

# Mae Young Classic Episode Seven: New Orleans on April 8 is a Place and Time

## Mae Young Classic Episode #7

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

We're down to the final eight and that means four quarterfinal matches tonight. You can probably guess what's coming for the final four but that's what makes these rounds exciting: there's the chance of a big upset and that could change everything. Things were a lot better in the second round and hopefully that's the case here too. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of how all eight made it to the quarterfinals.

No bio videos here, though to be fair you should know who they are at this point.

### Quarterfinals: Abbey Laith vs. Mercedes Martinez

Abbey takes her down in a test of strength to start until a hard palm strike to the jaw slows Laith down. Mercedes headlocks her for a bit before a heck of a slap staggers Abbey again. A spinning kick is countered so Abbey just does the splits instead of getting dropped again. Laith kicks at the arm a bit and JR brings up the two years off that Mercedes needed for a shoulder injury. That little background information often helps things so much and I wish we got more of it in WWE.

Abbey chops her back and kicks Mercedes in the head for two. That just earns Abbey a hard whip into the post and they fight to the apron with Lita joining the IT'S THE HARDEST PART OF THE RING club. Abbey kicks her out to the floor (which hasn't been the case very often in the tournament) for a crossbody to leave both of them laying.

Back in and Abbey tries to get fired up but Mercedes sends her outside

for a breather. That goes nowhere so Abbey grabs a bridging German suplex for two, drawing a heck of a scream out of Laith on the kickout. Mercedes grabs the fisherman's buster for the pin at 8:57 in another fast finish.

**Rating:** B. These finishes coming out of nowhere aren't doing much for me and they're becoming a pattern around here. Mercedes advancing is the right call as she's been treated as a veteran killer so sending her to the semifinals makes sense. Good match here too, which is all you can ask for.

Johnny Gargano is here and you know what that means.

#### Quarterfinals: Candice LeRae vs. Shayna Baszler

The winner gets Martinez in the semifinals. Shayna wastes no time with a hard knee lift and looks like she's toying with Candice to start. A kick misses though and Shayna crotches herself to give Candice a breather. Shayna gets sent outside for a suicide dive into a DDT (cool) to drop her on her head. Back in and we hit an Octopus hold on Baszler, followed by the Gargano Escape for a nice touch. Baszler calmly powers her up for a side slam and tries a super gutwrench suplex. Ms. LeRae's Wild Ride is easily countered into the rear naked choke for the tap at 3:11.

**Rating:** C+. They were getting going here until the very sudden ending, though this was the right idea. The idea behind Baszler is that she can finish you in the blink of an eye and that's exactly what they should be going for with her. LeRae is going to be fine wherever she goes and that suicide DDT was freaking sweet. Throw in the submission tease and they had me going a few times here. Give this more time though and it's instantly better.

Baszler won't let go of the hold, to the point where I thought they were going to reverse the decision for a second. She even kicks at LeRae as the doctors check on her. Now that's how you book a heel.

#### Quarterfinals: Piper Niven vs. Toni Storm

Storm takes the far bigger Niven into the corner and gives her a playful tap on the jaw. For some reason Toni thinks a test of strength is a good

idea with Niven taking her down. Storm bridges up and Niven can't break it for an impressive strength display. Like, a very impressive one as Toni isn't that big. They bridge up at the same time and shake hands upside down for a cute bit.

Niven powers her down and gets two off a splash, followed by Toni getting the same off a crossbody. Two more splashes give Piper the same so Toni grabs a Backstabber (popular move in this tournament) for a breather. A German suplex is countered into the Michinoku Driver for two and Piper is stunned. She tries the Vader Bomb, only to get caught in a German superplex. A top rope legdrop sends Storm on at 7:36.

**Rating:** C+. I don't think anyone was buying the idea that Niven was anything more than a dragon for someone to slay. Storm is as good of an option as anyone else as she has a great look and feels like someone they want to push the heck out of, especially over time. Good enough match here and while Storm isn't making it to the finals, she's getting noticed, which is often more important.

Baszler's fellow Four Horsewomen are proud of her win but here are Bayley, Charlotte and Becky Lynch for the staredown. Rousey: "Anytime, anyplace." Say....New Orleans perhaps? Maybe early April?

Funaki is here.

#### Quarterfinals: Kairi Sane vs. Dakota Kai

Kairi headlocks her down to start and the fans seem pleased at an early standoff. A spinning backfist misses and Kai gives her a martial arts pose. Kairi takes her into the corner for some hard chops as this is getting physical. The fans are behind Kairi but get quieted down with a running kick to the jaw in the corner. Kairi is tired of getting hit in the face so she spears Kai down for a breather.

Kai hits another running kick in the corner but gets sent into the corner. Kairi can't hit a superplex but can avoid a top rope double stomp with Kai tweaking the knee on the landing. A top rope Phenomenal Forearm gives Kairi two but Kai kicks her down again. Another running kick in the corner misses though and it's an Alabama Slam it's the top rope elbow to

send Sane to the semifinals at 7:42.

**Rating:** B. I'm starting to get the appeal of Sane and a lot of it is due to having her do stuff like this. Kai was very game here and that made for a more entertaining match. People like Sane are going to get more out of this than by squashing someone so it's definitely the right call. Kai will have a job in WWE if she wants one but this is Sane's tournament to win. Maybe.

The semifinals are set:

Kairi Sane

Toni Storm

Mercedes Martinez

Shayna Baszler

**Overall Rating:** B. I'm not sure what it says that I'm more interested in the Four Horsewomen battle than the tournament but that was definitely one of the big draws of this whole thing. The final four are interesting and while you can almost pencil in Sane vs. Baszler for the whole thing, that's not the worst result in the world. Good show here and I'm fired up for the last two shows.

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# Mae Young Classic Episode Five: No Mercy Lives!

## Mae Young Classic Episode #5

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

The fast paced shows continue as we have four more episodes being released today before we get ready for next week's live finale. We're down to sixteen competitors to go and for the most part, I'm coming into this blind on the spoilers. It's hard to say where some of these matches are going to go so let's get to it.

Mauro handles the opening recap again.

The remaining entrants are on stage.

Video on Abbey Laith, who has wrestled for years and is here now.

Video on Rachel Evers, who was originally scheduled to lose in the first round but Marti Belle was so horrible that they changed plans mid-match.

Kassius Ohno is here.

## Second Round: Abbey Laith vs. Rachel Evers

The fans sound split here as Rachel shoves her down to start, only to get wristdragged to the floor. Back in and a Stunner of all things puts Abbey down but they hit stereo bicycle kicks for a double knockdown. Abbey sticks with the kicks, including a high one off the side of Evers' head to send her straight down. She's up fast enough to catch Abbey on top with a super powerslam of all things for two. Cool looking move if nothing else. Evers tries another kick but gets dropped with a powerbomb, setting up the Alligator Clutch for the pin at 4:51.

**Rating:** C-. This started off a bit awkward but got better as things went on. Laith feels like someone they're ready to push pretty hard, especially given her background on the indy scene. Evers just needs a lot more ring time, though she has the look and pedigree to make a pretty nice run for herself one day.

Video on Serena Deeb, who is very aggressive and will work hard.

Video on Piper Niven, who wants to be tough but with a big smile.

### Second Round: Serena Deeb vs. Piper Niven

Niven powers her into the corner to start and falls on Deeb in a slam attempt. Well to be fair that was just kind of dumb. A hard belly to back suplex breaks up Serena's headlock and there's a splash for two more. With the holds not working, Deeb opts for just punching her in the face for a change. A middle rope Codebreaker (or maybe something like a monkey flip) drops Niven and a neckbreaker gets two.

Deeb is right back up with a modified Diamond Cutter for two more as the fans are split again. A charge misses in the corner though and Niven drops a Vader Bomb....for two. Dang I would have bet on that one. Niven heads up top (uh oh) and misses a splash, only to grab the Michinoku Driver to put Deeb away at 7:12.

**Rating:** C. What in the world was that ending? Niven missed the splash to seemingly give Deeb a hope spot but she was up less than five seconds later and hit the finish for the pin. I looked away for a second and my head swung back because I thought the video had skipped. They were trying to get into the Sting vs. Vader formula here but that ending REALLY knocked them back.

Video on Princesa Sugehit, who may be a veteran but needs to win this tournament.

Video on Mercedes Martinez, who has waited a long time for this opportunity.

Kalisto is here.

## Second Round: Princesa Sugehit vs. Mercedes Martinez

Sugehit, in Wonder Woman themed gear, takes her down by the arm and tries a quick rollup for two. Another rollup, this time into the corner, gets the same on Martinez but she's right back with Two Amigos into a draping swinging neckbreaker. Princesa grabs a Codebreaker but has to block a superplex attempt. Instead it's a tornado DDT (now a big spot on the indy Bingo card) for two on Martinez and both of them are spent less than five minutes in. One heck of a Fujiwara armbar has Martinez in more trouble but she pops up and hits a fisherman's buster for the pin at 5:09.

**Rating:** C. What is with these sudden endings? Sugehit was dominating and then got caught by one move, seemingly out of nowhere, for the pin. Mercedes winning certainly isn't a surprise but they could have done a better job of laying the match out. You have almost all the time you want and there's no need to cut them down this fast.

Video on Bianca Belair, whose hair whip thing is still stupid.

Video on Kairi Sane, who is perhaps the most awesome thing ever.

## Second Round: Bianca Belair vs. Kairi Sane

Kairi gets taken down to start and we hit a headlock as JR continues to brag about how awesome of an athlete Belair is. Back up and Belair blows her a kiss, only to have Sane grab it out of the air and stomp it on the mat. One heck of a forearm drops Belair but she hits the hair whip (So you can use it to whip people but get yelled at for pulling it?) to take over.

A delayed vertical suplex with some squats gets two and we hit a seated full nelson. So she's a No Mercy fan? Some ground and pound of all things has Kairi down but she gets her knees up to stop a splash. Kairi does those rapid fire chops in the corner that probably don't hurt much but they're done in Japan and therefore they must be awesome.

A seated double arm choke (another No Mercy move) has Belair in trouble until she fights up and gets in a double chickenwing slam. One heck of a 450 gets a red hot near fall on Sane and Bianca is stunned. Kairi kicks

her down and hits a running corner clothesline, followed by the top rope elbow (which she almost completely misses as her hip makes contact instead) to eliminate Belair at 10:00.

**Rating:** B. I'll give this one a higher rating for the No Mercy based offense and the hair thing being gone. Sane is clearly the top star in this whole thing and I'd be surprised if she doesn't win the whole thing. Belair is a heck of an athlete and that 450 looked awesome. She'll be a big deal in NXT for a good while and then on the main roster assuming she has any kind of talking ability.

A recap wraps things up.

**Overall Rating:** B-. Now we're getting to the fun part where they're having big names face other big names. The wrestling is getting better too and that can make for some sweet matches. I'm looking forward to where things go from here and the rest of the tournament, assuming it's given time, should be a lot of fun.

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# Mae Young Classic – Episode One: It's Ladies Month

## Mae Young Classic Episode #1

Date: August 28, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

It's finally here. In the tradition of last year's Cruiserweight Classic, this is a thirty two participant women's tournament held down in Florida. The field is comprised of an international group of talents, some of whom you probably haven't heard of before. There are four shows up today with the finals taking place live on September 12. Let's get to it.

The opening video, narrated by Stephanie McMahon (because of course), talks about the history of women's wrestling and how the biggest stars have helped lead us here. The result was the Women's Revolution and it's allowed something like this to be possible.

Opening sequence.

One note: I'm not familiar with most of the names in this so if I miss something big about one of them, I apologize in advance.

Video on Kay Lee Ray, a Scot who describes herself as a hardcore daredevil.

Video on Princesa Sugehit (pronounced sue hay). She was the only woman in her gym in Mexico and is here to win the tournament.

## First Round: Kay Lee Ray vs. Princesa Sugehit

Sugehit starts with the kicks and a big one to the chest gets two. They trade some trips until Ray grabs something like a Gory Stretch. That's reversed into a sunset bomb for two as the crowd is WAY into this so far. Sugehit drops three elbows for two but gets kneed in the face for the same. Back up and Kay chops her in the corner as Lita laments never wrestling in a mask.

A reverse DDT sets up a Koji Clutch on Sugehit for a few moments and the fans stay split. Sugehit gets out and rolls her around the ring into a cradle before a hard kick to the head gets two. More kicks are countered into something like a Gory Bomb for a slightly delayed two on Sugehit. Ray misses a splash though and a Fujiwara armbar makes her tap at 5:58.

**Rating:** B-. Good choice for an opener here with two easy to identify styles and Sugehit being the more polished of the two. It wasn't a classic or anything but it was the right idea: get the crowd into things (shouldn't be that hard) and something like a masked woman kicking another one in half was an easy choice.

Video on Serena Deeb who has a lot of history in WWE as part of the Straight Edge Society and a long stint in developmental. She had a bit of a drinking issue though and left the company, meaning she had to earn her way back.

Video on Vanessa Borne, who used to be a cheerleader for the Arizona Cardinals and a dancer for the Phoenix Suns but now she's here to be the star instead.

Naomi is here.

#### First Round: Serena Deeb vs. Vanessa Borne

Of note: Jessika Carr, the new female full time referee, is working this match. Feeling out process to start as the announcers focus on Deeb's previous issues that sent her away from the ring for two years. Some armdrags have the rookie Borne in trouble but she headbutts her way out.

The aggressive style doesn't seem to sit well with the fans, who are notably more silent for this match (though to be fair these could have been taped out of order). A sliding headbutt gets two on Deeb and we hit the chinlock. Serena fights up with some left hands and a neckbreaker but she goes shoulder first into the corner. A flip neckbreaker and Samoan drop give Borne two each but Deep is right back up with a spear for the pin at 6:06.

**Rating:** C-. There's your first story of the tournament and it's a good

one with Deeb's road to redemption. She never was the biggest star in the division as she barely wrestled singles matches for the company but it's an easy story to tell. It's easy to imagine her making a long run in this thing as she's one of the more experienced names in the field and that could help her go a long way.

Video on Zeda, who learned martial arts to deal with bullying as a kid. She didn't have a hero to look up to so she became one herself.

Video on Shayna Baszler, a former UFC fighter with a long career. She's here to try something new now but the style will be the same. Baszler has wrestled in Shimmer so she's not coming into this as a rookie.

Ronda Rousey is here to cheer on her former Four Horsewoman teammate.

#### First Round: Shayna Baszler vs. Zeda

Lita and Zeda were in the same judo club, albeit many years apart. Shayna won't shake hands but the fans know Zeda is going to die anyway. An early cross armbreaker doesn't work on Zeda and it's back to a standoff. A ZEDA chant goes nowhere and Baszler easily strikes her into the corner. Zeda gets in some elbows and a monkey flip is good for two but Shayna is done playing around. A suplex backbreaker into a choke makes Zeda tap at 2:21.

Baszler poses with the Horsewomen.

Video on Jazzy Gabert. She grew up in Germany and throws people all around. It's like a demon comes out in the ring when she hurts the little girls. You might remember her from a few matches in TNA as Alpha Female.

Video on Abbey Laith, who is better known as Princess Kimber Lee.

#### First Round: Abbey Laith vs. Jazzy Gabert

Gabert is rather intimidating looking with a very blonde mohawk. It's also odd hearing JR talk about Chikara, where Abbey was Grand Champion. Abbey slugs away to start but gets thrown down by the hair. A Jazzy chant starts up as she throws Abbey down into the splits. That's fine with Abbey who has a ballet ground for some great flexibility. We hit something like an Anaconda Vice of all things as Abbey is being

completely overwhelmed here.

Back up and Abbey is sent into the turnbuckle as the dominance continues. It's off to a chinlock before a rolling forearm knocks Abbey's block off. Abbey slips out of something and grabs a Tarantula into a choke on the ropes. Some kicks to the chest stagger Jazzy and some bicycle kicks make things even worse. There's a dropkick into the corner and a Swanton gets two on Gabert. One heck of a clothesline puts Laith down but she rolls off Jazzy's back -into an Alligator Clutch (a rollup used by Mae Young) for the pin at 7:12.

**Rating:** C+. I liked this one more than I was expecting to as they seemed to be going with a squash and then turned it into a better story with Laith winning in the end. There's a good chance that they're going to be sending her pretty far in the thing. Good idea here as Laith looks like a star now and should get a nice reception as a result.

Gabert shakes her hand post match.

We wrap it up with a quick recap of the night's events.

**Overall Rating:** B-. Good start for the tournament here as they showcased four names and we're already getting a good chunk of the second round ready. They should be flying through this pretty easily and that makes for a fun tournament. I also like having four episodes released at once as we can get through the first round in a single day instead of stretching it out for months. Lita was completely acceptable on commentary and seemed to be starting to get the hang of it more as the show went on. Good show here and that's a positive sign.

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