

Worlds End 2023: They Got There

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Date: December 30, 2023

Location: Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Long Island, New York

Commentators: Taz, Excalibur, Nigel McGuinness

It's the last pay per view of the year and that means we could be in for a rather big show. The main events will see MJF defending the AEW World Title against Samoa Joe with the Devil's reveal lurking. We also have the finals of the Continental Classic, which means the crowning of the first Triple Crown Champion. Let's get to it.

Zero Hour: Kris Statlander vs. Willow Nightingale

Stokely Hathaway, the source of the issues between these two, is at ringside and both of the women are from Long Island. An exchange of shoulders doesn't go anywhere as Hathaway blames Tony Schiavone for the issues between these two. Nightingale takes her to the mat and grabs a headscissors but Statlander easily slips out. A legsweep and some spinning knees give Statlander two but Nightingale runs her over with a crossbody.

Back up and Statlander strikes away, setting up the pretty impressive slam. We hit the bodyscissors and then a chinlock to keep Nightingale down, followed by a belly to back suplex for two. Back up and they collide for a double knockdown, followed by Nightingale crushing her in the corner. A spinebuster gets two for Nightingale, who gets planted down to give Statlander the same. Statlander hits an electric chair faceplant but Nightingale is right back up with the Pounce.

The Cannonball into a Death Valley Driver gives Nightingale two more, followed by Statlander's ax kick for the same.

Nightingale powerbombs her onto the apron though and a missile dropkick gets two more. Saturday Night Fever is broken up so Statlander settles for a discus lariat, only to miss the 450. The Babe With The Powerbomb doesn't work as Statlander lands on Nightingale (with Nigel pointing out that it was more of a legdrop for Statlander), so Nightingale grabs a better version for the pin at 13:21.

Rating: B-. This was a hoss fight and thankfully they went home after the not so great powerbomb slip. It's very nice to see Nightingale get a win after being known for coming up short so often. At the same time, what in the world has happened to Statlander? She went from on ire to losing clean in a Zero Hour match, which is hardly the best way to go for her. She needs to get back on track, though I'm not sure I see that happening anytime soon.

Zero Hour: Battle Royal

Action Andretti, Darius Martin, Alex Reynolds, John Silver, Danhausen, Bryan Keith, Matt Menard, Rocky Romero, Trent Beretta, Angelo Parker, Kip Sabian, Christopher Daniels, Lance Archer, Killswitch, Dalton Castle, Johnny TV, Butcher, Blade, Serpentino, Lee Johnson

For a future TNT Title shot. Castle (with two suspiciously large Boys) and TV get in a fight at ringside while everyone else jump Archer and Killswitch to bury the under tables at ringside. Everyone else gets inside and Serpentino is quickly eliminated. Sabian knocks Castle out (less than two minutes in) before a launched Danhausen gets rid of TV and Johnson follows him out.

The Dark Order beats up and eliminates Parker before Reynolds is out as well. Butcher tosses Silver as the ring is rapidly clearing out. Keith kicks Sabian out before going after Butcher and the Blade, who put him out. Archer is back up so Menard chops away at him, earning the quick elimination.

Archer's running knee gets rid of Daniels before Andretti (following his water bottle trick) and Martin manage to take Archer down.

Killswitch is back in and starts clearing the ring until it's down to Killswitch, Archer, Danhausen and Trent. Danhausen gets saved from the Blackout and Trent and Danhausen manage to get rid of Archer. Then Trent turns on Danhausen to throw him out (the fans DO NOT approve) but has to slip out of Killswitch's chokeslam. A low bridge puts Killswitch on the apron and a jumping knee puts him down on said apron. Not that it matters as a headbutt knocks Trent down to give Killswitch the win at 13:47.

Rating: C. One of the worst things you can do in a battle royal is having a field where one or two people is a likely winner. That was certainly the case here, and as soon as you remembered who the TNT Champion is, the drama goes even lower. It made for a bunch of waiting around for Archer and Killswitch to get back up and then it was just a matter of time.

Zero Hour: FTW Title: Wheeler Yuta vs. Hook

Hook is defending (Yuta's Ring Of Honor Pure Rules Title isn't on the line) in an FTW Rules match, meaning anything goes. We start fast with Hook jumping him and grabbing a throw, only for Yuta to get in a cheap shot. It's time to grab some weapons but Yuta takes too long, allowing Yuta to grab a suplex on the ramp. One heck of a trashcan lid shot puts Hook down but Yuta makes the mistake of yelling at Taz.

That's enough for Hook to come back with a clothesline and they get back inside. Yuta knocks him down again and a running backplash gets two. Hook manages another suplex and they slug it out for a double knockdown. A t-bone suplex sends Yuta into a trashcan in the corner for two but Redrum is broken up. Yuta DDTs him for two and Hook bails to the floor for a breather.

With Yuta grabbing a 2×4, Hook pulls out a stick (hockey or lacrosse) and nails Yuta hard. Redrum, with the broken stick, retains at 10:15.

Rating: C+. They were smart to go with the weapons stuff here as Hook probably isn't capable of a regular match yet and the Pure Rules still aren't interesting. Odds are they'll do this again under Pure Rules and then have a regular match later on, but this one had to go this way to start. Hook has cooled off a lot but at least he got some momentum here.

The PPV proper opens with a look at the big matches and a talk about how this is the end of everything.

Brody King/Jay Lethal/Rush/Jay White vs. Blackpool Combat Club/Mark Briscoe/Daniel Garcia

Matt Menard is on commentary. Rush and Castagnoli trade the heavy strikes to start with Castagnoli getting the better of things. Rush sends him outside but Castagnoli is back in and they stare each other down. Briscoe and Lethal come in with Lethal not being able to get the Figure Four. A chop off goes to Briscoe so Danielson comes in with the LeBell Lock to White. That means a quick rope break as Nigel is in rare form of insulting Danielson.

A running corner dropkick hits White and a middle rope hurricanrana drops him again. King comes in and shrugs off Garcia's right hands, setting up a swinging Boss Man Slam to plant Garcia. King takes him outside and yells at Menard, who isn't exactly interested in coming after the monster.

Back in and Lethal stomps away on Garcia (who might have a broken nose) before White adds a seated chop. Garcia manages to fight out of the corner though and it's Briscoe coming back in to clean house. Everything breaks down and the fight heads outside. Briscoe hits the running Blockbuster and Bang Bang Elbow from the apron, followed by a fisherman's buster for two on White. Back in and Briscoe knocks Lethal off the top, only

to have Lethal pop back up for a top rope superplex.

Everything breaks down again and Castagnoli unloads with uppercuts to King. Castagnoli muscles King up for an impressive suplex but Rush is back in for the save. Danielson cuts Rush off and dropkicks King to cut off Castagnoli's Swing. Garcia and Lethal slug it out until Lethal grabs his namesake Combination. The Figure Four goes on but Briscoe makes the save with the froggy bow. We hit the parade of finishes until Garcia rolls Lethal up for the pin at 17:12.

Rating: B. This was the insanity that you were expecting as this wasn't about the teams but rather getting eight people in the ring for a pay per view match following the Continental Classic. In other words, it was a great choice for an opener and Garcia's likely face push continues, as he gets a nice win in a match where someone had to pick one up.

We recap Andrade El Idolo vs. Miro. CJ Perry, Miro's wife, is managing El Idolo so Miro promised to not end him until after the Continental Classic. Since El Idolo is out, he's fair game for Miro.

Miro vs. Andrade El Idolo

CJ Perry is here with El Idolo, who gets jumped to start as the beating is on. El Idolo gets in a shot of his own but dives into a suplex to cut that right off. Perry yells at Miro about her infected finger so Miro chokes him on the ropes in front of her. Miro throws El Idolo to the floor, where El Idolo gets in a shove over the announcers' table.

Back in and El Idolo blocks a superplex attempt so they slug it out instead. El Idolo gets the better of things so Miro drops him with a clothesline. Miro gets knocked into the corner but it's too early for the running knees. Instead Miro bails to the floor, leaving El Idolo to hit the middle rope moonsault.

Back in and the double moonsault gives El Idolo two so we hit the Figure Four. That's turned into the Figure Eight...but Perry cuts it off. Miro, now much happier...or at least whatever passes for happy with him, kicks El Idolo in the face, setting up Game Over for the tap at 15:03.

Rating: C. This was a rough one as it just kept going. It's a good example of a match that should have been cut down by at least five minutes so there wasn't as much slow offense and standing around. The Perry turn was the right way to go as she and Miro work really well together. I'm not sure what took so long to set them up, but at least now things are as they should be.

We recap Toni Storm defending the Women's Title against Riho. Basically Riho returned, wanted a title shot, earned one, and is getting it.

Women's Title: Toni Storm vs. Riho

Riho is challenging. Storm takes over to start so Riho starts spinning around. A running knee into and a running bulldog out of the corner gives Riho two and we hit the chinlock. That's broken up and they head outside where Storm gets in a slam to take over. Storm slowly hammers away and gets in a slam, setting up the double bicep pose. The half grab goes on to stay on Riho's back, followed by a toss out to the floor.

Back in and Storm declares "she's toast now" before grabbing a Texas Cloverleaf. Luther adds some cheating but gets caught, meaning the hold is broken and Luther is out of here. Riho hits the 619 and a high crossbody, followed by another dive to the floor. Back in and Riho misses a charge in the corner, allowing Storm Zero to connect for two. Riho tries to spin over her but gets caught in a hard DDT to retain the title at 11:47.

Rating: C+. This could have been a lot worse, but they weren't given the chance to set up much of a feud. It was more or less

Riho coming back, saying she wanted the title, getting a title shot and then losing with little in between. Storm is still great at what she's doing and has Mariah May waiting on her, so this shouldn't have been the most stunning result.

Post match Mariah May brings out rose petals to celebrate.

Dante Martin is upset about not being a champion so Orange Cassidy comes in to say he knows where this is going. Martin issues the challenge and they're on for Dynamite.

Swerve Strickland vs. Dustin Rhodes

Rhodes is replacing an injured Keith Lee. Swerve jumps him before the bell and beats him up on the floor, with the cinder block being loaded up. The Swerve Stomp onto the ankle onto the block leaves Rhodes laying. Medics come down to check on Rhodes...who wants to go anyway.

The bell rings, with Swerve taking him down immediately and hammering away before shouting that it could have been you (meaning Lee). Swerve dropkicks the leg out again and gets in some dancing so Rhodes gets in a shot of his own. Rhodes manages a high crossbody for two, followed by the Canadian Destroyer and snap powerslam for two.

Nana offers a distraction and gets dropped with a right hand, followed by a piledriver and Cross Rhodes for two on Swerve. Back up and Swerve hits a Downward Spiral, setting up a half crab. Rhodes makes the ropes and fires up again before flipping Swerve off. The House Call cuts Rhodes off though and a second knocks him silly. Swerve snaps the arm and hits the Swerve Stomp to win at 9:24.

Rating: C-. This wasn't about the action, but rather the fact that this match didn't need to happen. Swerve took Rhodes apart before the match and left him laying, but instead of letting that be it, they had to have a nine minute match anyway. Throw in Rhodes doing high risk moves so he can get

his stuff in and this made Swerve look weaker than need be. He won in the end, but the match didn't need to happen.

Don Callis Family/Big Bill/Ricky Starks vs. Chris Jericho/Sammy Guevara/Sting/Darby Allin

Guevara gets knocked around by Takeshita to start so it's quickly off to Jericho. The fans don't seem to be pleased with that, even as Hobbs comes in to run him over. Takeshita gets in a few shots until Jericho makes it over to Allin for the tag. That doesn't last long as Allin is taken over for the tag to Hobbs so the beating can be on.

A suplex from Hobbs lets Bill come in for a huge toss across the ring. Allin manages to get over for the tag to Sting and house is quickly cleaned. Everything breaks down and Bill gets in a cheap shot, followed by a Boss Man Slam. Jericho comes back in with a Codebreaker and is soundly booed out of the building.

Allin manages to knock Jericho into Hobbs for a breather and a Scorpion Death Drop takes Hobbs down. Takeshita drops Allin HARD though and then does it to both Guevara and Allin with a single German suplex. Sting is back in and grabs the Scorpion on Takeshita, with Callis making the save. The Scorpion goes on but gets broken up again, allowing Guevara to come in and go all flippy. The shooting star press finishes Starks at 15:43.

Rating: C+. The match was the usual fun wild brawl, but this was ALL about Jericho. I'm not sure what AEW needs to do about him at the moment, but they are going to have to do something about it soon. Jericho can't come out there and be this kind of a distraction so he needs to either go away until his name is cleared or AEW is going to need to come up with some kind of a long term solution. The match was kind of a mess because of him and that can't happen again.

We recap Julia Hart vs. Abadon for the TBS Title. They're both

weird and want to be champion.

TBS Title: Julia Hart vs. Abadon

Abadon is challenging and under house rules, biting is allowed. The fans declare THIS IS SPOOKY and Abadon grabs a quick cutter to take over fast. Hart isn't quite sure what to do here so they grab each other by the throat until Hart can leg sweep Abadon down. Choking on the ropes has Abadon in more trouble until a running knee hits Hart in the corner.

A Codebreaker gets two but Hart manages to grab Hartless. The ropes don't help so Abadon has to crawl out and knock Hart away. Cue Skye Blue for a cheap shot before she dives underneath the ring, leaving Abadon to go after her. The distraction lets Hart drop Abadon, setting up the moonsault (which seemed to be more Hart's knees slamming into Abadon) to retain at 11:13.

Rating: C-. I'm not sure if it was the spooky vs. spooky stuff here, but they lost me and lost me hard during this one. They just kind of kept doing things until Blue showed up at the end and it couldn't have been much less interesting. Maybe I just couldn't get into it for some reason but this wasn't working and felt a lot longer than it lasted.

We recap Adam Copeland vs. Christian Cage. Copeland came back and wanted to reform the team, but Cage said no. The Waynes were brought into this, with Copeland attacking Nick and Shayna costing him the title as a result. Now it's about violence, revenge and the title, with the latter being a good bit less important than the others.

TNT Title: Adam Copeland vs. Christian Cage

Cage, with the Waynes, is defending and this is No DQ so Copeland jumps him on the floor to start. They brawl around ringside, with Nigel McGuinness insulting Copeland. That earns him a SHUT UP NIGEL, with Nigel obliging before waiting for

Copeland to be out of earshot to call him a coward. Cage's right hands don't do much as he has to avoid his hand being stomped onto the steps.

Cage bails into the crowd with Copeland following, setting up a big dive to take Cage down again. They go back to ringside where Copeland drops him again, earning a YOU STILL GOT IT chant. Back in and Copeland's spear hits post, followed by a drop onto the steps for two. With Copeland bleeding around the eye, Cage grabs some kendo sticks and chokes away before punching at the cut.

Cage grabs a chair and puts it over Copeland's back for a Boston crab in a creative, and mostly painful, looking hold. With that broken up, Copeland gets in a stick shot of his own, followed by some more to the ribs. As usual, Copeland gets the bar from the chair for the Crossface but that's not good enough. We get the obvious ladder brought in, with Cage being catapulted face first into it in the corner.

A low blow cuts Copeland off so Cage goes up, where a superplex is countered into a sunset bomb to leave them both down. It's time for a table, with the distraction letting Copeland grab an Impaler onto the chair. The Conchairto is loaded up but cue Nick Wayne with a low blow for the save. Cage loads up a spear through the table but naturally gets speared through it himself. Shayna Wayne breaks up the cover and Nick hits Copeland with the title. Wayne's World to the floor (next to the table rather than through it) drops Copeland again and Cage gets two.

That leaves the Waynes to cover the table with lighter fluid and set it on fire but Copeland spears Cage back inside. The fire goes out so Copeland puts on more fluid and it's on fire again. Nick gets sent onto (not through) the table and goes writhing onto the floor. Cage's belt shot is cut off and Copeland hits a Killswitch for the pin and the title at 24:40.

Rating: B. Now this felt like a fight and that is a good thing to see. It also helps that these two have a history, along with Cage being one of the best things in all of wrestling today. The ending isn't great, but I guess Copeland needed his "you still got it" moment. They could have done without some of the weapons, but the point here was they wanted to hurt each other and then tried to do it. That made for a better match and I liked what we got here.

Post match Killswitch jumps Copeland and chokeslams him through a chair...and since the contract from earlier is for a title match anywhere any time...but hold on as Cage wants it instead. Killswitch hands it over and let's do this.

TNT Title: Christian Cage vs. Adam Copeland

Cage is challenging and wins the title with a spear in ten seconds. That was A, great and B, even better because it gets rid of the Money In The Bank thing (with Edge getting some payback after being so well known for using the briefcase before).

Copeland gets looked at after the match.

We recap the Continental Classic, which has been going on for over a month now. Kingston wants to win to prove he belongs while Moxley wants to win because he likes winning.

Continental Classic Finals: Triple Crown Title: Eddie Kingston vs. Jon Moxley

For the vacant title and Bryan Danielson is on commentary. They go technical to start with Moxley taking it to the ground for some grappling. Moxley gets the better of things until a rope gives Kingston a breather. Back up and they go to the test of strength with neither getting the better of things. They stare each other down a bit more as Danielson is in full analysis mode, talking about each of them having strengths.

Kingston manages a jumping enziguri to put him on the floor but the dive goes over Moxley for a nasty crash. Back in and Moxley hits a quick suplex, followed by a Paradigm Shift on the floor. They get back in with Kingston's chop hitting a raised forearm, leaving Kingston in a lot of pain. A piledriver gives Moxley two so we pause for some yelling at the referee (possibly due to Kingston's bell being rung).

Kingston is back up and drops Moxley to his knees off a single chop. They chop it out and even Danielson is thinking this is a bad move. Kingston grabs a suplex so Moxley pops up, only to grab his banged up knee. The spinning backfist drops Moxley for no cover as Danielson is livid. The machine gun chops have Moxley in trouble in a variety of corners, setting up a DDT to plant Moxley again.

Moxley is back up with a cutter so Kingston hits the spinning backfist, only to get dropped with a hard lariat. The northern lights bomb gives Kingston two but Moxley is back with the bulldog choke. That's broken up and another northern lights bomb gives Kingston another two. One heck of a lariat drops Kingston for two, sending commentary into stories of injuries from clotheslines. They headbutt it out from their knees until another spinning backfist gives Kingston the pin and the titles at 17:05.

Rating: B+. Much like the previous match, this felt like a fight but for a very different reason. While Copeland vs. Cage felt like a fight between two people who hated each other, this felt like two people wanting to survive to claim a prize. That worked very well and I dug what we got here. Danielson in particular made a feel more like a sporting contest and it made things that much better.

Post match Eddie is presented with the title. Respect is shown and Moxley lets Kingston have the ring.

Here's what's coming on Dynamite.

We recap Samoa Joe vs. MJF for the World Title. While Joe is challenging, the real story is MJF being chased by the Devil, who very well could be revealed here.

AEW World Title: Maxwell Jacob Friedman vs. Samoa Joe

MJF is defending and we get a video of people talking about how he's THEIR scumbag, including a video from his ex-girlfriend giving a VERY censored story about a night in the back of a car. Before the match, cue Adam Cole to support MJF, whose shoulder is completely wrapped up. Joe backs him into the corner but MJF goes to the eye in a smart move.

A shot to the arm cuts MJF down fast and Joe drops a leg on said arm to make it worse. It's too early for the Muscle Buster though and Joe gets low bridged to the floor. Back in and a low superkick staggers Joe and the Kangaroo Kick connects. MJF is knocked outside for a heck of a suicide dive, followed by a suplex to rock the shoulder again.

They go to the apron where Joe drops him hard with a MuscleBuster for two. MJF manages a shot to the back of the head and rams Joe into the buckle over and over. Joe shrugs off some right hands in the corner and MJF collapses when trying a fireman's carry. He's fine enough to catch Joe with a Heatseeker for two before grabbing the Salt Of The Earth.

Joe reverses into an armbar of his own but MJF makes the rope. Back up and the ref gets bumped so MJF gets all smiley. A low blow cuts Joe off on the middle rope and an F5 of all things leaves both of them down. MJF's cover gets a very delayed two and Joe pulls him into the Koquina Clutch....for the knockout and the title at 17:47.

Rating: B. This was interesting as Joe won (more or less) clean and that makes sense. MJF isn't John Cena, meaning at some point the odds are so strongly against him that he has to lose. That's what took place here, as Joe had been built up as this unstoppable force and MJF was coming in very banged up.

While MJF fought, he ultimately couldn't last against someone like Joe. It told a good story, as the hero goes out on his shield and loses in the end.

Post match Joe leaves and Cole tells MJF to listen to the fans cheering for him. Cue the Henchmen to take both of them down, with Cole saying hit him instead. MJF says hit him instead of Cole. Then the lights go out and the Henchmen have let Cole go. The Henchmen are Wardlow, the Kingdom and Roderick Strong, with MJF being in tears. The big beatdown is on with Cole dropping the Devil mask on MJF to end the show.

Now this is probably the biggest story of the show as it is the big reveal after a months long story. While we'll have to wait and see what the actual story is, in theory it's all of MJF's past sins coming back to haunt him. MJF may be a changed man, but he's hurt a lot of people on his way to the top. That seems to be what came back to bite him here, as Cole and company wanted to take down the villain who had hurt them all on his way to the top. Cole in particular should feel upset, as he turned into some kind of goof and then lost to MJF at All In because he wasn't being himself. The real explanation will help, but the potential is there.

Overall Rating: B. This show might not have been great, but the last three matches did a lot to help boost it up. I know I say it a lot about Tony Khan produced shows, but there was too much here at first. The matches that came before the big stuff needed to be trimmed down, as only one non-cash-in match was less than ten minutes long. It's ok to have something go 5-6 minutes instead of stretching it out way longer than it needs to go and it would have helped a lot.

Now on the good side, the matches that had the biggest builds did rather well, with Copeland vs. Cage, the tournament final and the World Title match all being big hits. It continues to show what AEW can do with some nice storytelling to back up the good action. There are still some corrections to be made

and overall this is on the weaker end of the AEW pay per view offerings, but this started off weak and finished very strong and that is a great thing to see.

Results

Willow Nightingale b. Kris Statlander – Babe With The Powerbomb

Killswitch won a battle royal last eliminating Trent Beretta Hook b. Wheeler Yuta – Redrum

Blackpool Combat Club/Daniel Garcia/Mark Briscoe b. Jay White/Rush/Brody King/Jay Lethal – Rollup to Lethal

Miro b. Andrade El Idolo – Game Over

Toni Storm b. Riho – DDT

Swerve Strickland b. Dustin Rhodes – Swerve Stomp

Sting/Darby Allin/Chris Jericho/Sammy Guevara b. Big Bill/Ricky Starks/Don Callis Family – Shooting stark press to Starks

Julia Hart b. Abadon – Moonsault

Adam Copeland b. Christian Cage – Killswitch

Christian Cage b. Adam Copeland – Spear

Eddie Kingston b. Jon Moxley – Spinning backfist

Samoa Joe b. Maxwell Jacob Friedman via referee stoppage

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