

AEW Battle Of The Belts IX: They Fixed A Problem

Battle Of The Belts IX

Date: January 13, 2024

Location: Chartway Arena, Norfolk, Virginia

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Nigel McGuinness, Kevin Kelly

We're back with another quarterly special, but this time around things are a bit different. This edition features a match that has been built up over a few weeks rather than just in the last few days. That alone makes things more interesting and now we could be in for a more entertaining show. Let's get to it.

Tag Team Titles: Chris Jericho/Sammy Guevara vs. Ricky Starks/Big Bill

Starks and Bill are defending in a street fight. We're joined in progress as they're fighting in the parking lot with Jericho and Bill taking over before going after each other for a change. Bill gets the better of things and Starks is back up, with Jericho being thrown near a tree. Cue Sammy Guevara on a golf cart (because that's a thing that happened years ago) to run the champs over for two.

Bill is back up with a backpack full of bricks to Guevara but Jericho suplexes him onto a car. That would be the car of Ring Of Honor's Rhett Titus, who yells at Jericho and gets the Judas Effect for his complaints. They go inside, where Starks puts a plunger in Jericho's face. Jericho is back up by putting Starks' face into a copy machine as the other two brawl down the hall. Bill escapes a choke and hammers Guevara down as we take a break.

Back with Bill choking with a table cloth until Guevara manages a blast with a fire extinguisher. They find the food

table for the required mustard shot and then finally go into the arena. Jericho loads up the announcers' table but here is Konosuke Takeshita to kendo stick Jericho in the head. Bill powerbombs Jericho through the table to leave them both laying. Starks and Guevara fight near the stage, with Guevara putting him down and climbing the lighting structure. The big flip dive...misses as Powerhouse Hobbs comes in to pull Starks away. Starks gets the pin to retain at 18:39.

Rating: B-. The match was a wild brawl and I'm sure there was no hidden reason to keep Jericho in the back and away from the live crowd for that long. They did a nice job with making this feel like a fight instead of a match, but egads the idea of more Jericho vs. Don Callis makes my head hurt. At the same time, AEW gets major points here for having a Battle of the Belts match that has been built up for weeks. That has been one of the major issues with these shows and they did something about it here, so very well done on that front.

Video on Serena Deeb, who wants gold.

TBS Title: Anna Jay vs. Julia Hart

Hart is defending and takes her down to start, with Jay's head being slammed onto the mat. Jay gets caught in the corner for some more shots, only to be tossed outside where her banged up shoulder is even more banged up. We take a break and come back with Jay twisting Hart's arm down and kicking her in the ribs for two. Hart gets in a quick STO for two but she has to fight out of the Queenslayer. Another Queenslayer has Jay in trouble for a change but Jay slips out as well. A quick trip takes Jay again though and it's Hartless to retain the title at 9:00.

Rating: C. I'm not saying they should have changed the title here (as they shouldn't have), but at some point Jay needs to actually win something. Like so many other people on the AEW roster, it feels like she gets some momentum going and then falls right back down without ever actually getting some kind

of an accomplishment. That was the case again here, as she got a little bit of a build and then it comes crashing down one more time. That's only going to be possible so many times, but I'm not sure what exactly she could win.

Jeff Jarrett and company argued again, with Satnam Singh coming in not making it better.

International Title: Orange Cassidy vs. Preston Vance

Cassidy is defending but here is the Undisputed Kingdom to watch. Vance hits his discus lariat to start and Cassidy is knocked outside. Back in and Cassidy hits the Orange Punch but can't get the Beach Break. Vance can't get the full nelson so Cassidy tries a rollup, which is reversed into a wheelbarrow German suplex. A kick to the face sends Cassidy outside and a delayed vertical suplex gives Vance two back inside.

We take a break and come back with Cassidy dropkicking him to the floor, setting up the suicide dive. Back in and the tornado DDT is countered into a spinebuster, with the Undisputed Kingdom certainly approving. Cassidy fires off the lazy slaps before taking him down in the corner for some more aggressive stomping.

The Stundog Millionaire and tornado DDT give Cassidy two and Vance is sent outside. He pulls Cassidy's dive out of the air and all away slams Cassidy into the Undisputed Kingdom for a crash. Back in and Vance grabs the full nelson but Cassidy slips out and hits the Orange Punch. The Beach Break retains the title at 11:45.

Rating: B-. The fast start was nice here as they made me forget that I was supposed to be invested in a Preston Vance title shot. At the same time, Cassidy seems to have a big title showdown on the horizon and that is the best thing that could happen for him at the moment. The match was the usual Cassidy stuff, but Vance was at least trying rather hard here and it helped a lot.

Post match the Undisputed Kingdom gets in the ring so Roderick Strong can say Cassidy's clock is ticking. Cassidy holds up the title to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. It's kind of amazing how much just having a title match built up helped this show. It made things feel important after so many instances of this series feeling thrown together. This still isn't a show you need to run out of your way to see, but it had three good to good enough matches and is out of the way in an hour. Not bad at all here, with the extra effort helping a lot.

Results

Ricky Starks/Big Bill b. Chris Jericho/Sammy Guevara – Pin after Guevara misses a splash

Julia Hart b. Anna Jay – Hartless

Orange Cassidy b. Preston Vance – Beach Break

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