

Cruiserweight Classic – August 3, 2016: Daniel Bryan's Man Crush

Cruiserweight Classic

Date: August 3, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Daniel Bryan, Mauro Ranallo

It's the final night of the first round as this tournament has been as well structured as anything WWE has produced in a long time. Tonight we'll have another four matches to complete the field of sixteen for the second round. It should be interesting to see which people get the star treatment this week as you can almost always see who WWE wants to push, meaning they might be a big deal in the upcoming Cruiserweight division. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's show.

Preview of tonight's matches.

Opening sequence.

Corey Graves looks at the updated brackets.

Rich Swann says he won't take anyone lightly because people have spent years telling him he'll never make it.

Jason Lee of Hong Kong has been wrestling for eight years and wrestles with a kung fu style.

First Round: Rich Swann vs. Jason Lee

America vs. Hong Kong and dancing vs. nunchucks. They run the ropes to start with Swann diving over Lee and catching him with a dropkick for two. The fans are WAY behind Swann and chant ALL NIGHT LONG as he holds an armbar. I hope he does more than that tonight. Lee comes back with

some very fast strikes and an enziguri for two. Swann knees him in the head and jumps to the top for a hurricanrana but Lee comes back with a DDT. La Majistral gets two for Jason as Bryan is amazed by Lee's speed. Swann comes right back with a kick to the head and a standing 450 gives him the pin at 3:49.

Rating: C+. Both guys looked good here but you knew they weren't going to give Jason the pin over an NXT guy. Swann is really over with the crowd already and that standing 450 looked cool. I know Lee isn't likely to go anywhere in WWE but it's cool to see people like him get a shot, even if it's a one off like this.

Gurv Sihra, brother of Harv from last week, grew up watching cruiserweight wrestling and he can't wait to represent India.

Noam Dar wants to represent Scotland.

First Round: Noam Dar vs. Gurv Sihra

Scotland vs. India. Dar starts fast with a dropkick to the knee but gets caught in a headlock. Sihra can't get in a backbreaker so Noam starts back in on the knee and dropkicks him in the side of the head as a bonus. Another dropkick in the corner gets two but Gurv comes back with a spinwheel kick for two, only to miss a top rope elbow due to wasting time on a handheld Bollywood camera (as in the old Hollywood Blonds taunt). Noam uses the crash to grab a kneebar for the tap at 5:23.

Rating: C. I wasn't as interested here but I can always go for something as simple as working on the knee from the start to set up a leg submission at the end. Noam looked a lot better here and Gurv really did look young out there. This wasn't much of a match but again it didn't overstay its welcome, which has been a great thing about this whole tournament.

Fabian Aichner wants to see what it's like to wrestle outside of Italy where there isn't much of a wrestling scene.

Jack Gallagher, in a suit, is a British gentleman.

First Round: Fabian Aichner vs. Jack Gallagher

Italy vs. England. Jack already has more of a character than almost anyone else in this tournament. Gallagher spins out of a wristlock to start and does it again nearly in slow motion, much to Daniel's delight. A very British toehold keeps Aichner in trouble but the much bigger Italian runs him over with a shoulder. Some loud chops set up a slightly botched springboard kick to the chest and we hit a chinlock.

A pinfall reversal sequence results in Gallagher charging into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. Aichner surprises everyone with a double springboard moonsault for two, only to have Jack come back with a guillotine choke. Gallagher gets lifted into a suplex but powerbombed down and the fans boo the heck out of Aichner for beating on Bryan's new man crush. A great looking running dropkick knocks Fabian silly enough for the pin at 6:47.

Rating: B. Oh yeah this was a lot of fun. Gallagher is like the stereotypical British wrestler you would see in a video game but he's turned up to twelve or so. Bryan was gushing over him and I can't say I really blame him. Aichner was no slouch either and I really hope he gets another shot somewhere else.

The guys get a THANK YOU BOTH chant. Daniel: "I'm in love."

Video on Johnny Gargano vs. Tommaso Ciampa, who are best friends outside the ring but will fight as hard as they can to advance here.

Gargano and Ciampa both say they'll win.

First Round: Johnny Gargano vs. Tommaso Ciampa

America vs. America here. They take a few seconds before shaking hands and it's Gargano with an armbar to start. A very loud elbow to the jaw knocks Johnny's head around and Tommaso mocks the "Johnny Wrestling" chants. Another hard elbow has Johnny in trouble and we get a C DUB C chant. Tommaso grabs what looks like White Noise but climbs the ropes instead of crashing down, allowing Johnny to slip out and superkick him through the legs.

A powerbomb brings Ciampa down and a suicide dive makes things even

worse. Back in and they just kick each other in the head over and over, leaving Gargano looking rather shaken up. They chop it out on the apron and White Noise only gives Tommaso two. Johnny looks completely out of it and Ciampa can't bring himself to knee Gargano in the face.

The distraction lets Johnny get in a superkick but he walks into Project Ciampa (powerbomb into a Backstabber) for two. The stunned look on Ciampa's face is excellent. Some chops rock Johnny and a right hand just makes Ciampa angry. Ciampa loads up his armbars but Johnny counters into a crucifix for the surprise pin at 10:49.

Rating: B+. This was awesome stuff with some excellent selling from Gargano. They did a great job of making the evil Ciampa a little more human as he was afraid to hurt his friend and tag partner, only to get caught in a rollup at the end. These two are going to get a Tag Team Title shot at Takeover: Brooklyn and with a match like this it's easy to see why. Really good stuff here and probably the match of the tournament so far.

Ciampa can't shake hands post match but comes back to hug Johnny.

Here are the updated brackets:

Akira Tozawa

Jack Gallagher

Tajiri

Gran Metalik

Drew Gulak

Zack Sabre Jr.

Noam Dar

Hoho Lun

Brian Kendrick

Tony Nese

Kota Ibushi

Cedric Alexander

TJ Perkins

Johnny Gargano

Lince Dorado

Rich Swann

Overall Rating: A-. I'm digging this show more and more every week and it's cool to see so many different styles involved. Somehow they keep things fresh every week and go through things fast enough that it doesn't get dull. This really does feel like something different and that makes for interesting shows every week. Things are going to get even better now that we have the first round out of the way and that's just cool.

Results

Rich Swann b. Jason Lee – Standing 450

Noam Dar b. Gurv Sihra – Kneebar

Jack Gallagher b. Fabian Aichner – Running corner dropkick

Johnny Gargano b. Tommaso Ciampa – Crucifix

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