

New Japan Death Vegas Invitational: Thank Goodness

Death Vegas Invitational

Date: April 16, 2026

Location: Horseshoe Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Veda Scott, Jordan Castle

This is from New Japan, though I'm not entirely clear just how much impact they're going to have on the show. The good thing is that the promotion is getting some attention during the biggest wrestling week of the year, though hopefully the DEATH name is more just some odd name rather than a certain type of wrestling. Let's get to it.

The opening video...yep it's death match stuff, as presented by El Desperado. Thanks for that.

Zack Sabre Jr. vs. Fuminori Abe

The graphic says that Sabre is the World's Best Technical Wrestler while Abe (who is listed as X) is a third rate wrestler. I sense shenanigans. Anyway they go to the mat to start with Sabre's cranking on the leg not getting him very far. Abe cranks on a hammerlock but Sabre slips out and stomps Abe's arm for a change.

Back up and Sabre takes him to the rope for a slap to the face, which doesn't sit well with Abe. Sabre misses a charge and crashes to the floor, with Abe sending him into some chairs. Abe chops and kicks him in the back but takes too long, allowing Sabre to get in a neck twist. Back in and Sabre ties up various limbs, followed by another neck twist to keep him down.

Sabre's kick to the ribs is cut off though and Abe twists the knee around. A spinning kick to the ribs drops Sabre and Abe

grabs a failed cross armbreaker attempt. Sabre wins another grapple off and gets his own cross armbreaker, followed by a double arm crank. Abe gets over to the rope and they both need a breather.

They trade some big shots to the face and both go down again. It takes a bit longer to get up as we hit the fifteen minute call. Abe wins a slugout and grabs an octopus, which is reversed into the ankle lock. That's broken up as well but Sabre snaps on the Zack Driver for the pin at 16:52.

Rating: B+. This was a technical showcase and that's a great thing to see. They were trading one hold after another and trying to wear the other down until someone got the big shot at the end. That's exactly how it should have gone and it was quite the opener, with Sabre knowing how to do this match in his sleep.

Post match, respect is shown.

Effy vs. Jimmy Lloyd vs. Ishin

This is billed as Cute Sexy Hardcore and I think that is the right order for these three. It's a dance/gyrate off to start, with Lloyd knocking them both down. Effy sits in a chair and wants a lap dance before watching the other two thrust their pelvises. Ishin runs Effy over but gets knocked down by Lloyd's chair shot.

The chairs are brought in but Ishin suplexes Lloyd onto the side of an overturned chair (OUCH). Ishin knocks Effy down and pokes him in the back of the trunks while Lloyd pushes his thumbs into Effy's mouth. Castle: "Double penetration here." Effy fights up and kicks Ishin in the face and gives him a leg bulldog out of the corner.

It's time for the first door, which he rams into Lloyd in the corner. Effy's double Rough Ryder gets two but Lloyd is back up with a powerbomb through the door. Ishin makes the save and

puts some chairs on Lloyd, only for Effy to cut him off on top. Ishin kisses Effy on top and superplexes him onto the chairs onto Lloyd. A frog splash onto the chairs onto Lloyd gives Ishin the pin at 8:24.

Rating: C+. Weird spot in the middle aside (uh, yeah), this was a somewhat fun match, mainly because they didn't go with the crazy hardcore. Chairs and a door are fine and the match didn't go too long. Effy continues to be a talented star who can have some good matches and he fit in well here. Ishin has been around a lot this week and it's nice to see him get a win for a change.

MxM Collection vs. Kushida/Yamato vs. Bustah And The Brain

This is billed as "Runaway Rush And Crash: A Drop Dead Gorgeous" match, which makes perfect sense. Thankfully Price is walking and he jumps over the steps (after getting hurt on them yesterday). Price, Yamato and Mansoor start things off with a three way test of strength. Yamato gets the better of things but the other two knock him down. Price isn't about to touch tips with Mansoor so Yamato is back up with a running shoulder to Mansoor.

Madden comes in but gets sent to the apron by Kushida as everything breaks down. Bustah And The Brain take over but Mansoor breaks up a double suplex. Madden's running hip attack connects, only for Kushida to pull Mansoor out of the air for the Figure Four. Price add and Oliver add neck cranks but Madden turns it over for a four person Boston crab.

With that broken up, Kushida and Yamato hit stereo dropkicks on Oliver and Price...and we lose signal from the venue. The signal stays gone for a few minutes and we come back with Kushida and Yamato winning at we'll say around ten minutes. I won't rate it due to missing that much of the match but what we got to start was working well, which shouldn't be a

surprise.

El Phantasma/??? vs. Dragon Kid/Starlight Kid

Phantasma's partner is...Maika, who is replacing Maki Itoh, who has visa issues, for the "High-Stakes Heartbreak Jackpot" tag match. Funny way to say "mixed tag". Phantasma gives Maika the light up glasses before starting with Dragon. A running shoulder puts Dragon down and Phantasma sticks the landing off Dragon's headscissors.

Starlight comes in for a headscissors to Maika, followed by a standing moonsault (Scott calls it "adorable") before everything breaks down. Phantasma declares them the second cutest tag team in the world and Maika kicks Starlight out to the floor. Back in and Phantasma ties Starlight in the Tree Of Woe and stands on her, along with Maika.

Starlight comes back with some nipple twisting and avoids Maika's falling headbutt. Maika misses it again and tries a third time, which hits Phantasma by mistake. It's back to Dragon for a tornado DDT and a 619 to Maika's back. Everything breaks down again and Phantasma and Maika collide again, meaning it's time to argue.

We get some mixed submission holds until Phantasma and Maika make the ropes. Phantasma is sic of this and suplexes Starlight before kneeing her in the head on top. Dragon is back up with a super poisonrana, allowing Starlight to hit a big splash for two. Phantasma kicks Dragon and gives him a spinning torture rack neckbreaker. Maika breaks up Dragon's sunset flip and Phantasma gets the pin at 12:23.

Rating: B. This was little more than an athletic comedy match and that was a nice change of pace after everything else that has gone on with this show. They didn't try to do anything too crazy here and the women were just as good as the men. Phantasma and Maika's arguing was funny and this wound up being the most entertaining thing on the show thus far.

Gringo Loco/Joey Janela vs. Daisuke Sasaki/Gedo

House Rules Hardcore match which can't go well. Gedo is sent outside to start fast and a double elbow drops Sasaki. Loco's split legged moonsault gets two on Sasaki and it's time for some chairs. Janela gets knocked down though and it's time for Gedo's fork. Gedo stabs Janela in the mouth and then in the stomach, allowing Sasaki to wrap a chair around Janela's neck.

A Twist Of Fate (with chair) drops Janela again and let's stab him in the tongue. Since that's just stabbing and a possible neck injury, Janela is right back to kick a chair into Sasaki to send him outside. Loco (busted open) hits a big flip dive and then plants Sasaki for two back inside. Sasaki DDTs his way out of a powerbomb attempt, leaving Janela to load up a door in the corner.

Gedo Downward Spirals him through said door though and there's a fork shot What's Up (thankfully minus the jumping). Loco is back with a fork to stab Gedo in the head a few times (just go with it) and Sasaki gets the same. A door bridge is set up but Sasaki goes up, where Loco gives him a super Spanish Fly through the door for a crazy crash. Sasaki pops up for a La Mistica crossface but Janela and Gedo are back in as the hold is broken.

Gedo is laid on some open chairs so Janela goes up, only to get superplexed down through the chairs instead. It's Gedo with a fork and everyone else with a chair, with Gedo being knocked down. Loco's corkscrew moonsault onto the chair misses so Janela snapdragons Sasaki. An AA sends Gedo through some open chairs for two, followed by a top rope double stomp through a piece of the door to pin Gedo at 18:45.

Rating: C. This could have been a lot worse, though it could have been a lot better too. The fork stuff was stupid, if nothing else because they kept doing the same stuff over and over again. Other than that it was a pretty standard hardcore

tag match, even if Janela's tendency to go long was on full display. Not my thing, but it could have gotten a lot worse than they wound up going.

We get a bunch of tarps and light tubes brought out because...oh let's get this over with already. Oh and panes of glass and barbed wire because they're going full boar here.

Matt Tremont/Nick Gage vs. El Desperado/Jun Kasai vs. Masashi Takeda/Rina Yamashita

Love & Pieces because each match has a name of some sort. Gage comes in through the crowd for the MDK chants and after the Big Match Intros, we're ready to go. They go right for the light tubes to start, with Gage having them broken over his back. A double suplex sends Gage through the pane of glass and it's Yamashita vs. Desperado. Tremont breaks that up and gets stabbed with a fork (it gets stuck in his head), allowing Takeda to carve him up with scissors.

Desperado's mask is cut but Tremont runs Yamashita and Takeda over. Gage is back up with a light tube to Yamashita and stabs her with a broken piece. Yamashita pops up to try a super hurricanrana to Tremont but gets superbombed through some glass instead. Gage and Tremont get stabbed with skewers but Gage is back up with the pizza cutter. Kasai and Desperado go up and splash Yamashita and Takeda (glass tubes included) for two.

Gage is back up with the pizza cutter and some running knees connect as well. Gage's Vader Bomb crushes the tubes on Yamashita, who pops back up because hardcore or something. Desperado picks up some tubes, which are dropkicked into him for a big explosion. Desperado kicks Gage low and suplexes him onto more tubes. Gage blocks a powerbomb through the glass so Tremont chokeslams Desperado through the glass instead. Gage's chokebreaker and two piledrivers into a powerbomb finish Desperado at 14:26.

Rating: D+. Yeah I'm not going to try to validate any thoughts on this. I've ranted about how I don't want to see this stuff and how it isn't good, mainly just because of how repetitive it gets. They do the same stuff over and over and then just do a bunch of it for the ending. Nothing to see here, as usual.

Post match Gage calls out Kasai for a singles match and swears a lot. The catchphrase wraps us up.

Overall Rating: B. The last two matches bring this down a lot (though the Janela match wasn't THAT bad), with the main event definitely being the biggest problem. The good thing is that a lot of this show wasn't hardcore or deathmatch stuff, with the triple threat being a pretty standard weapons match. This could have been a lot worse and if you cut out the main event, it's a very good show. I know the deathmatch stuff has an audience, but it's just not me and never will be.

Results

Zack Sabre Jr. b. Fuminori Abe – Zack Driver

Ishin b. Jimmy Lloyd and Effy – Frog splash onto chairs onto Lloyd

Kushida/Yamato b. Bustah And The Brain and MxM Collection

El Phantasma/Maika b. Dragon Kid/Starlight Kid – Rollup to Dragon

Gringo Loco/Joey Janela b. Gedo/Daisuke Sasaki – Top rope double stomp through door to Gedo

Matt Tremont/Nick Gage b. El Desperado/Jun Kasai and Masashi Takeda/Rina Yamashita – Powerbomb to Desperado

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