

Impact Wrestling – July 6, 2023: That's A Hot One

Impact Wrestling

Date: July 6, 2023

Location: Center Stage, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Matthew Rehwoldt, Tom Hannifan

We are just over a week away from Slammiversary and the card is all but set. Oddly enough, one of the better built matches has been Scott D'Amore/PCO vs. Bully Ray/Steve Maclin, as the videos on D'Amore have been great. On top of that, there is also a new alliance in the form of Nick Aldis and Lio Rush, who are going after the Motor City Machine Guns. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening recap.

Eddie Edwards vs. Frankie Kazarian

Alisha Edwards is here with Eddie and shouts at Kazarian, even as he suplexes Eddie into a neckbreaker to start. A fisherman's suplex gives Kazarian two but Eddie manages to send him outside, where Alisha gets in a tornado DDT. Back in and Eddie rakes the eyes and chops in the corner, allowing Alisha to choke away.

Kazarian is sent to the apron where Alisha gets in another cheap shot, allowing Eddie to hit a clothesline. A slingshot DDT plants Eddie on the apron though and it's a double down on the floor. Back in and Kazarian counters the Blue Thunder Bomb into a failed chickenwing so it's an Unprettier for two on Eddie instead.

Another chickenwing attempt is blocked and Eddie grabs the

tiger driver for two of his own. The chickenwing finally goes on but Alisha offers a distraction, allowing Eddie to drive it into the corner, with the referee getting bumped in the process. Alisha kendo sticks Kazarian from behind though and the Boston Knee Party finishes for Eddie at 10:46.

Rating: B-. Well yeah of course this was good. They're both talented wrestlers and they have a story going. Giving them some time to put a match together is going to work and it went well here. You can probably pencil in some kind of a mixed tag for Slammiversary and that opens up more than a few options.

We look back at Nick Aldis and Lio Rush laying out the Motor City Machine Guns. That's your main event tonight.

Chris Sabin is ready to face Rush for the X-Division Title at Slammiversary.

Rush says he's here to win titles instead of making friends. Nick Aldis comes in to say he's here to make history, and they can accomplish these things together. As long as Rush stays out of Aldis' way.

Frankie Kazarian congratulates Eddie Edwards on the win, even if that's not how Killer Kowalski taught them. They're 1-1 so let's have the rubber match at Slammiversary, with Kazarian offering to bring his wife, Traci Brooks, to even things up.

Champagne Singh/Shera vs. Rich Swann/Sami Callihan

Swann get double teamed down to start and Singh drops him with a Downward Spiral for some trash talk. Swann trips him down though and it's back to Callihan to pick up the pace. This includes the always stupid throw a team together and make someone DDT his partner spot. Swann comes back in for a double superkick to Singh, meaning it's the Cactus Driver to finish Singh at 3:16.

Rating: C. Not much beyond a squash here but it's good to have

Callihan and Swann look like a solid team on the way towards Slammiversary. They're long established as friends and have teamed together, but rarely as a two on two team. Beating up Singh and Shera is always fun too, and it worked well here.

Moose and Brian Myers are ready to give Callihan and Swann real competition.

We look at Santino Marella yelling at Dirty Dango, allowing Heath to jump Dango from behind.

Dirty Dango talks about how he loved wrestling in the 90s (Juventud Guerrera, Villano IV, Villano VII, people like that) but then he realized that things change when you get into the arena. Go back to school instead of wrestling. As for Santino Marella, Dango has grown up while Santino is still stuck in 2010. Dango: "It's like going to a Yoko Ono concert where she just yodels the whole time." As for Heath....maybe try being a fork lift driver?

Angels vs. Jonathan Gresham

The Design is here with Angels, who is quickly sent outside. Deaner yells at Angels to do what he says so he goes back in and suplexes Gresham. A running dropkick sends Angels outside though and we take a break. Back with Gresham dropping him again for two and they fight over a suplex. A half and half suplex sends Gresham into the corner so Angels can hammer away, which doesn't seem to be following Deaner's plan. They fight over some rollups for two each until Gresham pulls him into the Octopus for the tap at 10:27.

Rating: C+. The idea here was Angels trying to pay attention to Deaner and do his own thing with neither exactly working. Beating Gresham is hard enough on its own and he did his whole technical wrestling master deal. If nothing else, it's better than the same stuff the Design was doing with Sami Callihan for months, so hopefully this leads to the team falling apart and going away for good.

Post match Gresham offers a handshake but Deaner doesn't want Angels to do it. Angels teases leaving but goes back in, with Deaner breaking up the handshake attempt. Deaner pokes him in the chest so Angels grabs his hand and then shakes Gresham's hand.

The Bullet Club is ready to defend the titles against anyone, including three teams at Slammiversary. The Rascalz come in and want to be in the match, but Chris Bey says they haven't won anything around here. Wentz suggests a match with Bey, and if Wentz wins, they're in the title match. Seems to be a deal.

Video on the Australia shows. Good for them for getting to go somewhere else, as they've turned things around so much in the last few years.

We recap the issues between Deonna Purrazzo, Trinity and Gisele Shaw.

Trinity thanks Purrazzo for having her back last week. Purrazzo says she wants Trinity 100% when she beats her at Slammiversary and that's not cool with Trinity. Purrazzo is willing to put out the open challenge next week to show Trinity who she's facing at Slammiversary.

PCO vs. Good Hands

Scott D'Amore joins commentary. Before the match, the Good Hands talk about how PCO is about to feel these good hands. PCO beats them to the floor to start and hits the big running flip dive. The Deanimator hits Hotch and a reverse DDT plants Skyler back inside. The PCOsault finishes Skyler at 1:56.

Post match Hotch goes after D'Amore and gets beaten up for his efforts, including a Sky High. The Canadian Destroyer is loaded up but here is Bully Ray to interrupt. Steve Maclin sneaks in from behind though and the villains wreck PCO and D'Amore with a chair. D'Amore gets handcuffed to the rope and PCO gets destroyed even worse, including being put through a

chair.

PCO gets thrown down a ramp into the backstage area. After yelling at D'Amore some more, they follow PCO outside and pour....battery acid into PCO's mouth. Then they add lighter fluid and light him on fire. This went on for a LONG time and while the ending looked cool, it was hard to keep interest all the way there.

Post break, we look back at what we just saw.

Scott D'Amore is looking at PCO, who doesn't know how the Slammiversary match is affected and really doesn't care.

Gisele Shaw vs. Courtney Rush

Jai Vidal, Savannah Evans and Jessicka are here too. Shaw runs her over to start so Rush grabs a top wristlock. Rush sends her outside for a breather, followed by a reverse DDT for two back inside. Vidal offers a distraction though and Shaw gets in a kick to the head to start the comeback. A suplex gives Shaw two and frustration is setting in. Rush knocks her away but Evans offers a distraction. Jessicka slugs her down but gets sent into the steps. Vidal gets on the apron as well and that's enough of a distraction for Shaw to grab a rollup with feet on the ropes for the pin at 6:13.

Rating: C. Shaw gets another win as the numbers game is too much for Rush and Jessicka. It wouldn't surprise me to see Shaw accept Deonna Purrazzo's challenge next week, though adding her to the title match at Slammiversary at this point doesn't feel likely. So far the new Death Dollz haven't been doing so well but their whole huge story has had so many twists and turns that something is going to come from all of it.

Kenny King and Sheldon Jean are interrupted by a random fan who has no business being backstage. She tries to put money in King's pants, and another woman does the same. Then Joe Hendry

pops up and produces Yuya Uemura to prevent a 2-1 beatdown. The villains leave.

Here's what's coming on various shows.

Motor City Machine Guns vs. Lio Rush/Nick Aldis

Sabin wants Rush to start but gets Aldis instead. Aldis easily wins an exchange of shoulders and elbows Sabin in the face for a bonus. Rush comes in and starts the dodging, setting up a jumping kick to the head. We hit the rear naked choke but Sabin slips out and slides outside to trip Aldis. Shelley uses the distraction to jump Rush from behind and Sabin gets two off a double stomp.

The abdominal stretch keeps Rush in trouble and Shelley knocks him outside. This time Aldis gets in a cheap shot on Shelley and we take a break. Back with Aldis clotheslining Shelley and stomping away a bit more. Aldis starts in on the leg and Rush comes in for some right hands of his own. Rush chokes in the corner and the bodyscissors goes on. It's back to Aldis for a chinlock but Shelley fights up with a Downward Spiral into the corner.

The tag brings in Sabin to clean house, including a middle rope missile dropkick to Rush. Everything breaks down and a Magic Killer of all things gets two on Rush. Aldis is taken down with a dragon screw legwhip over the ropes, with Rush taking one of his own. The Guns go after Aldis, allowing Rush to hit a big running flip dive to take everyone out. Aldis adds a top rope elbow for two but Rush misses the final Hour.

There's the Dream Sequence to Rush and a cutter drops Aldis. The powerbomb/sliding cutter hits Rush for two with Aldis making the save. Aldis gets the King's Lynn Cloverleaf on Shelley, with Sabin making the save. Rush hits Sabin low and kicks him in the head, setting up the Final Hour for the pin at 17:54.

Rating: B. This took some time to get going but eventually picked up well. What mattered here was setting up the King vs. Sabin title match at Slammiversary and they covered that well. Aldis vs. Shelley is more or less set up in advance, so this was a good way to make both title matches feel more interesting at the same time.

Overall Rating: B. Another solid show here as Slammiversary has come together rather well and I'm wanting to see the show. The PCO thing was quite over the top but it does kind of fit with how intense the feud has been. In addition to that, the title matches got some nice boosts and nothing is feeling overly weak. Next week is set up for the big go home show and now I'm curious to see what they're going to do for the big finale. God stuff here, which might as well be the official subtitle as of late.

Results

Eddie Edwards b. Frankie Kazarian – Boston Knee Party
Sami Callihan/Rich Swann b. Champagne Singh/Shera – Cactus Driver to Singh
Jonathan Gresham b. Angels – Octopus
PCO b. Good Hands – PCOsault to Skyler
Gisele Shaw b. Courtney Rush – Rollup with feet on the ropes

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Hard To Kill 2023: The Hard Part

Hard To Kill 2023

Date: January 13, 2023

Location: Center Stage, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Tom Hannifan, Matthew Rehwoldt

It's back to pay per view and Impact is actually on a heck of a roll right now. They are getting almost everything right at the moment and I'm wanting to see the show a lot more than I would have expected. We have a double main event as Bully Ray is challenging Josh Alexander in a Full Metal Mayhem match, plus Mickie James' Last Rodeo continues as she challenges Jordynne Grace for the Knockouts Title. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Kushida vs. Angels vs. Delirious vs. Mike Bailey vs. Mike Jackson vs. Yuya Uemura

This is a bit weird as the pre-show broadcast begins with most of the wrestlers in the ring, including the previously unadvertised Delirious (seemingly replacing Bhupinder Gujjar). Delirious misses (maybe) a charge at the returning Kushida to start and winds up on the floor. Uemura and Kushida are left in the ring to trade arm holds until Kushida hiptosses him into the basement dropkick.

Delirious comes back in to neckbreaker Kushida but it's Jackson (73 years old) coming in to armdrag Delirious to the floor. Bailey moonsaults onto a pile on the floor, setting up Jackson's suicide dive (Tom: "FOR THE LOVE OF AARP!"), because

of course he does. Back in and Angels takes over but Jackson takes him down by the arm. We hear about Jackson debuting at this venue in 1989 at FORTY years old (Tom: "I was six months old.") before he goes Old School around all four ropes and then dives on everyone else fighting in the ring. Angels is back up with a suplex to Jackson but Delirious pulls Angels down into a Boston crab.

With that broken up, Bailey comes in with the bouncing kicks to Delirious but Uemura dropkicks him down. The running spinning kick in the corner blasts Uemura, only to have Kenny King run in to break up the Ultimate Weapon. With a bunch of people in the corner, Kushida hits his running front flip kicks, setting up the cross armbreaker to make Angels tap at 7:28.

Rating: C+. As usual, it's hard to stand out in any way in this kind of a match and, other than Jackson (because geez), no one exactly did. The good thing is that Kushida is back and can be a huge boost to the X-Division, if not its outright champion. I would have expected Bailey to win here so points for throwing in a fine curve.

Pre-Show: X-Division Title: Black Taurus vs. Trey Miguel

Taurus is challenging and Crazy Steve handles his introduction (for a match originally on the main card). The chase is on outside to start, allowing Miguel to hit some running dropkicks back inside. Back up and Taurus misses a running knee in the corner, allowing Miguel to hit a dive to the floor. Taurus strikes away back inside but it's too early for Destination Hellhole.

A pop up Samoan drop doesn't work either as Miguel reverses into a crucifix bomb (sweet) for two of his own. Miguel goes to the ramp for a running charge, only to dive into a Samoan drop. Taurus shrugs off some strikes and hits a heck of a Pounce. The over the shoulder backbreaker gives Taurus two but

Miguel backdrops a charge out to the floor. A Code Red on the floor rocks Taurus again and the top rope Meteora gives Miguel two more.

Miguel takes him back inside and tries a springboard hurricanrana, which is countered into a super gorilla press (awesome) but Destination Hellhole is countered into the Lightning Spiral. Miguel's feet on the ropes are seen though, meaning it's time for the spray paint. The referee takes that away (art hater) so Miguel whips out another can and blinds Taurus, setting up another Lightning Spiral to retain at 10:15.

Rating: C+. They had some pretty cool spots in there as Taurus can do all kinds of things, including mixing in some power. At the same time you have Miguel really finding his niche as a heel and the spray paint works well for him. Then again with Kushida around, that title could be in some serious jeopardy rather soon.

The roster is on the stage for a tribute to Don West. The show is dedicated to him and we get a ten bell salute (with what sounds like Josh Matthews directing the person ringing the bell).

The opening video talks about how eventually you hit rock bottom, but that doesn't mean it is the end of you. People can fight back up and overcome everything, because you are hard to kill.

Impact Wrestling World Title: Bully Ray vs. Josh Alexander

Alexander is defending in Full Metal Mayhem, meaning TLC with pins/submissions. Ray hides during the entrances and jumps Alexander from behind to start things fast. A belt shot to the face has Alexander in more trouble and Ray sends a table inside before the opening bell. Ray tosses him inside and demands the bell ring but the bloody Alexander has to say yes first. Sure he's in, so the bell rings and Ray powerbombs him

through a table for two to start fast.

We go old school (of course) as Ray whips out a cheese grater so Alexander gets smart by punching Ray in the face. The grater to the face sends Ray (bleeding as well) outside. Some trashcan lid shots tot he head have Ray in more trouble and there's the grater to the head to draw the real blood. The thumbtacks are brought in but Alexander chairs him in the back first.

Alexander puts Ray on a table on the ramp and loads up a ladder, only to have Ray tip it over and send him into the ring, onto the tacks. The Bully Bomb is broken up and Alexander hits a German suplex to rock Ray again. A Regal Roll onto the tacks set up a middle rope knee (with chain wrapped around) to the head. The ankle lock goes on but Jason Hotch and John Skyler run in for the save. A 3D onto the tacks gets two on Alexander so the goons zip tie him to the top rope.

Cue Tommy Dreamer for the save with a trashcan shot to Ray. That earns Dreamer a spear through the table in the corner, leaving Alexander to get trash canned in the head. Cue Alexander's wife Jade (not supposed to be here) to beg him for mercy (Ray: "I WANT TO SEE TEARS!"). Ray demands her wedding ring but gets low blowed instead. Sliced Bread onto the tacks (Jade is a former wrestler so it's not insane) knocks Ray silly and Alexander is loose. Ray is put on another table and a splash from the ladder drives him through it for two. The ankle lock makes Ray tap at 17:02.

Rating: B-. This is a tricky one as the match wasn't all that great, mainly due to a bunch of stalling and interference taking away from the action. That being said, I'll absolutely take this over what would have been a pretty lame regular match between these two. Ray losing should get rid of him, at least at this level, for a good stretch. Alexander gets to retain again, but he needs a better challenger next time. What Ray did in the feud and here as well was far from awful, but

it was really hard to get around the fact that it was Bully Ray in this spot at this time.

Victoria/Tara gives Mickie James a pep talk before her Knockouts Title match (now the main event) against Jordynne Grace. Raven pops in to say he wanted to be here in case it's the end for James (since he was here at the beginning for her).

We recap the Tag Team Title match. All of the teams save for Bullet Club keep attacking each other and trading wins so now the titles are on the line.

Tag Team Titles: Motor City Machine Guns vs. Bullet Club vs. Major Players vs. Heath/Rhino

The Guns are defending under elimination rules and it's Ace Austin/Chris Bey for the Club. It's a brawl to start (duh) before the bell as the referee can't get this down to one wrestler from two teams to make things official. We finally get Rhino beating on Myers to ring the bell with Heath coming in to hammer away almost immediately. Myers gets out of trouble and brings in Cardona for a neckbreaker on Heath.

It's right back to Myers for two off a knee drop and the lifting Downward Spiral gets two. Heath is back up with the super powerslam, which is enough for the tag back to Rhino to clean house. A quick distraction lets Cardona send Rhino into the corner, setting up the rollup pin to get rid of Heath/Rhino at 3:39.

Bey comes in to roll Cardona up as the pace picks way up. Myers comes in to snap a suplex for two on Bey but it's back to Cardona for more neckbreakers. An enziguri gets Bey out of trouble though and it's Austin coming in to kick away. Austin's springboard missile dropkick sends Myers sprawling and Shelley tags himself in to start on Austin's leg. A dragon screw legwhip gets two on Austin and we hit the Figure Four.

With that broken up, Austin manages an enziguri and kicks Sabin away, allowing Bey to come in and beat up the Major Players. An assisted Art of Finesse sets up the Fold to pin Myers at 10:23, leaving us with the Guns vs. the Bullet Club. Sabin takes out the Club on his own and it's Shelley coming back in to double team Austin. Back up and the assisted Art of Finesse hits Sabin but Myers is still here for a distraction. Sabin suicide dives onto Bey and it's the Dirt Bomb to retain the titles at 13:10.

Rating: B. This was about cramming as many people in there as you could get away with but the elimination rules held a lot. Getting rid of some of those people makes all of the difference in the world and the Guns feel like they won instead of surviving. I'm a bit surprised that they won, but more Guns is not a bad thing.

As the Guns go to leave, Frankie Kazarian comes out for a surprise chat. Kazarian talks about everything he has been doing lately and announces that he has signed a long term deal with Impact Wrestling, meaning he is done with AEW. If he isn't doing anything in AEW, making the move makes sense for him.

We recap Joe Hendry defending the Digital Media Title against Moose. Hendry has been getting on Moose's nerves so he's coming after the title.

Digital Media Title: Joe Hendry vs. Moose

Hendry is defending and they start fast with Hendry elbowing him in the face and grabbing a spinning slam. Moose tosses him over the top and takes it to the floor for a posting. That doesn't do much to Hendry, who loads up a suplex, walks halfway around the ring, and then drops Moose.

Back in and Moose kicks him down before stomping on various things. A slap to the face wakes Hendry up though and he fireman's carry tosses Moose out to the floor. Moose is right

back with a chokebomb out of the corner for two, followed by a top rope superplex for the same. They get back up and strike it out until Hendry hits a clothesline. The Standing Ovation doesn't work as Moose hits a release Rock Bottom for two instead.

That's enough for Moose, who goes to grab the title. With that taken away, it's a low blow to set up the spear to give Moose the pin and the title. Hold on though as here is Santino Marella (by that name) to announce that he is the new Director Of Authority. Marella, with the thick accent and weird way of speaking, says he doesn't like cheaters so we're restarting this thing. Hendry grabs the Standing Ovation to retain at 14:05.

Rating: C+. Well so much for a lot of my enjoyment around this place. Santino has never been someone I particularly care to see and now we'll have to see his WACKY (and repetitive) comedy every week because he was a thing about twelve years ago. As for the match, good on letting Hendry have a big win, as he is getting somewhere with this run and needed a bigger win to make it work. I'm curious to see how far this version can go, because he seems to have all of the tools.

We look back at Kenny King costing Mike Bailey the pre-show match.

King isn't sure why Bailey is wrestling when they're going into the Fight Pit next week. That's the Bailey King wants and he better bring it.

Masha Slamovich vs. Killer Kelly vs. Taylor Wilde vs. Deonna Purrazzo

For a future Women's Title match. Slamovich goes after Wilde to start and they fight to the floor, leaving Kelly to forearms Purrazzo. That doesn't last long and it's Purrazzo hitting a dive, followed by Slamovich hitting one of her own. Back in and Wilde chokes Kelly in the ropes until Purrazzo

comes back in for the save.

Purrazzo and Wilde both grab a half crab on Kelly at the same time but both of them are broken up. After a series of knockdowns, Kelly grabs the Killer Klutch on Purrazzo. Wilde Crossfaces Slamovich at the same time but Slamovich fights up and Snowplows Wilde onto the other two for the pin and the title shot at 9:21.

Rating: C. This was a bit of a mess but it was also weirdly put together. You have Kelly, who was pushed hard for a few weeks and then more or less dropped. You have Wilde, who got a new gimmick about two weeks ago and already lost. You have Purrazzo, who could be slotted into any title match needed but has already had her time with the title. Then you have Slamovich, who lost both of her big matches, as well as a match to Wilde last week. That's not exactly building her up, but at least she is getting another title shot.

We recap Rich Swann vs. Steve Maclin. While Maclin is all about violence and destruction, Swann is standing up to him and is ready to fight. Now it's falls count anywhere so they can get more violent.

Rich Swann vs. Steve Maclin

Falls count anywhere and Raven is on commentary. Maclin jumps Swann in the back during an interview and the fight is on fast. A missed charge sends Maclin into a dumpster (Raven: "Yeah that was kind of dumb.") but he's right back with a bucket shot for two. They fight outside near the traffic, with Raven wanting to see one of them hit by a car.

Swann is fine enough to hit a cartwheel cutter but they stop to fight against a moving car, which is leaving the arena for some reason. Some shovel shots stagger Maclin and they come into the arena, where Maclin plants him onto the apron for two. They get inside for the first time with Swann hitting a running dropkick into the corner. It's right back to the floor

where Swann hits another cutter for two more.

Back in and Swann kicks away, only to get launched onto the ramp. Swann kicks him off the ramp and hits the splash for two. Maclin staggers up and counters a running hurricanrana off the apron into a Liger Bomb. A missed elbow lets Swann hit a superkick but Maclin hits him with a piece of barricade. The KIA on the ramp finishes Swann at 11:42.

Rating: C. I wasn't wild on the match itself as it was such a brawl that the wrestling was barely a factor. The good things here were of course Raven on commentary as he has that riffing style that can be hilarious, plus the continued rise of Maclin. There is almost no way anyone else is the next challenger for the World Title and it wouldn't surprise me to see him win the thing. Not a bad brawl, but what matters is Maclin racking up another win over another former World Champion.

We recap Jonathan Gresham vs. Eddie Edwards. Last year saw Edwards as part of Honor No More and Gresham is all about honor. Now Gresham is back for revenge so let's have a fight.

Eddie Edwards vs. Jonathan Gresham

Feeling out process to start with Edwards bailing to the floor after getting out technical. Edwards brings Gresham outside with him, misses a clothesline, and gets frustrated at Gresham being back inside. Back in and Gresham sends him outside for a change, immediately followed by a fast dive. They get back inside again with Edwards snapping off an overhead belly to belly to take over.

Gresham grabs some armdrags and kicks at the arm before cranking away. Edwards manages a powerslam to escape and a hanging cutter gets two. A neckbreaker gets the same but Gresham is back up and cranks on the arm again. They strike it out until Gresham hits an enziguri into a standing moonsault for two of his own. A Blue Thunder Bomb gets Edwards out of

trouble but his arm is all banged up.

The Backpack Stunner is broken up and Gresham sends him outside for the suicide dive. Back in and Edwards loads up a superplex, which is reversed into a choke with Edwards still on the ropes. Edwards is smart enough to drop straight down onto the buckle for the escape and a sitout powerbomb gets two. They go into a pinfall reversal sequence for two each until a tiger driver gives Edwards two more. The Boston Knee Party finishes Gresham at 18:49.

Rating: B. This was a heck of a match as Gresham is a technical master but Edwards is good enough to hold his own against him. That left the idea of Gresham still fighting for honor and Edwards trying to prove he still had it. As a result, you had two guys trying to pick up the win wherever they could until Edwards finally knocked Gresham silly for the win. Good stuff here, which you had to expect from this combination.

Post match the lights go out and (as the chants give away the reveal), it's the returning PCO, spitting sand out of his mouth. Edwards gets chokeslammed and the monster is back.

We recap Mickie James vs. Jordynne Grace for the Knockouts Title. James wants to prove that she still has it by winning the Knockouts Title one more time. Otherwise, she is retiring, giving us the huge stakes.

Knockouts Title: Jordynne Grace vs. Mickie James

James is challenging and some Native American dancers play her to the ring. As a bonus, her family (minus Nick Aldis) is in the front row. After the Big Match Intros, Grace powers her into the corner to start and James can't even grab a rollup. James slaps her a few times before getting dropped with a heck of a slap from Grace.

Back up and Grace double stomps her out of the corner, meaning

it's time to start the real beating. Grace stomps away and tells James to stay down, only to pull her up in the corner. We'll call that a mixed message as Grace misses a running knee in the corner and a super bulldog gives James a breather. They slug it out until James kicks her in the face before taking it out to the ramp.

The Thesz press drops Grace again but she blocks the MickDT. James settles for a guillotine but Grace muscles her to the top for a superplex floated into a Jackhammer for two more. James comes back with a flapjack into a nipup and now the Thesz press connects for another near fall. A spinebuster cuts James off and a sitout powerbomb gets two. Grace hits her in the neck of all things but a Tombstone is countered with a headscissors.

The Mick Kick is shrugged off so they hit a pinfall reversal sequence for two each. The Grace Driver is countered into a small package for two and another Mick Kick staggers Grace this time. The MickDT gives us the real near fall but Grace pulls her into a sleeper with a bodyscissors. Mickie powers up again though and Grace misses a charge into the post. That's enough for Mickie to grab a tornado DDT for the pin and the title at 19:22.

Rating: B. This had the drama it needed but never quite got to the level of epic. What mattered here was having Mickie prove she can still do it against a top star. A lot of that comes from having Grace built up as a monster over the last several months, meaning James' opponent meant something here in addition to the title. I'm glad this headlined the show as it was the better story all the way up to the show and they certainly delivered with what they were trying to do.

James' family and Tara get in the ring to celebrate with her to end the show.

No word on why the Death Dollz vs. Gisele Shaw/Tasha

Steelz/Savannah Evans didn't take place.

Overall Rating: B. The show was rather good for the most part with nothing bad, but there were some weak parts in the middle that dragged it down a bit. What mattered was the big matches delivered and I was into seeing Mickie get the title back to end the Last Rodeo. The important thing about Impact is that they aren't doing anything horrible or even bad, and that is a huge step forward over their more infamous years. Overall, good show and they did what they needed to do to start the new year.

Results

Kushida b. Angels, Delirious, Mike Jackson, Yuya Uemura and Mike Bailey – Cross armbreaker to Angels

Trey Miguel b. Black Taurus – Lightning Spiral

Josh Alexander b. Bully Ray – Ankle lock

Motor City Machine Guns b. Bullet Club, Heath/Rhino and Major Players – Dirt Bomb to Bey

Joe Hendry b. Moose – Standing Ovation

Masha Slamovich b. Taylor Wilde, Deonna Purrazzo and Killer Kelly – Snowplow to Wilde

Steve Maclin b. Rich Swann – KIA

Eddie Edwards b. Jonathan Gresham – Boston Knee Party

Mickie James b. Jordynne Grace – Tornado DDT

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