

New York Wrestling Connection Psycho Circus 17: Before They Were Stars

Psycho Circus 17

Date: February 23, 2019

Location: NYWC Sportatorium, Deer Park, New York

Commentators: Christopher Andrews, Matt Striker

This is from the New York Wrestling Connection, a promotion out of New York (shocking I know) that has been around for almost twenty years. As is usually the case, I know nothing about the show coming in and that can make things fun. Granted I'm not sure how much fun a show called Psycho Circus is going to be but let's get to it.

Keep in mind that I know nothing about this place coming in so I'm not going to have any idea about characters or storylines.

The unnamed hosts welcome us to the show and we've got a concept to start: a SAFE SPACE match.

Beer Belly Bandits vs. Shook Crew

That would be Bo Prichard/JT Kasin/Spyder vs. Bobby Orlando/Bryce Donovan/Max Caster (there's a surprise, along with his rather awesome mustache) and...egads Matt freaking Striker is doing commentary for this nearly three hour show. Freaking joy. There is a table in the ring with a bunch of red Solo cups, plus some trashcans. Hold on though as Caster has a mic and seems to be a hype man for Orlando.

Coach Mammone is here to read the rules, which says there will be NO violence in the ring, but rather only fun, safe games. If you break the rules, you get a strike, and three strikes means you're out. The coach gets punched down and

the Bandits head outside as Striker realizes he screwed up by calling this a battle royal. Seriously, why does this guy keep getting hired?

The Bandits get back inside and we start with a game of throwing a Frisbee into a trashcan. Hold on though as the Frisbee winds up in the crowd, meaning the brawl can head to the floor. Everyone gets back inside and now let's play some beer pong. This results in the Bandits having to drink a lot...until one of them throws a bowling ball through the table. This turns into a tug of war over Caster, who backdrops the referee into an accidental powerbomb.

The brawling is on with the Crew getting the better of things, including with a pillow shot to the face. Spyder gets Orlando to the ramp as Striker wonders how this is a safe space. Hold on though as the Crew goes under the ring, but Swoggle (not Hornswoggle, Striker) comes out to chase them back inside. It's time to bust out the bubble wrap, with Orlando being powerbombed...well next to a goat (of some kind).

That's good for a cover but Caster comes from the back with Officer Warren Barksdale. The Bandits are in violent of the safe space, meaning Prichard is handcuffed. This allows Striker to make jokes about the Mueller Report as the Crew wraps Kasin in bubble wrap for the pin at 10:09.

Rating: D+. I guess that counts as a match? Maybe? I'm not sure what to make of something like this because it was mainly a joke that went on for a long time without much of a payoff. This is something that probably shouldn't have opened the show, though there is a good chance that they did this first so they didn't have to worry about setting everything up later. That doesn't mean it's worth seeing or even having, though Caster as a low level guy on a low level show is cool to see.

The ring has to be cleared.

Joker's Wild Battle Royal

There are several entrants here and since the audio isn't great, their names aren't exactly easy to understand. A few highlights: Officer Warren Barksdale, an unnamed woman, and Swoggle, among about fifteen other entrants. Swoggle is left in the middle of the ring as everyone starts fighting around him as we're told the winner gets....uh, something that we don't hear, as Swoggle punches the whistling Coach Mammette in the face.

That makes Mammone take off his pants but it's time for everyone to go after the huge Apollyon and dump him out. Commentary finally gets to reveal that it's a title shot on the line as everyone brawls on the ropes without much of a threat of an elimination. People are being tossed out with commentary not mentioning them as Swoggle has a drink. We're down to eight after about four minutes and some more guys are tossed, leaving us with four.

J Rad (Maybe?) is eliminated via a bite from Swoggle, leaving us with Swoggle, Irish, and someone not important enough to name. Swoggle is back up with some German suplexes tot he guy who isn't named Irish. The toss takes too long though, allowing the guy not named Irish to stomp away on the very banged up Irish in the corner. Apparently it's Tinder Tom (what a name), who takes Swoggle down but gets sat on the apron. Irish eventually forearm Tom out, leaving Irish vs. Swoggle (I wonder if that counts as a civil war). Hold on though as Swoggle eliminates himself, telling Irish to win the title at 9:40.

Rating: D. I know the idea of a battle royal is to be wild and follows the idea of the one standing, but it doesn't help much when you aren't told who most of the people are or what they are fighting for until a few minutes in. Most of the wrestlers were not named here and it made things more than a little uninteresting. Swoggle not winning was a

bit of a surprise, but I have no idea who these people are or why I should care about them winning.

We see some clips of Matt Striker in a NYWC ring over the years. Of note: they're airing this on the video screen and pointing the camera at it for the budget version. Apparently he and someone named Mike Mistretta don't like each other and get to fight here.

Matt Striker vs. Mike Mistretta

Mistretta has a manager and a tag team (they were in the battle royal) with him and seems to be the villain. If they think I'm going to cheer for Striker, this place is crazier than I thought. Feeling out process to start as Striker is indeed the favorite here, which is still bizarre to see. Striker takes him to the mat and neither can get very far. Instead they interlock their legs and stand on their heads for a slap off, which doesn't last long. As commentary talks about Striker having a 90s Aaron Carter hair cut, Striker rolls him up and grabs a slam out of the corner.

The manager offers a distraction to break up a Fujiwara armbar and that's good for an ejection. The tag team is out as well, leaving it one on one. Mistretta jumps over him in the corner but gets pulled into a rear naked choke. As Striker looks over his shoulder, the manager and the tag team come back with a chair but get held back by the referee. The distraction lets a rather big man come in and chokeslam Striker so Mistretta can get the pin at 5:32.

Rating: C-. It was ok while it lasted but a good chunk of the match was spent on the interference and shenanigans. That being said, seeing Striker get beaten up is a nice thing. At the same time though, this company REALLY needs to work on its commentary, as they were too busy cracking jokes to explain anything going on here. It seems like there is a story, but when we don't even hear the names of the people involved, there are some gaps left to fill.

The villains pose over Striker in a nice touch. Striker stays down for a LONG time, which has been a theme after the matches so far.

Papadon/Talon vs. New York Wrecking Crew

The Crew (second one of the night) is Chris Seaton/Smoothie Blackmon. It's a brawl to start with the Crew clearing the ring, though Papadon and Talon bail from the threat of dives. Seaton hits a suicide dive of his own and we head back inside for the opening bell (I thought I missed it). Talon shoves Seaton down to take over and a Falcon Arrow gives Talon two. It's off to Papadon, who holds off a sunset flip long enough to bring Talon back in to cut Seaton off.

A snap suplex gives Papadon two, causing commentary to say "shades of someone we can't talk about but no one did it better." Talon comes back in with a slingshot elbow and the chinlock goes on to keep Seaton in trouble. With that broken up, it's a quick tag to the bigger Blackmon to clean house. A spinebuster gets two on Papadon, who gets caught between some alternating right hands. Papadon bites his way to freedom and Seaton is sent outside, leaving Blackmon to get spike piledriver for the pin at 7:36.

Rating: C. Rather odd to hear reference aside, this was a rather formula based tag match and that didn't make for the most interesting stuff. I've seen Blackmon elsewhere and he got to showcase some of his talents rather well here, though he was really just the hot tag guy. Papadon and Talon worked pretty well together, even if the match wasn't exactly on fire.

We look at the screen for another video, this time from someone we can't hear about something we can't understand. It seems like we have some former partners fighting after one turned on the other. Fair enough.

Blake Morrison vs. Bam Sullivan

Before the match, Morrison tells Sullivan to get out here and shake his hand so this is over. Sullivan starts fast and hammers away in the corner before dumping Morrison out to the floor. Morrison is sent outside, where a slingshot dive drops him again. They slug it out on the ramp until Sullivan hits a backdrop over the top. The referee has to take away a chair so Sullivan throws in the steps and poses a bit.

That takes longer than it should, allowing Morrison to boot him out to the floor. Back in and we hit the chinlock but Sullivan is right back up with a suplex slam. Morrison is able to pull him off the top for a big crash but Sullivan gets back up for a missile dropkick. The discus lariat drops Morrison again and a Razor's Edge gives Sullivan two. Sullivan hits a spear on the referee by mistake, but since he underestimates his own abilities, he knocks Morrison down and still expects a count. Cue some of Sullivan's friends with a chair but Morrison grabs a mic and offers Sullivan peace one more time. Then Sullivan's friends turn on him with the chair, allowing Morrison to grab a Tombstone for the pin at 10:09.

Rating: C. It was nice to have a bigger angle like this on the show as it hasn't been the easiest thing to get into so far. This felt like a betrayal and that is something that almost anyone is going to be able to understand. The match came off like two guys who wanted to hurt each other two and that is going to boost things up. Neither exactly stood out, though Morrison was a nice squirrely heels.

Big O vs. Randy Summers

You might remember Big O (a huge musclehead) as Zack Ryder's friends on his internet series. Summers has a rather energetic entrance and spins around a lot once he gets in the ring. They stare at each other to start and it's Summers bailing to the floor. Back in and O powers his

way out of a headlock without much trouble and a sleeper gives Summers the same amount of success.

Some shoulders and a running clothesline in the corner have Summers in more trouble, until he goes after 0's recently injured ankle. The leg is wrapped around the post and Summers gets to pose a lot. 0 uses the good leg to kick him away, only to have Summers go after the leg again. A springboard cutter (nice one too) gets two on 0 and the ankle lock goes on. What appears to be a tap (pretty clearly too) is apparently 0 reaching for the ropes so Summers goes up and misses a top rope stomp.

0's leg gives out on a powerslam though and a running knee gives Summers two. The leg is fine enough to pull Summers out of the air for the powerslam but the pain means it's a delayed two instead. Summers is right back with the ankle lock, complete with a grapevine, but 0 makes the rope again. Back up and Summers charges into a spinebuster for the pin (with 0 picking up the arm for some reason) at 9:56.

Rating: C+. When you have someone who looks like 0, you don't really expect much in the way of quality, but it worked out nicely here. They told a story with Summers taking out the leg to slow 0 down but not being able to do enough to keep him down. This was a nice surprise and 0 has actually developed into something of a wrestler rather than just a bodybuilder with a chokeslam.

Post match Summers suggests that he has a concussion off the spinebuster. Summers calls 0 a good guy who is nice to everyone backstage. 0 doesn't look pleased and it gets worse as Summers talks about his brother getting hurt in a car wreck. After the wreck, 0 came to see him and made him feel great again, because that's the kind of man he is. They go for a hug and Summers kicks him low for a heck of a heel turn. That one got me so well done.

John Silver vs. Mike Verna vs. Aidan Baal vs. Jaden Valo vs. Corey Cooper vs. Joey Conway

One fall to a finish and the winner gets an Independent Wrestling TV Title shot. Thankfully everyone gets an entrance and we have tags here as commentary tries to figure out why this is called a SUICIDAL SIX WAY. Valo gets jumped by Baal from behind but it's off to Verna to knock Baal to the floor. It seems that we're having lucha rules here so Conway comes in with a clothesline and a moonsault.

Verna kicks away at Conway until Silver comes in and literally tosses people around to clean house. A big dive drops a bunch of people but Conway's version takes out even more. That leaves Verna to go up top for a big flip dive, with Valo following with a top rope moonsault onto the pile. Back in and Valo goes Delaware with a froggy bow for two on Verna but Cooper makes the save. Verna fireman's carries both of them, but Silver German suplexes all three at once (geez), earning the right to pose.

Standing Sliced Bread drops Conway and one heck of a frog splash gives Silver two on Baal (the fans aren't thrilled with that kickout). Commentary points out that Baal has split his pants as Conway hits a backpack Stunner for two on Silver. Verna hits a powerbomb/World's Strongest Slam combination for two as Cooper is back in with a 450 to Verna, with Baal making the save. Valo gets to clean some house but Conway picks him up. That just lets Silver toss the two of them, causing Valo to Canadian Destroyer Conway. One heck of a running knee gives Silver the pin and the title shot at 8:23.

Rating: C+. Silver would go on to become the biggest star out of this group and that isn't a surprise. He has the charisma that you can't teach and that power game is enough to get him really far. Throw in the unique look and it's easy to understand why he has been so successful. Verna was

the only other one that stood out here and I could go for a bit more of him too.

Independent Wrestling TV Title: John Silver vs. Orange Cassidy

Silver is challenging and has to dodge the lazy kicks to start. Cassidy ducks some slow motion lefts and rights as commentary asks why Silver isn't going for the legs. With the hands still in the pockets, Cassidy flips over him and nails a dropkick into a nipup (which commentary says "makes Shawn Michaels jealous".).

Silver takes him down and forces the hands out of the pockets, setting up a hard clothesline. They head outside with Silver being sent into the barricade, setting up a top rope DDT for two. A fisherman's suplex gets the same and it's time to start on Silver's leg. The leg is fine enough for a brainbuster and they're both down.

Back up and Cassidy goes slow again, allowing Silver to strike away. Another brainbuster is countered into a Stunner, setting up a Canadian Destroyer to give Cassidy two. With nothing else working, Cassidy goes over to get some orange juice but Silver knocks it away. Silver goes to pick him up but the knee gives out, allowing Cassidy to grab la majistral for the pin at 10:02.

Rating: C+. This wasn't bad, as Cassidy only did his shtick at the beginning and then got things back to seriousness. He's still fun to watch as a novelty act like this, which is probably why I got tired of him in a hurry in AEW. Silver continues to be a blast to watch as he is such a ball of charisma. If he was six inches taller, he would be a star.

Respect is shown post match.

We're cut to a bit later, as a....something has been set up. There is one wall of a cage, one wall of barbed wire, and

one chain above the top rope with weapons hanging above. This is the Psycho Circus, so there's your namesake match.

NYWC World Title/Starlet Title/Fusion Title/Tag Team Titles: Team Bull James vs. The Culture

Ok, this is a BIG one.

The Culture (King Mega – World Title, Brandon Watts – Rush Title, Dave McCall/Nate Carter – Tag Team Champions, Willow Nightingale – Starlet Title and Kris Bishop, who isn't a champion) is defending (as in ALL titles are on the line) against Bull James/Bran Benson/CJ Benson/Kris Statlander/Mouse/Rex Lawless. Whenever anyone pins anyone, the two of them are eliminated and that title has been decided.

The match is basically WarGames with timed entrances, with James starting with Watts and heading to the floor to hide. Watts gets back in and gets annoyed at the idea of being sent into something, meaning it's time for more stalling. Back in and Watts goes for a kendo stick but gets knocked to the floor as James glares down at him again. James finally gets his hands on Watts for a running splash in the corner but time expires. Kris Bishop is in to give the Culture an advantage for two minutes, but James clotheslines both of them down.

A slingshot Codebreaker drops James though and it's Rex Lawless (he's a big guy) to clean house as things are evened up. The Culture gets Samoan dropped/fall away slammed at the same time but it's Nate Carter in to uneven the odds again. Carter also brings in a baseball bat to start hammering on people until Kris Statlander comes in to clean house as well. James hits Carter low with the bat but it's Dave McCall in to make it 4-3.

McCall uses the cookie sheet to take over and a Coast to Coast makes it worse. CJ Benson comes in and makes the save but McCall/Carter hit Cryme Tyme's G9. Willow Nightingale

is in and gets in the face of Lawless, who towers over her. Then she kisses him, as the two seem to be an item. Then Nightingale hits him low and pours tacks in his mouth, because you have to have tacks. A superkick to the mouth makes it worse and there's a Death Valley Driver into the ladder in the corner to keep Lawless down.

Brad Benson is in to even things up and hits a big dive off the cage to take off most of the people at the same time. Cue King Mega to complete the Culture and, after taking over a minute to get to the ring (with a grocery bag of something), it's time for a bunch of chokeslams. Statlander gets a drink of something and spits it in Mega's face, earning herself a powerbomb. Now it's Mouse (with a stick) coming in to really clean house as everyone is in.

Bishop and Mouse fight over the stick until Bishop puts him on the top. Mouse kicks him away and gets the stick back. Mega doesn't mind as it's a huge chokeslam, allowing Bishop to pin Mouse for the elimination. Statlander is back with the Legos and a dropkick knocks Mega onto them for the painful looking landing. Watts and Nightingale launch Statlander into the cage but the Bensons make a save with various metal objects. CJ loads up a ladder and goes up....because the Tag Team Titles are up there? Sure why not.

Lawless goes up but gets shoved down onto nothing, seemingly crashing out to the floor. The Bensons hit an assisted moonsault onto Carter but McCall is back up with a shot to Brad's head. The big ladder is brought in, with Brad driving it into McCall's ribs against the cage. McCall and Carter make a save though and it's a powerbomb to drive CJ through Brad to put the Bensons down. That's enough for Carter and McCall to go up and pull down the titles to get rid of the two of them, plus the Bensons (thankfully clearing things WAY out).

Statlander comes back with the skewers to Nightingale's

head (because of course), setting up an ax kick to get rid of Nightingale and win the Starlets Title. That leaves us with Mega/Watts vs. Lawless/James, with the latter loading up the table in the corner. James punches Mega and Watts down but Mega is back up with a hiptoss through the table for two. Watts adds a frog splash for two so James goes after Mega, only to get rolled up by Watts for the pin.

That leaves us with Mega vs. Lawless for the World Title, which has James rather annoyed. Mega slugs away and hits a chokeslam onto the apron for two, with Lawless shouting a lot after the kickout. Another chokeslam is countered and Mega is shoved into the barbed wire. A chokebomb gives Lawless two but here is the Culture for some cheap shots.

Lawless and Mega fight up to the stage, where Mega knocks him onto a barbed wire board. Back in and Mega loads up a bunch of weapons, only to get hit in the head with a chair. Cue the Culture AGAIN but Lawless fights them off and shoves Mega onto the pile of chairs for the pin and the title at 38:22.

Rating: B-. I'm not sure where to start with this one but I do like the concept. This was quite the insane match and the idea let everyone get in there and do something at some point. Lawless stood out a bit due to his size, though Mega didn't exactly seem to be able to do much outside of power. The name Circus really fits here as it was a lot of insanity, but having it be elimination let things settle back down as you wondered who would be able to go after which title. Good concept, though some of the weapons got a bit too silly.

Post match the winners come out to celebrate, setting up a staredown with the Culture. Mega and James hug and Mega raises Lawless' hand to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This was kind of a weird one, but the action was good enough to make the whole show work out. I

like the concept of the main event and I'll take that over some showdown that doesn't exactly feel all that important. One thing the show could work on is telling us more about what is going on, but I can overlook some of that for the sake of an entertaining show. Tighten some things up a bit and you have something better, but for now, it's a good enough event.

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Ring of Honor TV – February 22, 2017: It Doesn't Balance Out

Ring of Honor

Date: February 22, 2017

Location: Center Stage Theater, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentator: Kevin Kelly

We're finally ready for the end of the Decade of Excellence

Tournament with Jay Briscoe vs. Christopher Daniels in what should be a pretty obvious ending based on the story they've been going with. Other than that there's a good chance we'll be seeing more Bullet Club because that's how this place works. Let's get to it. The opening recap of course looks at the tournament, as it should. Opening sequence.

Silas Young vs. Bull James

An early Beer City Bruiser distraction lets Silas get in a few early cheap shots but James puts his feet on Silas' shoulders and pulls him out to the floor. That was supposed to be an ankle scissors but the lack of ANY grip around Silas' head made it clear he was flipping himself. Another Bruiser distraction lets Silas hit a flip dive to take James down and we take a break.

Back with Young working on a cravate as the fans tell someone that they're fat. It's not a good sign when you can't tell if they're yelling at the face in the match or the heel manager. Bull makes his comeback with a Flip Flop and Fly followed by an elbow for two (you're no Dusty Rhodes kid). James goes up but opts to run (work with me here) at the Bruiser for a tornado DDT off the apron instead. Back in and Misery puts James away at 7:48.

Rating: D-. Matt Borne told Bull James that he would make a million dollars in this business. I think this is proof that Borne wasn't that bright. This is a rare match where all the good is on one guy and all the bad is on another. James is just big, slow and completely uninteresting. Young was doing what he could be he was limited by dealing with a horrible opponent.

Jay Briscoe was the first man to come through the curtain at a Ring of Honor show and it's all about the numbers. It's been fifteen years, ten years, eight time Tag Team Champion, three time World Champion or whatever. All that matters now is one, and that's Christopher Daniels.

We look back at Bobby Fish's rise to the main event, including winning Survival of the Fittest and then making Adam Cole tap last

week. Those were just steps towards becoming World Champion because that's the only thing that matters. No one works harder than he does and he promises to win the World Title on March 4. Fish has dominated every title he's ever set his sight on and this will be no different. He gets in a good catchphrase with "Being Bobby Fish is good enough."

Colt Cabana vs. The Boys

Yes this feud is still going. Before the match, Cabana laughs off the idea of Dalton Castle (on commentary here) thinking he's the better man. Cabana: "I'm a legend!" Dalton names them #1 and #2 as the beating begins, despite the lack of an opening bell. Colt easily works them over until a double pose sends him outside. Back from a break (In this match?) with Cabana doing some Bionic Elbows and hiptossing #1 over the top for a big crash. Colt throws #1 into Dalton, hits the Chicago Skyline on #2 and grabs the Billy Goat's Curse for the tap out at about 6:00. Not enough to rate but it was a long squash.

Daniels lists all of his accomplishments but none of them matter without winning the World Title. It is his destiny to win the title and it will cement him as the best instead of the best that never was.

Video on the history of the Top Prospect Tournament, which starts up next week.

Mark Briscoe and Frankie Kazarian come out for commentary on the main event. That's a good idea actually.

Decade of Excellence Tournament Finals: Jay Briscoe vs. Christopher Daniels

The winner gets a World Title match at the Fifteenth Anniversary Show. Before the match, Daniels says Briscoe is the last obstacle between him and destiny. Briscoe says this isn't personal at all. Feeling out process to start and both guys fail at an early finisher. Back from a break with Jay having to fight out of a headlock with the announcers keeping things calm.

Briscoe starts swinging and kicks Daniels in the face to take over as it seems he's playing the default heel, though it's not like the fans dislike either guy. Daniels gets in an STO and scores with a Lionsault for two. There's a Koji Clutch (love that move) for a good bit until Jay makes the rope.

Angel's Wings have to be broken up and Kazarian is quoting Karate Kid. Back from a second break with Jay hitting a suicide dive but getting caught with a springboard moonsault to put both guys down on the floor. The seconds both head to ringside and it's a double crossbody to put both guys down inside. Double clotheslines have no effect so it's time for a slugout. A quick Angel's Wings gets two on Jay and frustration is setting in.

Jay is slow to get up but grabs the Death Valley Driver for a breather. Daniels misses the BME and gets his head taken off with a clothesline for two more. The drama is getting really strong here and the fans are split, as you might expect. With the Jay Driller not working, Jay takes him to the top but gets crotched for his efforts. A super Angel's Wings is enough to give Daniels the tournament at 18:03.

Rating: B. Good, clean ending here and that's all it should have been. This didn't need to be an angle filled match because Daniels is going to be the mega face going into the title match and you don't need some stupid cheating to get him there. I'm actually wanting to see Daniels win the title and that's not something I expected. I've never been a big Daniels guy but they've nailed the story here and that's what matters.

They shake hands to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. That main event was good but it's not enough to make up for the rest of the show being such a disaster. It really is telling to see how horrible the rest of the show is compared to the one good thing they have going at the moment. Ring of Honor is a mess at the moment and I can't imagine things getting much better anytime soon. We're coming up on Wrestlemania season, which should be the biggest time of the year for any promotion, but there's

nothing even lukewarm right now around here and that's a very bad sign.

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