could go in so many different, and possibly terrible, directions.

Overall Rating: B. As usual, there's no good way to rate something like this but they did a nice job with the Best Of concept. Now granted this was pretty much what they had left over from Slammiversary and Bound For Glory, the latter of which mostly aired as a special Impact about two months ago. They really need to have some fresh content but it doesn't seem like we'll be seeing that until January. For now though, another strong show, mainly because they could pick the good

stuff.

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