

California Championship Wrestling – August 6, 1986: Box Checking With No Budget

California Championship Wrestling

Date: August 6, 1986

Location: Fender's Ballroom, Long Beach, California Commentator: Barry Richards

Oh boy I've been wanting to check this one out for a long time. California Championship Wrestling is, as you might have guessed, a territory from back in the mid 1980s. What sets it apart is that it is apparently the worst wrestling territory that anyone has ever seen. I've seen quite a few bad territories in my day and I'm curious to see what they have. Let's get to it.

I know NOTHING about this going in.

Opening sequence and egads this is looking bad.

The show is sponsored by Budweiser so it seems to have some kind of money.

Barry Richards welcomes us to the show and runs down the card, which actually has some names.

Golden Star vs. Junior Maivia

We have a heel ring announcer who insults the timekeeper and referee, because that's a thing we need here. Star is a masked luchador and Maivia is....hopefully not related to the rest of the family as he is a rather bad looking man. From what I can find, this is Peter Maivia Jr., making him Rock's uncle. I'm going to assume that's just kayfabe and hope for the best. Star knocks him outside at the bell as we hear about Maivia being a heartthrob. Maivia comes back in and sends Star outside for a change but he's right back in to work on Maivia's arm.

Back up and Maivia takes over with an armbar of his own and goes after the mask. That makes Star all the angrier so he kicks Maivia in the corner and slaps on the chinlock. Maivia reverses into a hammerlock, which is reversed into a double arm crank. That doesn't last long either as Maivia is right back on the leg. Star reverses into a waistlock and then seems to rip at the face. The chinlock goes on but again Maivia reverses into a hammerlock. Back up and Star whips him hard into the corner but gets caught with a middle rope crossbody to give Maivia the pin at 8:06.

Rating: D+. Oh I'm seeing the issues around here. The wrestling wasn't the absolute worst, but this feels so painfully low budget. The guys both looked like they were found on the street somewhere and put in wrestling gear for a sketch instead of actual stars. Not an awful match, but this feels so low rent and bottom of the barrel that it's hard to get into anything.

Rocky Johnson vs. Billy Anderson

Johnson gets an entrance (to Soul Man, which makes me smile) and it's weird to see someone who had a career on this show. Johnson grabs a hammerlock to start and the shuffle is on as we hit the armbar. Back up and it's a crisscross into an armdrag to put Anderson down again. The test of strength goes to Johnson (of course), who takes Anderson's hands to the mat for a stomping. A headscissors keeps Anderson on the mat and it's time for the flipping. Back up and Johnson hits those dropkicks like only he would throw, setting up the running sunset flip to pin Anderson at 4:46.

Rating: C-. Like I said with the first match, this wasn't too bad as Johnson was just over two years removed from being half of the Tag Team Champions in the WWF. He absolutely had some star power here and looked like someone who belonged in a bigger company. This was a completely acceptable squash and the fact that it was in California Championship Wrestling was just a detail.

Rocky Johnson and Jimmy Snuka are right here together and they'll face anyone. Snuka knows that the best are in California Championship

Wrestling, even though Superstar Billy Graham is coming for them.

Victor Rivera/Chief Jay Strongbow Jr. vs. Steve Strong/Professor Tanaka

Stone (who has a handgun on his trunks) and Tanaka have the Golden Greek John Tolos, a legend in California and later Mr. Perfect's Coach in 1991, with them. The big brawl is on before the bell, with Tolos getting in some shots of his own. Rivera is busted open and the referee is bumped but Rivera fights back and the good guys (I guess?) clear the ring. The match is a double DQ but I never heard a bell. This was actually kind of a hot angle so well done.

Destroyin' Samoan vs. Beartrap Smith

The Samoan is your run of the mill Samoan and Smith is a huge (billed at 470lbs). Commentary says the Samoan is a nephew of Afa and Sika, which makes him either one of a few familiar stars who are wrestling while VERY under age, a very thin Yokozuna, the Tonga Kid (on loan from the WWF) or a very young Rikishi. The latter would be the only real option, and that's not Rikishi so....yeah the announcer is making stuff up.

Either way, the Samoan takes Smith down without much effort and headbutts the ribs. Some shouting sets up eye raking and biting, followed by several more headbutts. A middle rope headbutt misses though and Smith gets up after nearly three minutes on his back. Smith hits a terrible splash (basically kneeling on him instead of a splash) for the pin at 3:12.

Rating: D-. Now this is more like it with the wrestlers who feel like caricatures and embarrassing work. Smith got knocked down, stayed there for three minutes, and laid on top of Samoan for the pin. This was another bad match and makes me think that the two in the middle were exceptions rather than the norm.

Samoan gets in a few cheap shots after the match.

Jimmy Snuka vs. Steel Gladiator

Gladiator looks like a knockoff biker. Snuka takes him down with a top wristlock to start and pulls on the mat a bit as this is in first gear.

They trade arm and leg holds for a bit until Snuka cradles him for two. Snuka seems to get bored with everything and hits a backbreaker, setting up a top rope headbutt for the pin at 3:52.

Rating: D. This one tilts the balance down to bad, as Snuka did have star power but he might as well have been ordering breakfast here given the amount of effort he was putting in. You could see that he was just going through the motions here and that makes for a lousy match, no matter how big of a name he was.

A former boxer wants to be a manager and has a trophy. What is he doing with it? Not important enough to explain.

We replay the ending of the Snuka match, which didn't run the six minutes they mention here.

Snuka thanks the fans and he's back for the people to see.

A six year old fan likes his Jimmy Snuka action figure, which is from the WWF.

Overall Rating: D-. Yeah this was really bad, as the only decent things on the show were Johnson's match (as he was a star who was trying) and that big brawl in place of a match. The rest was complete junk, as it felt like a show that was put together on a nothing budget with two names and no one else to fill in the time. I'm not sure if it's the worst show ever, but I can see why it has this reputation. Awful show, but not as bad as it could have been thanks to Johnson.

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