

TJPW Live In Philly: That Was Fun

TJPW Live In Philly

Date: April 5, 2024

Location: Penns Landing Caterers, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Dave Prazak, Veda Scott

This is Tokyo Joshi Pro-Wrestling, a women's promotion based in Japan. As you might be able to guess, we're in Philadelphia over Wrestlemania Weekend and that means we're probably in for a bunch of guest stars. I remember liking the show from last year's Wrestlemania Weekend so hopefully they can do it again here. Let's get to it.

Note that I do not follow TJPW whatsoever so I apologize in advance for missing any plot or character points.

As is customary for the promotion, some of the wrestlers come out to welcome us to the show and do a song and dance routine. With that over, they seem to say a promotion catchphrase and we're ready to go.

Arisu Endo/Suzume vs. Yuki Aino/Zara Zakher

Endo and Suzume's Princess Tag Team Titles aren't on the line. Suzume and Aino start things off with Suzume's dropkick not working. A shoulder drops Aino and it's off to Endo vs. Zara. Aino hits the ropes and charges right into a pop up right hand. Everything breaks down and Endo/Suzume take them both down for stereo basement dropkicks. We settle down to Aino taking over on Endo and dropping a backsplash for two.

Zara comes back in for her own basement dropkick but Endo is up with a regular version for the double knockdown. Suzume comes in to pick up the pace...for all of five seconds before Zara drops her with a clothesline. A rope walk bulldog puts

Zara down though and it's Endo coming back in for a knee to the back of Aino's head.

Everything breaks down and Endo knocks Aino to the floor, only to have Aino grab an apron suplex to bring them back inside. They switch off again and Suzume grabs a sleeper on Zara, followed by a facebuster. Zara is fine enough to pull her out of the air for a toss, followed by a spinebuster to give Aino two.

Suzume is back up with a high crossbody for two of her own before locking hands with Aino for a slugout. Endo is back in but gets caught with a reverse DDT to send her right back to the floor. Zara loads up what looks to be a fisherman's buster but Suzume reverses into a rollup for the pin (on the third attempt) at 11:19.

Rating: B-. Starting a show with a tag match is often a good idea as you can get something fast paced like this to fire the crowd up early. I'm not sure why the champs weren't defending if they were going to win anyway but that's a minor issue at best. What matters is getting the show off to a good start and they managed to do so rather well.

Hyper Misao vs. Billie Starkz

Starkz has Athena with her and Misao looks like a superhero. She then says she is a superhero, so at least I can recognize a costume. Misao offers her a gift (looks like a stuffed animal) but then hammers Starkz down with it to start fast. They trade rollups for two each until Misao elbows her in the face. Misao ties up the limbs and swings her head first into the bottom buckle in the corner a few times.

Back up and Starkz grabs a German suplex for two but a big kick to the head is cut off. Misao hits a running knee to the back and then plants her on the apron for two. We get a bit wacky as Misao grabs the mascot head that Starkz wore to the ring, which allows Athena to hit her with the stuffed animal

that Misao brought. Kind of serves her right for cheating.

The distraction lets Starkz hit a fireman's carry backbreaker into a Swanton for two, giving us the surprised knockout face. A Nightmare On Helm Street gives Misao two, with Athena putting the foot on the ropes. Misao sprays...something in Athena's eyes, allowing Starkz to hit a suicide dive. Another Swanton gives Starkz the pin at 6:07.

Rating: C+. Misao was someone who stood out to me the last time I watched this company and she did so again here. Having her as a superhero who cheats is something that worked well enough and made her a bit more interesting, which is the point of such an over the top gimmick. Starkz and Athena are the far bigger names though and it makes sense for them to win, even in a short match like this.

Viva Van/Yuki Kamifuki vs. Trish Adora/Raku

Adora is apparently a substitute. Raku is one of the women who sang to start the show and is carrying a pillow. Van and Raku start things off with Van hitting a clothesline and posing a bit. Raku instead hits her with a pillow, which would seem to be some kind of rule violation. Van and Yuki are put on the pillow for a quiet two but Van gets up and throws the pillow into the crowd.

We settle down to Yuki sending Raku throat first into the rope, allowing Van to grab a Tarantula. A running facebuster gets Raku out of trouble though and Adora comes in to clean house. Van and Adora trade the big forearms until Van grabs a hurricanrana. A running boot in the corner gives Yuki two but Adora plants her with a Samoan drop. Yuki is back with an Octopus, which Adora breaks up and hits a Rough Ryder. Raku comes back in and is quickly kicked in the face but manages to grab a guillotine. Everything breaks down again and Yuki hits a Fameasser to pin Raku at 8:55.

Rating: B-. They kept this one energetic in the not overly

long run time and that made for a nice sprint. Yuki and Van seem to be a regular team who work well together while Adora and Raku made for a nice makeshift team. Adora continues to feel like she could be a big deal somewhere but that isn't going to happen when she keeps losing over and over, even on a show like this.

Mizuki/Vertvixen vs. Aja Kong/Pom Harajuku

Kong gets the big legend entrance and reception, which is more impressive since she's a replacement for Max the Impaler. Pom and Vertvixen start things off with the latter grabbing a headlock. That's broken up and we have a standoff before it's off to Mizuki vs. the much larger Kong. Mizuki bites the arm to limited success so Kong misses an elbow, allowing Mizuki to hit a basement dropkick.

Back up and Kong picks up Pom to throw her at Mizuki for two, which I guess is the same as a tag. Vertvixen slugs away in the corner and the villains (I think?) stomp Pom down. Mizuki steals Pom's shoe and throws it into the crowd, leaving Vertvixen to hit a hard forearm in the corner. The one shoed Pom manages an anklescissors for a breather and the tag brings Kong back in to wreck the mortals.

The spinning backfist misses and Vertvixen gets in a kick to the head, only for Kong to knock Mizuki out of the air. Pom comes back in for a wristdrag out of the corner but misses a backsplash. Kong seems rather gassed on the apron as Mizuki hits a running shot to Pom's back, only to miss a top rope double stomp. Mizuki is fine enough to put pom over the middle rope and now the double stomp connects. Kong makes the save but gets Stunned by Vertvixen. That leaves Mizuki to hit Pom with a shoe, setting up the Beauty Special (kind of a tabletop suplex) for the pin at 10:31.

Rating: C+. The action was fast paced, but this felt more like a way to have Kong in a match, which is more important than

anything else. The fans seemed way into what they were seeing (as has been the case all show) and it was cool to see a legend in the ring. Odd name aside, Vertvixen feels like someone who could be a star somewhere, but she has been treated as such a jobber whenever she is in AEW or ROH that she has an even longer way to go.

Shoko Nakajima vs. Rhio

Nakajima stands about 4'10 and is billed as a Big Kaiju (a Japanese monster). The much larger Rhino throws her down to start but Nakajima takes over on the arm. That's reversed into a headscissors on the mat but Nakajima flips over into a headlock in a nice display. Nakajima flips away from her and hits a dropkick, only to get planted with a high angle spinebuster.

A full nelson goes on to keep Nakajima in trouble and a backbreaker makes it even worse. Rhio goes up but gets caught with a super hurricanrana, allowing Nakajima to hit a slingshot hilo for two. Nakajima sends her outside for the suicide dive, followed by a running flip dive to make it worse. They trade forearms on the floor and then keep it going inside, where Rhio drops her with a headbutt.

A top rope superplex plants Nakajima hard but she's able to block the package piledriver. Nakajima strikes away until a superkick into a torture rack slam gives Rhio two. Rhio goes up but gets kicked down, setting up a 619 despite being back on her feet. A double arm DDT sets up a top rope backsplash to give Nakajima the pin at 13:24.

Rating: B. This was straight out of the little vs. big playbook and believe it or not, the story still works. Nakajima is a ball of energy who never stops moving and throws everything she has at you to stay in there. Rhio is someone who feels like she could be a star somewhere on the bigger stage after a bit more seasoning, but the talent is pretty

clearly there.

Maki Itoh/Miyu Yamashita vs. Miu Watanabe/Rika Tatsumi

Itoh gets a heck of a reception during her entrance. Yamashita and Watanabe start things off and apparently they have been feuding over the company's top singles title. Yamashita powers her back up against the ropes to start but has to avoid some kicks for a standoff. Tatsumi and Itoh come in for an exchange of headlocks takeovers and a cute-off. Itoh knocks her down and loads up her falling headbutt, only to have Yamashita stand her in place (with Itoh standing there like a board) and roll Tatsumi into place so the headbutt can connect.

Itoh's right hands in the corner are broken up and Tatsumi takes it to the floor as everything breaks down. Tatsumi chokes Yamashita with a belt as we have to go split screen, much to the surprise of commentary. They tease going back to ringside but head over to the bar, with commentary saying this is a great way to showcase the building if you can't be here in person. Watanabe buys some beers (and leaves a tip) but Yamashita and Itoh steal the drinks and raise a quick toast.

That's broken up and the drinks are spilled, much to a variety of chagrins. Back in and Watanabe elbows Itoh down for two before Tatsumi starts in on the knee. The Figure Four has Itoh in trouble but she makes the rope rather quickly. Watanabe tries a reverse Alabama Slam to send Tatsumi onto Itoh but only hits mat. That's enough to bring Yamashita back in but Watanabe powers her into the corner.

A powerslam puts Yamashita down again and the giant swinging into Tatsumi's dropkick gets two. Yamashita blocks a Twist of Fate and kicks Tatsumi in the head before Itoh low bridges her to the floor. Back in and Yamashita hits a delayed AA with Tatsumi having to make a save. Everyone is knocked down until Tatsumi and Yamashita strike it out. Itoh is back in and a top rope Codebreaker into a German suplex (not the smoothest of

transitions) knocks Tatsumi silly. A Skull Kick gives Yamashita the pin at 19:07.

Rating: B. This felt like a mixture of a fun brawl and a regular match which made for a good back and forth fight. The fans were WAY into Itoh here and it makes sense given her incredible charisma. I had a good time with this and it wound up being probably the best thing on a solid show.

Overall Rating: B+. Rather solid effort up and down here, with the worst match being completely decent. Shows like this are meant to be something of a sampler for fans and they got a good result here, with the whole thing working. I've liked everything I've seen from this promotion before and while some of it might not be for everyone, there should be something worth seeing here if you're looking for something different.

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Tokyo Joshi Pro-Wrestling Live In Los Angeles: I Had To Get Here Someday

TJPW Live In Los Angeles

Date: March 31, 2023

Location: Globe Theater, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Jonny Loquasto, Thom Fain

This is Tokyo Joshi Pro-Wrestling, a Japanese women's promotion which I've heard some amazing things about. There are going to be some names here you might have seen in AEW or elsewhere over the weekend, but I have no idea what to expect from the show. Let's get to it.

Note that I don't follow the promotion so I apologize in advance for not knowing history, characters or anything else.

The ring announcer welcomes us to the show and gives us a quick preview while also plugging the WrestleCon appearances. She also reminds the fans that the wrestlers don't speak much English and apologize in advance. Fair enough and something often forgotten.

And now, as is tradition, here are three wrestlers (Hikari Noa, Raka and Miu Watanabe, the Up Up Girls) for a song, apparently how they open all of their shows. With the mini concert over, the women greet the fans.

The announcer says some stuff in Japanese, which is apparently the introduction to the first match (almost fifteen minutes into the broadcast).

Daisy Monkey vs. Free WiFi

This would be Arisu Endo/Suzume vs. Hikari Noa vs. Nao Kakuta as I love Japanese team names. In response to why they're

called Free WiFi, the answer is simple: who doesn't like free wifi? Hikari and Suzume (rather popular) start things off with Hikari quickly being sent into the corner so Endo can come in for a dropkick to her back.

Kakuta gets in a cheap shot from the apron though and Endo gets caught in the wrong corner. What appears to be a double bite of the head has Endo in more trouble and stereo basement dropkicks make it worse. Endo's dropkick gets her out of trouble though and it's Suzume back in to pick up the pace.

Hikari pulls Suzume off the top and gets two off a rollup before it's back to Endo. A choke over the ropes slows Suzume down but she's back with a running bulldog. Kakuta comes back in with a dropkick into a camel clutch, sending Endo bailing to the ropes for two. Everything breaks down and a double torture rack faceplant finishes Kakuta at 11:41.

Rating: B-. Good start to the show here as they had a fast paced match with some fun action. The ending looked good as well as Kakuta got dropped on her face. Free WiFi (that's so ridiculous of a name that it's brilliant) was a nice team but Monkey (these names are fun) looked a bit more complete so the ending felt like the right choice.

Janai Kai vs. Yufi Kamifuku

Yufi dances a lot and gets kicked in the chest to cut him down. A running kick to the back gives Kai two but Yufi kicks her way up from the mat. There's a pair of dropkicks to send Kai into the corner but she's right back with a dragon sleeper. With that broken up, Kai hits a spinning kick to the head for the pin at 4:49.

Rating: C. This was more of a showcase for Kai, who had some rather hard kicks in there. At times the best thing that you can do is have someone go out there and kick someone else really hard, which is what Kai has done. I'm pretty sure I've seen Kai before and you know what you're getting going in,

which worked well here.

Hyper Misao/Trish Adora vs. Raku/Yuki Aino

Misao is a super hero and you've probably seen Adora a time or two. Before the match, Misao officially dubs Adora a superhero as well, giving her her own mask and naming her Hyper Trish. Adora backs Raku into the corner to start and everything breaks down rather fast. The heroes grab stereo submissions but Misao accidentally hairsprays (or whatever it was) Adora in the face.

Then Raku whips out a pillow and puts the heroes to sleep for two before it's off to Aino. Misao fights up and hands it back to Adora for the power. Aino grabs a gutwrench suplex for two as everything breaks down. Misao sprays them both and a high crossbody finishes Raku at 9:04.

Rating: C+. Mild obsession with the spray can aside (which isn't very heroic), this was a fun match and was giving me flashbacks to the Mighty Molly or Hurricane days (in a good way). It was designed to be nothing but fun and Adora is someone who feels like she could be a breakout star if she is given the chance. Raku stands out a bit as well, but that might be due to being in on the song earlier.

Wasteland War Party vs. Miu Watanabe/Shoko Nakajima

That would be Max the Impaler and Heidi Howitzer. After getting the streamers out of the ring, we start with Watanabe bouncing off of Max. Nakajima comes in and avoids a charge in the corner but the much bigger Max sends her into the corner. It's off to Heidi for two off a stalling brainbuster but Nakajima gets over to Watanabe anyway. The pace picks up for a few moments, until Heidi runs Watanabe over again.

Watanabe slugs away at Max and Nakajima comes in to add some running dropkicks. Max is finally knocked into the corner but comes back with the Wasteland. Back up and Watanabe gets Max

up for a pretty impressive slam before taking Heidi down as well. Nakajima hits a 619 on Max but Heidi runs her over. An elevated splash (the Master Blaster) gives Max the pin at 11:52.

Rating: C+. The War Party are one heck of a monster team and they were showcasing it here. Watanabe and Nakajima were cowering in fear, or at least looking scared, to put the War Party over. This was a good example of a way to have two stars look like threats and it isn't a surprise that they were apparently Tag Team Champions until a few weeks ago (if I heard commentary right).

International Princess Title: Rika Tatsumi vs. Billie Starkz

Tatsumi is defending what seems to be the midcard singles title. They go with the grappling to start but Tatsumi gets a bit more serious by ripping at Starkz' face. Starkz is right back up with a running knee to the back of the head for two, with Starkz getting frustrated by the near fall.

Tatsumi is back up with a hip attack and we hit the Figure Four in the middle. Starkz' long legs get her to the ropes so Tatsumi hip attacks her again. Back up and Starkz hits a brainbuster onto the knee for two but Tatsumi blasts her with a running hip attack. The Twist of Fate sets up a top rope hip attack to retain Tatsumi's title at 8:44.

Rating: C+. This was probably the weakest match of the night so far, partially because I didn't really buy that Tatsumi was in danger. Starkz is very talented for her age but she felt like she was in over her head with this one. It certainly wasn't bad, but it came off more like Tatsumi just waiting until she could finish Starkz off.

Respect is shown post match.

Princess Tag Team Titles: 121000000 vs. Magical Sugar Rabbits

That would be Maki Itoh/Miyu Yamashita (defending) vs. Mizuki (top singles champion)/Yuka Sakazaki. Miyu misses a big kick (her thing) to Sakazaki to start so it's Itoh coming in for an elbow to the face and a run around the ring. Everything breaks down fast and the champs headscissor them to the floor, setting up the big stereo dives. Back in and Itoh shrugs off a face first ram into the buckle and hits an assisted splash for two.

Itoh bites Mizuki's fingers and Miyu comes in for some kicks to the back. A roll over allows Mizuki to bring Mike back in to clean house. Everything breaks down and Itoh hits a...I'm not sure what that was but she follows with a brainbuster for two. Mizuki is back in with a high crossbody for two on Itoh with Miyu making a save.

Itoh goes up but gets superplex right back down. Back up and Itoh pulls her into a kneeling Texas Cloverleaf but the save is quickly made. Everything breaks down again and Miyu knees Itoh by mistake. With Miyu sent outside, Sakazaki hits a top rope splash, followed by Mizuki's top rope double stomp for the pin and the titles at 16:18.

Rating: B. The title change makes the show feel important and it was after a good match as well. The Rabbits felt like a more complete team and apparently they held the titles at some point before this. It was a solid main event and getting Itoh on the card was a necessity after the attention she got in AEW, though she was mostly playing it straight here.

Post match the new champs thank the and the locker room comes out to the ring for a JOSHI chant. The roster takes a photo and a PLEASE COME BACK chant takes us out.

Overall Rating: B-. The show wasn't a classic, but I can absolutely get the appeal for a lot of fans. These wrestlers are going to get your attention and the wrestling ranges from good to very good. While I don't think I'll be watching

regularly, it's the kind of thing I could see myself watching again once or twice. Nice stuff here, with everyone working hard and having a good time.

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