

Middle Kingdom Wrestling – January 20, 2017: Lost in Translation

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Date: January 20, 2017

Location: Pattaya Boxing Stadium, Pattaya, Chon Buri, Thailand

Commentator: Al Leung

If I remember right, the previous season ended with a line about things picking up in the spring so I'm not entirely sure what this is. This one is labeled as a Thailand Edition though so maybe this isn't the third season premiere but rather just something as a bonus. Either way, they need all the ring time they can get so maybe we'll have something here. Let's get to it.

The opening video is in a club with some good looking women dancing. I've heard worse ideas.

We go to the arena for the first match and.....there's no one there. Of a few hundred seats, there might be two dozen people in the arena. I know there probably isn't much of a wrestling scene in Thailand but this is really sad looking.

Selfie King vs. Candy Brother vs. Mickie Rawaz

The winner gets a future MKW Title shot and the ring is HUGE, probably bigger than a WWE ring. No one gets an entrance and right away we get to a major downgrade in the production. There's a new (and far weaker) commentator who doesn't give his name to start the match.

On top of that the camera work seems to have gone way down in quality, though having a camera at either side of the ring is certainly different. A sloppy looking Russian legsweep/DDT combo puts everyone down and we get the triple headlock spot. King is sent outside and Candy....I guess dances as we're told Mickie is a local wrestler. That's the first thing we've heard about any of the wrestlers and we're over three minutes in.

This time it's Mickie being sent outside so Brother wraps a Twizzler around his hand....before kicking King in the ribs. Eh cute fake out.

We continue the “theme” of the match with Brother being sent outside so King can hit a Cannonball. Candy comes back in as there are too many cameramen on the apron. They’re getting a bit distracting, much like having another camera in the corner for a lot of their shots.

Mickie slams both of them down and drops a double leg for two on both. Back up and Brother ties his legs between both of theirs’ and pulls back on their arms for a good looking hold which goes nowhere. Instead it’s off to some slaps to King’s chest, followed by the Tower of Doom to put everyone down. The announcer (still no name) explains that this is a kickboxing ring, meaning it’s much bigger and stiffer. That’s one of the first interesting things he’s said so far. King takes a few quick pictures and drops a frog splash on Brother for the pin at 10:31.

Rating: D-. And that might be too high. This was a real mess with absolutely no story, mostly bad wrestling and no help from the commentary. King winning is fine as he’s one of the better known names in the promotion but that might be the only positive thing I can come up with here. It felt like they were trying but the major production downgrade and lack of anything resembling a story to the match dragged it through the floor.

King takes a quick selfie next to the fallen Candy in one of the best gimmicks going in the promotion.

Dalton Bragg is on the phone in the back (with subtitles, which help overcome some sound issues) and says he’s not medically cleared to defend the MKW Title against the Slam.

ABC Tag Team Titles: Ash Silva/Jason Wang vs. Claude Roca/Tony Trivaldo

Roca (in his 70s) and Trivaldo are defending their French Tag Team Titles. Everyone (who I can identify thanks to some better graphic placement) seems to be a face here and it’s Claude vs. Ash to start. A monkey flip sends Ash flying and Claude headlocks him over for good measure.

Trivaldo (easily the biggest guy and with by far the best look) comes in for a slam and headlock but it’s off to Wang as this is already more structured than the first match. Wang takes over with some knees to the head and a frog splash connects (albeit being left a bit short) for two. We get some challengers miscommunication and it’s a double clothesline to set up the tag to Roca. Claude

continues to use basic wrestling (I need a Drew Gulak joke there) until Jason throws him into the corner.

The challengers take over and turn into the de facto heels with Wang grabbing a camel clutch. Claude nips up (because of course he can) and monkey flips both of them down at the same time. There's the hot tag to Tony so house can be cleaned and everything breaks down. Tony spears Jason and gives Ash a release F5. Claude is thrown onto Jason for the pin at 11:20.

Rating: C+. This felt like a different promotion and that's the best thing that could happen. It's amazing what a simple story (work over the older guy and keep the younger, stronger champion on the apron) can do for a match and these guys worked fine together. Ash and Jason are old rivals (thank you commentator) so they had their own little story built in. Good match here and I had more fun with it than I was expecting to.

Ash and Jason get in a fight post match.

Overall Rating: D+. That tag match did wonders for this show and really does feel like it came from a different company. The opening match felt like something thrown together by people who had no idea what they were doing. Then everything improved in the second match, including the commentator (whose name was listed on the YouTube page but never on the show itself).

Overall, this was a downgrade from the China shows and some of that might be due to the length. This would have been better off at about five minutes shorter and just one match with more promos to fill in the extra time. It's far from terrible but as usual, there are a lot of adjustments to be made.

I know I keep harping on it but the commentary here was a big issue. I can't believe I'm saying this but I miss the old commentary team (maybe they're gone due to different location), who were far better than the lone guy here. Commentary can do a lot for a show, especially one like this where there isn't a deep history. Something as simple as "Ash and Jason have feuded before) was a big help but it was one of the only things we were given all night. The commentary is our guide and without it going well, it's hard to know where things are supposed to go.

Maybe this show didn't work as well because it was part of a co-promotion and more of a feature than a regular show but it wasn't as

good as the normal stuff is. There was something good in there though and the teaser for next time gave me some hope so maybe there's hope to be had. Not terrible but again the big problems really hold things back.

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