

WrestleDream 2023: Well It Wasn't A Nightmare

WrestleDream 2023

Date: October 1, 2023

Location: Climate Pledge Arena, Seattle, Washington

Commentators: Excalibur, Nigel McGuinness, Jim Ross

We're back with the third pay per view in six weeks and this has a bit of a theme to it. The idea of this show is paying tribute to Japanese legend Antonio Inoki, who passed away a year ago to the day. As a result, there are some New Japan stars involved in the show, which does have a strong card. Let's get to it.

We open with a long video tribute to Antonio Inoki, with wrestlers talking about what he meant to wrestling.

Tony Khan is in the ring with some other people, all with the Inoki scarves around their necks. Khan introduces the men as Rocky Romero, Katsuyori Shibata and Hiroto/Naroto Inoki, Antonio's grandsons. We get Inoki's signature phrase to wrap it up.

Zero Hour: Shane Taylor/Lee Moriarty/Diamante/Mercedes Martinez vs. Keith Lee/Satoshi Kojima/Athena/Billie Starkz

Fans: "WE WANT BREAD!" Excalibur: "Of course Satoshi Kojima the leader of Bread Club." JR: "You might want to explain that." Diamante and Starkz start but it's quickly off to Athena for a suplex. JR wants Athena to go on a tear, apparently not realizing that she's been on one for the better part of the last year. Taylor comes in to punch Keith in the face and manages to knock him down.

It's off to Moriarty, who gets dropped rather quickly so Kojima can come in to run Moriarty over. A DDT gets two with Diamante making the save, earning her a beating from

Starkz. Everything breaks down and Athena hits an O Face on Moriarty, with JR calling it illegal. The ring is cleared, leaving Kojima to lariat Moriarty for the pin at 5:38.

Rating: C. They didn't have time to do much here as they had eight people with less than six minutes. Kojima is a star from New Japan and still does well despite having been around forever, while Keith is rarely in the ring anymore for whatever reasons. It wasn't a great match or anything close to one, but it was a way to get a lot of people in the ring.

Zero Hour: Josh Barnett vs. Claudio Castagnoli

Jon Moxley is on commentary and talks about training with Barnett. They grapple to start with Barnett powering him down but Castagnoli manages to take over on the mat. Castagnoli gets in some elbows (Moxley: "ELBOW HIS D*** HEAD OFF CLAUDIO!") but Barnett reverses into a dragon screw legwhip.

That's broken up as well but Castagnoli can't get the Swing. Back up and they slug it out until Barnett gets a quickly broken abdominal stretch. Castagnoli gets in the swing, setting up some kind of leglock. Barnett makes the rope and grabs a suplex before they strike it out. The Neutralizer is blocked so Castagnoli pulls him into an Octopus Hold on the mat. That and a rollup is enough to pin Barnett at 8:20.

Rating: B-. This was a different kind of match as it was more of a grappling exchange between two guys who know what they're doing in that style. Barnett is someone who is a lot better known in mixed martial arts than in wrestling but he's good enough to hang with someone like Castagnoli. Good stuff here and probably something different than anything else you'll see on the show.

Post match Barnett shows respect and says Inoki would be a fan of Castagnoli. Barnett says Castagnoli owes him more

time though so keep training. Sounds good to Castagnoli.

Zero Hour: Nick Wayne vs. Luchasaurus

Nigel says this is going to be like Luke Skywalker being dropped into the pin with the Rancor. Wayne fires off a dropkick to start but gets tossed with a nasty release German suplex. Luchasaurus pounds away but Wayne is back up with some kicks. A chokeslam sends Wayne to the floor...where he crawls to his mom in the front row. That earns him a face first swing into the barricade but Wayne scores with some kicks back inside. Wayne's World is easily blocked and the forearm to the back of the head finishes for Luchasaurus at 4:51.

Rating: C. That went about as it should have, as Luchasaurus is a total monster and Wayne is someone who hasn't proven himself to be on Luchasaurus' level. There is something to be said about a smaller guy striking away with everything he has but not being able to overcome. The part with his mom was a nice bonus, making this go according to the logical plan.

Zero Hour: Trios Titles: TMDK vs. Acclaimed/Billy Gunn

TMDK (Shane Haste/Mikey Nichols/Bad Dude Tito) is challenging. Tito powers Caster down to start and hands it off to Haste. Caster punches his way out of the corner though and it's Gunn coming in to quite the reaction. A running shoulder drops Haste and Gunn loads up Scissor Me Timbers, which connects for quite the reaction.

We settle down with Bowens getting caught in the wrong corner and Tito adding a slingshot hilo. Bowens fights out of a chinlock but gets knocked back again to keep up the beating. An attempt to get over to the corner is cut off as Gunn and Caster are knocked to the floor in a smart move. Bowens manages to duck around and get over to Gunn though and house is cleaned. Tito plants Gunn rather quickly and Caster has to make a save. A step up Cannonball hits Caster

in the corner but Gunn is back in with the Fameasser. The Arrival into the Mic Drop retains the titles at 9:18.

Rating: C. That was your Rampage opener of the show and not much more. They had some time to do a bit more here than usual and that helped, but it's another group of guest stars getting a title shot. That is only going to get you so far and they hit most of that limit here. Not a bad match by any means, but there wasn't much in the way of drama.

And now, the show proper.

Ring Of Honor Tag Team Titles: Maxwell Jacob Friedman vs. Righteous

MJF is defending on his own, but before the match, he accuses someone of stealing his devil mask and attacking Jay White. As for the Righteous, MJF promises a BODY SLAM. Dutch starts for the team and MJF asks who wants to see that body slam. Instead we get the handshake of sportsmanship before MJF pokes Dutch in the eye. MJF gets in a hip swivel and pulls Vincent in, only to get clotheslined by Dutch.

The chinlock doesn't last long as MJF fights up...but realizes he doesn't have a partner. Dutch powerbombs him down so Vincent can hit a Swanton for two. The Boss Man Slam gets two more and Autumn Sunshine gets the same, leaving the Righteous stunned. Vincent goes for a chair but MJF grabs him low to cut it off.

Back up and Vincent kicks him in the face but misses a second Swanton. Everything breaks down and Dutch is rammed into the corner over and over. The body slam connects and the fans are thrilled. With Dutch sent into the corner, MJF sends Vincent face first into the back of Dutch's tights. The Kangaroo Kick sends the Righteous outside and the Heatseeker finishes Dutch (with feet on the ropes) at 9:35.

Rating: C+. Watching MJF do his goofy, almost parody of wrestling is hilarious and it's great to see him having fun like this. At the same time, the Righteous being out of the title picture for the time being is nice to see. It still feels like the Kingdom will be the ones to win the titles, but at least we're having a good time on the way there.

We recap Katsuyori Shibata vs. Eddie Kingston, with Kingston defending his two titles but Shibata not defending his.

Ring Of Honor World Title/New Japan Strong Openweight Title: Eddie Kingston vs. Katsuyori Shibata

Only Shibata is challenging and he goes to the mat to start. With that not working, they trade strikes until Shibata pulls him down into an ankle lock. The rope is reached so Shibata grabs a Figure Four to stay on the leg. That's broken up as well so Shibata puts on a bow and arrow. Kingston fights up and fires off the chops in the corner but Shibata kicks him in the face. The running basement dropkick in the corner and the fans are behind Shibata.

Kingston is back with a t-bone suplex but Shibata grabs an STO, with Taz being at his best by explaining the leverage and science. The Octopus Hold on the mat has Kingston in trouble but he makes it over to the rope. Kingston knocks him away again but Shibata comes back with the running kick to the chest. They strike it out until Kingston's spinning backfist gets one. The northern lights bomb gets the same, followed by another backfist and the powerbomb to retain the titles at 10:58.

Rating: B-. This was Kingston striking away and gritting through someone more polished and skilled. It made for a nice story to the match and served as Kingston's latest fantasy match come to life. Kingston needs some wins to establish himself as a star and wins like this one are

going to get him a long way.

Post match Shibata gets the big show of respect.

We recap Julia Hart challenging Kris Statlander for the TBS Title. Hart is on a roll but Statlander was the last person to beat her. Now the title is on the line.

TBS Title: Kris Statlander vs. Julia Hart

Hart, with Brody King, is challenging. Statlander powers her into the corner to start and hits some shoulders to the ribs. The running knee misses but she runs Hart over again without much trouble. Hart manages a hurricanrana but Statlander muscles her over with a suplex for two. They go outside, where Statlander grabs her in a fireman's carry and carries her back up the steps. It's right back to the floor, with Hart sending her into the barricade this time.

A backsplash gives Hart two back inside and we hit the quickly broken abdominal stretch. Now Statlander's running knee in the corner sets up the Blue Thunder Bomb for two. Statlander trips so King yells at her, allowing Hart to load up the mist. That takes too long though and Statlander grabs a fisherman's driver for two more. Hart pulls her off the top and goes up, meaning it's the moonsault for a rather close two. Hartless goes on but Statlander muscles her up into a Tombstone, followed by Sunday Night Fever to retain at 8:54.

Rating: B-. I was a bit surprised by the result as it stops Hart's run cold, but Statlander has been on a roll since getting the title. Having her get another pay per view win is not a bad thing whatsoever, but she needs to start fighting some of the bigger names. The division has the depth to have some stronger challengers come after her, though Hart did rather well here in her biggest match ever.

We recap the four way tag match for the #1 contendership to the Tag Team Titles. There are four teams and they're

fighting for a title shot, end of story.

The Gunns vs. Hook/Orange Cassidy vs. Lucha Bros vs. Young Bucks

One fall to a finish for a future AEW Tag Team Title shot. Fenix and Nick strike away at each other before popping up for a staredown. Cassidy tags himself in but the Gunns pull Fenix outside for a ram into the barricade. Back in and Austin dropkicks Cassidy into the corner before trying to cover Colten. The referee isn't having that and it's the Bucks' turn to clean house.

Hook comes in and gets to clear the ring as well, leaving Cassidy to hit a dive onto both Bucks. Apparently Fenix is down so Penta comes in to kick at the Bucks. We settle down to Colten punching Hook down for two but Penta is back in. Made In Japan gets two on Austin as everything breaks down again. Matt hits a superkick and Nick adds the slingshot X Factor to Austin.

Penta's big running flip dive connects though Hook tags himself in. Redrum is blocked so Cassidy Orange Punches Austin into Redrum to put him in trouble. Nick tags himself in though and hits a 450 for two with Cassidy making a save. The Bucks double superkick Hook but Penta superkicks the Bucks. Not that it matters as the BTE Trigger finishes Penta at 12:10 to give the Bucks the title shot.

Rating: B-. The Bucks are 2/3 of the Six Man Tag Team Champions, #1 contender to the Tag Team Titles and Nick is getting an International Title shot this week. I know it's All ELITE Wrestling but this might be taking things a bit too literally. Anyway, this was your usual insane display of people jumping and flipping all over the place, though Fenix being down isn't a good sign. I'm not sure if they're going to run FTR vs. the Bucks again, but it would certainly be a big deal if they did. I'm just not sure how big.

We recap Hangman Page vs. Swerve Strickland. Page can't break through to be a star and Swerve wants to prove what he really is. Then Page stabbed him in the hand with a pen.

Hangman Page vs. Swerve Strickland

The Mogul Embassy, complete with dancing Prince Nana, is here with Strickland (the home area boy). Feeling out process to start until Page knocks him into the corner for a loud chop. The fans are WAY behind Swerve here, even as Page knocks him down into the corner. Swerve is right back with a kick to the face and the middle rope elbow to the back lets him dance a bit.

Page manages a quick suplex and they're both down again. With Swerve on the floor, Page hits a big moonsault to take him down on the floor. The dive drops Swerve again but they go back inside where he grabs a rolling Downward Spiral. The Brainbuster gives Swerve two but Page catches him on top. That's fine with Swerve, who knocks him backwards for the Swerve Stomp (the fans approve again).

Swerve's House Call gets two more and they head to the apron. The Deadeye on the apron is blocked so Page hits it on the steps instead. Page doesn't cover, instead sending him inside and kicking away, only to get caught in the ropes. They slap it out until the Buckshot Lariat is countered into a rather nasty arm crank. We pause for the doctor to check on Page but Swerve hits a Swerve Stomp onto the apron.

A 450 onto the arm gives Swerve two and he grabs the armbar. Page makes the rope and scores with a left arm lariat. Swerve's armbar is broken up and Page hammers on the bad hand. Swerve gets in a suplex but misses another Stomp. The Buckshot Lariat connects for a rather delayed two, as Prince Nana puts the foot on the rope. Page chases Nana off, allowing Swerve to hit him in the face with Nana's crown for two. Back to back House Calls set up the

JML Driver for the pin on Page at 20:06.

Rating: B+. That's the Swerve match that the fans have been waiting to see and it worked very well throughout. These guys beat the fire out of each other and it felt like a big slugout. If Swerve becomes a breakout star around here, there is a good chance that this is what starts it off for him. Awesome match here and the best thing on the card so far.

We recap Ricky Starks vs. Wheeler Yuta. Starks wasn't happy with losing to Bryan Danielson back to back so he'll fight Danielson's teammate instead.

Wheeler Yuta vs. Ricky Starks

Jon Moxley is back on commentary. They go with the grappling to start before opting to punch each other in the face instead. Starks gets the better of things and knocks Yuta up against the ropes, allowing him to stare at the crowd a bit. Yuta slips out of a fireman's carry and rolls him up for two, only to have Starks get in another shot. Moxley thinks Starks is talented but runs his mouth too much, meaning he isn't sure if he should fight Starks or take him on a date. Yuta is back with something like a Samoan drop and an armbar goes on.

Cue Big Bill as Starks makes the rope and spikes Yuta for two. Starks hits his own hammer and anvil elbows, which just make Yuta mad. That's fine with Starks, who takes Yuta's head off but gets shoved off the rope for a crash onto Bill. Yuta posts Bill to get rid of him and fires off the real hammer and anvil elbows. The Seatbelt gives Yuta two but Starks is back up with the spear. The Roshambo finishes Yuta at 9:54.

Rating: C+. The match wasn't bad, but I'm not sure if it needed to be on the pay per view. This felt like a Rampage main event or a big match on Collision rather than needing to be on here. What matters here though is that Starks got

his big win and regains some momentum so things should be getting a bit better for him going forward. Odds are it sets up Moxley vs. Starks as well and that's not a bad thing.

We recap Bryan Danielson vs. Zack Sabre Jr. and...yeah I think that's all you need to know here.

Bryan Danielson vs. Zack Sabre Jr.

Sabre's New Japan TV Title isn't on the line. Feeling out process to start as they both seem nervous about going too far. Danielson suplexes him down and Sabre pauses for a standoff. Sabre pulls him into the abdominal stretch but Danielson pulls him into a leglock. That's broken up and they stay on the mat with neither being able to get control. Instead Danielson pulls him into the surfboard but Sabre slips out again.

Sabre starts going after the arm and gives it a shoulder before adding a nasty stomp. The arm gets twisted around and Sabre is starting to get cocky. Sabre stays on the arm but he takes too long going up, allowing Danielson to cut him off. The arm is snapped over Sabre's shoulder though and the armbar goes on up top. Danielson headbutts his way out of trouble and a top rope butterfly superplex lets him...not get the LeBell Lock.

Instead Danielson goes with a half crab but Sabre is right over to the ropes. The YES Kicks rock Sabre and Danielson stomps him in the head. The running knee is countered and Sabre pulls him into the European Clutch for two. Moxley (on commentary) is on his feet as they both need a breather. Cattle Mutilation goes on but Sabre rolls out, only to get caught with the elbows to the face.

Danielson gets a leglock but Sabre reverses into one of his own. That earns him a spit in the face and they strike it out, with Danielson getting the better of things. Back up and Sabre goes for the arm while Danielson kicks at the

leg. Sabre gets the better of things this time and pulls Danielson into the double arm crank. Nigel: "THINK ABOUT YOUR KIDS! THINK ABOUT YOUR WIFE! RETIRE NOW!"

Danielson makes the rope (Nigel: "You coward!") so they trade kicks, with Danielson nailing a big one to the head. The stomp to the head misses so Sabre pulls him into the cross armbreaker. That's reverses into a leg trap belly to back suplex into the running knee for the very near fall. Another running knee finishes Sabre at 23:13.

Rating: A-. Like I said before the match, this was going to work because of the talent involved and then they were allowed to have all the time they needed to tear the house down. You could see two masters in there trying to take the other apart and it worked about as well as expected. Awesome stuff here and as usual, it felt like a clinic from two of the best ever with this style.

Post match respect is offered but Sabre turns it down. Naturally Nigel says that wasn't technical wrestling so Danielson is NOT the best in the world.

We recap Chris Jericho/Kenny Omega/Kota Ibushi vs. the Don Callis Family. All three hate Callis so they're fighting his team.

Chris Jericho/Kenny Omega/Kota Ibushi vs. Don Callis Family

Omega and Will Ospreay start things off but it's quickly off to Sammy Guevara, who lounges on the top rope. They start running the ropes until Sammy flips over him and scores with a dropkick. Ospreay comes back in to get suplexed by Jericho as Sammy shouts at commentary. Jericho punches Ospreay and we get the big standoff. The good guys clear the house, pay tribute to Inoki (oh yeah that's a thing with this show) and hit stereo dives.

Back in and Omega slugs away at Takeshita, who rakes the eyes to cut him off. Takeshita hits a clothesline but

Ibushi comes in for a save. Ospreay puts on an abdominal stretch, with the rest of the Family adding leverage like villains should. The Blue Thunder Bomb gets two on Omega but he gets over for the tag back to Omega. That means an abdominal stretch to Sammy, with the rest of Omega's partners pulling as well.

Ibushi comes in with a double back elbow and we get an Ibushi/Jericho Sex Gods pose. Omega and Jericho hit stereo moonsaults to the floor, leaving Jericho to hit the Lionsault for two on Sammy. Takeshita breaks up the Walls and drops Omega on his head with a release German suplex. Jericho has to fight Ospreay and Takeshita at the same time but Takeshita knees Ospreay by mistake.

Omega is back up with the big running flip dive to take out Takeshita and Ospreay. Back in and Sammy Spanish Flies Jericho for two, followed by the shooting star to the floor. Omega and Ospreay slug it out back inside but Takeshita is back in with a running knee to put Omega down.

Sammy Codebreakers Jericho for one so Jericho fights up, only to get beaten down again. Ibushi is back up to strike away but Ospreay saves Takeshita from the big boot. The Golden Trigger is cut off by Sammy's high crossbody. Jericho is back up with the Judas Effect to Ospreay but Sammy superkicks Jericho in the face. Jericho tries to pull him into the Walls but Callis comes in with a baseball bat shot to give Sammy the pin at 22:17.

Rating: B+. This was the match I was expecting to be the best on the card and it came pretty close. The match started with the regular wrestling but then broke down into the wild fight that it was destined to be. The Callis Family stuff isn't exactly thrilling but the matches have worked so well and that's what matters most.

We recap Aussie Open challenging FTR for the Tag Team Titles. FTR beat them for the New Japan Tag Team Titles a

year ago and now the Aussies want to even things up.

AEW Tag Team Titles: Aussie Open vs. FTR

FTR is defending. Harwood and Fletcher lock up to start with neither being able to get very far. Wheeler comes in and this time Fletcher bails to the floor. Harwood sends him back in, where Wheeler hits a backdrop to take over. It's off to Davis for a chop off with Harwood, who gets slammed down. Davis hits a backplash so it's back to Fletcher, who gets caught with a snap suplex.

Everything breaks down and FTR is rammed into each other on the floor. Back in and Fletcher forearms away at Wheeler before Davis grabs a chinlock. Wheeler fights up and catches Fletcher on top, meaning it's a belly to back superplex for a big crash. Fletcher is able to grab a brainbuster but Wheeler is up again, this time getting over to Harwood. Rolling German suplexes drop Fletcher as Wheeler and Davis fight on the floor.

Harwood gets two off a Liger Bomb but Davis is back in to break up the PowerPlex. A Doomsday kick to the face gets two on Wheeler but Harwood is back in for the save. Now the PowerPlex can connect, leaving Fletcher to high crossbody Harwood into the cover to break it up.

Wheeler rolls Davis (who appears to have hurt his wrist) up for two, only to walk into a Shatter Machine from the Aussies. The Coriolis gets two with Harwood making the save this time. They head outside again and it's a spike piledriver on the floor to drop Davis. Back in and a super Shatter Machine finishes Fletcher to retain the titles at 20:23.

Rating: B. It was a good match but this might have been better if they had cut out about four minutes. The problem here came down to the fact that this went long in the semi-main event spot on a show that is going to run over four and a half hours. The Aussies winning felt like a long shot

in the first place and while the match was good, it wasn't able to completely overcome those circumstances.

We recap Darby Allin vs. Christian Cage for the latter's TBS Title. Allin wants to prove he belongs in the main event in his hometown and the title is on the line.

TBS Title: Darby Allin vs. Christian Cage

Allin is challenging (and bleeding before the match for some reason) and this is 2/3 falls. Feeling out process to start with Cage bailing into the corner and spitting into Allin's face. Allin is calm enough to pull him into an armbar, followed by a headlock to keep him down. Back up and Christian chops him against the ropes, meaning we get the double bicep pose. It's too early for the Unprettier though as Allin pulls the turtleneck over Christian's face and rolls him up for the first fall at 4:55.

We pause for a bit as Cage stops to look at Nick Wayne's mom in the front row before taking Allin down again. Cage pounds away at the back and cranks on his neck to keep things slow. Allin gets back up for some rapid fire rollups but gets sent outside in a crash. Cage whips him into the barricade but goes after Wayne's mom again, allowing Allin to hit a suicide dive. Back in and the Coffin Drop hits raised knees, allowing Cage to send him into the announcers' table. Something like a powerslam off the apron hits sends Allin back first into the steps. That's enough for a countout to tie it up at 15:18 total.

A stretcher is brought out as Cage is doing something with the ring skirt. He peels the entire mat back and exposes the wood...before hitting a frog splash onto Allin on the stretcher. That's good for two back inside and Cage grabs a Scorpion Deathlock. Allin makes the rope (the fans approve) and it's a Scorpion Death Drop for two, followed by the Coffin Drop for the same.

Cage loads up a superplex onto the steps on the floor but

gets reversed into a sunset bomb. The spear hits the referee though, leaving Cage to hit Allin low. The title is brought in but Nick Wayne runs in to take it away. Then Wayne hits Allin with the title (his mom is NOT happy) and Cage retains at 25:13.

Rating: B+. This was a smartly worked match as Christian didn't have to go insane but rather set things up for Allin to go nuts instead. It made for some very good drama and action, with Allin getting the first fall to save some face. I liked the match rather well, though having it as the main event (yes they had to with the ring deal) might have been a stretch.

Post match Cage hugs Wayne, who destroys Allin while yelling about family. Sting comes in for the save but Luchasaurus is here to beat him down as well. The Conchairto is loaded up...and the lights go out. A video of someone driving a car to the arena plays and the lights come up. And yeah EDGE debuts (complete with Metalingus theme), with the villains handing him the chair. He cracks Wayne with it instead and spears Luchasaurus to clear out the villains. Edge and Sting shake hands to end the show. That's the big deal of the show and while we'll have to see where it goes, the moment was there.

Overall Rating: B+. As tends to be the case with AEW shows, they wind up being good in the end through the hard work and effort put in from the wrestlers. That was the case again here, with a few awesome matches being more than enough to keep me interested. The show got better as it went on and thankfully they didn't have some of the lesser matches eat up too much time.

That being said, this was they could be that much more enjoyable with some time trimmed off. There is just SO MUCH STUFF on here and some of it could easily be dropped (like the bonus Rampage described as Zero Hour) and probably

Starks vs. Yuta. At some point the energy is going to go away and that isn't good for the main event matches. That being said, the show was still quite the blast to watch and if they can keep it up, they're not going to change anything.

Results

Satoshi Kojima/Keith Lee/Athena/Billie Starkz b. Shane Taylor/Diamante/Lee Moriarty/Mercedes Martinez – Lariat to Moriarty

Claudio Castagnoli b. Josh Barnett – Rollup

Luchasaurus b. Nick Wayne – Forearm to the back of the head

Billy Gunn/Acclaimed b. TMDK – Mic Drop to Haste

Maxwell Jacob Friedman b. The Righteous – Rollup with feet on the ropes to Dutch

Eddie Kingston b. Katsuyori Shibata – Powerbomb

Kris Statlander b. Julia Hart – Sunday Night Fever

Young Bucks b. Lucha Bros, Gunns and Orange Cassidy/Hook – BTE Trigger to Penta

Swerve Strickland b. Hangman Page – JML Driver

Ricky Starkz b. Wheeler Yuta – Roshambo

Bryan Danielson b. Zack Sabre Jr. – Running knee

Don Callis Family b. Chris Jericho/Kenny Omega/Kota Ibushi – Baseball bat shot to Jericho

FTR b. Aussie Open – Super Shatter Machine to Fletcher

Christian Cage b. Darby Allin 2-1

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WrestleDream 2023 Preview

So here we have WrestleDream, which is a show designed to honor the passing of Antonio Inoki one year ago. Therefore it's another AEW show with New Japan guest stars, though New Japan is running a big show of its own on the same day so the visiting stars are limited. There is some good stuff on the card though and hopefully that's enough to carry it. Let's get to it.

Zero Hour: Nick Wayne vs. Luchasaurus

This is a side story from Darby Allin vs. Christian Cage as both have interfered in the other feud. It's a speed vs. power match and that is something that can work under almost any circumstances. AEW really seems interested in pushing Wayne every chance they can these days but at some point he is going to need to win something. I'm just not sure he gets to do it here.

I'll go with Luchasaurus to win here as he's coming off the TNT Title reign and isn't likely to lose to someone with so little experience on this level. I'm sure Wayne will get a bunch of stuff in and get to showcase himself again but that doesn't mean he's going to win. Hopefully Wayne gets to throw everything he has at Luchasaurus, but he'll fall short in the end.

Zero Hour: Trios Titles: Acclaimed/Billy Gunn(c) vs. TMDK

This is the first New Japan match on the show and in this case it was built up as "whoever wins the title match on Rampage defends against TMDK tomorrow night". That's not

exactly a thrilling story but it's a way to get the titles on the show. Thankfully in this case it's just on Zero Hour, meaning it won't extend the show with a match that has very little in the way of drama.

Of course the champions retain here, as a group of guest stars aren't going to be the ones to end the reign that is bringing the Acclaimed and the Gunns back to prominence. The (arguably) good thing about these titles is you can throw any three challenges out there and have a title match. That's more or less what they've done here, though at least it's a regular team from New Japan.

Zero Hour: Claudio Castagnoli vs. Josh Barnett

So this was added the night before the show as the result of a Castagnoli open challenge. Barnett has never wrestled for AEW before but does have experience in Japan so here we are. That makes for a tricky preview because there isn't any kind of a story going into the match, and Barnett being a complete stranger around here makes it even more complicated.

Since Barnett is not likely to stick around, I'll go with Castagnoli to win as there isn't much of a reason to do anything else. Castagnoli needs a big win coming off his loss to Eddie Kingston and while this won't be some kind of a game changer for him, it should be enough to give him a boost. I'm not sure why this match needed to be added, though more Castagnoli is often a good thing.

Zero Hour: Shane Taylor/Lee Moriarty/Diamante/Mercedes Martinez vs. Satoshi Kojima/Keith Lee/Athena/Billie Starkz

This is another match added during the Collision because MORE MEANS GOOD. There are a few people with some history here but a good chunk of it has been in Ring Of Honor. Taylor seems to be one of the new flavors of the month for AEW and it makes sense that they would want to get him out there in front of people as often as possible. Throw in Lee

and this could be a lot worse.

Give me Lee and company to win, as Moriarty being thrown half a mile by Lee would be a good way to get the show going. Other than that, there is always the chance of Athena beating Martinez or Diamante. Either way, there are going to be a bunch of people in this match and there is a good chance that a lot of them are not going to be able to get in that much ring time.

TBS Title: Kris Statlander(c) vs. Julia Hart

Statlander has been a mostly dominant champion in her still relatively short title reign, but Hart has caught fire in recent weeks and suddenly feels like she could be a major threat to the title. The good thing here is that you are seeing two mostly fresh women in the title scene, which is what AEW has been needing for a very long time now. In other words, there isn't a bad option for a winner here.

I think I'll actually take Hart to win the title, as it would be very deflating for her to lose after the big push that she has gotten in the last few weeks. Granted that might have been just to make her feel like a threat, but the House of Black needs to get something back after losing the Trios Titles, so this would be a nice fit to help get them on track. I'm not sure what is next for Statlander, but I'm thinking she should lose here.

Ricky Starks vs. Wheeler Yuta

This was thrown onto the card earlier in the week as Yuta doesn't like how Starks has been going after Bryan Danielson. Starks has been on a roll as of late without winning much of anything, which leaves him in a weird place. Granted that is kind of why you put someone like Yuta in this spot as he could go a long way with making Starks look like a bigger deal after his losses.

I'll go with Starks to win here, as there is little reason

for Yuta to win. His role in the Blackpool Combat Club is to put up a good fight in defeat and that is what he'll be doing here. Starks is red hot and for someone who keeps losing so giving him a win here would be the right way to go. They'll have a good match, but at the end of the day, Starks needs this way more than Yuta.

Young Bucks vs. The Gunns vs. Lucha Bros vs. Orange Cassidy/Hook

For a future AEW Tag Team Title shot, which sounds a bit like a Money In The Bank deal. We'll start with getting rid of Cassidy and Hook, who are a fun team, but I can't imagine they actually get put into the title picture so soon. That leaves a few options, and I could picture any of the three getting the shot. It's nice to have options here, and unfortunately none of them really stand out.

While the Bucks would be the interesting way to go, I'll take the Gunns getting the win here. FTR vs. the Lucha Bros doesn't sound like it would be the most engaging match and the Bucks vs. FTR has been done so many times now. Go with FTR vs. the Gunns, which does have a history but hasn't been hammered into the ground. This is going to be the "everyone flies all over the place" match and it should be entertaining enough. Just don't do the Money In The Bank deal, please.

AEW Tag Team Titles: FTR(c) vs. Aussie Open

This one is a little more interesting as I could see the titles changing hands. Aussie Open has come a long way and established themselves as one of the better teams in AEW at the moment. That means they can be put into this spot for a shot at the best team around without much trouble. The teams have even traded some promos to hype things up even more and so far, they've done their jobs.

With that being said, for the life of me I can't imagine FTR losing the belts They can have good to great matches

with just about any team and it would feel like a waste to take away that option, especially with them frequenting Collision. The Aussies will give them one heck of a run for their money, but FTR comes out on top of this by retaining the titles, and that's the right choice.

Chris Jericho/Kenny Omega/Kota Ibushi vs. Konosuke Takeshita/Sammy Guevara/Will Ospreay

This is the Don Callis Family match, which has seen two feuds combined into one for the sake of taking away some of Callis' television time. Ignoring that aspect though, we should be in for a heck of a match here, especially if Ibushi is able to wrestle more like his old self than the version we have seen in AEW so far. Everything else should work well and I'm wanting to see how this goes.

After dominating for a good while, this should be the match where Callis and company can drop a match to the conquering heroes. Guevara taking a fall from Omega or even Jericho won't ruin him as they can get set up for another singles showdown in the future. Either way, this has the potential to steal the show and if they can get to that higher level, it very well may be the best thing on the show.

Ring Of Honor World Title/New Japan Strong Openweight Title: Eddie Kingston(c) vs. Katsuyori Shibata

It's a double title match with Shibata's ROH Pure Title not on the line, meaning commentary has said that Shibata can become a triple crown champion. At least Shibata is someone who has wrestled in Ring Of Honor more than once, as there is far too much of a tendency for random people to get title shots (like earlier in the show or example). Shibata is also someone Kingston is going to respect so there is a real chance he'll bring the work here.

As for a winner, much like the Trios Titles, there isn't much of a reason to believe the title is going to change hands, especially so soon after Kingston won the ROH title

in the first place. Kingston needs to rack up some wins to make him feel like a bigger deal and this would be a nice addition. It should be a hard hitting match as well and that should take them far enough, but yeah Kingston retains.

Ring Of Honor Tag Team Titles: Maxwell Jacob Friedman(c) vs. Righteous

So this was supposed to be a tag match with Adam Cole included but he's basically destroyed his ankle, leaving us with a handicap match instead. That puts them in a tough spot and again I'm not sure where this is going to go. On one hand, MJF doesn't need to have the titles anymore if Cole is injured, but the titles changing hands would involve the Righteous beating the AEW World Champion.

As little sense as it might make, I'll go with MJF retaining, as I can't imagine either Vincent or Dutch pinning him or making him give up. There is always the chance of some kind of screwy finish and that is probably coming later, but it is still hard to fathom that anyone but the Kingdom is taking the titles from Cole and MJF. Or is it just MJF these days? Either way, the Righteous don't win here.

Hangman Page vs. Swerve Strickland

This is the match that has felt the most interesting throughout the build to the show and the contract signing this week kept that interest high. Both guys need a big win and they have me wanting to see them fight, which is a great sign for one of them. Hopefully the loser isn't going to be hurt that badly but there is a good chance that this is going to continue beyond this match.

Give me Swerve here, as a Page win would seem to wrap things up between them with a tighter bow. As much as Page could use a win, he's had success before and is a much more accomplished star in AEW. Let Swerve get his win and move

up the card a bit, as a win over a former World Champion is going to do a lot of good no matter what. Page should be fine, but either way, this match should rock.

Bryan Danielson vs. Zack Sabre Jr.

What we have here is the kind of match that sells itself on name value alone. The idea of Danielson vs. Sabre Jr. is going to get hardcore fans interested and there is a very real chance that they could live up to or even exceed their expectations. That might be a very hard task to pull off, but these are the kind of stars who might be able to pull that kind of a miracle off.

As has been a trend here, there isn't much of a reason for the star who is going to be going away after this show winning, so I'll take Danielson to win here. Yes he did it in a pay per view main event against a guest star this year and that should cover him for well over a year, but I can't imagine Sabre winning here. Danielson has things to do in AEW and downgrading him (as much as that can be done) with a loss to a one off guest star doesn't make sense.

TNT Title: Christian Cage(c) vs. Darby Allin

This is the rumored main event for the show and with Allin as the hometown boy in a 2/3 falls match, that is not the worst idea. These two had a rather nice match a month or so ago on Collision and if they do that again with more time and on a bigger stage, we should be in for a pretty solid main event. That leaves a pair of questions though and I think I have the answer to at least one.

Of course I'll take Allin winning here, as otherwise it would run a real threat of killing Seattle for AEW. Allin winning is the perfect way to go and it would be a great moment to end things on. Then again, there is also the chance that we get an Edge debut here to do something with Cage, though hopefully that doesn't include giving him an assist to keep the title. Allin wins here, as he should.

Overall Thoughts

That's a lot of matches. Once I get to the end of the card, I've already forgot a good few of the matches involved as there are too many for the show's own good. Then again that is the case with almost every AEW show, which makes it all the more frustrating. The action will be rather good as it almost always is, but the way the show is presented is such a self imposed roadblock. It still feels like a B show, but now it feels like a rather bloated B show.

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Joey Janela's Spring Break 6 Night Two: The Greatest Clusterf.....Hey It's My 8000th Review!

Joey Janela's Spring Break 6 Night Two

Date: April 1, 2022

Location: Fair Park, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Dave Prazak, Kevin Gill

It's the second half of the show and in this case, it needs to get a pretty big upgrade over the first half. Night one was a decent enough show, but it wasn't memorable, which is the point of a show like this. Now that being said, this show is built around the Clusterf*** Battle Royal, which could be quite the mess. Let's get to it.

[Here is Night One if you need a recap.](#)

We open with Joey Janela talking about beating Sean Waltman last night and wanting his flowers. He wonders why the fans hate him now but Spring Break needs a lethal dose of poison to turn it back into what it is supposed to be. This year, he is entering the Clusterf*** so he can end it once and for all. Maybe just don't run it then?

Matt Cardona vs. Chris Dickinson

Chelsea Green is here with Cardona, who is currently the king, meaning yes he does have a Macho King crown. Green gets in an ALL HAIL THE DEATHMATCH KING and the fans are all over Cardona again. Cardona insults GCW and says they are the power couple of wrestling. Six years ago, he won the Intercontinental Title at Wrestlemania, but now he's in this piece of garbage ring. If he was in WWE, like he should be, he would be celebrating his friend Mark Calaway, who he will see in the Hall of Fame one day.

Dickinson comes out with...MISSY HYATT to even things out, which is one of those names that makes this show feel fun. Both pairs share good luck kisses before the match, with Hyatt's leaving Dickinson woozy. Dickinson wrestles him to the mat to start but Cardona is up to yell at Hyatt. That doesn't work well for Dickinson, who grabs a cross armbreaker to send Cardona bailing to the floor.

Back in and Green grabs Dickinson's foot for a distraction so Cardona can stomp away. After throwing his shirt at Hyatt, Cardona chokes with the wrist tape and then his hand for a bonus. The running forearm drops Dickinson again and

a neckbreaker gives Cardona two. It's already door time but Cardona spends too much time mocking the crowd, allowing Dickinson to backdrop him through the door in the corner.

The slugout is on with Cardona going to the eyes, only to get blasted with a running clothesline. The brainbuster gives Dickinson two but Green offers a distraction, allowing Cardona to nail a spear for two. Missy finally grabs Cardona's boot and slaps Green, allowing Dickinson to hit a Death Valley Driver for two of his own.

Green offers another distraction so Cardona can hit a low blow into the Rough Ryder for two. Now it's Green coming in and hitting Cardona with Missy's loaded purse by mistake, allowing Dickinson to clothesline her down. The toss Razor's Edge is enough for Dickinson to pin both of them at once at 12:43.

Rating: C+. You really can see why the GCW fans can't stand Cardona in this run as he is one of the most annoying and obnoxious heels you could want to see. He is playing up the idea of being a big shot and that is one of the best ways to get heat from anyone. Dickinson is a decent power guy and looked good here, though Missy kind of disappeared for large chunks of the match.

Biff Busick vs. Tony Deppen

Feeling out process to start with Deppen trying to go to the mat to little success. Back up and Busick goes to the armbar, which has Deppen bailing to the ropes. Busick chops the heck out of Deppen, whose chops back have no effect. They head outside with Busick uppercutting away but a chop only hits the post. With Busick trying to shake it off, Deppen hits a flip dive off the apron and they head back inside.

Busick is fine enough to knee him down and the figure four necklock sends Deppen to the ropes again. Back up and Busick gets a little more violent by holding Deppen in

place for some slaps to the face. Deppen is smart enough to go after Busick's bad hand but Busick hits a running uppercut to take him down again.

Busick misses a charge though and Deppen hits a suicide flip dive for two back inside. Back up and the slugout goes to Busick until Deppen goes for the hand and grabs a Kimura of all things. With that broken up, Busick wins another strike off but Deppen avoids a charge in the corner. A running knee finishes Busick at 11:40.

Rating: B-. Sometimes you need two people to hit each other really hard and you got at least half of that here with Busick's beating. Busick might not be a star in the making, but he's an established hard hitter in the middle of the card and that should be enough to get him quite a few jobs. At the same time, you have Deppen as one of the better heels I've seen in a bit, as he is just straight up unlikable. Keep going with that and he'll be fine.

Post match Deppen thanks Busick for the match but tells anyone who doesn't believe in him what they can kiss.

Mike Bailey vs. Jordan Oliver

Bailey does his bow and they shake hands to start. Oliver does his pose so Bailey kicks him in the face and strikes away but Oliver is back up with chops of his own. Bailey's leapfrog is countered into a faceplant and Oliver sends him outside for a big dive. Some kicks send Oliver through some chairs though and Bailey knees him in the chest.

Back in and Bailey kicks him in the chest for two, followed by the YES Kicks to make it worse. Bailey hits a running kick to the face in the corner and they strike it out again. Oliver snaps off a release German suplex and a sitout powerbomb for two but Bailey sends him outside. There's the springboard moonsault to the floor and they strike it out on the apron.

Bailey gets the better of things and hits the moonsault knees, setting up the bouncing kicks back inside. The big kick to the head looks to set up the Ultimate Weapon but Oliver counters it with a cutter. A handspring cutter gets two so Oliver goes up, only to get pulled down with something like a One Winged Angel for the pin at 10:01.

Rating: C+. As is usually the case with Bailey, the action was good but he continues to have such a punchable face that it is hard to get into his matches. The good thing here was he didn't have the stupid no selling that drags down every good thing he does, making this slightly easier to watch than most of his matches. Oliver has come a long way but still has a good bit to go before he moves up to the next level.

Effy says he shouldn't be here but tonight he'll beat Minoru Suzuki, have his own show tomorrow, and then maybe he'll come for some gold.

Effy vs. Minoru Suzuki

Allie Katch is here with Effy. They both stick their jaws out with offers of a free shot but Effy's attempt at a kiss gets him slapped. Suzuki slaps him down and then a kick to the face puts Effy on the floor. They head outside with Effy telling him to chop as hard as he can. That's fine with Suzuki, who mocks Effy's return chops.

A big boot sends Effy through the chairs and Suzuki cranks on the arm back inside. Effy tries some forearms but gets dropped with a single one from Suzuki. Then Effy bites Suzuki's nipple and northern lights suplexes him for two. The big kiss staggers Suzuki but it's a slap to the face and the Gotch style piledriver to give Suzuki the pin at 9:04.

Rating: C. Effy's stuff may or may not be your cup of tea but Suzuki more or less squashed him here in a match with little to no doubt about the outcome. Effy was doing little

more than comedy here so it isn't like there was much to get annoyed about. They were going for the "wouldn't it be funny if these two wrestled" idea here and I've seen worse versions.

Greatest Clusterf***

So this is basically a Royal Rumble, but only in the very loosest of terms. There are no set time intervals and I don't believe there is a set number of entrants. I'm not going to be able to keep track of all of the eliminations, as I've never seen a version of this where they are all announced. This is going to be about total chaos and some surprise entrants and nothing more. You can be eliminated by pinfall, submission, over the top, leaving the building and...death?

Joey Janela is in at #1 and Buff Bagwell is in at #2 for your first surprise. Granted Buff is on a crutch but he has the American Males theme so this could be a lot worse. Janela wants to strut with him but it's a superkick to get rid of Buff very quickly. George Gatton, with an unidentified title, is in at #3 and it's a superkick into a piledriver to get rid of him too. Judas Judd Cassidy (I think?) is in at #4 and gets thrown over the top just as fast.

Yoya is in at #5 and suplexes Janela but gets caught in a heck of a package piledriver for the pin. Billie Starkz is in at #6 and a Gory Bomb takes Janela down but he raises knees to block her Swanton. That's it for Starkz and it's Juicy Finau (a big guy) in at #7. Janela can't suplex him so Finau does it to Janela instead and it's the even larger Sam Stackhouse, in Bam Bam Bigelow inspired gear, in at #8.

That leaves Janela to get crushed in the corner by back to back splashes but Stackhouse misses an ugly moonsault. Janela tosses both of them and it's Rhett Titus in at #9 as Janela keeps up his Brock Lesnar-esque run. Titus wrestles

him down and hits the running boot in the corner until it's the Invisible Man in at #10.

So we have the Invisible Man, Janela and Titus with Titus and the Man slugging it out. The Man gets the better of both of them but an elbow to the face lets Janela and Titus beat him down. A double suplex lets the two of them pose but Man is back with a double low blow. The Man throws out Titus but gets stomped down until Dante Leon is in at #11. They waste no time in the next entrant with Ninja Mack in at #12.

Leon and Mack are long time rivals so they pose at each other before superkicking Janela down. A shooting star piledriver drops Mack and it's a sick looking Jimmy Lloyd in at #13. Janela and Lloyd put on masks and they rehash their Social Distancing match, meaning they punch from a safe distance. Mack isn't having that and kicks Lloyd down, setting up the running flip dive to drop Janela on the floor. Back in and Lloyd runs Mack over for the pin and Early Morning Guy Steele is in at #14.

Steele doesn't seem to know what he is doing and falls off the top as Janela and Lloyd watch from the middle of the ring. Then Steele gives them a running double Blockbuster and a Canadian Destroyer each. Then he goes up top for a 450 to Lloyd, only to get rolled up for the pin from Janela. That was a weird one and it's Blake Christian in at #15. House is cleaned but the Invisible Man hits Christian low. That earns him a dropkick and it's Kevin Blackwood in at #16.

Blackwood's suplex gets two on Leon and stomps on Janela in the corner until Hoodfoot is in at #17. Hoodfoot and Blackwood slug it out until Slade is in at #18. Young Dumb And Broke (Charlie Tiger and Ellis Taylor) are in at #19 and #20, giving us Janela, Invisible Man, Leon, Lloyd, Christian, Blackwood, Hoodfoot, Slade, Tiger and Taylor as

this is far more organized than I was expecting. Everyone hits everyone until Deranged is in at #21 to clean house. With that going nowhere, Grim Reefer is in at #22 and has a smoke.

We now pause for everyone to partake, including Janela, who says he isn't with AEW anymore and can do what he wants. Janela runs to the back (I don't think he's been eliminated but who can tell around here?) and Sandra Moone is in at #23. Reefer clotheslines her down and it's Parrow in at #24. House is cleaned with Deranged and Reefer being eliminated almost immediately.

Big F'N Vin is in at #25 as Janela is having some Cheetos. Vin kicks Parrow out without much trouble as Janela wants to know his next spot. Nate Webb is in at #26 and comes through the crowd, who sings his theme music. Lloyd gets dropped by the Invisible Man, who hammers on Webb in the corner. Janela superkicks the Invisible Man though and tosses him out, much to the fans' annoyance. Webb misses a charge and gets low bridged to the floor and Hoodfoot is tossed as well.

Shazza McKenzie is in at #27 and goes after Janela to start the beating. Janela gets in a shot to the face though and grabs a door, only to have McKenzie spear him through it. Janai Kai is in at #28 and Jazzy Yang (Jimmy Wang's daughter) follows her at #29. The four women in the match stare each other down and it's Edith Surreal in at #30. That gives us Janela, Leon, Lloyd, Christian, Blackwood, Tiger, Ellis, Moone, Vin, McKenzie, Kai, Yang and Surreal, assuming I didn't miss any random eliminations.

Dark Sheik, another woman, is in at #31 and we have a six woman showdown. Uh make that seven as LuFisto is in at #32. Some of the guys come in to go after the women, with Leon and Taylor being tossed out. The women all beat up Tiger and toss him out with Vin joining him. Then the women get

into it, with Kai kicking out LuFisto. Moone is out as well and McKenzie hits a Stunner on Kai for the elimination. Janela comes back in to superkick McKenzie for the pin and it's Maven of all people in at #33.

Everyone stops to look at him so Maven hits a bunch of dropkicks...and then walks out for an elimination. Fans: "THANK YOU MAVEN!" With everyone else pairing off, Sean Ross Sapp, yes the dirt sheet writer, is in at #34, drawing a WE WANT MELTZER chant. Sapp gets a mic and begs people to subscribe to Fightful Select so they can read about GCW wrestlers getting fired by AEW. Josh Barnett, former UFC Heavyweight Champion, is in at #35 but fellow writer Denise Salcedo (not in the match) comes in to low blow Sapp and toss him out.

Nasty Leroy is in at #36 and Barnett blasts him with a clothesline as Jimmy Wang Yang is in at #37. Yang manages to take him down (not the prettiest but it worked) so Jazzy (remember, Yang's daughter) comes in to grab the leg, which apparently counts as a submission to get rid of Barnett. Jazzy rolls up Lloyd for an elimination and it's Alec Price in at #38. Price tosses Yang and dances a bit before getting kicked in the face by Jazzy. That's enough for Price to toss her as well and it's Cole Radrick in at #39.

Radrick and Price wind up on the apron and it's a double elimination. Brandon Kirk is in at #40, giving us Janela, Christian, Blackwood, Slade, Surreal, Sheik, Leroy and Kirk (I think at least). Sheik hits Kirk low as we're told Slade has left the building. Janela runs the ropes a lot until Lord Adrean (a Wal-Mart Guy) is in at #41. Adrean cleans house and Tombstones Kirk for the elimination, only to get Death Valley Drivered by Janela for another elimination. Kevin Matthews (you might remember him as KM in Impact) is in at #42 and stares it down with Leroy.

A not great looking Rock Bottom plants Matthews and a worse

Rock Bottom sets up a leglock for the tap as Janela busts a gut laughing. Then Janela hits Leroy low and pins him and it's Nick Wayne in at #43 for a brawl on the apron with Janela. Wayne superkicks Janela out for one heck of a pop and here is B-Boy to introduce Team LA Fights, which are six unnamed people. The team (Jai Vidal and Jack Cartwheel are two of them) clean house and something like a Styles Clash into a sitout powerbomb gets rid of Blackwood.

With those six in at #44-49, the Second City Crew (AJ Gray/Mance Warner/Matthew Justice/1 Called Manders and Levi Everett) are in #50-#54. The Crew cleans house with Matt Vandagriff (of LA Fights) being tossed. Damian Drake and Ju Dizz (I think) are both out with Hunter Freeman joining them. Cartwheel gets knocked out but walks on his hands until Manders chairs him down for the elimination. Vidal is tossed out and the Crew is left alone until the others still in the match come in.

Christian and Wayne get together to toss Everett and Manders. Somehow Christian and Wayne are the last two with Christian hitting a quick Downward Spiral for the pin...and never mind as yeah there are some people still left. Sheik comes in off the top with a spinwheel kick and the rest of the Crew pile onto her for the pin. Christian goes after the Crew but gets taken down and superplexed into a top rope legdrop for the pin...and that's it at 1:23:57 (I guess Surreal was tossed somewhere in there).

Rating: C+. To be clear, this match is not about something coherent or anything more than having one name after another. That being said, this was WAY more coherent than the previous edition and that helped a lot. This felt more like a very indy Royal Rumble and, save for Surreal, no one was getting lost in the whole thing. I had a good time with this and it did fly by with some fun moments. It's the kind of match that I was expecting from a Spring Break and it went well, especially with all of the insanity that came

with it.

Overall Rating: B-. This was more like the Spring Breaks of the past and it worked out pretty well all things considered. It was a collection of some fun matches before we got to the big main event and that wound up working well. Good stuff here and it didn't feel like a regular GCW show. While those can be fun, it's not what I came into this wanting. The main event is all that mattered here and the other four matches were a nice bonus so we'll call this a success.

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Impact Wrestling – March 2, 2017: And So, it Ends

Impact Wrestling

Date: March 2, 2017

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: D'Angelo Dinero, Josh Matthews

We're in a weird spot here as this is the final taping before the promotion is completely overhauled into Jeff Jarrett's new vision. It's also the final show for a lot of talent, including the Hardys who have publicly stated they've left the company. Other than that we have Lashley defending the World Title against Josh Barnett. Let's get to it.

Knockouts Title: Jade vs. Rosemary

No intro and Madison Rayne is on commentary. Jade is challenging and this is Last Knockout Standing. They start brawling in the aisle with Jade grabbing some German suplexes inside. Madison: "I think Jade knows it's going to take more than some German suplexes to keep Rosemary down." That's the kind of commentary that people mock Madison for but I'm sure Josh will say she's the best female commentator ever.

The weapons are brought in and Rosemary chokes Jade over the ropes. A short range Coast to Coast drives a garbage can into Jade's face for a seven but Jade swings away with a kendo stick. Madison keeps prattling on until Pope cuts her off as Jade powerbombs Rosemary onto the can.

Jade comes off the top and dives into the mist and a Red Wedding (F5) for another near fall. Back up and Jade is knocked to the floor and another Red Wedding outside gets nine. Rosemary gets posted and Jade washes her eyes out before powerbombing the champion onto the steps. That's still not enough to finish things off so Rosemary mists her again. A third Red Wedding on the stage retains the title at 11:09.

Rating: C. Jade hit a big move, Rosemary hit a big move, Jade hit another big move, Rosemary used the mist, Madison got really annoying every time she talked. This was entertaining while it lasted but it was also a very formula based match and a result we've seen so many times already. Rosemary really needs a new opponent and if it's not Allie, I have no idea what they're going for.

Moose wants Cody.

Matt Hardy has brought the family to his zoo for a day of togetherness. On top of that though, Matt wants to see how Jeff can handle his new found powers.

Moose calls Cody out for a fight and he doesn't care what club he's

a part of. Cody comes in from behind as Josh rips on Moose for getting involved in Rhodes Family business. Moose fights back and powerbombs some production guys before getting into it with Cody again on the ramp. Wrestlers try to break it up and here's Brandi to yell at Cody to stop. Cody agrees but beats up Josh Matthews instead. Well I'm a fan.

James Storm vs. Jesse Godderz

Josh is back on commentary and talking about his dedication to the job to be back. Tony Schiavone and Jim Ross would be out of action for months you see. Oh...joy. Storm jumps Jesse to start and grabs a belly to belly. It's off to the Adonis Lock but here's Kingston for a distraction so James can take out the knee. Josh: "I could have used someone like Kingston earlier when Cody was out here!"

We hit a quickly broken leglock as Josh is now insulting Jeremy Borash. Jesse fights up with a clothesline and gets two off a Blockbuster. Now we get to hear about Josh's in-ring career (He was undefeated. Like a certain other heel commentator at Wrestlemania perhaps?) as Kingston gets inside. Jesse suplexes him and grabs another Adonis Lock to make Storm tap behind the referee's back. Cue Bram to chair Jesse, setting up the Last Call for the pin at 6:30.

Rating: D. So you have two problems here and I'll let you pick which is worse. First up, we have Matthews running his mouth non-stop and becoming the heel character who will be on the show for two hours straight every single week. Second, we have the DCC needing three weeks and cheating to beat Jesse Godderz, which is supposed to be a big deal. I really, really hope they make a change to commentary because Pope as the lead face and Josh as a heel isn't going to work.

X-Division Title: Trevor Lee vs. Andrew Everett

Lee is defending. Everett doesn't waste time and gets in an early Pele to send Lee outside for a big flip dive. Another big flip dive takes Lee down again and a top rope Asai Moonsault has Lee reeling. Back in and Lee does his running C4 and hammers away but the announcers are arguing about something changing next week.

Lee stomps away in the corner and gets two off a clothesline as Josh tells Pope to cut out the comedy. A springboard missile dropkick puts Lee down but Everett can't follow up. The hurricanrana driver plants Lee but Gregory Helms grabs the referee at two. Everett

chases Gregory off and tries the shooting star which hits raised knees. Lee grabs a rollup with trunks for the pin to retain at 7:11.

Rating: C-. Everett was a good looking flipper and that's about it. The Helms thing feels like an X-Division version of Ric Flair and HHH which isn't the most interesting thing in the world. At least we had some entertaining stuff here but the division is in need of (another) overhaul and I don't know if I believe TNA is going to do it.

Matt tells Jeff to feed a donkey named Vincent Van Gogh. Vincent tells him to get a shark and keep it in a salt water pool. Jeff has a pre-mo-nition that says they'll be outnumbered in an upcoming fight. Everyone grabs Vanguard I and it's time for the next trip on the Expedition of Gold.

Back from a break and the Hardys arrive at an undisclosed arena.

After a look at Lashley and Barnett warming up, the Hardys are backstage and demanding a shot at the National Tag Team Titles of the World. Senor Benjamin asks the #1 contenders (apparently named the Appalachian Outlaws, who won a sixty four team tournament) for their autographs and then electrocutes them. The Hardys offer to replace them and agree to work without being paid.

The match is made and turns into a hardcore brawl in the back with Matt being left alone. Jeff is stuck in the back getting beaten down by the Outlaws but Jeff and Benjamin bust out the fireworks. The Outlaws bail and Jeff comes back to the ring for the win and the titles, setting up a big celebration.

Drew Galloway comes up to Moose in the back and offers him a shot tonight.

Long recap of last week's wedding.

Laurel is in the back, crying and screaming, still wearing the wedding dress and holding the champagne.

Global Title: Moose vs. Drew Galloway

Galloway is defending and kicks Moose in the face to start before it quickly goes outside. Drew gets the better of it and sends Moose into the steps, setting up the Celtic Cross onto said steps for a near countout. The bell saves Moose but he still loses the first round. The second round begins after a break with Moose kicking Drew in the face and running him over as a bonus. A moonsault gets two on

the champ so he bails up the ramp, only to get caught like you would expect.

Something like an AA (not a Death Valley Driver) onto the apron drops Moose again but he powerbombs Drew onto the apron as well. Again it's nearly a countout but this time Moose wins to tie the score. To continue the theme, they kick each other in the face to start the round. Moose is back up with the Game Changer for two but Galloway hits a Claymore and a Tombstone for the same. They slug it out with Moose getting the better of it and no selling another Claymore. A second Game Changer takes us to the end of the match at 15:13. Moose wins on a split decision and Josh starts complaining.

Rating: B-. This is mainly due to Galloway leaving and needing to get the title off of him in time. Now in theory that should have been done with the Hardys as well but you can't expect TNA to get something right twice in a night. Anyway, they beat the heck out of each other here and Moose winning is the right idea, especially with a good performance like that. I'm not wild on Drew leaving but you have to get the title off of him here and that's exactly what they did.

Drew throws a chair.

We get the same Barnett video from last week.

TNA World Title: Lashley vs. Josh Barnett

Lashley is defending and gets kicked in the head for his efforts. More kicks have Josh in control but Lashley takes him to the mat as we go to a break. Back with Lashley taking a jumping knee to the chest but grabbing an armbar to slow things down. The spear is countered into a cross armbreaker attempt but Lashley is in the ropes. Barnett's keylock is countered and a spear gives Lashley the pin at 9:21.

Rating: D+. That's an edited ending as there was originally a screwy finish with Barnett getting the pin but having it reversed a few moments later. As it is, this was little more than Lashley's latest uninteresting test as Barnett doesn't have much standing in TNA and his debut promo was weak at best. Just a match really and not a very interesting one, as is often the case with MMA style wrestling matches.

A preview of next week's show with a list of names appearing

(nothing out of the ordinary) takes us out.

Overall Rating: D+. And that's it for this version of TNA. The big development here seems to be Josh Matthews doing his best Michael Cole impression. That character got old fast and Cole is FAR more enjoyable to hate than Matthews so I give this a good week before he's the most annoying person in wrestling. Unfortunately it's not in the good way but rather the "I'm not going to watch the show anymore because he's driving me crazy" way that I'm sure a lot of fans will reach soon.

As for something resembling a season finale, it was fine enough with the Grand Championship changing hands and a main event with some resolution. I liked the show well enough, even though it's not a show that is really going to mean anything going forward. When so much of the roster is gone and there's a good chance a lot of it will be adjusted, there isn't much of a point to this one. Still though, not horrible and that's fine for what this was supposed to be.

Results

Rosemary b. Jade – Red Wedding on the stage

James Storm b. Jesse Godderz – Last Call

Trevor Lee b. Andrew Everett – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Moose b. Drew Galloway via split decision

Lashley b. Josh Barnett – Spear

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Impact Wrestling – February 23, 2017: They Got One Thing Right

Impact Wrestling

Date: February 23, 2017

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

Time for a wedding! It's one of the last nights of the TNA tapings and we're getting a major angle in the form of Braxton Sutter being forced to marry Laurel Van Ness for reasons that still aren't clear. Other than that we have Bobby Lashley defending the TNA World Title against newcomer Josh Barnett at some point in the near future. Let's get to it.

In memory of George Steele, Ivan Koloff Nicole Bass and Chavo Guerrero Sr.

Matt Hardy is at House Hardy where he talks to George Washington (the giraffe), who is worried about Vanguard I's drinking issues. The Seven Deities are going to teleport Matt somewhere for his transformation into the King of Gold. However, he might lose some of his abilities so therefore he has to transfer them into Jeff's body. Jeff has a pre-mo-nition which tells him that Matt is going to Egypt. Vanguard I takes Matt away.

Wedding video.

Here are Cody and Brandi Rhodes for a chat. Cody doesn't like the idea that his wife was dubbed Mini Moose (still a dumb name) last week so he'd like Moose out here right now. This brings out Moose and Cody gets straight to the point by asking if they're going to sleep together soon. Brandi isn't cool with that and asks if Cody is telling the truth. Cody says he was kidding but lays Moose out while shouting to Brandi that it's a joke. Cross Rhodes leaves Moose laying.

Post break, Cody has no comment.

Eli Drake thinks Tyrus stepped way over the line and tonight he has to take a beating.

Tyrus never liked Drake.

Eli Drake vs. Tyrus

Before he gets in the ring, we get a little more Drake trash talk which is basically a way to plug the fact that Tyrus is a Fox News contributor. A single shoulder puts Drake on the floor so he offers Tyrus more money. Tyrus growls at him so Drake lays out the referee for the DQ at 2:35.

Post match Drake offers Tyrus a raise and they hug. In other words: "I hate you!" "I hate you too!" "Want more money?" "Yeah we're cool." Pope says this won't happen when the new management takes over. The Anthem Owl told him so.

Maria and company are getting ready for the wedding but can't find Allie.

Matt comes back from his quest and now has a regal robe. He's learned what it's going to take to make the Expedition of Gold a success. That means Skarrsgard is no longer a dilapidated boat but rather the Ark of Gold, where all the title belts will be stored.

Here's Jade to say her rivalry with Rosemary ("Red vs. Blue") is far from over. Jade wants to take the division back from the sick freak (Why does it feel like 80% of TNA storylines are about getting us back to what something is supposed to be? Sting had that feud roughly 485 times.) so here's Rosemary, who I barely remember being champion.

Josh and Pope get in an argument during the entrance and Pope hints that changes are coming to the booth. Rosemary wants the Knockouts to decay so Jade talks about going through Monster's Ball and coming out standing. We get a challenge for a Last Knockouts Standing match with Rosemary accepting. This felt really forced and Jade is far from a smooth talker.

Mike Bennett tries to give an annoyed Braxton Sutter a pep talk. Champagne is consumed and Bennett doesn't seem thrilled with his own marriage. Sutter brings up Allie but Maria has that covered.

Bram vs. Jesse Godderz

They slug it out to start as Pope keeps hinting that Josh is going to be gone soon. Godderz plants him with a belly to back suplex and a Blockbuster to set up the Adonis Lock. Kingston gets on the apron for a distraction so Jesse catapults Bram into him, setting up the rollup for the pin on Bram at 3:57.

Rating: D. Good grief TNA. If you were just going to treat the DCC like a bunch of goofs, why did you bother putting them together in the first place? At this point the guys are the Job Squad as they can never win a match and there's still not exactly a clear point to why they're together in the first place. Nothing to see here.

Godderz cleans house and bails before he gets beaten down.

The Hardys teleport to the Mid-Atlantic territory where they say they won the Tag Team Titles. A team called the Mid-Atlantic Outlaws say they're the #1 contenders so a challenge is issued but another guy says this is their way to get out of this territory and on to a better life. Apparently this means anyone winning the Tag Team Titles so they're all off to find the champions.

The Lady Squad is getting ready for the wedding when Allie finally shows up. They yell at her a bit and tell her to make sure the hotel room is ready. Allie leaves and runs into Braxton, who can't explain why he's doing this. If that's not what he wants to do, then don't do it.

Back to Mid-Atlantic where a locker room brawl breaks out and the Hardys get a title shot. Just like last week, it's a clipped up match with the Hardys beating Mathis and Rage to become champions.

Josh Barnett hasn't been impressed by Lashley and thinks he needs to show Lashley how to be a champion. I still have no idea why I'm supposed to be impressed by/care about Barnett but that's never stopped TNA before.

Bad Bones vs. Josh Barnett

Bad Bones is a tough looking guy from Germany and Lashley is on commentary. Barnett takes him to the mat and tries a chinlock but let's look at Lashley talking instead of the debuting #1 contender. A bunch of strikes have Bones in trouble but he gets in a spear through the ropes. Barnett suplexes him and gets in a nasty Jackknife followed by a keylock for the submission at 2:43. Lashley is impressed.

X-Division Title: DJZ vs. Trevor Lee

DJZ is getting his rema ch and has a bad ankle coming in. That doesn't stop him from diving over the top onto the champion to start. A hurricanrana off the apron bangs up the ankle again so Lee goes after it in a smart move. The slow beating continues until an enziguri staggers Lee again. That means a Schitt's Creek plug as DJZ grabs a reverse hurricanrana. DJZ loads up the ZDT but Helms grabs the leg, allowing Lee to get in a rollup with a handful of tights to retain at 4:31.

Rating: D+. Standard X-Division match here, meaning no chance to go anywhere, high spots that were more interesting the first thousand or so times we've seen them and little surprise to the ending because you only get one change of this title every five months or so. Nothing to see here, as expected.

Post match Lee loads up the Pillmanizing but Andrew Everett comes in for the save.

Maria comes up to see Sutter and offers to remind him why this is happening. Sutter says he knows and Maria threatens him with consequences if there's no wedding. We still don't know what those consequences are.

It's time for the wedding with an already drunk Bennett as the best man. Spud is flower man and Aron Rex comes out in his gear. Maria and Sienna are the bridal party and after a break, here's Laurel as the fans chant for ODB. Maria does her signature stuff and brings out Allie, who looks stunning in her bridesmaid's dress and causes Braxton's jaw to drop.

Laurel reads her own vows, talking about how your bank account is what matters and promising to buy Braxton a new wardrobe. The fans drown this out with DELETE chants and Sutter says he forgot to bring his vows. We get to the "any objections" part and Maria shouts the fans down before Allie can say anything. Maria trips her and yells when the rings fall because that's what Maria and Allie do.

Laurel says I Do but Braxton can't get the second word out. Fans: "JUST SAY NO!" Braxton says no because he can't stand being around Laurel. There's a guy out there for Laurel to make completely miserable but it's just not him. Braxton says he loves Allie and for once the fans seem to genuinely freak out over this (It couldn't be because these are characters the fans can relate to and get behind

because they can't stand the villain could it?).

He knows Maria is going to fire Allie for this and he'll never see her again but he loves her and that's all that matters. Maria fires Allie but she quits instead. This might have been more effective if they hadn't had the big split moment two or three times already. Sutter punches Bennett down and Brooke comes out to help Allie. Robbie E. goes after Aron and the big kiss ends the show as Pope teases the changes AGAIN.

The big angle was good because I have a reason to care about the characters but as usual, TNA screwed themselves over by hyping this as the "most controversial wedding in wrestling history". Not only does that basically say they know what's coming but also...this was exactly what people were expecting. It's not like this was anything that we haven't seen a half dozen times before. The Brooke wedding a few years back where Tazz joined Aces and 8's was a bigger surprise than this one. Again though, that's TNA in a nutshell: make something bigger than it is and be disappointing because Josh can't shut up about it.

Overall Rating: D. Assuming you even count the first "match" as wrestling, this show didn't even have fourteen minutes of actual bell time (not counting the Hardys which was a bunch of clips instead of a match). The Hardys are still running around doing whatever they want, despite it not seeming to lead to anything (other than Ring of Honor) at the moment. Everything else is just there with no particular rhyme or reason, which doesn't make for a good show. The wedding was entertaining for what it was but that's not enough to carry a show.

I know none of this really matters as they're resetting everything (AGAIN) in two weeks but they better knock it out of the park with the new stuff because this has been really dull lately. They're certainly teasing some new stuff and that's a good thing, though if there's one thing TNA knows how to do, it's underwhelm on their bragging.

Results

Tyrus b. Eli Drake via DQ when Tyrus hit the referee

Jesse Godderz b. Bram – Rollup

Josh Barnett b. Bad Bones – Keylock

Trevor Lee b. DJZ – Rollup with a handful of tights

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Impact Wrestling – February 16, 2017: I Think I Like This Better Than the Wrestling Show

Impact Wrestling

Date: February 16, 2017

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

The big story coming out of last week is the full on split of the Wolves as Davey Richards cost Eddie Edwards his last shot at the TNA World Title. While you can probably guess the reason behind the split, it should be interesting to hear the actual explanation. Other than that we also have the saga of Braxton Sutter and company which seems to be setting up a wedding. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Expedition of Gold, which will take the Hardys to Tijuana, Mexico this week.

Video on Davey turning on Eddie.

Moose/Brandi Rhodes vs. Crazy Steve/Rosemary

I know I say it every time she's out but Brandi is a very beautiful woman. Moose is wrestling in a shirt for some reason here. The guys get things going with Steve bouncing off Moose multiple times. Rosemary offers a distraction so Steve can take over, which must last for a good fifteen seconds. Abyss' interference does a bit better and everything breaks down with Decay taking over.

Moose will have none of that and LAUNCHES Steve onto Abyss at ringside. Rosemary jumps onto Moose's back and it's time for Brandi's still awkward chops (yeah they're still awkward but she's only had a few months of ring time and she's clearly trying as hard as she can). A middle rope missile dropkick puts Rosemary down as Pope still tries to get Mini-Moose over as a nickname. The matching pump punches have Decay in trouble and stereo Game Changers are enough for the double pin at 5:43.

Rating: C-. For someone who hasn't even been in the ring for a year, Brandi already looks more comfortable than a lot of the Diva era wrestlers. Like, she's already miles better than Torrie Wilson or the Kat or anyone like that, which may not sound like much but it suggests that she has a bright future if she wants to stay in the ring. I'm sure we'll get to the "where's Cody" stuff later on and that's where we get the feud out of this.

Eddie Edwards isn't here to talk because he wants to hurt Davey.

Moose tells Brandi he's there for her whenever she needs. There was no hint of anything romantic in the way he said it.

We look back at the end of last week's show.

Eddie calls out Davey but he gets Angelina Love instead, saying there's no Davey until she says so. Basically Eddie abandoned Davey while he was recovering from knee surgery and forgot about his "brother". Love says Eddie can have Davey now and introduces the

American Wolf (new nickname) but Eddie cuts her off and says to let go of her husband's balls.

Davey grabs the mic and goes on a rant about how he created the team and the Wolves' Nation. Richards offers him a chance to leave but Eddie goes straight up the aisle to start the brawl. Security breaks it up so Eddie says this isn't over as Davey tries to crawl in the ring. We get a challenge for a street fight later tonight and Davey seems more than game.

Ok...that was great. I was really, REALLY worried about this feud when I first heard about it because their ROH feud was such a disaster but this already fixed the major problem of the ROH version: there's a reason for them to hate each other. The previous one was a bunch of "I respect you but I want Dan Severn to train me because this is suddenly an MMA promotion" and I have no idea why that's supposed to entertain me. This felt like two guys who wanted to kill each other and they got to the point immediately. I can easily go for something like that.

Mike Bennett has a bachelor party for Braxton Sutter, who is miserable. It's basically a frat party with people all around thirty years old and Sutter wants to leave.

It's off to Tijuana where the Hardys are challenging for the Mexican Tag Team Championships of the World. Matt and Jeff demand to speak to the promoter and yell in Spanish at a luchador who speaks English. Konnan, the promotion's owner, wants to make money off their appearance.

Now we have Laurel Van Ness' bachelorette party with Allie having set up a very sweet room with streamers, balloons and confetti everywhere. Maria yells at her for making it look like a children's party. Allie is devastated when she hears about how it's for Laurel and Braxton's wedding.

Kingston vs. Jesse Godderz

Kingston chops away to start and shrugs off a dropkick by raking the eyes. We hit the choking on the middle rope before Jesse makes his

comeback with clotheslines and a Blockbuster for two. An STO puts Jesse down for the same but he nails a quick enziguri. Godderz hits a springboard....I guess we'll say forearm for the pin at 4:11.

Rating: D+. Nothing special here and again I don't get the idea of having the DCC losing so often. This was a completely clean pinfall loss to Jesse Godderz of all people and that's a really bad sign. I can't even think of a signature win for them at this point and that's horrible after they debuted so strong.

The DCC comes out post match but Jesse is smart enough to bail.

The bachelor party continues to be horrible with an overweight man crushing the drug dealer.

Allie tries to liven the party up with noisemakers but Maria yells at her again. Sienna just wants to drink.

Tyrus has taken over Fact of Life and brings out someone who was never his friend: Eli Drake, whose arm is in a sling. Drake can't sit at the desk so the sling comes off in a hurry. Eli yells at Tyrus for making decisions that he didn't approve of and not watching his back like Tyrus is supposed to do. No one owns Tyrus and a match is made for next week.

Back in Tijuana (this show has more scene cuts than a Total Divas episode), Konnan says he can't pay the Hardys but his messenger says they don't want money. The Hardys come in to see Konnan and agree to wrestle for the titles for no pay. Matt: "Money is for marks." The Hardys leave and Konnan tells the staff to start making and selling as much bootleg Hardy merchandise as they can.

Maria yells at Allie for the amount of pink at the party. Allie can be a ring bearer next week and gets frosting thrown in her face. The ladies take the gifts (including lingerie) and leave.

We get the match from Tijuana with the Hardys challenging Super Crazy and Psicosis for the Crash Tag Team Titles. While the match is going on, the promotion's women hit on Vanguard I because the women of this promotion aren't all that smart. We only see clips of the match with the Hardys hitting all their signature stuff to win with

a Swanton to Crazy. Of note: the referee was blurred out because he works for Lucha Underground, who threatened legal action against TNA if they showed one of their contracted workers.

After the match, the Hardys teleport back to North Carolina before Konnan and company can stop them. Konnan: "WHAT DO YOU MEAN THEY DISAPPEARED???" Back in North Carolina, the Hardys literally throw the belts into a bag and go off to win the Mid-Atlantic Tag Team Titles next week. Hint: you might not want to show us the celebration after winning the belts.

Video on Brooke returning to TNA and being targeted by the Lady Squad.

Sienna vs. Brooke

Maria offers an early distraction to start and Sienna takes over with forearms and a spinebuster. Brooke gets in some forearms of her own as Madison Rayne explains why Maria is the most amazing Knockout ever. Another Maria distraction lets Sienna get in a running clothesline as Josh talks about how you can get a Louisville Slugger baseball bat signed by Jeff Hardy. Maria chokes on the rope and offers a distraction so Sienna can choke as well. As Maria talks about how the Knockouts show their midsections, Brooke fights off the double teaming and rolls Sienna up for the pin at 5:55.

Rating: D+. The wrestling was fine but WOW Madison Rayne is one of the most annoying commentators I've ever heard. She doesn't really have a character and isn't a heel or a face but rather just a woman talking a lot. I'm not sure how that's supposed to add anything to the match but I'm sure it's completely necessary.

One of Bennett's friends wants to put in an adult DVD but Bennett says it's time for something special. That would be a stripper who sounds like she's smoked five packs a day. Bennett slams the door in her face and asks where the DVD went.

Eli Drake commandeers a camera and promises to give Tyrus a beating next week. As usual, this is one of the best things on the show.

Here's Lashley for a chat. Lashley says it doesn't matter if it's

wrestling or MMA because no one can hang with him. This brings out UFC fighter (currently facing a potential suspension for steroids) and professional wrestler Josh Barnett to give him a lecture about respecting the title. Lashley says this is his ring but has to escape an armbar. A challenge is issued but Barnett wants the title on the line. Bobby says he'll fight anywhere anytime and the challenge is accepted for some point in the future. I get the idea they're going for here but Barnett was really, really awkward on the mic.

Everyone has passed out at the bachelor party but Braxton is sitting there twirling his thumbs. He slowly gets up and puts the stripper on Mike's lap for a quick picture. He then calls Maria and leaves the phone on the two of them before leaving.

Eddie Edwards vs. Davey Richards

Street fight with a full hour and a half of build. Angelina does Davey's entrance, allowing him to jump Eddie from behind. There are weapons ready at ringside and Davey keeps beating him down as we take an early break. Back with Davey crushing Eddie's hand with a chair but Edwards fights back anyway. Eddie and Angelina both have chairs but the distraction lets Davey swing a chair into Eddie's for a knockdown.

Cue Eddie's wife Alisha...who gets dropped with a single forearm. Angelina handcuffs her to the ropes but Eddie covers her up and takes the chair shots for her. Davey unloads on him with the chair while Angelina makes Alisha watch. There's no referee as Eddie gets a Conchairto so Angelina counts the pin for a no contest at around 13:30.

Rating: B-. This was a good brawl while it lasted and I'm VERY glad they didn't have a definitive winner. The ending was the important part and will keep this going for a long time as the women add another dynamic to the whole thing. I had a lot more fun with this than I was expecting and that's the best possible outcome.

A promo for next week's Expedition of Gold wraps us up.

Overall Rating: C. That might be the oddest episode of Impact I've ever seen. There wasn't a big focus on wrestling here but rather a lot of vignettes from the two parties, plus all the Mexico stuff. Outside of the main event, the wrestling we did see ranged from mostly boring to forgettable, but Davey vs. Eddie looks like it has serious potential.

Above all else, I appreciated the idea of TNA trying to do something. The wedding story could be good (assuming Sutter gets to win some matches later on) and Lashley FINALLY has some fresh blood, even if Barnett is hardly a household name and his promo was just a step above a disaster. They're doing something though and that's what matters more than anything after a long stretch of very dull and boring shows. This kept my attention, but I need more stuff actually between the bells rather than all the stuff setting up future matches and stories. Still though, it's a step up.

Results

Brandi/Moose b. Crazy Steve/Rosemary – Double Game Changers

Jesse Godderz b. Kingston – STO

Brooke b. Sienna – Rollup

Davey Richards vs. Eddie Edwards went to a no contest

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