

Impact Wrestling – March 16, 2023: The Balancing Act

Impact Wrestling

Date: March 16, 2023

Location: Sam's town Live, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Tom Hannifan, Matthew Rehwoldt

Sacrifice is next week and the card, while is looking a bit stacked, is coming together. That means we are likely to get some more build towards Tommy Dreamer vs. Bully Ray this week, as that is likely headlining the show. Otherwise, the six man tag featuring Time Machine should see some more setup as well. Let's get to it.

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

Opening recap.

In the desert, PCO screams for Eddie Edwards to come fight him.

Opening sequence.

Mike Bailey/Jonathan Gresham vs. Decay

Steve has to bail to the ropes to escape Gresham to start but a bite of the hand has Gresham in trouble. Bailey comes in and is sent outside just as fast, leaving Decay to double team Gresham down in the corner. Gresham gets sent into the corner but forearms/dropkicks his way to freedom. Bailey comes in to backflip a bit and kicks Steve down. There's the running shooting star for two on Steve...who bites on Bailey's boot.

The boot is fine enough for the bouncing kicks but Steve hits a clothesline for the double knockdown. Taurus comes in for his huge backbreaker into a pop up Samoan drop for two on Bailey. Everything breaks down and Gresham sends Steve

outside, leaving Bailey to kick Taurus in the head for one. Steve and Gresham fight on the floor as Bailey hits the spinning kick, setting up the Ultimate Weapon for the pin on Taurus at 6:19.

Rating: C+. This was shorter than I was expecting but Bailey didn't managed to no sell a bad knee so he is doing better than usual. Other than that, it was the partners who don't quite like each other teaming together to beat a midcard team, which isn't a horrible stretch. Bailey is a popular enough star to carry the opener, and the Ultimate Weapon does look painful so had a nice start here.

Post match Gresham and Bailey seem a bit testy with each other but respect is shown.

Josh Alexander, Frankie Kazarian and Rich Swann are ready for the Bullet Club tonight. They've been successful on their own and now it's time to succeed together. They trust each other, but here is Steve Maclin to interrupt, with Swann not seeming pleased.

Gisele Shaw says she didn't lost last week and blames Deonna Purrazzo. Revenge is coming at Sacrifice. Johnny Swinger and Zicky Dice come in and suggest Swinger faces...interviewer Gia Miller? Instead, he'll face Jai Vidal.

Steve Maclin vs. Heath

Heath starts fast with some running forearms but gets sent into the corner to cut him off. Maclin runs him over with a good shot to the face until a backdrop sends him to the floor. We take a break and come back with Maclin beating him up at ringside and choking on the rope. A backbreaker gives Maclin two and we hit the abdominal stretch. Heath fights out and slugs away, including the jumping knee and powerslam for two. Maclin cuts off a bulldog though and ties him in the Tree of Woe, setting up the spear. KIA finishes Heath at 12:04.

Rating: C+. I'm still kind of amazed at what Heath has been doing in Impact as he has turned into a rather reliable in-ring star without doing much of the comedy. Granted he never really got the chance to show what he could do so maybe this has been there all along. That being said, this was all about getting Maclin another win on his path to the World Title shot and that went well.

The Death Dollz are ready to retain the Knockout Tag Team Titles but Taya says Jessika might be too much of a liability. Taya and Rosemary can handle this themselves, which (after Jessika leaves), seems to be because they think Jessika could be swayed.

PCO has walked from the desert to Las Vegas, shouting for Eddie on the way.

Jonathan Gresham calls Mike Bailey his sidekick but Bailey says he isn't forgetting Gresham beating him. They'll run it back at Sacrifice.

Johnny Swinger vs. Jai Vidal

Zicky Dice, Savannah and Gisele Shaw are all here too. Swinger doesn't think much of Vidal to start and his offer of a test of strength is answered with a dropkick. Vidal drops an elbow to send Swinger into the corner but a charge misses. Dice grabs Vidal's leg and gets ejected, with the distraction letting Swinger choke on the rope. Evans breaks up the camel clutch and gets ejected, along with Shaw. Cue Deonna Purrazzo to jump Shaw, leaving Vidal to hit a running dropkick to finish Swinger at 3:22.

Rating: C. Total comedy match here and yeah it worked well, as does almost everything that Swinger does. Having him lose over and over is a funny idea, as he is still trying to find someone he can beat. Vidal was fine enough in the ring, but this was all about Swinger (and Purrazzo in the end) and he delivered.

Deaner talks about Callihan's sixth step when Callihan storms in to yell about last week. Callihan's sixth step is about taking punishment, which he'll do. Deaner seems to have an idea. Here's an idea: WRAP THIS STORY UP ALREADY!

PCO arrives at the arena, still screaming for Eddie Edwards.

Mickie James comes up to Tommy Dreamer, who has requested that they have a mixed tag against Bully Ray and Masha Slamovich next week. Jordynne Grace comes in to say this is a bad idea and promises that she's still coming for the title.

Here is Eddie Edwards for a chat. He has been thinking a lot and is ready to let the past be in the past. Everything that has happened before is over and it is time for him to focus on himself and his future in Impact. We look at someone in a car saving Eddie from PCO last week and...here is PCO. Before he can make it to the ring though, Kenny King comes up from behind and hits him with a shovel, allowing Edwards to come up for the double team.

Commentary speculates that King was driving Edwards' getaway car last week before PCO sits up on the ramp. The brawl is on and PCO gets crushed between the steps and post. That's broken up and PCO (bleeding from the back of the head) cleans house, only to have King grab a Blockbuster. The chair is put over PCO's head and Edwards crushes it with a kendo stick. This isn't going to end well for them is it?

Santino Marella is in the back with...Vladimir Kozlov of all people. They're happy to be back together and then Kozlov leaves. Dirty Dango comes in and can't say Kozlov's name. That's enough for SAY HIS NAME AND HE APPEARS, so here is Joe Hendry, who wants Brian Myers. Santino makes the match so Dango can gush over what a Hendry fan he is. It's such a big deal that Santino makes Hendry and Dango against Myers and Moose.

Knockouts Tag Team Titles: The Coven vs. Death Dollz

The Dollz (Rosemary/Taya Valkyrie) are defending and Jessika is here with them. Taya crossbodies King down to start and hands it off to Rosemary for a suplex. Wilde comes in to slug away, earning a bite to the hear from Rosemary. Everything breaks down and the Coven is clotheslined to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Rosemary fighting out of a chinlock but getting pulled down by the hair. Wilde chokes in the corner but Rosemary manages a quick Upside Down. King is knocked away and the hot tag brings in Taya to clean house. The running hip attack and running knees in the corner hit King for two but Wilde hits a Fameasser over the ropes. Everything breaks down but King breaks up the Road To Valhalla. Instead Wilde hits a kick to the head and King's pumphandle flipping faceplant connects for the pin and the titles at 11:32.

Rating: C+. Taya appearing on this week's Dynamite didn't exactly help with the result but well done on trying to make some new stars out of nowhere. Wilde has been trying to find her way back to prominent since her return and King has only been around for a few weeks. Nice match too, without Jessika playing into the finish as they seemed to telegraph.

Here's what's coming on various shows.

Josh Alexander/Rich Swann/Frankie Kazarian vs. Bullet Club

Kazarian flips out of Bey's wristlock to start but Bey kicks him into the corner. There's a running chop and it's Austin coming in. That's fine with Kazarian, who sends Bey outside and grabs Austin's arm. Swann comes in and is quickly dropped with a springboard dropkick, allowing Austin to grab a headlock (as is the customary followup to a springboard missile dropkick). That's broken up as well and it's off to Kenta vs. Alexander, which has the fans' approval. They slowly slug it out until everything breaks down, with Bullet Club being sent to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Bey kicking Swann in the head and motioning that Swann is asleep. Austin and Bey use some precision kicks to put Swann down for two but Bey misses a legdrop. Kenta isn't having any of this tagging stuff though and kicks Swann right back down. Swann manages a kick though and it's Kazarian coming back in to really clean house.

Everything breaks down and Alexander comes in to strike on Bey. The hurricanrana is countered into a powerbomb on Bey and Swann adds the middle rope 450. Austin makes the save and it's time for the exchange of kicks to the head. Swann flips off the apron onto Swann but gets taken down by Bey.

The slingshot dive is loaded up but Kazarian pulls bey out of the air into a cutter onto the pile (that was great). Back in and Swann hits an ax kick to Bey and Kazarian adds the slingshot DDT to Austin. Kenta knees Swann down but gets dropped by Alexander. Cue Steve Maclin for a distraction though and Alexander gets kicked down. The Art of Finesse into the Fold finishes Swann at 17:57.

Rating: B. This was rolling by the end and the Maclin distraction was about all they could have done to get out of this without something rather screwy. You don't want the new champs winning and Kenta probably isn't getting pinned, so having Maclin there was the best way out. Rather good match too, with talented wrestlers getting time to do what they can.

Overall Rating: B-. Impact is somehow managing to build towards three shows (granted one of them is in name only for the most part) at once and thankfully they didn't bother with that much about Tommy Dreamer vs. Bully Ray. That feud doesn't need any more time and hopefully they can have their match and move on (yeah I know there's no way that's it). Other than that, you had some build towards Sacrifice, which is looking rather strong. Good show this week, as we should be in for a nice few weeks coming up.

Results

Mike Bailey/Jonathan Gresham b. Decay – Ultimate Weapon to Black Taurus

Steve Maclin b. Heath – KIA

Jai Vidal b. Johnny Swinger – Running dropkick

The Coven b. Death Dollz – Pumphandle flipping faceplant to Valkyrie

Bullet Club b. Josh Alexander/Rich Swann/Frankie Kazarian – Fold to Swann

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Impact Wrestling – March 9, 2023: There's Good And Bad

Impact Wrestling

Date: March 9, 2023

Location: Sam's Town Live, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Tom Hannifan, Matthew Rehwoldt

We are on our way to a trio of shows with Sacrifice, Multiverse United and Rebellion, which makes for quite the packed series of builds. That got started last week with a little something for each show getting time, but they are going to have to do it again for the next few weeks. Let's get to it.

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

Opening recap.

Here is Bully Ray to get things going. At No Surrender, Tommy Dreamer used the words "someone like me" (meaning Ray). What did he mean when he said that? Did he mean a two time Hall of Famer or half of the greatest tag team ever? Maybe a two time World Champion?

Ray wishes he knew what Dreamer meant, because he threw hot coffee into Dreamer's face. Dreamer wants a Busted Open match at Sacrifice but there is no way Dreamer is making it there. Cue Santino Marella to call Bully "Bobby Ray" and say that Dreamer will be at Sacrifice. It was only a minor burn to his balls...er, eyeball so he'll be fine.

Cue Bhupinder Gujjar to speak Hindi and issue a challenge for right now. Santino makes the match and we're on. This Santino stuff is getting REALLY old as he's still doing the same "gee I sure do talk funny" shtick, which can be charming for all of 12 seconds before you realize that he's making the crowd chuckle over what was supposed to be a serious angle.

Bhupinder Gujjar vs. Bully Ray

Ray's chain shot doesn't work to start so he clotheslines Gujjar down instead. Gujjar gets up and yells a lot, seemingly inviting Ray to hit him. Ray's right hands are shrugged off and Gujjar dropkicks him down. Ray catches him on top though

and loads up the chain, which takes too long as well, allowing Gujjar to get in a shot of his own. Gujjar loads up the chain but gets low blowed for the DQ at 3:31.

Rating: D+. Remember when Gujjar was looking like he could be something? Well now he's cannon fodder in the star making feud between Bully Ray and Tommy Dreamer. This was hardly a high energy match and was much more about Ray trying to get out of having the actual match. Nothing to see here, but thank goodness Ray got his time in.

Post match Ray chains Gujjar in the back but Tommy Dreamer comes in for the save (Why didn't he come out earlier?). Cue Masha Slamovich to hit Dreamer low but Mickie James makes the save. The women brawl until Dreamer gets up to chase Ray off with a chair.

PCO is next to a grave with a shovel and screams for Eddie Edwards to come fight him.

Josh Alexander comes up to Rich Swann and gets him on his team for a six man at Sacrifice. Steve Maclin comes in but Swann says this isn't about him. Frankie Kazarian comes in and Maclin leaves, with Kazarian seemingly joining Swann and Alexander at Sacrifice.

Callihan vs. Rhino

The Design and Heath are here too. They trade shoulders to start and neither goes anywhere. The fight heads outside with Callihan raking the eyes and posting him to take over. A Russian legsweep on the ramp puts Rhino down again and the seconds get in an argument. We take a break and come back with Rhino hitting a TKO for two, followed by a belly to belly. A hard clothesline out of the corner cuts Rhino off but it's too early for the Cactus Driver 97. Angels grabs Callihan's foot though and Khan adds a chair to the face, allowing Rhino to hit the Gore for the pin at 10:11.

Rating: C. This was as good as a ten minute Rhino vs. Callihan match was going to be as there is only so much the two of them are going to pull off. Rhino is still able to have a watchable enough match and it is nice to see him get a win here. At the same time, the Callihan/Design stuff is still pretty horrible and it needs to wrap up soon. It won't, but it needs to.

Trey Miguel interrupts Dirty Dango and Santino Marella in the back, asking what they're going to do for him. That works for Santino, who makes Miguel vs. a handpicked opponent at Sacrifice, plus a six way match for the X-Division Title at Multiverse United. Johnny Swinger and Zicky Dice come in to see if Miguel is as tall as Sky Low Low. With Miguel gone, Swinger asks about facing Dango, who says he's the assistant Director of Authority. Swinger and Dice leave, so Marella says that isn't Dango's job. Dango: "It's not a job. It's a way of life."

During the break, Callihan was mad at the Design but was told that was step #6.

Jordynne Grace vs. Alex Gracia

Grace powers her into the corner to start as we hear about Grace competing as a bodybuilder. A German suplex out of the corner gets two on Gracia but the Grace Driver is blocked. Instead Grace grabs a torture rack spin into a powerbomb. Now the Grace Driver finishes Gracia off at 2:26.

Moose comes up to Joe Hendry, who is telling jokes to a bunch of fans. Brian Myers jumps Hendry from behind and the big beatdown is on.

The Bullet Club, complete with Kenta, come in to mock Josh Alexander/Frankie Kazarian/Rich Swann. The six man is set for next week. Alexander mocks Ace Austin and Chris Bey for being overly excited about being the Tag Team Champions, which doesn't sit well with the champs.

Jonathan Gresham vs. Kushida

They go technical to start (yes really) with neither being able to get very far. Instead they shake hands and spin around a lot while fighting over arm control. Neither gets very far so Kushida takes it to the mat and rides him a bit. Gresham reverses into a hammerlock on the mat but Kushida gets to his feet, with Gresham still cranking away. It's finally broken up and Kushida stomps on Gresham's hand but Gresham is right back with another armbar.

Kushida's armbar sends Gresham to the rope so Kushida dropkicks the arm to keep him in trouble. Gresham is right back with la majistral for two so he tries it again, only to get reversed into a cradle to give Kushida two of his own. Back up and Kushida sends him into the ropes, which bangs up Gresham's arm again. The Hoverboard Lock makes Gresham tap at 10:04.

Rating: B-. This was the technical match that you knew it would be and it made Kushida look that much better because he beat someone on his level. Both of them are established names but Kushida is on his way to the World Title shot at Multiverse United so he needed the win here. Good match, and different from everything else on the show.

Eddie Edwards goes to the grave where PCO called him out. That sounds like a very bad idea.

Here is Killer Kelly to sit in a chair and call out Taylor Wilde. Cue Wilde, who says this isn't about Kelly but rather the future. Kelly doesn't think much of Wilde telling the future with cards, because she controls her own destiny. Taylor pulls out the tower card and it's KiLynn King coming in from behind to chair Kelly down. A Death Valley Driver plants Kelly again. I've liked King in the past so this is interesting.

Still at the grave, PCO swings his shovel at a rock.

The Death Dollz teleport in to console Killer Kelly, with Rosemary telling her that she needs to grasp the darker realm. Kelly doesn't seem convinced but says she can handle a 2-1 situation herself. With Kelly gone, KiLynn King and Taylor Wilde come in to make the Knockouts Tag Team Titles challenge. Rosemary is in, if King and Wilde agree to give up the dark arts if they lose. Deal.

Eddie Edwards arrives at the grave but there is no PCO. Then PCO pops up behind him but misses the big swing with the shovel. They fight a bit and PCO sends him into a rock. Eddie manages to grab the shovel but PCO drops him with a reverse DDT (as you do in a fight by a grave). PCO sends him into the grave but here's a car to run PCO over. Eddie gets in the car and rides away but we never see who is driving.

Here's what's coming on various shows.

Knockouts Title: Gisele Shaw vs. Mickie James

Shaw, with Jai Vidal and Savannah Evans, is challenging and Deonna Purrazzo is on commentary. Mickie takes her down with a headlock to start but gets reversed into a headscissors. Back up and they fight over wrist control until Mickie sends her outside for a crash to send us to a break.

We come back with Shaw sending her into the corner to take over. Mickie's Thesz press gives her a breather though and they slowly slug it out. Shaw gets the better of things and grabs a reverse chinlock to keep James down. Back up and Shaw charges into a boot in the corner, allowing Mickie to hurricanrana her out. The comeback is on but Mickie has to dive onto the goons on the floor.

Shaw gets in a cheap shot to take over again though and the chops have Mickie in trouble in the corner. A pull of the hair drops Mickie again but she explodes out of the corner for the double knockdown. Mickie strikes away and hits a flapjack as the referee seems to tell her how much time is left. The top

rope Thesz press gets two on Shaw but Vidal's distraction breaks up the MickieDT. Purrazzo breaks that up so Shaw grabs a rollup, only to have Purrazzo turn it back over so Mickie can retain at 17:00.

Rating: B-. This match got a lot of time and the ending seems to bring Purrazzo either into the title picture or in line for a showdown with Shaw (or perhaps both). For now though, these two had a good match, with Shaw holding up her end and James being her usual awesome self. It felt like a big time main event and that is a hard trick to pull off a lot of the time.

Overall Rating: C+. This show got better as it went on but there were definitely some rocky points. There are some parts here which just aren't very good and give me no reason to want to see what happens in them from week to week. Stuff such as Ray vs. Dreamer and the Design/Callihan stuff is just there with few positives to either of them and it hurts to watch them. Then on the other hand you have the solid Knockouts division and the main event feuds, though a lot of that seems to be on hold until we get closer to the build to Rebellion. For now though, the bad stuff gets bailed out, as the positives are quite positive.

Results

Bhupinder Gujjar b. Bully Ray via DQ when Ray hit him low

Rhino b. Callihan – Gore

Jordynne Grace b. Alex Gracia – Grace Driver

Kushida b. Jonathan Gresham – Hoverboard Lock

Mickie James b. Gisele Shaw – Rollup

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