

The Wrestling Channel International Showdown

International Showdown

Date: March 19, 2005

Location: Coventry Skydome, Coventry, England

Attendance: 3,400

Commentators: Dean Ayass, Eamon D'Arcy

So this is a British independent show that was recommended to me and it sounded worth a look. There are a bunch of names on the card and some of the matches do sound good. Several of them are from TNA so there will at least be some star power on the show. Let's get to it.

This was presented by the Wrestling Channel, which sounds like quite the awesome concept.

Johnny Storm promises to beat up all three opponents in his fatal four way.

The ring is rather small and I think I like that.

Jonny Storm vs. Petey Williams vs. Chris Sabin vs. Spud

The ring announcer says a bunch of stuff but commentary drowns it out. Spud is better known as Drake Maverick and this is one fall to a finish. Sabin flips Spud down by the arm to start and they fight over wrist control. An armdrag into a rollup gives Spud one so Sabin rolls him up as well for a standoff. Williams and Storm come in, much to the fans' appreciation. Williams takes him down for a basement dropkick to the back of the head but gets sent outside, where he has to block a sunset bomb.

Sabin gets in and sends Williams outside, leaving Spud to hit a big dive to the floor. Storm hits his own running flip dive

onto the pile and then goes back in for a running DDT on Spud. It's back to Sabin for a powerslam into a running Swanton to crush Spud for two. That leaves Storm to hit a Michinoku Driver into a middle rope moonsault for two of his own, with Williams making a save.

Somehow Spud is able to get back up for a neckbreaker on Storm, who superkicks him down so Williams can steal the near fall. The Canadian Destroyer is broken up though and Sabin hits a reverse DDT for a breather. Storm comes back in as everything breaks down, setting off a rapid fire exchange of rollups for two each. Since it's required, we hit the Tower of Doom (or something close enough to it) to leave everyone down.

It's Sabin up first with an enziguri to Williams, setting up a running Liger Bomb for two. Sabin goes up so Storm catches him with a super poisonrana, leaving Spud to make the save this time. Storm misses a running enziguri on Spud, who grabs a spinning DDT for two. Back up and Sabin springboard missile dropkicks Spud to the floor, only to get caught in the Canadian Destroyer to give Williams the pin at 11:27.

Rating: B-. Take a bunch of high fliers, put them in a match and have them do their high spots for about ten minutes. It worked in WCW and it worked very well here too. This was a fun match and the fans were into it, so what more can you ask for? The Canadian Destroyer was still amazing at this point so the ending was the right call, with neither of the British wrestlers taking the fall either. Nice opener, and a good start.

Everyone poses together after the match.

Spud says that was amazing and he wants to face everyone again.

Steve Grey vs. Mal Sanders

This is under British Rules and a legend named Tony Scarlo is

guest referee. Grey debuted in 1969 and Sanders debuted in 1977. Sanders headlocks him to the mat to start as we hear about their history together. Grey literally bounces his way to freedom and then rolls out of a wristlock. A headstand counter lets Grey work on the wrist so Sanders cartwheels out. That's broken up as well so Sanders takes him down again as the technical off continues.

They keep up the feeling out process as the first round ends (An explanation of British Rules would be nice. A lot of fans will know them, but that isn't going to be everyone). We start round two with Grey's leg giving out on a slam attempt but he kicks Sanders onto the referee. That means Sanders gets to slap the referee in the back of the head a bit and we're back up.

Sanders grabs a bodyscissors and lifts Grey up to drop him down, which commentary says was what old British wrestlers would call a piledriver. Another battle of the wristlock goes nowhere so Grey takes him down into a hammerlock instead. That's broken up and we're right back to another standoff. Round two ends with Grey on his back and in need of some help.

We start round three with a battle of sunset flips going nowhere so they're back up again. Sanders blocks a victory roll though and walks around with Grey hanging from him for a unique visual. Grey gets out and ties up the legs for something like an Indian Deathlock. That's broken up as well so Grey hiptosses him down, only to get caught in a hammerlock. Back up and they trade crossarm chokes to end the round.

We start round four with Sanders changing to strikes to mix things up. A clothesline puts Grey down and a snapmare gives Sanders...nothing, as Grey has his foot on the ropes (Off a snapmare?). Sanders takes too long going up for an ax handle though and gets punched out of the air but Grey STILL can't keep anything going. Instead Sanders hits a running shoulder,

only to get tossed hard out to the floor. Back in and Grey hits a crossbody for the pin out of nowhere at 17:19.

Rating: C. This is kind of hard to rate as it's much more for the British audience, leaving outsiders with two older guys having a match which wasn't great. That being said, it was nice to see something different and that's what we got here. It felt like something you're not going to see elsewhere and that's rather nice to see when British wrestling would go on to become so popular in the coming years.

Here's Bill Apter for a live Apter's Alley. He has a special Lifetime Achievement Award to present, but here is Greg "The Truth" Lambert, dressed like a judge, to interrupt. Apter thinks he looks like Harry Potter but Lambert offers him some praise. That doesn't last long though as Lambert needs to yell at the fans, prompting Apter to tell him to GET TO THE POINT. Lambert talks about how Apter is a has been whose most recent magazine fell apart.

Violence is teased but Lambert thinks he knows someone who deserves that award: FWA Heavyweight Champion Alex Shane (with entourage). The rather tall Shane talks about how much better he is than the fans and knows he'll have five women tonight while the fans are at home with WWE Divas in the Caribbean. Shane is ready to take care of Raven tonight, but Apter cuts him off to bring out the real recipient of the award: Mick Foley!

We pause for a good while to soak in some chants before Foley is presented with the award from Apter. These two know each other rather well, as Apter apparently shot Foley's wedding video and did a Cookie Monster voice to calm down Foley's son. Shane gets in Foley's face and calls him an old washed up piece of censored, which Foley says is true. Foley will be celebrating his 40th birthday soon and he doesn't wrestle anymore, but he has stepped aside so people on this show can steal the show like never before.

That's ok, but Foley will NOT stand for Shane in the middle of a cheap pop, especially right here in Coventry, UK! Foley suggests violence but offers Shane the chance to leave, with Shane actually bailing. After some thank yous from Foley, he gets a nice send off, with Apter wishing him a nice day as the Cookie Monster. Foley leaves, allowing Lambert and Shane to sneak in from behind and hit Apter low. That brings Foley back for the save and to call out some help for Apter. With Apter gone, Foley says you haven't seen the last of him tonight. Sounds ominous.

CM Punk vs. Samoa Joe

Well ok. They're both from Ring of Honor here, which is quite weird to hear. Even stranger: Punk with his blonde hair. Joe is looking downright slim here (even showing signs of abdominal muscles) and Punk's right leg is heavily taped. Feeling out process to start and they fight over wrist control until Joe takes him to the mat. Punk heads outside for a breather as commentary tries to understand the concept of straightedge. Back in and Punk gets hit in the face, which the fans refer to as being "b**** slapped*.

That's good for another trip to the floor but Punk is back in to actually win a test of strength. An exchange of armdrags sets up some kicks to Joe's chest, which just get on his nerves. Joe shows him how to throw some kicks, including a jumping enziguri to drop Punk. Back up again and Punk grabs another headlock takeover, which is reversed into a headscissors. Joe kicks him down again and drops a big knee for two.

A heck of a facewash in the corner puts Punk in even more trouble and he charges into a Rock Bottom to make it even worse. Punk is back up with a snap across the top into a slingshot hilo (that's a new one). Some rapid fire chops into a basement dropkick to the back of the head sets up the chinlock on Joe. That's broken up in a hurry as well so Punk

snaps off a Russian legsweep, only to be sent outside. One heck of a suicide dive rocks Punk and a running boot against the barricade makes it worse, setting up a near fall back inside.

Punk is back with a hammerlock DDT and a Lionsault for two so Joe snaps off a powerslam for the same. The powerbomb into the STF has Punk in more trouble and Joe drops a backsplash for another near fall. Punk snaps off a tornado DDT (which he doesn't swing all the way around, landing on his stomach) and frustration is setting in.

With nothing else working, Punk loads up the Pepsi Plunge (middle rope Pedigree, his old finisher) but Joe isn't feeling that and slips out. A hurricanrana into a HARD clotheslines gives Joe two and they're both down again. It's Punk up first with some kicks and a Shining Wizard for two, but Joe blocks the Pepsi Plunge again. Instead, Punk's leg gets kicked out and it's the MuscleBuster to give Joe the pin at 20:45.

Rating: B. Oh like this wasn't going to be good. These two have awesome chemistry together and I always wanted to see them get to do something in WWE. They had a long match and beat each other up but Punk still can't beat Joe no matter what he does. Awesome match and these two could have a good match against each other in their sleep.

Respect is shown post match.

In the back, Punk says he's banged up but his pride hurts more than anything else. He keeps getting up and tomorrow is another day. Joe can hit him over and over again but Punk is going to keep fighting him until he makes Joe feel like he does right now. One day, Punk will prove that straightedge means he is better than you. Punk got fired up in the end after starting kind of lame.

Doug Williams/James Tighe/Scorpio vs. Mitsuharu Misawa/Tiger Emperor/Yoshinari Ogawa

The latter team is from Pro Wrestling Noah, where Misawa/Ogawa recently lost the Tag Team Titles to (2 Cold) Scorpio/Williams. Believe it or not, Misawa gets by far the biggest pop of the six. The handshakes take a long time until Williams works on Emperor's wrist to start. Tighe comes in to trade arm cranking and armdrags. That leaves us with a standoff until Tighe gets sent to the apron, only to come back in with a missile dropkick. The big dive takes Emperor down again and it's off to Scorpio for a pretty ineffective front facelock. Misawa comes in and you can tell the fans are in a bit of awe.

Scorpio gets driven into the corner and elbowed in the face, setting up a quickly broken chinlock as commentary keeps rifling off everyone's resumes. Ogawa gets the tag and walks into a superkick, allowing a tag back to Williams. The grappling is on with Williams going full British to pull him into a headlock. Ogawa reverses into a headscissors until they roll apart for a standoff. Scorpio and Emperor come back in with Scorpio grabbing a suplex for two. Emperor is right back up with a dropkick to the floor and it's back to Tighe.

That's about it for the good things for the non-Noah guys, as Misawa grabs a camel clutch. Ogawa chops away in the corner and Emperor adds a spinning moonsault for two. Tighe pops up and brings Williams back in for some knee drops, followed by a belly to back suplex. Scorpio gets two off the standing moonsault and adds a powerbomb into the springboard somersault legdrop and another near fall. Ogawa is back up with a dropkick, allowing the tag back to Misawa to clean house.

Williams doesn't seem to mind and gutwrench suplexes Misawa for two. It's already back to Ogawa, who gets knocked off the top and crushed with a top rope knee. Tighe comes back in with a high crossbody for two of his own, only to miss his moonsault. Emperor grabs a quickly broken Black Widow but walks into a Side Effect. Misawa and Ogawa are sent outside, leaving Emperor to get hit with a bunch of running shots in

the corner.

Scorpio's moonsault and Williams' top rope knee drop gets two more, with Misawa coming in for the save. Williams hits a sitout powerbomb for two on Emperor, who is right back up with a handspring elbow. That doesn't go so well either as Williams reverses into a German suplex (that was sweet) for two more. It's back to Misawa and Ogawa to stagger Williams though and Ogawa grabs a top rope hurricanrana for another near fall. A 619 gives Emperor two more but Williams snaps off Rolling Chaos Theory to FINALLY put Emperor away at 23:45.

Rating: B+. This was long and showcased everyone involved, which is exactly what they were shooting for. It's always great to see a real legend like Misawa and Scorpio is an all time favorite as well. The one setback here was the ring size, as that tiny thing just does not work for a six man tag. Still though, awesome match with everyone getting to show off a bit in the good amount of time that they had.

A lot of respect is shown post match.

In the back, Scorpio, Doug Williams and James Tighe are all proud of their win over legends like that. Williams and Scorpio are ready for all challengers.

Raven vs. Alex Shane

Raven's Rules, with Shane's goons barred from ringside and Shane's FWA Title not on the line. Commentary lists off Raven's accomplishments, capped off by saying "he even had a good match with the Big Show". Before the bell, Raven says he hasn't been in England long but he likes what he has seen. He isn't happy with what Shane did to Bill Apter tonight though and it is time for some revenge. Shane jumps him to start and sends Raven into the corner, including a ram into the exposed buckle.

Raven is already busted open so he tries the Raven Effect,

sending Shane bailing to the floor. That's fine with Raven, who grabs a chair and knocks Shane right back outside. They fight into the crowd with Raven carrying him near the fans, only to be sent into the hockey boards. Now it's time to head up into the balcony, with Shane stopping to do Raven's pose. That's never a good idea, and Raven hits him low for a toss down to the floor.

Shane mostly lands feet first so he survives, with Raven having to climb down to allow him to recover. They get to the entrance stage where the Raven Effect and a powerbomb are both broken up, meaning it's time to get back into the ring. Shane hits him low but gets drop toehold face first into the open chair. The corner clothesline into the running bulldog gets two on Shane. Raven gets sent into the chair as well though and it's a cutter to put him back down.

Another drop toehold sends Shane into the chair (it's not a good sign to use the same spot three times in about a minute and a half) but the referee takes the chair away from Raven. That doesn't make a ton of sense, but Shane kicks the chair into the referee's face. Cue Shane's goons to go after Raven, meaning Mick Foley comes back for the save. House is cleaned and Foley grabs the Mandible Claw on Shane. That's enough to set up the Raven Effect, with Foley grabbing the referee's hand for the count at 15:57. I guess that counts.

Rating: B-. This was pretty good as Raven has probably done something like this about a hundred times. It helps that it is also Raven was freshly released from WWE and not as banged up as he would come to be later. It was a fine match that probably gave the fans a bigger thrill than came through on the broadcast.

Post match Foley says Shane learned never to mess with him and his friends, and Raven learned never to dare Foley to do something. Foley then does a funny Diamond Dallas Page impression...and Raven does a puppet show with the socks that

fans have thrown into the ring. Hold on though as Raven wants ONE MORE cheap pop, which has Foley talking about a woman's rather large chest. Foley: "And I love looking at them, RIGHT HERE, in Coventry, England!"

NWA TNA X-Division Champion Christopher Daniels has been in wrestling for a long time and he finally gained the glory he had been craving. AJ Styles is not taking that away from him tonight. I had forgotten how lame the original X-Division Title design really was.

NWA TNA X-Division Title: AJ Styles vs. Christopher Daniels

Daniels is defending and yeah I think this is going to work. They go face to face to start but Daniels punches him down early. AJ is back up but misses the dropkick half of the drop down into the dropkick. Back up and Styles is fine enough to hit a slam into the jumping knee drop. There's a surprisingly delayed vertical suplex for two on Daniels as the fans are split down the line. AJ goes up but dives into an exploder suplex. Daniels drops an elbow and hits his own delayed brainbuster for two.

AJ is fine enough to nip up for a hurricanrana, only to charge into a hot shot. The Arabian moonsault sets up what would become known as the Bank Statement. They head outside with Daniels winning a strike off and grabbing a reverse cravate back inside. AJ is right back with a backbreaker into a gutbuster, only to get pulled into a Koji Clutch. That's good for two arm drops but AJ makes it over to the rope for the break.

Back up and AJ blasts him with a discus lariat to put both of them down. A top rope elbow to the face sends Daniels outside and AJ is right there with the running flip dive. They head back inside with Daniels scoring with an STO to put both of them down. AJ loads up the moonsault into the reverse DDT, gets blocked, and then does it again for two. Daniels is right

back up with the release Rock Bottom into the BME for his own near fall.

The Pele drops Daniels though and they're both down for a bit. They go to a pinfall reversal sequence until Daniels has to go to the rope to break up the Styles Clash. Daniels scores with the Angel's Wings for two and he can't believe the kickout. Last Rites is countered and AJ pulls him up into the Styles Clash for a very near fall. Daniels is right back up and grabs Last Rites to retain the title at 20:38. Ignore AJ's foot being underneath the rope.

Rating: B+. This is another good example of "well what else were you expecting". These two were the hottest things in the world at this point not named John Cena and Batista and it would only get better when Samoa Joe joined the fray. It was another awesome match between two people who had a lot of awesome matches against each other. Hence why they were in a main event on a pretty big show.

After waiting a bit, they shake hands to end the show.

Overall Rating: A-. Yeah this was awesome and that's not exactly surprising given who was on the show. You had basically an indy all star show with some local stars thrown in. The fact that the locals were all quite good as well made it even better. This was a heck of a show and absolutely worth checking out. We were in a great time in wrestling at this point and you could see both the present and the future right here. Definitely check this out if you get the chance.

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ECW on TNN – December 10, 1999: We're Running Around In Circles

ECW on TNN

Date: December 10, 1999

Location: The Tabernacle, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 2,000

Commentators: Joey Styles, Joel Gertner

We're slowly getting to Guilty As Charged but it's still far enough away that we don't need to talk about it yet. The main story here is still Raven vs. Dreamer because it worked in 95 so of course it'll work now right? These shows are all over the place most of the time so there's no way to know what's coming here. Let's get to it.

We open with Van Dam in the ring dedicating his title defense tonight to Sabu who is here but injured apparently. Sabu doesn't like it and has to be held back. Van Dam calls Sabu the Sheik's (Sabu's legit uncle and trainer) second favorite wrestler.

We cut to the back where Raven is ramming his head against the wall but Dreamer comes in to stop him, saying they're proud of Raven.

Theme song.

Joey and Joel are in the ring and after our opening limerick, we throw it to a recap of last week with Steve Corino going to a Limp Bizkit concert. Back in the arena we have Corino and Jack Victory in the ring. Corino bashes hardcore wrestling and hardcore music but praises the Backstreet Boys, N'Sync and Britney Spears. Corino goes on a rant about how bad music is and then complains about Dusty Rhodes.....who happens to be in the crowd.

Corino rants about how everyone here is drunk and Dusty killed WCW. Dusty comes to the ring with a smile on his face and gets in Corino's face. Corino calls himself the future of pro wrestling and says he never respected Dusty. Dusty elbows Steve and Victory in the head and drops the big elbow on Corino.

After some ads, Dusty is in the ring still. He takes a bow and that's it.

We recap the Hardcore TV taping from earlier.

The Impact Players say they can both beat Sandman and don't need any help.

Spike Dudley vs. Uganda

Acid Drop pins Uganda in almost less time than it takes me to type this sentence. Uganda isn't Kamala in case you're one of the many who think this. Basically he's a Kamala imitator, as in he looks identical to him, wears the same attire, has the same paint, and wrestles just like him. Different guys though.

RVD (stoned even more than he usually is) says he was the star of his team with Sabu.

ECW World Title: Mike Awesome vs. 2 Cold Scorpio

Awesome (the champion) runs Scorpio over to start and Scorpio isn't sure what to do. Scorpio knocks him to the ramp (the arena is strange as the aisle to the ring is on the level with the ring but the ring itself is in a kind of a pit) and hits a flip dive to take over, but back in the ring Awesome suplexes him to the floor. Scorpio is launched into the crowd and the champion dives over the barricade with a clothesline.

A chair to the back puts Scorpio back at ringside and a charge into the chair into Scorpio gets two back in the ring. Another tackle puts 2 Cold down and a clothesline knocks him inside out. This has been a total squash so far. Scorpio grabs a quick cradle for two and "hits" a superkick to set up a big top rope splash for two. A moonsault gets the same but Scorpio walks into a modified powerbomb for two.

Awesome hits a sweet release German suplex and it's table time. It is ECW after all. Jazz, Scorpio's manager, gets in and Scorpio has to save her from being powerbombed through the table. There's another superkick to Awesome but Scorpio takes too much time to go up top and a HUGE powerbomb through the table kills 2 Cold dead to keep the title on Awesome.

Rating: C. I like both of these guys so I was a fan of this match before it started. This was when Scorpio was a shell of his old self when he was flying all over the place back in WCW in the early 90s. Good stuff here though as Awesome was moving around like Scorpio used to despite being bigger and taller than Scorpio ever was. Fun stuff.

Justin Credible is here to complain about Sandman having a Singapore Cane of his own. Apparently Jason, the Impact Players' lackey, has stolen Sandman's Cane.

Justin Credible vs. The Sandman

Sandman has what looks like a broom. After a break Sandman is going after the cane but gets caught by a baseball slide to send him into the barricade. Justin rams him into a chair in the ring but Sandman gets a

shot in of his own and heads to the floor where he climbs a magically appearing ladder. He climbs the ladder and then climbs back down, making this another pointless ECW sequence.

Justin puts the ladder in the corner between the ropes and due to wrestling law #1, is sent into it himself, getting a two for Sandy. The ladder is placed on the top rope and Justin is launched into it for two. A slingshot legdrop onto the ladder onto Justin gets two again and it's time for another table. The table is set in the corner but Credible grabs a sleeper out of nowhere. Speaking of out of nowhere, here's Rhyno to Gore both guys through the table. The White Russian Leg Sweep would seem to get the pin but Lance Storm comes in and hits a missile dropkick on Sandman to drive a chair into his face and give Justin the pin.

Rating: D+. This is a great contrast of two kinds of matches. The world title match had a coherent story to it (mostly) and both guys were hitting almost everything they used. This was a lot messier with the weapons being the focus of the match instead of the wrestlers in the ring, which is almost never a good thing.

Post match Dreamer runs out to beat up Storm and we get a Dawn Marie vs. Francine catfight.

After a recap of the show, Dreamer yells at Raven who says he wasn't going to help Sandman. Dreamer calls him Scotty to prove how serious he is.

Overall Rating: D+. This just wasn't that good. Corino finally has an actual wrestler to feud with and the world title match wasn't bad, but the focus is still completely on the tag title feud and I only have kind of an idea what's going on. The Impact Players want the titles and Candido (not here tonight) and Rhyno want the titles and Dreamer hates Raven and Sandman is in there somewhere and Raven hates Sandman. Now one question: when are the belts going to be defended? That's the main (of multiple) problems with this: there's no match anywhere in sight so far.

Not a horrible show but still messy.

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WCW Saturday Night – August 21, 1993: 40 Minutes Of Sting Vs. Flair. I'm Sold.

WCW Saturday Night

Date: August 21, 1993

Location: Center Stage Theater, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 750

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Jesse Ventura

This was my first request via Twitter. I don't usually do Saturday Night but the few I've done have gone pretty well. This is less than a month before Fall Brawl 93 so we have two world titles at the moment. Both champions are in action tonight. One has a squash, and the other has a 40 minute match against the guy who is probably his greatest rival. Let's get to it.

Also this is three days after Clash of the Champions 24 but it was taped earlier, so we likely won't hear much about the Clash.

Sid Vicious/Harlem Heat vs. Ron Simmons/2 Cold Scorpio/Marcus Bagwell

Harlem Heat has been around like two weeks at this point. They're Kane (Stevie) and Kole (Booker) at this point and all three heels are managed by Colonel Parker. This is just after the Heat were changed from prisoners in shackles won by Parker in a card game to street thugs. How did this company not get sued into the ground? Apparently the commentary was recorded after after the Clash or the results were given to Tony and

Jesse beforehand.

Booker and Scorpio start things off with Scorpio countering a kick into a fast rollup for two. Off to Bagwell and the arm work begins. The ring is divided into sections, almost like a bunch of gym mats hooked together. Stevie comes in but Bagwell suplexes him over anyway. That's more power than I was expecting out of him. Bagwell gets caught in a slam but an elbow misses. While the match isn't that great, the commentary does offer a good line. Jesse: "Why do they call it an Irish Whip? Did someone from Ireland invent it?" Tony: "Uh yeah Jess."

Off to Simmons to make it power vs. power. Stevie takes him down with a clothesline but Simmons comes back with a botched spinebuster, making it look more like a shove. The heels bail to the floor and things stop for a bit. Sid comes in and wants a test of strength with Simmons, but as any good heel would do, he kicks Simmons in the ribs instead of going through with the test. Ron is cool with that and it's time to go after the arm. Considering it's 1993 and this is Sid vs. Scorpio, 2 Cold is dropped face first onto the buckle pretty quickly and the bad guys take over.

The Heat double team Scorpio on the floor with a clothesline and it's back in to Sid for a one armed chokeslam, which Tony says is like a powerbomb. Off to Booker who yells at the camera a lot and tags Stevie in again. We head to the floor and Scorpio is dropped throat first on the barricade, making him sound like a cat coughing up a hairball. Back in and Scorpio avoids an elbow drop and it's off to Bagwell. Everything breaks down and Sid powerbombs Bagwell to death for the pin.

Rating: C. Sid was on his way to the world title at this point and it's pretty easy to see why. He was the perfect kind of monster giant and him vs. Vader could have been an awesome clash of the titans. Then he went insane stabbed Arn Anderson so we got Flair in the main event, which worked out fine. Harlem Heat would wind up being the most successful out of all these guys though, which shows you never know what you'll get out of wrestlers.

The announcers talk about the Amateur Challenge, which is something kind of sort of like Tough Enough without an actual contest.

The Equalizer vs. Ron Preston

Equalizer is a big guy who would become "famous" as Dave "Evad" Sullivan. Here he's just a big bad guy who didn't really equalize anything. We have a two minute match here and about a minute of that is spent in a neck crank. Full nelson ends Preston.

We go to the Fall Brawl Control Center, which is the old way they used to promote the PPVs. Back then, they would actually take time to hype their matches and tell us why we should buy them, as opposed to today when they have both guys beat the other and then hope that gives us enough reason to want to see them fight a third time. We get some clips of past WarGames matches after the host of the segment says the wrong year for when the match started (it was 87, not 88).

Charlie Norris vs. Fury

So if you've read my stuff before from this time period, you know that I don't really like WCW in 1993. Two of the big reasons for that are Equalizer and Charlie Norris. They were both big, strong, and absolutely AWFUL. Norris is an Indian and that's about it. Norris hooks on an armbar as the match is ignored for the sake of talking about the PPV. In this case, I'm totally fine with that.

Fury, who is apparently part of a tag team called The Wrecking Crew, hits a clothesline and shoulder block before hooking a chinlock. Norris grabs a sunset flip for two before getting suplexed for the same. Back to the chinlock but Norris gets up, goes on the warpath, and hits a big chop for the pin. Fury by the way is Marcus Laurinitis, brother of John and Road Warrior Animal. He never did much of note.

Rating: D-. This was Norris' Saturday Night debut, which basically would be his national debut. If that's the case, why in the world would you have him get beaten down this long, and why would you have this match go nearly seven minutes? Like I said, 1993 in WCW was horrible and it would only go downhill from here for Norris.

We see Cactus Jack's return promo from the Clash, which is him saying he's back and he wants Vader. He talks about the look in the eyes of

wrestlers when they face Vader. They used to look at him like that and he wants to earn that look again. This is another classic Jack promo.

Mike Thor vs. Johnny B. Badd

Badd has been injured recently and is wearing a mask as a result, but tonight he's removing it. Badd is still at the point where his character is gay but we can't say he's gay because it's 1993 and you can't do that. Johnny knocks him into the corner to start and then down onto the mat with a headlock. Off to the arm as Jesse tries to figure out what the B. in Badd's name stands for. After some near falls, Badd takes the mask off and reveals that he's fine before hitting the big left hand (the Tutti Fruti) for the pin.

Rating: D. This was about four minutes of armdrags and armbars. Badd would get WAY better around 1995 but he was still developing at this point. To be fair, he was a lot better than he was a year before this, as he now had an actual offensive move set outside of the punch. Also, Mike Thor is a good name for an indy guy.

Badd insists he's still pretty.

Ice Train vs. Rage

This is Train's debut and he has a guy named Thunderbolt Patterson with him. Fury is the tag partner of Rage from earlier. Nothing match that Train wins in less than a minute with a powerslam. I always liked Ice Train.

Patterson and Train say Train wants to learn and improve.

Big Van Vader vs. JD Stryker

Chokeslam, punch, powerbomb, pin.

Vader, the WCW Champion, and his manager Harley Race, say they don't care about what happens in the main event. Race wants to talk about WarGames, where Vader is going to destroy everything. A mystery partner is mentioned, who was already revealed to be the Shockmaster.

So we have almost fifty minutes to go in the show and this is all we have left.

NWA World Title: Sting vs. Ric Flair

I know why this was requested. This is one of those matches that is nearly impossible to screw up and you start at a higher rating than the usual. It's not about will the match be good but how good will it be. A quick shoulder takes Flair down as Tony talks about the history of these two, without mentioning the original Clash for some reason. Sting wins a battle of a hammerlock as Tony messes up the date of the original Clash (he says April, it was March 27).

Sting controls with a wristlock on the champion (Flair has the belt coming in) and we're still in the feeling out process here. Flair tries a Figure Four out of nowhere but Sting escapes before he gets close. Things speed up but they botch the gorilla press spot. Sting doesn't panic though and throws on a chinlock, which is probably the best thing they could do in that situation. Now the press slam hits and Flair goes to the apron.

A suplex back in puts Flair down and there's a Boston Crab. Flair taps but it doesn't mean anything yet so he gets a rope and bails to the floor instead. Back in and Flair goes to the eyes before chopping away in the corner. Say it with me: those don't work on Sting. A half crab works on Flair's back again, followed by another gorilla press for two. Sting hooks an abdominal stretch and the champ is in trouble.

As is his custom, Sting misses the Splash in the corner and Sting gets his second wind. They head to the floor but Flair tries a piledriver and gets backdropped instead. Flair begs off in a corner and suckers Sting in like only Flair can do. Sting gets thrown to the floor but it just ticks him off. Flair fires off the chops but, say it with me, THOSE DON'T WORK ON STING.

The champ begs off again and walks to the floor for a breather. Back in and Tony calls Sting Steamboat before Sting misses a splash on the top rope, clotheslining himself. There's the knee drop to the head from Flair and the champ has his third wind. I don't know what it is about them but

Flair does some of the best snapmares ever. Flair rolls up Sting about six times in a row, all for two.

Ric is in full heel mode despite being a face coming in. A cover with the foot on the ropes gets one and a suplex gets about twelve. We take a break and come back to Sting making a comeback. During the break Sting rolled through a top rope cross body by Flair for two. Both guys are down for a bit before Flair hits a belly to back suplex for another few two counts. He must have had seventeen near falls so far.

Flair goes up top....and the forearm off the top actually connects. You never know what you'll find in these old shows. A sunset flip gets two for Sting as does a backslide. There's the Flair Flip in the corner and down to the floor he goes. Flair pokes him in the eye and goes up, only to get slammed down. It wouldn't be a Flair match if that spot hadn't happened. A clothesline gets a few two counts for Sting and he clotheslines Flair to the floor.

They head to the outside and Flair chops him against the railing. Even on the floor, THOSE DON'T WORK ON STING. Back in and Flair backs off again and Sting escapes a suplex into an O'Connor Roll for two. Flair pokes him in the eye and there's the Figure Four (complete with a Whomp There It Is chant from the audience for no apparent reason). That finally gets turned over but Flair gets the rope.

Sid comes out to the commentary desk for no apparent reason as Sting gets a small package for two but the knee is in big trouble. Sid says this should be his title match and talks about bees. Flair chops him again because at times he really isn't that bright. The gorilla press hits and a bulldog puts Flair down. Another small package gets two for Sting as does an atomic drop.

Probably the fourth gorilla press puts Flair down but the splash hits knees. Sting comes back with a clothesline and puts the Figure Four on Flair. Flair gets the rope and they trade rollups for two again. For the fifth time the chops don't work on Sting so he superplexes Flair down. Eventually that gets two and gorilla press #5 puts Flair down again. Flair cross bodies Sting to the floor and both guys are down. Sid sneaks

in and sends Sting into the barricade to give Flair the win by countout.

Rating: B+. This is one of those matches that it's pretty much impossible to get wrong. They were getting pretty repetitive at the end though, with way too many rollups and gorilla presses. The first half of the match was great though with Flair trying to get Sting to use energy and Sting working on the back to set up the Scorpion. The ending kind of sucks but they couldn't put either guy over clean here so I can certainly live with that.

Flair freaks out on Sid but Harlem Heat runs in before there can be another fight. Sting saves Flair and they knock Sid to the floor.

Post break Flair and Sting say that sucked but they'll get Sid and the Heat later.

Overall Rating: B. It's a two hour show and 1/3 of that is Sting vs. Flair for forty minutes. The rest of the show was standard 1993 WCW nonsense that no one wanted to see, but for free TV on their flagship show, this was pretty awesome stuff at the end. I don't have anything else to say: it's Flair vs. Sting for forty minutes. That sums everything up.

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