

Impact Wrestling/NJPW Multiverse United 2: Now For A Very Special Feature

Multiverse United 2: For Whom The Bell Tolls

Date: August 20, 2023

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Matthew Rehwoldt, Tom Hannifan, Veda Scott

This is a special show as it's a battle between Impact Wrestling and New Japan. The original version was held over Wrestlemania weekend and now we could be in for a cool sequel. This includes a main event of Alex Shelley defending the Impact Wrestling World Title against Hiroshi Tanahashi. Let's get to it.

Note that I do not follow New Japan incredibly closely so I apologize for missing any characters, plot points etc.

Kickoff Show: Joe Hendry/Heath/Yuya Uemura vs. Master Wato/Rocky Romero/Ryusuke Taguchi

Heath and Romero start things off with Heath hitting an atomic drop into a clothesline. Taguchi comes in for the double stomping in the corner but it's Heath coming in for some dancing. A hip attack drops Heath though and it's Hendry coming in to face Wato. This doesn't work for the Impact guys either, as Wato gets in a double bulldog and sends them outside.

Back in and Hendry chops away at Wato before hitting a delayed suplex for two. Uemura comes in for a slam as things settle down into the standard rotating beatdown. Hendry's chinlock doesn't last long as Wato fights up and brings Romero back in to pick up the pace. Hendry fall away slams Romero and Wato at the same time, allowing the double tag to Uemura and Taguchi.

Everything breaks down and Uemura hits a high crossbody for the pin at 10:21.

Rating: C+. Nice way to start here with three fun Impact stars getting a win to warm up the crowd. Hendry and Uemura seem to be gearing up for a tag team run and Heath can work well in any midcard spot. The New Japan guys were treated as stars here too, with Wato being a near buzzsaw at times. Entertaining opener and that's as good as you can expect.

Impact – 1

NJPW – 0

Kickoff Show: Digital Media Title: Yoshinobu Kanemaru vs. Kenny King

King is defending. Feeling out process to start with Kanemaru cranking on a headlock before hurting himself on a shoulder block. The headlock works a bit better, at least until King breaks it up and stomps away, setting up a camel clutch. Back up and King misses a charge in the corner, allowing Kanemaru to hammer away a bit more. A DDT plants King for two, followed by a moonsault for the same. King spinebusters him for two more before ducking the miss. A kick to the head sets up the Royal Flush to retain the title at 6:51.

Rating: C. They kept this relatively short as it was mainly a way to get a title match on the show. King's title is about as low down as you can get in Impact and having him defend against a former champion like Kanemaru makes sense. The match itself was fine enough and that's really all it needed to be for the spot they were in.

Impact – 2

NJPW – 0

The opening video looks at some of the bigger matches. Rather simple here and nothing wrong with that.

Chris Sabin vs. Kevin Knight vs. Frankie Kazarian vs. Bushi vs. Yoh vs. Rich Swann vs. Mao vs. El Desperado

Everyone in at once, one fall to a finish. We get a quick eight man lockup before they pair off and go outside. Naturally this means some dives until it's off to Mao (who dances a lot) vs. Swann, the latter of whom kicks him in the ribs. Yoh comes in to clear the ring without much effort but Knight hits him with a spinning splash for two.

Sabin is in with a missile dropkick to Knight before getting taken down by Kazarian. Desperado and Mao are back in to clean house in a hurry until Mao punches him in the mask, as you probably guessed was coming. We get the eight man submission chain until the referee breaks it up for using the rope (Rehwoldt: "Using the rope was the most ridiculous part of that.").

Everyone beats down Bushi before they go after Swann with running splashes in the corner. A Tower Of Doom bring Swann down again and Knight comes off the top for two. Kazarian sends Knight to the apron and pulls him back in with a cutter, setting off the parade of knockdowns. Sabin drops Yoh and Knight at the same time before hitting the Cradle Shock to finish Yoh at 8:24.

Rating: B-. I never know what to say in a match like this, as it's all over the place and complete insanity, with a big parade of spots and dives. That being said, it can be fun to see something like this, as it's nonstop action until someone gets the win. They also did the right thing in keeping it relatively short, which can be a huge problem in matches like this. Fun opener, as they're certainly starting fast.

Impact – 3

NJPW – 0

Post match Desperado mists Sabin to blow off some steam. And some mist.

TMDK vs. Team Impact

That would be Zack Sabre Jr./Shane Haste vs. Moose/Eddie Edwards for your wacky Impact team of the night. Eddie and Sabre start things off with Sabre wasting no time in going after the arm. Haste comes in for two off a dropkick and it's already back to Sabre to work on the arm again. Eddie gets in a shot to Haste and hands it back to Moose, who gets two off Eddie's backpack Stunner.

The Impact guys take turns chopping at Haste, who gets slammed down to make it worse. Haste kicks his way to freedom though and brings Sabre back in. Moose is low bridged to the floor and an armbar over the rope has Eddie in trouble again. A PK hits Eddie, who pops back up with a Blue Thunder Bomb for a double knockdown. Haste and Moose come back in, with the former armdragging his way out of a release Rock Bottom.

The second attempt works but Sabre is back up with a tornado DDT to Moose. Eddie drops Sabre and everyone is down again. Back up and Sabre slugs it out with Moose, with Sabre pulling him into a choke. Eddie makes the save and hits the Boston Knee Party to Sabre. Haste rolls Moose up for two but the spear gives Moose the pin at 13:23.

Rating: B. This was another rather solid match and it was cool to see a makeshift team hang with and even beat an established pairing. Haste taking the fall to a former Impact World Champion is hardly some big slap in the face, though this was quite the upset. If nothing else, Sabre didn't get to snap any limbs!

Impact – 4

NJPW – 0

Video on the four way for the New Japan Strong Women's Title.

New Japan Strong Women's Title: Deonna Purrazzo vs. Momo Kohgo vs. Gisele Shaw vs. Giulia

Giulia is defending and it's one fall to a finish. Purrazzo and Giulia grab headlocks to start but get broken up for a staredown just as fast. Everyone goes or a rollup and I's another four way showdown. Shaw brags a bit too much and gets dropkicked to the floor, leaving Purrazzo to dropkick the other two. Momo is back up with a superkick for two on Giulia, with Shaw making the save.

Shaw takes Momo and Giulia down and covers both of them in a row for rapid fire near falls. Deonna pulls Giulia to the floor so Momo can hit a big dive before Shaw goes after Giulia for a change. Back in and Giulia butterfly superplexes Shaw, leaving to a four way knockdown. They pair off for the stereo forearm exchanges until Shaw's spear misses Purrazzo and hits Giulia by mistake.

An assisted Backstabber puts Momo down again but Shaw gives Purrazzo a super Spanish Fly. Momo makes the save, leaving Purrazzo to Queen's Gambit Giulia and Shaw. Purrazzo and Shaw grab stereo submissions but stop o fight each other. Giulia is back up and hits a northern lights bomb on Shaw to retain at 12:25.

Rating: B-. Another title match to make the show feel more special and in this case it went well. The more I see of Giulia in the ring the more obvious it is that she is a star. It's a good idea to feature someone like that and Shaw has lost enough that another one isn't going to do much damage. Purrazzo vs. Giulia down the line could be a heck of a showdown and that might be the case eventually. For now though, I'll take a Giulia showcase.

Impact – 4

NJPW – 1

Sami Callihan vs. Douki

Before the match, Sami says we're missing the extreme around here so let's make this a street fight. Douki agrees and

wastes no time in knocking him outside before putting Sami in a chair. The kick from the apron takes too long though and as a result, Sami throws in a bunch of weapons.

Back in and Sami whips out an 8×10 of himself and paper cuts Douki's fingers, followed by the arm pit. A t-bone suplex sends Douki onto a chair, which Sami loads into the corner. That takes too long and Douki sends him into it instead, meaning it's time for a kendo stick. Some shots to Sami let Douki stack the chairs on him, setting up a top rope double stomp.

Sami is back up with a neckbreaker onto the chair for two before it's time for a ladder. Douki manages to send him into said ladder though and a slingshot X Factor gets two. The Douki Driver is countered and the Cactus Driver 97 gives Sami two. Sami loads up four chairs and they climb onto them, with a Cactus Driver 97 sending Douki into them for the pin at 12:42.

Rating: C. Pretty basic hardcore match here and since they're in Philadelphia, it would almost have been insane to not include something similar. Sami is the right choice for a match like this too, as he might not be the most polished in the ring, but he knows how to do this kind of thing. Douki more than held up his end, but it was just a bunch of the same stuff we've seen far too many times over the years.

Impact – 5

NJPW – 1

Kosei Fujita/Robbie Eagles vs. TJP/Francisco Akira

Akira and Fujita go to the mat to start and neither can get very far. Back up and Fujita chops Akira up against the ropes but TJP comes in off a blind tag for a double dropkick. Eagles comes in with a dropkick of his own for two on Akira before Fujita grabs a quickly broken leglock.

It's back to TJP for a facewash in the corner, followed by a dropkick to put Fujita down again. That doesn't last long as the hot tag brings in Eagles for the rapid fire house cleaning. The running knees in the corner get two on Akira and the Ron Miller Special (leglock) makes it worse.

TJP makes the save before being sent outside but Akira is back up with a poisonrana. A top rope double stomp/reverse DDT combination puts Fujita down for two and the Mamba splash gets the same. Eagles superkicks Fujita by mistake though and something like a 3D puts Fujita down again. Stereo running knees finish for TJP at 11:30.

Rating: C+. This was the showcase match for New Japan and that isn't a bad idea. There was enough good action here to make the match interesting, with TJP and Akira coming off more like a successful team than Fujita and Eagles. Solid fast paced match here though and I could go on more of TJP and Akira.

Mike Bailey is ready to challenge Hiromu Takahashi for IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title but tonight, they're teaming together.

Bullet Club vs. The World

Bullet Club: David Finlay, Chris Bey, Ace Austin, Alex Coughlin, Kenta, Clark Connors

The World: Josh Alexander, PCO, Tanga Loa, Tama Tonga, DKC, El Phantasma

Finlay spits at Tama to start and quickly send him outside for the big beatdown. Back in and PCO chops it out with Coughlin with the latter somehow managing a gutwrench suplex. Coughlin is sent outside for the big beatdown from the World as everything breaks down. Back in and DKC runs Connors over until a powerslam takes him down.

Finlay comes in for some rapid fire shoulders in the corner but DKC kicks his way to freedom. The big tag brings Alexander

in (first time in five months) to clean house but Austin/Bey kick him down. It's off to Kenta for some kicks to the back and Austin drops a leg for two. Alexander suplexes Austin and Bey, allowing the tag off to Phantasma.

Everything breaks down and Finlay is surrounded so the beatdown can be on. DKC's frog splash gets two but the Club makes the save. Kenta's GTS to Alexander is countered into an ankle lock, which is broken up as well. PCO dives onto them and then hits a big dive onto the pile. Back in and Finlay hits a quick powerbomb to finish DKC at 14:08.

Rating: B-. This was similar to the opener with all of the chaos and everyone doing their thing at various times. The good thing is that they managed to have more of a structure this time around, with the Club getting the big win, as they should have earned. What mattered here was getting a bunch of people onto the show at once and it was one step away from being total chaos, which makes it pretty engaging stuff.

Impact – 5

NJPW – 2

Mike Bailey/Hiromu Takahashi vs. Lio Rush/Trey Miguel

Takahashi and Miguel start things off with Miguel telling the crowd to be quiet so he can stomp away in the corner in silence. Bailey comes in to trade dodges with Rush and hit a dropkick on Miguel. We settle down to Miguel missing a charge in the corner and getting dragon screw legwhipped by Rush.

Bailey's running shooting star press gets two but Miguel suplexes his way to freedom. Everything breaks down and Bailey moonsaults onto Rush on the floor. Back in and Rush avoids the Ultimate Weapon, meaning Miguel and Takahashi get to chop it out. Takahashi gets double kicked down until Bailey makes the save.

The Lightning Spiral is countered into Takahashi's pop up

powerbomb and Miguel is rocked. The Ultimate Weapon into a Regal Roll gets two with Rush making the save. Rush hits Rush Hour for two on Takahashi, leaving Miguel to Meteora Bailey on the floor. Back in and Rush counters the Time Bomb and hits Takahashi low, allowing a rollup to give Rush the pin at 14:30.

Rating: B. This has been the night of letting people go nuts throughout their match and that is where these people shine. The ending could set up a champion vs. champion (X-Division vs. Junior Heavyweight) and that could be a big showdown at some point. Letting talented people fly around and showcase themselves is always a good idea and that's what they did here at a pretty high level.

Impact – 6

NJPW – 2

Post match Rush says he wants the IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title shot but Bailey brings up asking for the shot, which Takahashi granted.

Quick video on the main event, which is both for the title and teacher vs. student.

Impact Wrestling World Title: Hiroshi Tanahashi vs. Alex Shelley

Shelley, Tanahashi's former student, is defending. Tanahashi takes him into the corner to start and we get an early standoff. A headlock takeover frustrates Shelley a bit, though the air guitar might soothe him a bit. Shelley has to fight his way out of the headlock and gets to the middle rope for a knee to the arm.

The cranking on the arm ensues until Shelley gets taken down, with his knee being sent into the post. Tanahashi starts working on the knee but a slingshot stomp to the arm cuts him right back off. Shelley works on the arm outside and then

again on the apron as he certainly has a target. Tanahashi gets in another shot to the knee but Shelley slugs away and hits a running forearm.

The standing Sliced Bread sets up the Border City Stretch to keep Tanahashi down for a change, but the foot in the rope makes the save. That means a dragon screw legwhip over the rope can put Shelley down again. The Texas Cloverleaf goes on but Shelley escapes and knocks him down again.

They slug it out with Tanahashi getting the better of things until three straight Twist and Shouts take Shelley down. The Sling Blade gets two but Shelley avoids the High Fly Flow. A running knee and ripcord clothesline give Shelley two so Tanahashi German suplexes him for the same. They head up top with Shelley Air Raid Crashing him back down before Shell Shock retains the title at 18:53.

Rating: B. This felt like a title match, as it came off like two stars fighting over a prize. While Tanahashi is definitely a few steps slower than he used to be, there is enough talent there to let him wrestle a good match with the right opponent. Shelley might not be setting the world on fire as champion, but you're going to get a well wrestled match against any opponent. In other words, he is a perfectly acceptable placeholder and that's not the worst place to be. Good main event.

Impact – 7

NJPW – 2

Overall Rating: B-. This felt like a rather cool DVD extra, as it doesn't change storylines in any meaningful way. Instead, it was a nice showcase of the Impact stars against some midcard names from another company. You don't need to watch it to keep up with what was going on, but you'll have a good time with the whole thing, even if it's about three and a half hours counting Kickoff Show. Pretty easy watch though, with a

rather surprising final score too.

Results

Joe Hendry/Yuya Uemura/Heath b. Master Wato/Ryusuke Taguchi/Rocky Romero – High crossbody to Taguchi

Kenny King b. Yoshinobu Kanemaru – Royal Flush

Chris Sabin b. Kevin Knight, Frankie Kazarian, Bushi, Yoh, Rich Swann, Mao and El Desperado – Cradle Shock to Yoh

Moose/Eddie Edwards b. TMDK – Spear to Haste

Giulia b. Deonna Purrazzo, Momo Kohgo and Gisele Shaw – Northern lights bomb to Shaw

Sami Callihan b. Douki – Cactus Driver 97 onto a pile of chairs

TJP/Francisco Akira b. Kosei Fujita/Robbie Eagles – Double knees to Fujita

Bullet Club b. The World – Powerbomb to DKC

Lio Rush/Trey Miguel b. Mike Bailey/Hiromu Takahashi – Rollup to Takahashi

Alex Shelley b. Hiroshi Tanahashi – Shell Shock

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Wrestle Kingdom XV Night Two: They Did It Again

Wrestle Kingdom XV Night Two

Date: January 5, 2021

Location: Tokyo Dome, Tokyo, Japan

Attendance: 7,801

Commentators: Rocky Romero, Chris Charlton, Kevin Kelly

It's the second half of the biggest New Japan show of the year and as usual, the card is stacked. The main event will see new IWGP Heavyweight/Intercontinental Champion Kota Ibushi defend against Jay White, along with pretty much everything else that wasn't featured on Night One. They have a lot to live up to so let's get to it.

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

Note that there were two Stardom dark matches which were not broadcast due to various rights issues.

The opening video runs down the card, in order.

King Of Pro Wrestling Provisional Title: Toru Yano vs. Chase Owens vs. Bad Luke Fale vs. Bushi

So this is a new thing that started last year, where you have to become the Provisional Champion and then defend it throughout the year, with whoever is the final champion at the end of the year winning a trophy. Then the whole thing starts over. Yano was the first champion and this is one fall to a finish. Bushi and Yano chill on the floor to start so Fale heads outside to hammer on Yano while Owens does the same thing to Bushi inside.

Everyone gets inside with Yano rolling Bushi up for two. Yano isn't having this wrestling stuff and pulls off the turnbuckle pad to continue his tradition. Owens saves Bushi from getting hit in the face but Bushi rakes him in the eyes for offering an alliance. Fale and Owens start double teaming Yano but Bushi is back in to low bridge Fale to the floor.

A fisherman's neckbreaker gives Bushi two on Owens as Yano slams Fale in the back of the head. Well he never has seemed like the smartest person. Owens blocks Bushi's top rope Codebreaker but can't hit the package piledriver. Fale comes back in to hit the Grenade Launcher on Bushi but Owens won't let him have the pin. They go after the referee, allowing Yano to come in with the low blow and steal the pin on Bushi for the title at 7:34.

Rating: C-. This wasn't supposed to be anything serious and was more or less a warmup match for the rest of the show. It was quick, it gave the fans a smile at the end and lets Yano do his thing. There was no reason to believe that this was going to be anything special and they had a perfectly acceptable match.

IWGP Junior Heavyweight Tag Team Titles: Suzuki-Gun vs. One of Eight

That would be El Desperado/Yoshinobu Kanemura (defending) vs. Ryusuke Taguchi/Master Wato after the challengers (with Hiroyoshi Tenzan) have beaten the champs twice. Wato and Desperado start fast with Wato knocking him to the floor for the big dive. It's off to Taguchi who runs the ropes a lot until Kanemura takes him to the floor for a whip into the barricade. Back in and Kanemura takes advantage of a distracted referee to send Taguchi's knee into a chair.

We settle down a bit with Desperado dropkicking Taguchi's knee out and easily avoiding the hip attack. Taguchi gets over for the tag to Wato though and it's a springboard uppercut to drop

Kanemura. The referee is sent into Wato for a distraction, allowing Kanemura to hit an enziguri. Desperado comes back in and gets pulled face first into the back of Taguchi's tights over and over (that's his thing you see). The running hip attack puts Desperado down again and Three Amigos do it one more time.

Desperado and Taguchi counter a few things each until Taguchi grabs a cobra clutch suplex. That just earns him a Stretch Muffler but Taguchi reverses into an ankle lock. A double chickenwing gutbuster gets two on Desperado but he and Taguchi trade rollups for two each. With the other two being knocked outside, Desperado hits Angel's Wings (which had a Spanish name I couldn't make out) to finish Taguchi and retain the titles at 13:21.

Rating: C+. This is the kind of match that seems to come and go most years without having much long term meaning. The Junior Heavyweight Tag Team Titles offer some fun matches but they don't exactly seem the most important. It's nice to see the champs retain to let their reign grow a bit and seeing Taguchi lose always makes me smile just a little bit. Pretty nice match too, but it didn't hit anything great.

Never Openweight Title: Shingo Takagi vs. Jeff Cobb

Shingo is defending and Cobb is part of the Empire. They shove each other around to start and then go to the forearm off, as is the custom for the title. Shingo hits a hiptoss and runs him over with a shoulder but Cobb is right back with a dropkick. That's enough to send Shingo to the floor for some whips into the barricade, followed by a heck of an overhead belly to belly. Back in and an elbow to the face gives Cobb two and we hit the bearhug. That's broken up in a hurry so Cobb suplexes him down again.

They slug it out until Shingo suplexes him out to the apron. Shingo joins him and has to slip out of a Razor's Edge attempt

(must fear a bad case of death) before knocking Cobb out to the floor. The big flip dive hits Cobb again and an elbow drop gets two back inside. It's Cobb's turn to hurt him, meaning it's the rolling gutwrench suplexes into a sitout Razor's Edge powerbomb for a big two. Shingo is right back with a Death Valley Driver as they're trading bombs here.

A top rope superplex sends Cobb flying again and there's a German suplex to make it worse. They trade t-bone suplexes and forearm it out until Shingo hits a clothesline but falls to the floor in exhaustion. Shingo dives back in, earning himself a quick piledriver for two more. Tour of the Islands is broken up so Shingo hits Made In Japan for his own near fall.

Cobb snaps off a rebound German suplex into Tour of the Islands but the knee gives out to delay the cover. They're both down with Cobb's knee still bothering him but he's fine enough to hit a backflip fall away slam (Does that mean it's still an away slam?). Tour of the Islands is blocked again and Shingo hits a kind of fall away suplex. A big lariat turns Cobb inside out and Last of the Dragon (kind of a reverse Samoan driver) retains the title at 21:13.

Rating: A. Oh yeah this was amazing as these two just beat the fire out of each other for twenty one minutes. There was nothing scientific about it and there wasn't supposed to be. This was all about two big, strong guys hitting each other really hard and Cobb is born for that kind of match. Great stuff here and if you want one of those old school hoss fights with suplexes thrown in, check this one out, because it's awesome.

Sanada vs. Evil

They're former partners but Evil (with Dick Togo tonight) turned on him to become Heavyweight Champion. Feeling out process to start with Sanada being thrown outside but he jumps back in as Evil goes to the floor. Back in and Sanada loads up the Paradise Lock for the running kick, sending

Evil outside again. This time Evil catches Sanada to drive him into the barricade and some chairs are brought out as well.

Evil and Togo set up a table and Sanada is taken back inside...only to be taken outside again for a whip into the barricade. That's good for two back inside but Sanada gets in a shot to the knee to put Evil down for a change. A dropkick does it again so Sanada has the chance to dive onto Togo. Back in and Togo trips Sanada but Evil can't put him through the ringside table. Instead, Sanada misses a springboard, having to settle for a hanging swinging suplex.

A tiger suplex gives Sanada two but Evil drives him hard into the corner. Evil gets him up top for a superplex into the Scorpion Deathlock, with Sanada diving for the rope. Darkness Falls gets two on Sanada but Evil misses a charge into an exposed (When did that happen?) corner. Sanada's belly to back suplex gets two, only to have Evil swing Sanada's leg into the referee. Togo comes in to beat on Sanada, who kicks Evil into the ropes to crotch Togo (Togo: "OH S***!") out to the floor.

Sanada moonsaults over Evil into Skull End (dragon sleeper), which he lets so for a moonsault instead. He tries a second but this time Evil gets his knees up to put them both down. Skull End goes on again so Evil grabs the referee, allowing Togo to choke with a wire from the apron. That's broken up though and Sanada dropkicks Evil into Togo through the table (There it goes!). Evil panics, kicks out of a rollup, and blasts Sanada with a clothesline for two of his own. Skull End is broken up again so Sanada hits his own Everything Is Evil (Evil's finisher), setting up a pop up TKO. The moonsault finishes Evil for good at 23:45.

Rating: B+. This is as easy of a story as you can get, with the tag team splitting up and one of them needing to prove that he is the better man. That's what we got here, with Sanada wrestling the clean match to overcome the villains, including using Evil's own finisher. Rather good match here, and it's easy to see why this was one of the featured showdowns.

We recap Hiromu Takahashi (Best of the Super Juniors) vs. Taiji Ishimori (IWGP Junior Heavyweight Champion) for the title. Takahashi won a #1

contenders match against El Phantasma last night and now he has his title shot.

IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title: Hiromu Takahashi vs. Taiji Ishimori

Ishimori is defending and they run the ropes to start, with Takahashi being sent outside. Ishimori's dive is broken up on the apron as Takahashi cuts him off and hits a superkick. The sunset bomb is countered as well so Takahashi powerbombs him hard onto the apron. Takahashi goes WAY up the ramp and runs down but his dropkick is countered into a suplex to cut him down.

Ishimori nails a moonsault down to the floor and then sends Takahashi shoulder first into an exposed turnbuckle (Is that the same buckle from the Yano match? They never replaced it???). The shoulder is banged up but the legs are fine enough to snap off a running headscissors to put Ishimori down. A running dropkick off the apron sends Ishimori hard into the barricade for two back inside but he's back up with the sliding German suplex.

The YES Lock stays on Takahashi's bad arm until a foot on the rope is good for the break. Takahashi counters a charge into a belly to belly into the corner and they're both down for a deserved breather. It's Takahashi up first with a wheelbarrow into a Downward Spiral, followed by the running Death Valley Driver. Ishimori's handspring is countered into a German suplex but he's right back up with a Canadian Destroyer for another double knockdown.

They slug it out from their knees and then from their feet until Ishimori sends him shoulder first into the post. A shoulderbreaker sets up the YES Lock with Takahashi needing the ropes to keep him alive. Ishimori tries the YES Lock again but this time gets faceplanted down for a delayed two instead. They both try what looks to be a suplex until Ishimori takes him down into a Gargano Escape. With that almost broken, Ishimori lets it go and tries the YES Lock, only to be reversed into a suplex into a faceplant. That lets Takahashi get back up for the Time Bomb 2 for the pin and the title at 25:31.

Rating: A-. This was another slugout as both of them were barely able to

hang in there until the end, with Takahashi's shoulder nearly doing him in. Takahashi coming back from his injury and winning the title again was a great moment and a great story. Granted it wasn't as spiffy again as the second time, but Takahashi has turned into a huge star around here and the win felt special and was made even better by an awesome match.

Takahashi takes his time getting the title.

We recap Jay White vs. Kota Ibushi for the IWGP Heavyweight and IWGP Intercontinental Titles. Ibushi won the titles last night but lost to White a few months ago. White is the most evil man in the company and it's time to fight him off.

IWGP Heavyweight Title/IWGP Intercontinental Title: Kota Ibushi vs. Jay White

White is challenging and has Gedo with him. White bails to the floor to start but then gets back in for the trash talk. They lock up nearly two minutes after the bell and an early Gedo distraction lets White stomp away. The headlock goes on for a bit but the threat of a big kick to the head sends White bailing to the floor. Gedo offers another distraction on the way back in though, allowing Kota to grab a DDT. A suplex onto the apron bangs up Kota's back and that means a rather long count on the floor.

Back in and a knee to the ribs gets two and the waistlock goes on. Rib stomping ensues and it's a tranquilo pose to keep White's cockiness high. A hard DDT plants Kota again and White yells at the referee as the champ pulls himself up. That's enough for Kota to get in a shot of his own, followed by the standing moonsault for two. They head to the floor with Ibushi's ribs going into the barricade to cut him off again.

Back in and Kota's powerslam looks to set up the middle rope moonsault but White crotches him instead. That means it's time to start working on the leg, followed by a swinging brainbuster for two. Kota manages to send him outside but the knee gives out on the springboard attempt. White shoves him out to the floor and then suplexes him into the corner for two more. Kota grabs a desperation half nelson suplex and they slug it out again. The kneeling Tombstone gives Kota two and they're both down.

It's White up first with a snap belly to back suplex into a Rock Bottom for his own two. Back up and Kota hits his own belly to back for two, followed by a kick to the head. Gedo's distraction breaks up another moonsault though and it's time to go up to tease a dragon superplex (geez). Thankfully that's broken up and White goes after the knee instead. A leglock goes on to put Kota in trouble but he's in the rope in a hurry. White kicks him in the face a few times and gets a "dude really" look from Kota, who gets back to his feet.

Ibushi strikes him down into the corner and tells White to come on. That's fine with White, who is knocked right back down. They do the same thing again, with White getting knocked to the floor. Back in and Kota says hit him but White lays down, telling Ibushi to pin him. Instead, Ibushi unloads on him until the referee tries to intervene, allowing White to get in a low blow. They head outside again with Ibushi going ribs and back first into the barricade and apron.

White gets back inside and tells Ibushi to bring it, earning Kota some German suplexes. It's back to the apron (Kelly: "Oh no.") with Ibushi gets in a kick to the head to rock White for a change. A super German suplex brings White back in for two for a rather near fall but he grabs a sleeper suplex. White hits another one and a RegalPlex is good for two. Blade Runner is broken up but Kota reverses into the big knee to the face for two and the applause.

The phoenix splash connects but Gedo pulls the referee, sending Kelly into hysterics. Gedo's brass knuckles shot is countered into a big knee to the face so Kota sends the referee back in. The delay lets White hit the Blade Runner for a very close two (first time anyone has ever kicked out) so he pulls Kota down into what looks like a reverse Figure Four.

Kota is nearly to the rope but White pulls him back into the middle. That's not going to happen though as Kota makes it back to the rope again. Bloody Sunday looks to set up another Blade Runner but Kota nails a jumping knee to the face. Another jumping knee sets up a hard lariat into a pair of big knees to retain the titles at 48:05 (the longest match in Dome history).

Rating: A. It says a lot that you don't feel a match running nearly fifty minutes but this felt like nothing close to that. Ibushi had a pair of great performances and it makes him look like an even bigger star. White is the kind of heel you want to see get destroyed and having him get kneed in the face works very well. This was a heck of a match and lived up to the main event spot, with the time being a great addition, especially fast the whole thing felt.

Post match here's Sanada to issue the (very respectful) challenge for the titles. Kota talks about how he is more powerful than ever and agrees to the match. With Sanada gone, Kota gives his big speech to wrap it up. Commentary applauds him as he leaves.

The long wrapup ends the night.

Overall Rating: A+. This was an interesting one as I wasn't feeling it as much as the first night but aside from the not exactly serious opener, this was one great match after another with nothing being close to bad and a bunch of classics. It's the kind of show that you expect from Wrestle Kingdom and that is a very hard reputation to achieve. Absolutely awesome show though and somehow better than the very good Night One, which is hard to pull off. Yeah it's annoying to have back to back shows this long, but it's once a year so I can't get mad, especially when it's this. Check both nights out, because they're worth the time.

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