

Mae Young Classic – September 26, 2018: That's What We're Here For



IMG Credit: WWE

Mae Young Classic

Date: September 26, 2018

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Renee Young, Beth Phoenix, Michael Cole

We're wrapping up the first round tonight with the last four matches, meaning things are already going to be halfway done. The interesting thing here is going to be seeing which surprises WWE has left for us, along with Japanese superstar Io Shirai as this year's breaking name. Let's get to it.

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

The opening video talks about the eight names who will be competing tonight.

Opening sequence.

All matches are first round matches.

Rachel Evers is the daughter of Paul Ellering and wants to make her own path. She lost her focus last year but that's not happening this time

around.

Hiroyo Matsumoto calls herself Lady Godzilla. I think that sums her up quite well.

Kassius Ohno, who is dating Evers, is here.

Hiroyo Matsumoto vs. Rachel Evers

Cole's description of a woman who called herself LADY GODZILLA and wants to fight the Undertaker: "She's colorful and loves to have fun." Cole on Evers: "She wants to have fun!" They shove each other around (while still having fun) to start and some shoulders go nowhere. Clotheslines go nowhere so Matsumoto shoulders her down as Renee talks about joshi.

Evers gets two off a gutwrench suplex and kicks Matsumoto in the face. A missed charge lets Matsumoto Stun her over the ropes, which is called flamboyance for some reason. Matsumoto gets two off a missile dropkick and we hit the chinlock. Back up and Evers gets laid over the middle rope for some kicks to the ribs, followed by a Vader Bomb knee drop for two more.

Evers comes back with a pop up spinebuster (not a powerbomb Cole) for a double knockdown. A slugout goes to Evers and she grabs a cutter into a backsplash for two. Evers drops a spinning double springboard legdrop for two more and the fans are entirely behind her here. Another strike off goes to Matsumoto and she grabs a German suplex, which Evers no sells to a BIG reaction. Matsumoto has had it with Evers and powerbombs the heck out of her, followed by a Saito suplex (the Rock Drop) for the pin at 7:46.

Rating: B. Well that was awesome. These two beat the heck out of each other in a style that you just don't get around here. Matsumoto wasn't quite the monster I was expecting but Evers got to slug it out with her and it turned into a very entertaining match as a result. The crowd alone made it that much better, which is a major benefit that not every match can enjoy.

Taynara Conti is a Brazilian jujitsu fighter who has appeared on NXT

before.

Jesse Eleban is a nerdy geek who is from Earth and describes herself as “amazeballs”. I think you get the idea here.

Dana Brooke is here. Uh....ok then.

Jessie Eleban vs. Taynara Conti

Conti wastes no time in throwing her down twice in a row. Jessie is right back up with a kick to the face (those long legs help with that) and a backsplash (egads enough with that move) gets two. Back up and Conti starts in on the arm, followed by an STO for two. A stomp to the arm sets up an armbar, followed by another version with some cranking on the wrist to keep Jessie in trouble.

Now it's off to bending the fingers apart, followed by some stomping to the ribs in the corner. Since that's enough to let Jessie fight back, Conti kicks her square in the arm to cut her off again. A catapult of all things drops Conti and some dropkicks keep Conti in trouble. Conti blocks a rollup though and spins her into a Boss Man Slam for the pin at 4:44.

Rating: D+. Conti winning here wasn't exactly a surprise here and there's nothing wrong with that. When you have someone who has wrestled on Wrestlemania and a newcomer, it's not exactly the biggest shock in the world. Jessie is charismatic and could get somewhere with some more experience and development, but there was no way she was winning here.

Isla Dawn says she takes a lot of inspiration from goddess worship and wants to fight.

Nicole Matthews is a veteran from Canada who wasn't happy with being an alternate last year. How can you have the best of the best if she's not included?

Isla Dawn vs. Nicole Matthews

They fight over a few lockups to start as we hear about Dawn being into witchcraft. Dawn takes her down and hits a double stomp, followed by a running Meteora for two. Nicole is right back with a neckbreaker out of

the corner (with an edit that made me think that was a second attempt) for two. A kick to the back and a backbreaker has Dawn in more trouble until she avoids a forearm in the corner.

Matthews ties her in the ropes though and kicks away at the chest to keep Dawn in trouble. Some elbows and forearms set up a double arm crank but Dawn is right back up with some knees to the face. A snap belly to back suplex drops Matthews and a fisherman's suplex gets two. Dawn almost drops her on an Angle Slam for another near fall as Beth thinks a spell might be in need of a spell. Matthews has finally had enough of her and clotheslines Dawn into a Lontamer for the tap at 7:19.

Rating: D. This one didn't work for me and I don't think that's the biggest surprise. I was really disappointed in Dawn here who had an interesting backstory and then just went out and wrestled a normal match. The match itself felt disjointed and sloppy at times, which you shouldn't have from someone with Matthews' experience.

Io Shirai is a strong style high flier who was inspired by Rey Mysterio. Make sure the rocket attached to her back doesn't burn you as it launches.

Xia Brookside is nineteen years old and the daughter of NXT trainer Robbie Brookside. It was nice knowing her.

Of course Robbie is here.

Io Shirai vs. Xia Brookside

Renee on Xia: "She looks like she's made of Skittles." That sounds cool, but Io's moniker is Genius of the Sky. I don't like Skittles so I'm taking Shirai there. Xia forearms her to start but Io lands on her feet to counter a headscissors. The look of shock on Xia's face pretty much seals her fate so as Io forearms her in the corner.

Slingshot knees to the chest in the corner and Io grabs a kind of reverse Sling Blade into a Crossface. A hard knee to the face drops Brookside but she gets in a faceplant for a breather. The fans get behind Brookside...for all of two seconds until a palm strike cuts her off. More running knees

in the corner set up a Great Muta style moonsault for the pin at 3:17.

Rating: D+. This still wasn't the most thrilling match in the world as Xia was nothing more than cannon fodder for the big star. At the same time, Io isn't about to show off everything she can do in a match that is little more than a squash. She's going to get a heck of a push in the tournament and beyond, which is exactly the point of a match like this.

Shirai helps what used to be Brookside up.

Here are the updated brackets:

Meiko Satomura

Mercedes Martinez

Lacey Lane

Taynara Conti

Toni Storm

Hiroyo Matsumoto

Mia Yim

Kaitlyn

Tegan Nox

Nicole Matthews

Rhea Ripley

Kacy Catanzaro

Io Shirai

Zeuxis

Deonna Purrazzo

Xia Li

We get a recap of the show, which doesn't happen every week. Feels like filler.

Overall Rating: C. The opening match more than makes up for some of the weaker stuff down the card but the first round being over is the most important thing. The whole appeal of a tournament like this is seeing the people who stole the show in the first round fighting each other again later and that's going to make the next few weeks a lot of fun.

Mae Young Classic Episode Five: No Mercy Lives!

Mae Young Classic Episode #5

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

The fast paced shows continue as we have four more episodes being released today before we get ready for next week's live finale. We're down to sixteen competitors to go and for the most part, I'm coming into this blind on the spoilers. It's hard to say where some of these matches are going to go so let's get to it.

Mauro handles the opening recap again.

The remaining entrants are on stage.

Video on Abbey Laith, who has wrestled for years and is here now.

Video on Rachel Evers, who was originally scheduled to lose in the first round but Marti Belle was so horrible that they changed plans mid-match.

Kassius Ohno is here.

Second Round: Abbey Laith vs. Rachel Evers

The fans sound split here as Rachel shoves her down to start, only to get wristdragged to the floor. Back in and a Stunner of all things puts Abbey down but they hit stereo bicycle kicks for a double knockdown. Abbey sticks with the kicks, including a high one off the side of Evers' head to send her straight down. She's up fast enough to catch Abbey on top with a super powerslam of all things for two. Cool looking move if nothing else. Evers tries another kick but gets dropped with a powerbomb, setting up the Alligator Clutch for the pin at 4:51.

Rating: C-. This started off a bit awkward but got better as things went on. Laith feels like someone they're ready to push pretty hard, especially given her background on the indy scene. Evers just needs a lot more ring time, though she has the look and pedigree to make a pretty nice run for herself one day.

Video on Serena Deeb, who is very aggressive and will work hard.

Video on Piper Niven, who wants to be tough but with a big smile.

Second Round: Serena Deeb vs. Piper Niven

Niven powers her into the corner to start and falls on Deeb in a slam attempt. Well to be fair that was just kind of dumb. A hard belly to back suplex breaks up Serena's headlock and there's a splash for two more. With the holds not working, Deeb opts for just punching her in the face for a change. A middle rope Codebreaker (or maybe something like a monkey flip) drops Niven and a neckbreaker gets two.

Deeb is right back up with a modified Diamond Cutter for two more as the fans are split again. A charge misses in the corner though and Niven drops a Vader Bomb...for two. Dang I would have bet on that one. Niven heads up top (uh oh) and misses a splash, only to grab the Michinoku Driver to put Deeb away at 7:12.

Rating: C. What in the world was that ending? Niven missed the splash to seemingly give Deeb a hope spot but she was up less than five seconds later and hit the finish for the pin. I looked away for a second and my

head swung back because I thought the video had skipped. They were trying to get into the Sting vs. Vader formula here but that ending REALLY knocked them back.

Video on Princesa Sugehit, who may be a veteran but needs to win this tournament.

Video on Mercedes Martinez, who has waited a long time for this opportunity.

Kalisto is here.

Second Round: Princesa Sugehit vs. Mercedes Martinez

Sugehit, in Wonder Woman themed gear, takes her down by the arm and tries a quick rollup for two. Another rollup, this time into the corner, gets the same on Martinez but she's right back with Two Amigos into a draping swinging neckbreaker. Princesa grabs a Codebreaker but has to block a superplex attempt. Instead it's a tornado DDT (now a big spot on the indy Bingo card) for two on Martinez and both of them are spent less than five minutes in. One heck of a Fujiwara armbar has Martinez in more trouble but she pops up and hits a fisherman's buster for the pin at 5:09.

Rating: C. What is with these sudden endings? Sugehit was dominating and then got caught by one move, seemingly out of nowhere, for the pin. Mercedes winning certainly isn't a surprise but they could have done a better job of laying the match out. You have almost all the time you want and there's no need to cut them down this fast.

Video on Bianca Belair, whose hair whip thing is still stupid.

Video on Kairi Sane, who is perhaps the most awesome thing ever.

Second Round: Bianca Belair vs. Kairi Sane

Kairi gets taken down to start and we hit a headlock as JR continues to brag about how awesome of an athlete Belair is. Back up and Belair blows her a kiss, only to have Sane grab it out of the air and stomp it on the mat. One heck of a forearm drops Belair but she hits the hair whip (So you can use it to whip people but get yelled at for pulling it?) to take

over.

A delayed vertical suplex with some squats gets two and we hit a seated full nelson. So she's a No Mercy fan? Some ground and pound of all things has Kairi down but she gets her knees up to stop a splash. Kairi does those rapid fire chops in the corner that probably don't hurt much but they're done in Japan and therefore they must be awesome.

A seated double arm choke (another No Mercy move) has Belair in trouble until she fights up and gets in a double chickenwing slam. One heck of a 450 gets a red hot near fall on Sane and Bianca is stunned. Kairi kicks her down and hits a running corner clothesline, followed by the top rope elbow (which she almost completely misses as her hip makes contact instead) to eliminate Belair at 10:00.

Rating: B. I'll give this one a higher rating for the No Mercy based offense and the hair thing being gone. Sane is clearly the top star in this whole thing and I'd be surprised if she doesn't win the whole thing. Belair is a heck of an athlete and that 450 looked awesome. She'll be a big deal in NXT for a good while and then on the main roster assuming she has any kind of talking ability.

A recap wraps things up.

Overall Rating: B-. Now we're getting to the fun part where they're having big names face other big names. The wrestling is getting better too and that can make for some sweet matches. I'm looking forward to where things go from here and the rest of the tournament, assuming it's given time, should be a lot of fun.

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Mae Young Classic – Episode Two: The Future Is Bright. And Tall.

Mae Young Classic Episode #2

Date: August 28, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Lita

It's kind of nice to have all four episodes of the first round up on the same day as we're going to be able to get to the final sixteen in one day. The first four matches were all fine and we already have some names to watch. This show will get us down to twenty four names left in the competition so let's get to it.

Mauro Ranallo narrates the opening video, which looks at last week's show and previews tonight's four matches.

Opening sequence.

JR and Lita preview tonight's matches.

Video on Xia Li, a signee from China who trains in Chinese martial arts.

Video on Mercedes Martinez, who has been a big star on the independent circuit for years and is covered in tattoos.

First Round: Mercedes Martinez vs. Xia Li

Li has a fan in her hand, which gives me a nice flashback to Mulan. Martinez gets rather evil by doing the crane kick pose instead of shaking hands. A headlock into a front facelock has Li in early trouble but she comes right back with a spinning kick to the ribs. More kicks get two and a forearm knocks Martinez straight down. A spinebuster cuts Li off for one though and Martinez's shocked face is rather over the top. Martinez stays ticked off enough to grab a surfboard into a dragon sleeper for the tap at 3:06.

Rating: D+. This wasn't quite a squash with the far bigger star winning despite selling a lot of Li's offense. Li has a good look and seemed poised in the ring. If she can learn English I could see her going somewhere down in developmental. Martinez is going to be a big deal in this thing and that really shouldn't be any kind of a surprise.

Video on Rachel Evers, the daughter of Paul Ellering who has made several appearances in NXT. She's well rounded and ready to fight any style.

Video on Marti Belle, who is best known from her time in TNA. She leads the pack instead of following it.

First Round: Marti Belle vs. Rachel Evers

The fans are entirely behind Evers here and Belle is a very clear heel. A single underhook suplex gives Marti two and she brags about how close that was. Back up and Evers gets one off a springboard spinning legdrop out of the corner. Marti snaps the throat across the top as the dueling chants begin.

Rachel comes back with some forearms and a COME ON, followed by a running backplash. A pretty bad looking spinebuster gets two on Marti so Rachel loads up a fisherman's buster but slams her forward for two instead. Marti comes back with a Stroke for two of her own as this needs to end soon. A very quick small package pins Belle at 6:31. It's as sudden as it sounds.

Rating: D-. Yeah this really didn't work. Rachel has all the requirements to make something of herself (good look, good pedigree) but the in-ring work really isn't there. The match was sloppy and looked completely

disjointed at times, easily making it the worst match of the tournament so far. That only puts it in sixth but I can't picture much beating this. Really bad match.

Video on HHH welcoming the 32 entrants.

Video on Miranda Salinas, who was trained by Booker T. She's 5' and from what I can find, has less than twenty matches in her career. I can't imagine that's all she's had but if so, well done on getting here.

Video on Rhea Ripley, a 20 year old phenom (I'd like some more details on that description) from Australia with a soccer background.

First Round: Rhea Ripley vs. Miranda Salinas

Miranda definitely has some charisma to go with her small stature. The far bigger (probably by a foot) Rhea headlocks her down before hitting a good looking dropkick to send Salinas outside. Ripley fires off some chops in the corner but gets kicked in the back of the head. A running knee to the chest gives Miranda two but a forearm to the face just seems to get on her nerves. Ripley hits a running kick to the face in the corner, followed by a running basement dropkick for two. Something like a Chick Kick sets up a full nelson slam to put Salinas away at 3:51.

Rating: C+. If she's only 20, they might be on to something with the prodigy thing. I really liked this match a lot more than I was expecting to and there's something to both of them. Rhea has a good look, solid size and the in-ring work. Her charisma was a bit below average but she can work on that. Salinas' size is going to work against her but if she can get the work down, she'll be fine. I was impressed by these two and they had a much better match than I would have bet on. Well done and keep an eye on Ripley coming to NXT.

Video on Mia Yim, who you've probably seen in various promotions, including TNA as Jade. She talks about her domestic violence story last year, which got some mainstream attention.

Video on Sarah Logan, better known as Crazy Mary Dobson, who is a backwoods tough girl from Kentucky who trained in Japan.

Natalya and Beth Phoenix are here.

First Round: Mia Yim vs. Sarah Logan

Mia works on a wristlock to start and a dropkick gets two. Sarah comes back by taking her down and hammers away with some right hands for two of her own. A basement dropkick keeps Mia in trouble but she kicks Sarah right into the corner. That's fine with Sarah, who screams at her to do it again.

Mia obliges and puts on the Tarantula before getting two more off a jumping knee. A rolling guillotine choke has Sarah in trouble but she slips out and it's time for a seated slap off. Logan is back up first with a running knee to the face for another two but Mia grabs a pair of bridging German suplexes for near falls of her own.

Sarah gets two more off a Samoan drop and a fisherman's suplex out of the corner gets the same. Sarah: "OFF WITH YOUR HEAD!" She then misses....I'm not sure what actually but Mia kicks her in the head (Mia: "Off with YOUR head!"), setting up Eat Defeat (still don't like that move) for the pin at 7:17.

Rating: B-. Yim is one of the bigger stars in this thing but she's going to be facing Shayna Baszler in the second round, meaning she's probably done after two matches. Logan has some skills but at the same time she's only going to go so far with the Kentucky tough thing. She needs more time in front of the crowd though and that's going to come with time.

The recap ends the show.

Overall Rating: C. This wasn't as good of a show as the first one and a lot of that is due to the Belle vs. Evers match, which really brought things down. The big thing I got out of this one though was the future is looking bright. There's a lot of talent in this tournament and several of them have been signed to developmental deals. If they can go somewhere with this stuff, the NXT women's division is going to be in good shape in the near future.

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