

ECW on Sci-Fi – July 25, 2006: It Took Them Two Months But Things Are Starting To Come Together

ECW on Sci-Fi

Date: July 25, 2006

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: Joey Styles, Tazz

We're in Detroit tonight and the challenger of the week is Kane in an Extreme Rules match. That's an interesting idea as there's no better way to have someone built up as a monster than by having them run through people, especially when the regular roster has nothing they could throw at him for a reasonable challenge yet. Also tonight there's more in the Knox vs. Sandman feud which I'm sure you're all dying for. Let's get to it.

After a quick intro about Show vs. Kane we hit the theme song.

Knox and Sandman are in the ring to start and Knox gives us a montage of Kelly's dances. However, Kelly can never take her clothes off again after the cane shot last week, which we see. Knox claims that he didn't abandon Kelly but rather was in the back getting the EMTs.

Mike Knox vs. Sandman

Sandman busts himself open with a beer can on the way to the ring. Knox goes off on Sandman with right hands but Sandman comes back with the legsweep. He gets the cane and goes to swing it at Knox but Kelly gets in the way. Sandman stops himself but Test comes in for the DQ win for Sandman.

Dreamer jumps Knox and Test in the back.

Heyman is talking to Sabu (kind of) and says that Sabu won't get the title match he wants with Show. Heyman tells Sabu to leave. He keeps walking and runs into Guido, who he yells at for doing nothing. The security guards beat him up and Heyman says Guido's match is next.

CM Punk says he hasn't been handed anything. He's from the streets and he debuts next week.

The Vampire vs. Little Guido

The Vampire would later be known as Kevin Thorn. Guido is dragged to the ring by the security guards. The Vampire destroys Guido and Ariel the tarot card girl gets on the apron and sucks his fingers. A modified powerbomb puts Guido down again and an elevated Stunner (think Orton's DDT) kills him. Razor's Edge ends this. Guido never got his vest off.

Video on Kane.

Shannon Moore still has nothing to say.

Justin Credible vs. Balls Mahoney

Balls starts fast and pounds Justin into the corner. Off to a neck crank as Tazz and Joey talk about how insane Mahoney is. Justin tries to run but gets caught by the ears. Back in Justin drops some legs and a running release tornado DDT for two. Northern lights suplex gets two.

Off to a kindof seated abdominal stretch and then to a regular knee to the back chinlock. Balls hooks a suplex to get out of it and the punches get two. Justin tries a slide into the corner but crotches himself on the post. He whips Mahoney into the corner and dropkicks him into the referee. A reverse DDT hits but there's no referee for Justin so he goes and gets a chair. Balls steals the chair and clocks Credible with it for the DQ.

Rating: D. This wasn't much of anything and the ending didn't help it. For some reason Credible was a total jobber in ECW despite being a long reigning world champion in the original incarnation. Mahoney was mainly a tag wrestler but was getting a pretty significant push in this version. He's more interesting though so I can't complain there.

Mahoney clocks the referee with the chair post match.

Show wants to know why he can't fight Sabu. Heyman says don't worry about it.

Vote in the Diva Search! If there was a mention of something like that in the original ECW, riots would break out.

Angle is back next week.

ECW Title: Kane vs. Big Show

Kane fires off some clotheslines but is thrown up and over to the floor on the third attempt. Oh and this is Extreme Rules. Kane sends him into the post and throws some weapons into the ring. Show knocks him back down and we take a break. Back with Kane down in the ring and Show stalking him. Kane gets up and hits a chair shot to take Show down. The chair is wedged between the ropes in the corner and Kane slugs away.

According to the laws of wrestling, Kane goes face first into the chair that he set up. Show goes up for a Vader Bomb but Kane hits him low and a belly to back superplex puts both guys down. They slap it out from their knees and then punch it out on their feet. Kane knocks him into the corner and hits a running clothesline. He lost his elbow pads in this somewhere.

Here comes a chokeslam but Show grabs one of his own which only gets two. Not much of a surprise on the kickout either, as in the crowd didn't seem to care. Show gets a table and sets it up on the floor and then a second one. He sets for a suplex over the top but Kane guillotines him on the top rope.

A trio of chair shots knocks Show off the apron and through the tables.

Heyman and the security come out to try to tell Show that he needs to shake it off. I think Show is busted open. Kane tries to get Show back in the ring and DANG that's a good cut. Kane goes up but jumps into a chokeslam but Kane counters into a DDT for two. Heyman put the foot under the rope to break it up so Kane goes after the boss. That allows Show to hit Kane in the back with a chair and chokeslam him onto it to retain.

Rating: B-. WAY better than I was expecting here as it was about beating each other up which is the whole appeal of battles of monsters like this. Kane moved around in this and his power was enough to make you believe that a title change was possible. It was very unlikely but it was possible. Good match and a nice surprise.

Sabu comes in and lays out Big Show with a variety of chair shots.

Overall Rating: C. This was one of the first times where you could feel part of a running story throughout the show which is what this show has been lacking. Until now it's come off as more like a collection of segments and then a long main event. Now we're actually getting some stories together and the show is a lot more interesting as a result.

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ECW on Sci-Fi – July 18, 2006: Sabu Has A Wrestling Match

ECW on Sci-Fi

Date: July 18, 2006

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Joey Styles, Tazz

Back to the tribe of extreme for the show that is the hardest of all of the ones I review to find. This is I think the sixth episode of the show and it's still in the Big Show's title reign. His opponent of the week is Undertaker, who you can't get on Raw but you can get on ECW. It's a strange world out there people. Oh and he has Khali on Sunday at the Great American Bash. Gee I wonder if that'll lead anywhere. Let's get to it.

Undertaker got in Big Show's face on SNME.

Intro song.

We open immediately with Kelly stripping and here's Knox to stop her of course once she gets to her underwear. He takes her to the ring because the best way to keep people from seeing her is to put her in front of an audience right? It's Kelly's fault that Knox got hit by the Sandman's cane last week because she wanted people to see her take her clothes off. We get a clip of that attack and Knox says Kelly can never take her clothes off in public again. Now go get in his corner.

Mike Knox vs. Sandman

Oh and it's Extreme Rules. Knox jumps Sandman as he's coming in and we're off and jogging. They head to the floor and

Sandman is thrown into the table and barricade. Knox chokes Sandman with a camera cord and we go back in. Sandy gets a boot up and a bulldog before they go back to the floor. Sandman gets the cane but it hits Kelly as Knox pulls her in the way. Two low blows give Knox the pin. Hu-freaking-zah.

Knox leaves Kelly there. She's eventually taken out on a stretcher.

Shannon Moore can look at a camera.

Kelly was taken to the back during the break.

Here's Heyman with his two riot guards. He tells the fans that they have to all drink the Kool Aid and talks about how it's their fault that Van Dam lost the title. He knows it must be hard to keep up with his intellect but the people can do it. Here's Dreamer who talks about how he's been there with Heyman for so many years and he never demanded anything for himself. Now though, he wants Heyman to explain himself to the locker room and to the fans. Heyman grabs Dreamer and kisses him and here's Test to kick Dreamer's head off. Heyman and the guards leave and it's a TKO for Dreamer. Yay Test.

We get a nifty tale of the tape of Undertaker vs. Big Show.

Balls Mahoney says he likes his name. He's had that name all his life and it's a little nuts, just like him. He's an ECW Original you know.

Sabu vs. Stevie Richards

This isn't Extreme Rules. This is a rematch from SNME where there was an Extreme Rules match but here on ECW it's a regular match. Got that? Stevie arm drags Sabu and puts him down with a shoulder block. Sabu gets a backslide for two. A leg bar is quickly broken by the ropes and the fans want tables. Richards goes heel with right hands and rams Sabu's shoulder into the post. There's an armbar for a few moments

but Sabu comes back with right hands. Slingshot flip Fameasser gets two. Springboard tornado DDT sets up the camel clutch for the tap out.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here for the most part as the whole point of Sabu is that he's crazy, but I guess it makes sense to have him do regular matches right? That's the point of ECW and the guy you've built up more than anyone else right? Richards was never more than a jobber in this version of ECW.

Sabu chases the referee with his spike post match.

CM Punk talks about why he's in ECW. He lists off a bunch of martial arts he's trained in and also talks about his discipline. Why is he a face in ECW again?

Kevin Thorne talks about the future and about how there is death coming for Big Show's reign.

Video on how dominant Big Show is.

ECW Title: Big Show vs. Undertaker

Undertaker in ECW is just strange. Taker tries to take the leg out so Show headbutts him down. A slugout goes badly for the challenger and Taker gets knocked back into the corner via a headbutt. Taker comes back with his strikes but can't put Show down. The champ knocks him to the floor and we take a break. Back with Taker getting laid out by a spear for two.

Out to the floor and Taker's head goes into the steps. Taker gets in a kick to the face but Show headbutts him right back down. Undertaker grabs the leg and hooks a hold of some sort to get Show in trouble. Show pounds him down in the corner and they slug it out again. Chokeslam by Taker is broken up but a running DDT gets two. Old School is broken up and Show hits a superplex. It's an EXTREME ring though so it doesn't break. It only gets two and Taker sits up. Chokeslam is broken up again but Show is knocked to the floor. And here's Khali for the no

contest.

Rating: D. This picked up a little bit at the end but until that point, MAN was it boring. It was nothing but these two punching each other and the other coming back. Now repeat that for about 12 minutes. It was clear that Khali was going to be involved in the ending so until then it was really just killing time. Bad match but the superplex was cool.

Khali and Big Show put Undertaker through the table before the Bash on Sunday,

Overall Rating: D+. This one didn't do it for me at all. This show needs a breath of air already and that's not going to happen for a few months. The problem here is that they keep trying to throw in the original ECW stuff and it doesn't fit at all. Once they go to the show being its own show, it'll get a lot better.

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WWF Wrestling Challenge – January 31, 1988: Hogan vs. Andre II Is Coming

WWF Wrestling Challenge

Date: January 31, 1988

Location: Nashville Municipal Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Bobby Heenan

At the moment this is the last show that I have from this era and this show in particular. There will probably be more but

until I get them I obviously can't review them. We're past the Rumble now and not a lot has changed. However five days after this, we have the live Main Event which is where for the first time in four years, Hulk Hogan won't be world champion. Let's get to it.

We get the usual highlights of the city we're in and Gorilla opens us up.

Bad News Brown debuts today.

Tiger Chung Lee vs. Junkyard Dog

Dog shoves him to the floor and grabs a hammerlock back inside. The announcers talk about Hogan vs. Andre as the powerslam gets the pin in a quick match.

Craig DeGeorge talks about the card for The Main Event on Friday. We get some clips of the matches that set up Hogan vs. Andre II and Harts vs. Strike Force II. DiBiase and Andre say Hogan is going down and DiBiase will get the title.

Scott Casey vs. Greg Valentine

The fans have the Outshout The Mouth megaphones still. They trade slams and Brutus says that whatever problems Valentine has had before, he'll have real ones coming up soon. Valentine sends him to the floor where Casey manages to get in a few right hands. Back in Casey misses a top rope splash and the Figure Four ends this quick.

House show ads.

Steve Lombardi vs. Sam Houston

Lombardi isn't the Brawler yet but is still a jobber. Houston works over the arm and an atomic drop gets two. We hear about the Jumping Bomb Angels winning the Women's Tag Titles at the Rumble as Lombardi's offense is stopped very quickly. The armbar takes Steve back to the mat and it's time for Sam to

dance. Belly to belly sets up the bulldog for the pin.

Gene tells us that there actually are other things going on in the company besides Hogan vs. Andre. He brings in Hacksaw who talks about how tough the competition is and how you always have to deal with managers anymore. Hacksaw doesn't like Harley Race either. They make a "going both ways" joke and it sounds very dirty for some reason.

The fans say who thinks will win some of the bigger matches on Friday.

Hart Foundation vs. Omar Atlas/SD Jones

Bret and Jones start things off. Hart gets sent to the floor so Jimmy yells about a hair pull. Strike Force is looking forward to the match on Friday. Atlas gets caught in the Tree of Woe and Neidhart pounds away. Here's Bret again with a backbreaker and it's back to Jim. Brain makes fun of the Bomb Angels as the Hart Attack ends this squash.

Dibiase says that he's going to collect on the biggest deal of his life on Friday. Andre says he wants to be world champion now and it's going to be Giantmania.

Randy Savage vs. Terry Gibbs

Gibbs gets in a quick shot and that's about all he's got going for him in this match. Savage says he'll beat Honky on Friday. Slam and elbow get the pin.

With Savage still in the ring, Honky, Jimmy and Peggy Sue come out and say nothing of note before Savage comes to the platform.

Bad News Brown vs. Rex King

Brown jumps Rex during the introduction and the pain begins. Total squash just like any debut, ends in about two minutes with the Ghetto Blaster.

House show ads.

British Bulldogs vs. Dusty Wolfe/Barry Horowitz

Barry pounds away on Davey to start and gets suplexed for his efforts. Off to Dynamite for the snap suplex. Davey powerslams him for no cover as Gorilla talks about the show on Friday. For some reason, they've never said what network it'll be on. More suplexes follow and Davey hits a piledriver. He still won't cover so Dynamite hits a top rope knee. A middle rope belly to back superplex ends this domination.

Rating: C-. The Bulldogs were near the end of their run here and would be gone by the end of the year. Not a bad match but the jobbers literally didn't get in a single shot of offense at all. The Bulldogs are still fun to watch though and this was decent enough for a main event I guess.

Butch Reed says that Gene's questions are none of his business. He has soup bones for fists and is going to take out Muraco like he took out Billy Graham.

Hogan says he wants to break DiBiase's financial empire and that he'll prove all the doubts about his first victory this Friday.

Gorilla and Bobby wrap it up.

Overall Rating: C. This made me want to pop in The Main Event which makes this a success. The matches weren't anything of note but it could have been a lot worse of a show. Either way, Hogan vs. Andre is pushed to the moon and the pushing would work as it holds the record for the highest rated wrestling match ever. Good hype show.

Here's The Main Event if you're interested:

[The Main Event – The Biggest Rematch Ever, Period](#)

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Superstars of Wrestling – October 11, 1986: Roddy Piper The Carpenter

Superstars of Wrestling

Date: October 11, 1986

Location: Baltimore Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Attendance: 7,000

Commentators: Jesse Ventura, Vince McMahon, Bruno Sammartino

Back to Superstars again as we continue what would become the build to Wrestlemania 3 in a few months. If we somehow get to the new year, I've already reviewed the January through March shows so I have a lot of this covered. Today we have a big match as the Dream Team faces the Bulldogs in a Wrestlemania rematch. Let's get to it.

Usual opening jazz.

Dream Team vs. British Bulldogs

This is non-title. We get a quick interview backstage where Matilda the dog debuts. The non-champions jump the Bulldogs before the bell to take over. We start with Valentine vs. Dynamite and there's the snap suplex. Off to Davey who clotheslines Greg down but walks into a back elbow.

Off to Beefer who suplexes Davey but has it no sold. Greg comes in again and hits a backbreaker on Dynamite but gets slammed off the top. Valentine hits a backbreaker of his own

for two. Hot tag brings in Davey and everything breaks down. The referee goes down and comes up to count a pin from Valentine, but since he's not legal it's a DQ? Ok then.

Rating: C-. Well it wasn't exactly their match in Chicago. This was nothing to see for the most part as neither team seemed all that fired up. Then again it wasn't for the titles and they didn't even get five minutes so how good can it be? The Bulldogs would drop the titles to the Harts soon enough after this.

The Update this week is about Jake Roberts and Damien. They're in the shower and Jake talks about fear. The audio is really bad here and you can barely understand what he's saying.

Don Muraco/Bob Orton Jr. vs. Billy Jack Haynes/Sivi Afi

Muraco and Orton come out to the bagpipe music. Afi and Muraco start. Sivi works on the arm of the bearded wonder before it's a double tag. Muraco and Orton tag in and out quickly before the superplex pins Afi. Squash.

Savage says Steamboat will be a three time loser in Boston.

Big John Studd/King Kong Bundy vs. Dick Slater/Ricky Hunter

The jobbers actually get an entrance here. This is when Slater was The Rebel and was getting a small midcard push. He and Studd get things going with Slater punching him into the corner and avoiding a splash. The size and power becomes too much though and Slater is carried into the corner. Bundy misses a big elbow and the place gets all fired up. Hunter comes in and the heels take over. Studd hooks a chinlock and the fans want the Machines. Avalanche pins Hunter.

Rating: D. Literally a squash. Slater was in there for about 45 seconds and after that it was all downhill for him and Hunter. Studd and Bundy would challenge the Bulldogs a bit on some house shows but nothing would ever come of it. Studd

would be gone fairly soon after this if I remember correctly.

Steamboat is ready for his shot at Savage and that he's waited his 30 days to get his rematch. Savage would only defend when he had to at this point, allegedly.

Rougeau Brothers vs. Hercules/Barry O

Ray and Barry start off and Barry gets thrown around so much that he tags out quickly. Hercules uses his power but the speed frustrates him enough to bring in Barry to face Jacques. The Cannonball gets the quick pin.

We go to Roddy Piper as he builds the set for the new Piper's Pit. Nothing is said.

We get a clip from SNME with Piper chasing Adonis off with a crutch.

Piper says it hurt when Adonis and company attacked his leg and he's going to take out Muraco first.

Islanders/Pedro Morales vs. Ken Glover/Hart Foundation

One of these things just doesn't belong. The Islanders team jump the other guys and clear the ring. We start with Tama vs. Hunter as Jimmy praises the Harts in an inset. Top rope splash ends this quick. The Harts were never in and I don't think Morales was either.

Post match Hunter takes the Hart Attack.

We see Slick, Volkoff and Sheik arriving in a limo. Jesse greets them and Slick says he wants the tag titles.

Junkyard Dog/George Steele vs. Steve Regal/Terry Gibbs

No not that Regal. Regal jumps the Dog and that goes as well as you would expect it to go. Steele comes in to a nice reaction and then it's back to Dog for the powerslam and the pin. This didn't last a minute. Steele throws out Regal post

match because he's a nice animal. Kids get to dance with the winners.

Bob Orton is ready for Billy Jack Haynes and Piper needs to find a new job.

Muraco warns Piper to stay away too.

Vince wraps things up.

Overall Rating: D. This flew by but there wasn't enough angle building to make the squashes interesting. That's been one of the things you can get from the previous shows: there have been a lot of angles thrown out there to balance out the weak wrestling, which is a lot more than you can ask for in a lot of these shows. Not much here this week.

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How I Would Book Lesnar Vs. Cena

I know I say I hate this, but for once I got an idea in my head and I liked what I saw. This isn't a fully fleshed out idea, but it's more for the Cena promo that I would have loved to hear him say tonight. The answer, as most answers are, is found in a Rocky movie. Before I start this, I know full well this would never work on WWE TV, I know it has holes in it, I know it isn't going to happen. I get that.

Now the crux of this is based on the Brock interview that they've aired for the last two weeks. The idea here is that Brock has dominated everything (not named professional

football) that he's ever competed in. Everything from amateur wrestling to pro wrestling to the UFC, he's gone to the top of it with no one being able to stand in his path. Lesnar is a finely tuned athletic killing machine that has never been stopped no matter what he attempts.

On the other side you have John Cena, who played college football and is the top man in the WWE and has been for about the last 7 years. He started very slowly and worked his way to the top. The idea is that Cena works his way through every problem he faces and even when he fails, he never gives in and never quits. He spent years and years perfecting his craft, unlike Lesnar who has basically come in and within a month or two is the top dog everywhere.

This presents a very strong dichotomy between the two and gives you an angle to play off of. This is where Rocky V comes in. For those of you that haven't seen it, the end of the movie is a confrontation between Rocky and Tommy Gunn. Rocky is a street fighter who had no high class training and was very raw for the most part of his career. Gunn was trained well and became a polished fighter. Now at the beginning of the movie, Rocky has been told that he can never step foot into a boxing ring again due to fear of head trauma. This is where the connection kicks in.

By the end of the movie the two are about to fight each other but Gunn's manager says that Tommy only fights in the ring. Rocky says "my ring's outside." Now THIS is where the WWE should pick up on things. The idea is that Lesnar has dominated everything he's done, but everything he's done has had rules. Even in the UFC, everything is regulated and under control at all times. Play up Cena's background as more of a street brawler (if you flash WAY back in his career it's there) and how he's not a polished killing machine like Lesnar, but at Extreme Rules, Lesnar doesn't have anything under control. It's on Cena's terms, not Brock's. It's a street fight, not a match with rounds and rules and on Sunday,

anything goes.

To cap it off, picture Cena saying something like this: “And Brock, this Sunday in Chicago, if you think the beatings you took in the UFC were bad, you just wait. There ain’t gonna be a referee to pull me off you like when you guys like Cain Velazquez and Allastair Overeem beating your face into a cage. That’s what happens when you lose control: you get beaten up Brock. I’m not stopping until the job’s done and I’m the one left standing. See you on Sunday.”

Thoughts?

ECW on Sci-Fi – July 11, 2006: Flair Still Has It

ECW on Sci-Fi

Date: July 11, 2006

Location: Target Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Attendance: 3,000

Commentators: Joey Styles, Tazz

Welcome to the rest of ECW. After last week, there was no way that this could be considered ECW anymore so we’re now in whatever you want to call this. Big Show is champion and he’s supported by the EVIL Heyman, which is WWE all the way. There isn’t much else to say but the show is going to be old vs. new now. Let’s get to it.

We open with a recap of the main event from last week.

Flair vs. Big Show for the ECW Title later. This isn’t going to get any easier.

Here's Heyman who says he made sure RVD lost the title last week. Don't blame him though, because it's the fans' fault. It's the people's fault that RVD got suspended for thirty days. It's their fault that he had such a rigorous schedule and it's their cheers that made him jump off the top. Heyman talks about the sacrifices he made for ECW and how he's the savior of the company. He'll do things like this if it saves the fans and he'll do it for the good of ECW. That isn't really an explanation but that's too much to ask for.

Heyman and his security leave and run into Dreamer. He wants an explanation but Dreamer has a match immediately so Heyman doesn't have time to explain.

Raw ad, on an ECW show. It's a different company remember.

Tommy Dreamer vs. Test

Dreamer is in street clothes. Test slaps him so Dreamer goes crazy on him. They go to the floor where Test rams his back into the post to take over. Test whips him into the corner and stomps him down as this is looking like a squash. A backbreaker sets up a bearhug which is broken pretty quickly. Tommy hits a pair of neckbreakers but the DDT is countered into a full nelson slam. The top rope elbow misses and Dreamer tries the DVD. Test slips off the shoulders and rolls Dreamer up, putting his feet on the ropes for the cheap pin.

Rating: D. If they really think this is how the new brand was going to get over, they were idiots. At the end of the day, this is Test, the same guy that wasn't over from 2001-2005, so they keep pushing him anyway. Nothing to see here and Dreamer was treated like a jobber the whole time of course, which is one of the few things they've gotten right.

Candace says her expose will be hot.

Kelly and Candace do a dance together. At least the song is different. Knox does his usual stop but Sandman pops up to hit

him with the cane. My goodness it's an actual story.

Ariel and Kevin Thorn are creepy.

Punk talks about how his tattoos tell a story. Seriously, get to him already. He's WAY better than this.

Sabu vs. Justin Credible

Sabu was hyped up for the first half of the show so this should be a squash. Sabu goes straight at him and knocks Justin to the floor where he looks for a weapon. That goes badly for him as Sabu hits a flip dive to the floor. Slingshot legdrop gets two back in the ring. Sabu heads to the floor and loads up a broken table, which he puts Justin through after a brief fight for the DQ. Yeah a DQ in ECW. Next.

Balls Mahoney is a little bit nuts. His words not, mine.

Flair says he'll win his 17th title tonight. Foley needs to grow some balls as well.

Shannon Moore (not named) is freaky looking.

ECW World Title: Ric Flair vs. Big Show

Extreme Rules again. Show throws him to the floor and we take a break. Back with Flair pounding away in the corner. Joey calls this historic. Not exactly the word I'd use but whatever. Show press slams him and Flair is busted open from something. Knowing him it was a stiff breeze. Flair tries chopping him but gets knocked down by one from Show. They head to the floor for another slugout, won by Show.

To keep up the tradition, Flair chops and punches but Show chops him down with one or two shots. Show measures him but Flair hits him low. Keeping with the tradition theme, Flair hits him low a second and third time. Make it four and Show is in trouble. Flair finds a barbed wire ball bat from somewhere and hits Show in the head with it before digging it into

Show's face.

Trashcan shot to the head staggers Show as does a chair to the chest and back. Show goes down but it only gets two. Flair busts out some tacks and knocks Show into them with about five chair shots to the head. That just ticks him off though so he pulls Flair into the chokeslam and a cobra clutch backbreaker. He keeps the clutch on for the knockout win. Show throws Flair into the tacks post match.

Rating: B-. I liked this a lot more than I was expecting to. Flair is still a master of making you believe that it could happen, which is what he did here. Also, notice that he puts Show over by making it look like Show shrugged off all that offense and won with ease. That's not you make someone look good, which Flair made a career out of.

Flair is helped out to end the show. That and replays ate up the last three minutes.

Overall Rating: C. I think this was the best show of the first batch of them, and that's not saying much. The show was ok with the main event being a highlight, but it's much better because the idea that this is the rebirth of ECW is forgotten now. Instead the ECW Title is the third WWE Title, making it a much easier show to book. The opening was weak as was the rest of the show other than the main event, but I really dug that match. Watchable show, but nothing great.

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ECW on Sci-Fi – July 4, 2006: If It Wasn't Dead Before This, It's Dead Now

ECW on Sci-Fi

Date: July 4, 2006

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 1,500

Commentators: Joey Styles, Tazz

I remember this day very well because I was dragged to a free country music concert downtown which was supposed to feature 9 acts. Due to the hardest rain storm I've ever seen, that wound up being 2. This show was actually a standalone ECW show, as in Smackdown was taped the Monday before but this was just ECW. The result: 1,500 people in a place that holds ten times that much (Survivor Series later that year got 15,400). It's the old Main Event deal where it's a full show but only the last few matches make the broadcast. This is a major overhaul in ECW's show which is very interesting so let's get to it.

Heyman and RVD are in the back with Heyman trying to get RVD on his side in something not important enough to explain. Big Show comes in and DEMANDS a title match tonight. No answer yet but it wouldn't be ECW without some potentially big match being hotshotted right?

Theme song.

Time for Kelly's Salute To America Expose, which is the usual thing (same song third week in a row too) in front of a bunch of flags. This would be light years better with Layla or the Bellas, who can actually dance a bit, or a lot in Layla's case. And here's Mike Knox for the save.

Mike Knox vs. Little Guido

Knox says Kelly is his so we don't get to see her. The fans chant at him as they should. Guido jumps him to the pop of the night. He hits a dropkick to the side of the head but a second attempt misses, allowing Knox to take over. The fans want pizza and think Knox can't wrestle. Knox goes into an EXTREME series of bodyslams as the fans think this is boring. Guido tries to get something going but gets his head kicked off and the spinning downward spiral ends this.

Rating: F. This match, if it wasn't already, proves that ECW is dead. Guido was a big deal (kind of) in ECW, but here he's a jobber. You know, like everyone that isn't one of the top ECW guys. And to Mike Knox? The most generic of generic big men ever? They were going off on him here. Imagine what he would have gotten in the ECW Arena. But this is the new ECW, where the fans mean nothing and the ECW Originals are a stable 8 months from now.

RVD tells Heyman that it's cool. Ok then.

Back in the arena a bald guy jumps the guardrail and grabs the mic. The guy is wearing what appears to be a priest's outfit. He says this is his first ECW show and he's disgusted by the sex, violence and language. This form of entertainment shouldn't exist and if you enjoy it you're a sinner, which gets the biggest pop of the night. Oh and he's not a priest. He just wore it to get our attention. Yeah because WHO WOULD WANT A CHARACTER AGAINST EVERYTHING ECW IS FOR??? Sandman comes out and beats him up, meaning we'll never see the priest again. I'm so glad this was included. It enhanced so much.

RVD slaps Big Show, accepting his challenge. It'll be Extreme Rules.

Video on Test. He's coming soon.

Test vs. Al Snow

Very soon it seems. Yeah it's Test, one of the guys that got

close to being over once and then never meant a single thing again. He's one of the guys that's supposed to represent ECW. The crowd thinks Test takes steroids. Big boot and a TKO end this.

Video on Sabu, who TALKS, and says he won't be silent anymore. I was wrong. THIS is where they clearly didn't get it.

We see some tattoos and hear a voice saying that he's straightedge. He doesn't do drugs, he doesn't drink, he doesn't smoke. His addiction is wrestling. His rush is competition. His name is CM Punk. Another sign that WWE clearly had no intention of this being ECW: Punk is the antithesis of everything ECW was about, so naturally he's a face.

ECW World Title: Big Show vs. Rob Van Dam

This is just after RVD lost the WWE Title due to the drug arrest, so there's about zero doubt as to who wins here. We get big match intros and this is under Extreme Rules. Show chases him into the corner but Rob comes back with kicks to the legs. The fans hate Show here as you would expect. A headbutt puts Van Dam on the floor and he gets crotched while trying his kick from the barricade.

You know it's amazing: Joey, the free thinking announcer that went to ECW because he was tired of being a WWE announcer, uses the EXACT same lines about Big Show (you have to see him live, hands like skillets etc) that the WWE announcers use. Pure coincidence of course, because Joey Styles is different and WWE would never tell him what to say, which is why we need to bring him back right? He just goes renegade every night and says whatever he thinks. Van Dam gets in a kick and the spinning kick to the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Rob in trouble but he manages the springboard kick out of the corner. Not that it matters as he gets crotched and superplexed for two. The walking legdrop gets two. The fans

are trying to be an ECW crowd but they're in the wrong arena to do that. Show drops an EXTREME elbow for two as the fans chant marijuana. A bearhug goes on and the fans totally turn on the match. It gets even worse as Show lays down on the mat while still holding it.

Show follows that up with a backbreaker, bending Rob over his knee afterwards. There hasn't been anything EXTREME in this match so far either. That stip has been completely worthless. Show tries a chokeslam but Rob counters into a DDT. Rolling Thunder gets two. He tries the top rope kick but Show catches him with ease and throws him to the floor. Show tries the steps but gets his knee kicked out and his head hits the steps.

A top rope dive is caught again and Show keeps control to make sure the crowd doesn't get interested. Rob grabs a chair but it gets swatted away and the chokeslam gets two. There goes the referee and Show loads up a powerbomb. Rob grabs the chair though and pops him with the chair, ala HHH vs. Undertaker at Mania X7. Van Daminator sets up the Five Star but there's no referee. Here's Heyman ala One Night Stand but instead he turns heel and joins Big Show. Chokeslam changes the title as it's Survivor Series 2002 all over again. That belt looks like a toy on Show.

Rating: D-. Not only was it stupid, but the match wasn't even that good. If ECW wasn't dead already, this ended it. To begin with, it's a special match now that it's Extreme, even though that's the name of the company. Second, this was a WWE main event style match, but Big Show was the weakest main event guy in the company so no one was interested. Third, it's another corrupt authority figure, which is WWE Booking 101. Bad match to end a horrible show.

Overall Rating: E. As in ECW is Dead. The company was done back in 2001 but for one night (in 2005), it was around again. The TV show was never going to be ECW, which is clear here for

all the reasons I gave earlier. The Originals would be jobbers forever and the big muscleheads like Knox and Test and eventually Lashley would become the focus, which no one wanted to see. If this new show had been called ANYTHING but ECW, it wouldn't be nearly as reviled as it is. Even if we ignore the name though, the show's biggest problem is that it's not that good. This is a really boring series and it needs to change a lot, which it would.

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WWF Wrestling Challenge – January 24, 1988: It's Royal Rumble Day

WWF Wrestling Challenge

Date: January 24, 1988

Location: Municipal Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Bobby Heenan

This is the day of the first ever Royal Rumble but of course this show was taped weeks earlier. They've been treating the Rumble like any other house show which is so strange to hear when it's such a huge event anymore. On the other hand, there's only one more show after this before Hogan vs. Andre II so expect to hear a lot more of that in the next two reviews, assuming I get the January 31 edition. Let's get to

it.

After the usual rundown we're ready to go.

Jerry Allen vs. Honky Tonk Man

Some of the fans have the mini-megaphones that Beefcake mentioned last week. Allen, who I'm sure I've heard of, grabs the arm to start but Honky takes him to the ropes to break. We get an inset promo from Liz of all people, saying she doesn't like Honky like Peggy Sue (Sherri) claims. Honky throws him to the floor for nothing of note. Back inside Allen gets in a few punches before ducking his head against a guy whose finisher is a swinging neckbreaker. This guy deserves to get pinned, which he does.

Quick recap of the Matilda theft story, including a message from the Bulldogs saying they're worried even though they have her back.

Strike Force vs. Dave Waggoner/Tiger Chung Lee

Non-title again. Santana and Lee start things off. The champions start off with some double teaming as we hear Demolition talking about wanting the titles. Martel hits a nice flying headscissors to take Lee down and grabs an armbar. Waggoner comes in and has some better luck against Tito, but it lasts about fifteen seconds before Santana shoves him to the Strike Force corner and brings in Martel. Strike Force takes over and the forearm gets the pin.

Rating: D+. This was your usual tag team squash but I'm a big Strike Force mark so I almost always rate them higher than usual. It's kind of strange that no one remembers their title reign but it ran for about six months. If a team were champions for six months today the world would probably collapse. Actually scratch that as no one would notice.

Gene talks about the Rumble. Hacksaw says he's going to stay

in a corner to see them all coming. Listen to this man! He doesn't like Harley Race that much either.

Bigelow says this is going to be his year.

Ted DiBiase vs. Dave Stoudemire

Dave dropkicks DiBiase into Virgil to start and gets thrown to the floor for his efforts. Ted pounds him on the floor then he pounds him in the ring. A powerslam sets up a middle rope falling elbow for the pin. Total squash but the dropkick at first was a little surprise.

Muraco talks about needing the luck of the draw.

Bad News Brown is still coming.

Brutus Beefcake vs. Dusty Wolfe

Wolfe takes over quickly but charges into an elbow. Jimmy doesn't like Brutus that much and wants the Barber banned. Sleeper and we're done.

Wolfe gets his hair cut.

Ron Bass is the "live" interview this week. He says he won't whip DeGeorge but says that he's the baddest man around. Bass issues challenges to all the big names and makes DeGeorge get on his knees.

The fans are split on Hogan vs. Andre.

Greg Cooper/Brady Boone vs. Islanders

Boone actually shoulder blocks Tama down to start but gets slammed face first into the mat. Tama shouts that it was for Bobby. SAVAGES DON'T TALK! IF THEY COULD THEY WOULDN'T BE SAVAGES!!! I'm not sure what there is to say here. It's total dominance and Tama wins it with the top rope splash on Cooper. Total squash.

More fans talk about the title match and there's no consensus still.

Don Muraco vs. Mike Sharpe

Sharpe gets in some shoulders and a headlock but Muraco runs him down. Gorilla talks about Pat Patterson and the IC Title which is something you don't hear about that often. Muraco comes back with power and a modified tombstone wins it.

Dino Bravo vs. WD Wellington

The majority of the match is spent talking about the bench press attempt at the Rumble. That segment would last about twenty minutes, or longer than anything but the Rumble. The match is a quick squash and ends with the side suplex.

Gene talks about the Rumble which has the proper name now. The odd thing is that these promos would all be shot in one long day so I wonder why they changed it in the middle. Slick comes in and hopes his men have high numbers. He also respects Gene. Ok then.

Overall Rating: D. This was again boring and I wasn't really caring that much. The bigger names on the card were some nice changes though as we had the IC and tag champions out there. Hogan didn't even show up on Superstars so this is as good as any TV show got. This was nothing special though and the squashes were shorter than usual.

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WWF Wrestling Challenge – January 17, 1988: The Rumble Royal? Since When?

WWF Wrestling Challenge

Date: January 17, 1988

Location: Municipal Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Bobby Heenan

Back to the early 1988 B shows from the boys up north. We're still getting close to the Rumble which probably won't be mentioned more than in passing. Expect some more talk about the upcoming Hogan vs. Andre II match, assuming that's been advertised already. This is going to be very similar to the Superstars shows that I've already done so I'll know a lot of it before I watch it. Let's get to it.

We get a message from Bill Boner, the mayor of Nashville, welcoming us to the city.

Gorilla and Bobby are hosts. Gorilla: "Gorilla Monsoon here with this miserable individual." He's coming out swinging this week.

They run down the card and Duggan is called a policeman. I haven't heard that one before.

Jake Roberts vs. Gino Carabello

Gino can barely make it onto the bottom rope to hold his arms up. Gino gets in a single shot before Jake knees him in the ribs to take over. Jake grabs the arm as the fans chant for the DDT. Short clothesline and a slam set up the DDT for the quick squash win.

Gino gets the snake treatment.

Dino Bravo is going to attempt to break a world bench press record at the Rumble and he speaks French about that for a bit.

Jimmy Hart's Glamor Girls defend the Women's Tag Titles against the Jumping Bomb Angels. Look those challengers up if you want to see some cool women wrestlers. They get a quick word in Japanese here.

Demolition vs. Omar Atlas/Rex King

Ax and let's say King start us off and it's time to pound on the back. Smash comes in for some slams and throws King to the outside. Ax slams him on the concrete and it's time for more pain. A HARD chop puts King in the ropes and it's off to Omar. He gets smashed (see? The name makes sense) down as Gorilla and Heenan have some funny exchanges about Heenan's standing in the company. Fuji says that's enough and the Decapitator ends Omar.

Rating: D. This wasn't much other than a long squash, but the tag matches were almost always longer. Demolition was straight up awesome and they dominated for so long that there was no one capable of hanging with them. The match was boring but at least the music was cool.

Gene keeps telling us about the Rumble Royal coming up next Sunday in Ontario. Ron Bass likes his chances and explains the rules one more time.

Bad News Brown is coming.

Jim Duggan vs. Joe Mirto

Harley Race says he's the real king. Heenan bails to go take care of something else as Duggan pounds away. Mirto is a big guy too so this is even more impressive. Three Point Clothesline ends this.

Van Van Horne vs. Rick Rude

Gorilla thinks Rude vs. Warrior would be a classic. Well I wouldn't say classic but it was certainly good so chalk up most of one for Monsoon. Rude offers a free shot at the ribs which does nothing of course so he snap suplexes Van Horne after shrugging it off. Rude keeps beating him down but Heenan won't let him end it. Oh ok now he can so Rude hits a NICE dropkick. I've never seen him do that before but it worked perfectly. Rude Awakening ends this.

More Rumble stuff. The Gang and Reed aren't wanting to go to Canada but they'll go for the money.

Young Stallions vs. Los Conquistadors

Powers starts with let's say #1 and armdrags him down. Off to #2 who gets caught as well. The Stallions double team #2 as Heenan is back with facts about Los Conquistadors. They're from South America and one of them is not named Raoul. One of them, the one we'll presume isn't named Raoul, comes off the top with a shot to the back of Powers and more double teaming commences. #1 misses a dive off the top and it's off to Roma. No one in the crowd seems to care as Powers hits a powerslam on #2 for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not the worst match in the world but the Stallions weren't interesting at all. They were both your run of the mill muscle guys that were nothing different than any other guys with their builds would have been. There's just nothing there and that's why no one cared about them. Even in a less crowded tag team scene they wouldn't have meant anything.

We get our "live" interview segment with Andre and DiBiase. They talk about the Main Event and Andre says he'll win the title for DiBiase.

Ultimate Warrior vs. Brian Costello

Warrior immediately clotheslines him over the top to the floor before suplexing him back in. Someone gives Heenan an

envelope. Gorilla press and splash get the pin.

Bolsheviks/Butch Reed/One Man Gang vs. Killer Bees/Lanny Poffo/Rick Hunter

This is the closest thing you'll get to a big match on this show for all intents and purposes. The Bees break up the Soviet anthem and we start with Blair vs. Boris. Off to Brunzell quickly as Heenan shows Gorilla a letter from Tunney reinstating the Islanders. O'Connor Roll gets two on Nikolai, who locks in a bearhug on Brunzell. Reed comes in and runs over Lanny with an elbow and Hunter comes in. Reed runs him over and the Gang hits whatever he called the gordbuster for the pin. Not enough to rate but it was a squash.

Beefcake has his own small bullhorns which he'll give to the fans to counteract the Megaphone. Then it'll be him vs. Valentine, which is what he wants.

Gorilla and Bobby wrap it up.

Overall Rating: D+. Nothing of note here but it wasn't bad. The idea was to talk about the Main Event and it's pretty clear that no one intended the Rumble to be a major event. I'm more curious about what they're doing with the name, as it was Rumble Royal a week before the show but the Royal Rumble when it aired. Anyway, pretty weak show, but things would pick up soon.

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Cena vs. Lesnar Official For Extreme Rules

I like this for a contrast to Cena vs. Rock, as they're not making us wait that long. The company is hot right now so they're capitalizing on it. The opening brawl was awesome too.

Thoughts on this?