

Forbidden Door: Why Is It Forbidden?

Forbidden Door

Date: June 26, 2022

Location: United Center, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Excalibur, Taz, Kevin Kelly

It's a special show as we have a host of international guest stars from New Japan coming in for a bunch of big time matches. The main event is for the Interim AEW World Title as CM Punk being stripped of the title was off the table. Other than that, we have a series of title matches which should make for a great show. Let's get to it.

Buy-In: Hirooki Goto/Yoshi-Hashi vs. QT Marshall/Aaron Solo

Solo and Hashi start things off with Hashi working on a headlock. A running shoulder drops Solo again so it's off to Marshall vs. Goto, with the latter knocking Marshall around without much trouble. Solo comes back in and cheap shots Hashi though, allowing Marshall to get in a cheap shot on Goto. That lasts all of a few seconds before the big beatdown is on to put Solo back in trouble. Everything breaks down and Marshall's cartwheel tumbling dive drops Goto and Hashi.

Back in and Goto shrugs off the beating and hits a suplex, followed by a running clothesline to Marshall. The hot tag brings in Hashi to clean house, including a Blockbuster for two on Marshall. Everything breaks down and Marshall grabs a Diamond Cutter for two, with Goto having to make the save. A 450 misses for Marshall and Solo can't hit his top rope double stomp, allowing the tag back to Goto. The superkick into the fireman's carry backbreaker sets up a GTR/powerbomb combination to finish Solo at 8:53.

Rating: C+. It was energetic but this went a bit longer than

it needed to. Marshall is a good pesky heel but it is a little hard to buy the Factory hanging in there this long. Goto is still a big enough star though and the right guys won in the end. For a warmup match, this did about all you could need it to pull off.

Buy-In: Lance Archer vs. Nick Comoroto

Archer rocks him to start but Comoroto picks him up for a gorilla press. That doesn't work as Archer slips out and hits a big boot, only to be knocked outside and into the barricade. Comoroto's collection of forearms just wake Archer up so Comoroto punches him back down. Back up and they slug it out until Archer takes over and hits the rope walk moonsault for two. Comoroto hits a powerslam for two of his own but Archer catches him on top. The Blackout finishes Comoroto at 6:05.

Rating: C-. I'm not sure I get the idea of commentary talking about Archer being in a big role at the G1 Climax tournament and then having him go 50/50 with a low level guy like Comoroto. This didn't really make me think much of Archer and I'm not sure what the benefits was of adding this in. They didn't pull an upset, but this didn't do much for anyone.

Buy-In: Swerve Strickland/Keith Lee vs. El Desperado/Yoshinobu Kanemaru

The fans sing to Lee as he starts with Kanemaru, who doesn't like said singing. Lee cranks on the arm and sends him into the corner, meaning it's off to Desperado vs. Swerve. A drop down from Swerve is countered into a quickly broken Brock Lock and Desperado is sent outside. That's fine with Desperado, who grabs the hold again on the floor.

Back in and Lee comes in again, with Swerve accidentally kicking him in the knee. The leg is cranked back and it's a DDT for two on Lee. Desperado comes back in for more stomping but Lee kicks him away and brings Swerve back in. A brainbuster gets two on Desperado but he trades running elbows

with Swerve. Lee tries to come back in, only to have Desperado kick the rope to keep him on the floor.

Swerve wins a strike off and hits a backbreaker, setting up the rolling Downward Spiral. Lee comes back in and, along with Swerve, gets taken down into stereo leglocks. With those broken up, Kanemaru loads up his whiskey and spits it in Lee's face. The ensuing rollup gets two but Swerve is back up with a double stomp to Kanemaru. The Big Bang Catastrophe finishes for Lee at 12:03.

Rating: C+. Pretty nice match here, though I could go for Lee and Swerve either splitting up or being a team rather than teasing it for months on end. That is something AEW tends to do far too often and I hope they don't try it again here. They work well together, but the will they/won't they stuff is kind of played out.

Post match Team Taz pops up in a sky box to make basketball references and call Lee a broke Phillip Banks. The challenge seems to be thrown out.

Buy-In: DKC/Kevin Knight/Alex Coughlin/Yuya Uemura vs. Max Caster/Gunn Club

After the Acclaimed's entrance, here is Danhausen with a customized entrance and theme song for the Gunn Club. That sends Austin and Colten chasing after him, leaving Billy and Caster to get beaten up. We settle down to Coughlin cleaning house and Caster getting double teamed to put him in trouble. Billy gets suckered in but Caster fights out of the corner anyway, only to get knocked back down. DKC drops a chop for two but Caster fights out of the corner (again) and hands it off to Billy to clean house. The Fameasser sets up the Mic Drop for the fast pin on DKC at 5:35. Austin and Colten were never even at ringside.

Rating: C. Kind of a weird match here as while the New Japan guys are mostly Young Lions, would it be that big of a stretch

for them to give the Gunn Club some trouble? Turning it into a handicap match with Gunn and Caster winning doesn't exactly make the New Japan guys look great, especially with it being so short. This is one of the matches that could have been dropped without missing much.

The opening video looks at the companies colliding.

No Jim Ross for the show, which might be for the best.

Eddie Kingston/Shota Umino/Wheeler Yuta vs. Chris Jericho/Sammy Guevara/Minoru Suzuki

The winning team gets an advantage in Blood & Guts on Wednesday (which has nothing to do with Suzuki and Umino). Yuta wastes no time in rolling Jericho with some German suplexes and the Crossface goes on. Everything breaks down for a bit and it's Guevara getting in some shots to Umino to take over. That doesn't last long as Kingston comes in to face Jericho, who hands it back to Suzuki.

Kingston takes the straps straight down and the fight is on, with Kingston's chops having little effect. Suzuki drops him with a single forearm so it's back to Jericho. That's fine with Kingston, who chops away in the corner and gets in a shot on Guevara for a bonus. Suzuki armbars Kingston over the arm to put him back in trouble, setting up the penalty kick for two. Everything breaks down and the triple submissions have Kingston and company in trouble again.

With that out of the way, Kingston suplexes Sammy out of the air and sweeps the leg out, allowing the tag off to Umino to clean house. Umino sends Jericho outside for a flip dive but Sammy hits a top rope shooting star onto the floor. Kingston adds a dive but Suzuki loads up his own...and of course he isn't doing that.

Back in and Yuta gets to come in and strike away, setting up a cradle for two on Guevara. Kingston's backdrop driver sets up

the Stretch Plum until Suzuki breaks it up. The spinning backfist drops Suzuki but Jericho German suplexes Kingston. We hit the parade of secondary finishers until everyone is down. The Codebreaker drops Umino but he catches Jericho on top with a super powerslam.

Suzuki makes the save and Guevara hits a GTH on Yuta on the floor. Jericho's Lionsault is broken up by Kingston so Umino can get two but Tay Conti gets in a baseball bat shot to Umino. The Judas Effect misses though and a tornado DDT into a brainbuster gives Umino two. Jericho has to be saved from the Walls and Suzuki piledrives Kingston. The Judas Effect finishes Umino at 18:45.

Rating: B. This got going rather well and the action was very good, though it did run a few minutes longer than it needed to. Umino being in there all but guaranteed he was taking the fall but he did showcase himself here. Heck of an opener and it got the needed goal so there isn't much to complain about with this one.

We recap the Tag Team Title match, with the United Empire's IWGP Tag Team Titles and FTR's Ring Of Honor Tag Team Titles on the line. They all want to win for the gold and honor.

Ring Of Honor Tag Team Titles/IWGP Tag Team Titles: FTR vs. United Empire vs. Roppongi Vice

That would be Cash Wheeler/Dax Harwood vs. Great O'Khan/Jeff Cobb vs. Trent Barretta/Rocky Romero, Vice is the only challengers and it's Harwood headlocking Trent to start. That's reversed into a headscissors and we get an early standoff. Cobb comes in and shrugs off Harwood's chop so Romero tags himself in, much to Cobb's annoyance. Harwood fights back but seems to have hurt his shoulder and drops to the floor after handing it off to Wheeler.

The Forever Clotheslines have Wheeler in trouble and Harwood is taken to the back. O'Khan sits on Wheeler's head in the

corner and Cobb adds a swinging suplex to send him into the corner. Wheeler fights out and tries a tag but realizes Harwood isn't there. Instead he goes with Trent to clean house, but Cobb blocks a tornado DDT. Everything breaks down and the fight heads to the floor, with Trent hitting a running knee off the apron to drop Cobb.

We settle back down to Wheeler chopping his way out of trouble against the Empire. That doesn't last long as O'Khan chops him down...and Harwood is back, with his shoulder taped up. Harwood comes back in to clean house, including some rolling German suplexes to Cobb. Trent helps Harwood with a double superplex but Wheeler tags himself in to add a top rope splash for two. O'Khan gets to take over on Wheeler in the corner, only to have Romero help on a spike piledriver.

Cobb is back up with a powerbomb to Romero and we hit a parade of knockdowns. The claw slam into a German suplex from Cobb gets two on Trent, who kicks out without any help. FTR gets taken out on the floor and it's a spike Strong Zero for two on Cobb, with Wheeler diving in for the save. Romero and Harwood trade rollups until an enziguri staggers Harwood. Not that it matters as the Big Rig gives FTR the pin and the IWGP Tag Team Titles at 16:16.

Rating: B. There was some serious relief when Harwood came back out, even if he still might be injured. FTR winning was the right call as it sets up the big winner take all match against the Young Bucks at All Out. The action was there throughout the match and it was a lot of fun, which shouldn't be a surprise. I don't know how any team can be better than FTR right now, because dang they are on the roll of a lifetime.

Juice Robinson and Jay White don't think much of their competition and promise to win.

All-Atlantic Title: Pac vs. Miro vs. Malakai Black vs. Clark

Connors

For the inaugural title. It's a brawl to start (as you might have expected) with Connors knocking Miro to the floor (which you might not have expected), leaving Black to knock Miro into the corner. Miro comes back in to knock Black down, only to have Black come back with the springboard moonsault. Connors comes back in for a kneebar but Miro is back in to clean house. Miro runs Connors down and slams him for two before Black and Miro stomp Pac down.

Black doesn't like anyone else getting to stomp Pac though and yells at Miro, setting up the required forearm off. With Black knocked to the floor, Pac superkicks Miro and tosses Connors outside as well. There's the big flip dive to Black, followed by a shotgun dropkick to Miro. Connors comes back in with the German suplexes until Miro knocks him down. Black loads up a table against the barricade and gets in a fight with Miro on the floor.

Connors spears Miro through the table and powerbombs Pac for two back inside, as the fans get behind Connors for a change. Miro is back up though and Game Overs Pac until Black uses the mist to break it up. That means a Black Mass to Miro and a cross armbreaker on Connors, but Pac's 450 makes the save. The Brutalizer to Connors gives Pac the tap and the title at 15:04.

Rating: B-. This took some time to get going but the ending worked well, with Pac coming in for the save and winning the title. It's nice to see Pac winning a title for a change, as he hasn't done much in the way of championships in his career. Connors showcased himself too and has a nice future, but he was in over his head here. Black and Miro need a win, but that mist could be the start of something between them.

Dudes With Attitude vs. Bullet Club

That would be Sting/Darby Allin/Shingo Takagi vs. the Young

Bucks/El Phantasma. And there's no Sting, though Hikuleo is here with the Club. Hold on again though as we look at the catwalk above the arena...and then Sting dives off the set to take the Club down. We get inside with the bell ringing and Takagi taking over on Phantasma as commentary dubs the Dudes Los Stingobernables.

Allin comes in and gets caught in the wrong corner, allowing Phantasma to flip around a lot and hit his back rake. Then Matt flips around, dances, flips some more, and then rakes Allin's back too. Phantasma stands on Allin's crotch in the corner and Hikuleo pulls Sting off the apron for a whip into the barricade. Allin manages to knock Phantasma away though and the hot tag brings in Takagi.

A snap suplex gets two on Nick Jackson and a pop up Death Valley Driver drops him again. Now it's back to Sting for the well received house cleaning but he has to no sell Phantasma's nipple twist. Hikuleo's distraction lets Phantasma punch Sting low though and it's a Superkick Party. Sting shrugs off the superkicks, clotheslines them both down, and then goes down. The tag brings Allin back in but the Coffin Drop hits Matt's raised knees.

Everything breaks down and it's More Bang For Your Buck on Allin, setting up Phantasma's rope walk moonsault onto everyone on the floor. Back in and Sting teases a dive, which is cut off by a triple superkick. The BTE Trigger misses though and Sting hits a double Scorpion Death Drop. Now Sting gets to twist Phantasma's nipples (Tony: "This is so much fun! Unless someone is grabbing your nipples!"), allowing Takagi to blast Phantasma with a clothesline for two. Last Of The Dragon finishes Phantasma at 12:58.

Rating: B-. This was a lot of fun and the lighthearted match that the show needed after three more serious fights to open the show. Sting and Tony were both having fun here and it wound up being good stuff, with Phantasma getting to be the

showcase star. Takagi continues to be great at just about anything so another nice job with this one.

Chris Jericho and his goons jump Shot Umino, setting up the fireball.

AEW Women's Title: Toni Storm vs. Thunder Rosa

Storm is challenging, making me wonder why she didn't just win the Owen Hart tournament. Feeling out process to start with Rosa taking her to the mat for a quickly broken headscissors. Back up and Rosa cranks on the wrist before getting two off a crucifix. Storm takes her down for a double arm crank but gets small packaged for two more. It's time for the slug out with screaming until Rosa knocks her against the ropes.

The running dropkick sets up the northern lights suplex for two more, followed by a double stomp to Storm. They head outside with Rosa snapping off another northern lights but the Death Valley Driver on the apron is blocked. Storm hits a DDT onto the floor, followed by the hip attack and another tornado DDT for two. Rosa is right back with a nasty Fire Thunder Driver for two, followed by the Final Reckoning to retain the title at 10:39.

Rating: C. This got better near the end, but it wasn't exactly a great match at its best. The sudden ending didn't help things, and it was another loss for Storm, who can't take many more of them. They also felt rather rushed here and Rosa continues to not exactly blow anyone away with her defenses. Not a great match here, but they didn't embarrass themselves or anything close to it.

We recap the IWGP United States Title, as champion Will Ospreay is a major star but might have trouble with Orange Cassidy.

Now JR comes out to join commentary.

IWGP United States Title: Will Ospreay vs. Orange Cassidy

Ospreay, with Aussie Open, is defending but doesn't have the title with him. Cassidy starts fast with the hands in pockets running shoulders so you know he's serious. Ospreay is knocked outside for a breather so Cassidy can mock Ospreay's pose (in slow motion of course). You know that's too far for Ospreay, who runs around the ring and takes Cassidy down, followed by a hard whip into the corner back inside.

That lets Ospreay get in some situps before we hit the abdominal stretch. Ospreay makes sure to put his hand in Cassidy's pocket so Cassidy hiptosses his way to freedom. There's the high crossbody but the tornado DDT is blocked. A top rope forearm to the head drops Cassidy but he collapses before the Hidden Blade can launch. Some Kawada Kicks put Cassidy down again, until he powers up to his feet.

Cassidy, with his hand in his pocket, hits his own Kawada kicks but has to avoid the Oscutter. The Stundog Millionaire into the Michinoku Driver gets two and the tornado DDT sends Ospreay to the floor. A springboard flip dive takes out Aussie Open, setting up the top rope DDT for two. Cassidy catches him on top and sends Ospreay face first into the camera (for a wacky visual), allowing Cassidy to...drop down and avoid a double moonsault.

Ospreay is fine enough to try a standing shooting star press but Cassidy gets the knees up, setting up the Beach Break for a close two. The Orange Punch is countered into the Oscutter for two but the Hidden Blade misses. Stormbreaker is countered into a hurricanrana for two more so Ospreay blasts him with a clothesline. The Hidden Blade gets two more, setting up Stormbreaker to retain the title at 16:10.

Rating: B. They did what they should have done here with Cassidy by not having him do a bunch of stupid stuff. Instead, this was the serious match that they should have had and it

worked well as a result. I didn't quite buy the near falls, but I had a good time with the match and it was probably the best Cassidy has looked in a singles match to date.

Post match the big beatdown is on but Katsuyori Shibata comes in for the save and Ospreay has a new challenger. Shibata shows quite a bit of respect to Cassidy.

Zack Sabre Jr. wanted Bryan Danielson but gets a mystery opponent, which doesn't matter to him.

Zack Sabre Jr. vs. ???

It's Claudio Castagnoli, better known as Cesaro, who is now part of the Blackpool Combat Club and will be in Blood & Guts on Dynamite. Claudio starts fast with the running European uppercut and the Neutralizer gets a very fast two. Sabre goes straight to the floor for a needed breather to cool things off a bit, earning himself a whip into the barricade. Back in and Claudio hits a suplex but Sabre gets in a Disarm-Her to slow things down.

That just ticks Claudio off though and he forearm the heck out of Sabre. A rake of the eyes breaks up the spinning torture rack and Sabre is back on the arm. That's broken up with the deadlift but they crash over the top and out to the floor. Claudio doesn't let go though and walks up the steps to powerbomb Sabre back inside (because that's a thing a human can do).

Back in and Sabre grabs a guillotine but gets taken up top to break it up. That's fine with Sabre, who pulls him into an octopus hold on top. Claudio reverses into a gutwrench superplex and they're both down for a bit. The Giant Swing is loaded up but Claudio's arm gives out. Claudio tries a Sharpshooter instead, which is reversed into a heel hook. That's broken up but Claudio still can't get the Sharpshooter. A Pele Kick to the arm sets up a sleeper on Claudio, followed by some hard kicks to the chest. Those just tick Claudio off

though and it's a pop up uppercut into the Riccola Bomb to pin Sabre at 18:23.

Rating: B+. This was the Claudio that fans have been wanting to see, as he got to show the fire and then hit a bunch of his signature/power stuff. Throw in Sabre Jr. being able to do just about anything imaginable to someone's limbs and this was a fun chess match. Eventually though it was Claudio wrecking him for the win and that is how a debut should have gone.

IWGP World Title: Hangman Page vs. Adam Cole vs. Kazuchika Okada vs. Jay White

White is defending and it's one fall to a finish. After the Big Match Intros, we ring the bell and pause for the fans to cheer a lot. White bails straight to the floor so the other three can fight but Cole winds up out there with him. Cole pitches the alliance but Okada and Page join them on the floor to start the brawl. Page gets double suplexed on the ramp and a neckbreaker drops Okada inside.

Back up and Page whips White into the steps, only to be taken down by Cole. Page fights back again and gets to clean house but Cole superkicks the moonsault out of the air. That means Okada can come back, including the dropkick to knock Cole off the top and out to the floor. The running crossbody over the barricade drops everyone else before they head back inside. Cole's brainbuster onto the knee gets two on White, who is right back up with the swinging Rock Bottom.

A sleeper suplex drops Cole and White hits another on Okada. Page gets one too but he pops back up with a lariat for the four way knockdown. We get the tag team double forearm off until Cole and White slug it out. Page goes after White but has to deal with Gedo, only to hit the Deadeye. The Buckshot Lariat gets two on White with Okada having to make a save. Page and Okada forearm it out until the Rainmaker misses. A discus lariat drops Okada but Cole breaks up the Buckshot.

The Panama Sunrise is countered into Okada's White Noise onto the knee but White breaks up the Rainmaker (after the zoom). Cole superkicks Okada for two, earning himself that perfect dropkick. Some more superkicks drop Okada and Page but the Rainmaker misses Cole, as he collapses. Okada gets Sling Bladed, allowing White to pin Cole to retain at 21:04. Something looked wrong there and White was talking to the referee after the match. I don't know if Cole got hurt or something but that didn't look right.

Rating: B. That ending didn't help things as they didn't get the chance to go to the big climax. What we had instead was a very good match with White escaping again, which is the right call. The lack of a Rainmaker tells me that there was something bad with the ending, so this felt like it was lacking something. The fact that it worked as well as it did is quite the impressive result though, as the talent got to shine.

Interim AEW World Title: Hiroshi Tanahashi vs. Jon Moxley

For the vacant title. Feeling out process to start with neither being able to get very far. A dragon screw legwhip puts Moxley down though and Tanahashi is starting to get the confidence going. That's broken up as Moxley grabs a quick cutter, setting up the running corner clothesline. The piledriver drops Tanahashi again and Moxley stomps away, setting up a Texas Cloverleaf (a Tanahashi signature). Tanahashi fights out and hits his middle rope flip splash for two of his own.

The Sling Blade is countered into a whip outside though and Moxley puts him through a table. Tanahashi beats the count back in so Moxley kicks away at the chest. The Sling Blade cuts Moxley down for a change and somehow he's busted open. A dive to the floor drops Moxley again, setting up Twist and Shout back inside. Moxley manages a suplex though and it's time for the hammer and anvil elbows.

With those broken up, Tanahashi headbutts him down and hits the high crossbody. High Fly Flow connects but Moxley rolls him into the bulldog choke. That's broken up so Moxley BLASTS HIM with the King Kong Lariat...for one. The Hammer and Anvil elbows set up a rear naked choke but Tanahashi fights up again. Moxley shifts into another bulldog choke, followed by the Death Rider for the pin and the title at 18:14.

Rating: A-. This was a good example of two guys beating the fire out of each other until Tanahashi couldn't keep going. The blood was a bit too much and felt out of place, but Moxley winning the title makes the most sense. He is a good placeholder until Punk gets back and people will buy him in the role, so this is the right choice after a great match.

Post match respect is shown but Chris Jericho and Daniel Garcia run in for the beatdown. Eddie Kingston runs in, setting off a string of run ins until the Jericho Appreciation Society beats everyone down. Claudio Castagnoli runs in for the save and gets in a Swing. Kingston yells at Claudio (who he has never liked) and leaves so Moxley's music can play us out.

Overall Rating: A. I don't think there was any real surprise that this was an instant classic with one great match after another, though it was lacking THAT match that took it to the next level. It helps that it felt more like a New Japan show, as they cut out a bunch of the goofy stuff and focused on the in-ring action. The talent is there to make it work and this was a fantastic show. I didn't care for the build but the show delivered on all levels, including time, as they shaved off about an hour from Double Or Nothing. Great stuff.

Results

Hirooki Goto/Yoshi-Hashi b. QT Marshall/Aaron Solo – GTR/powerbomb combination to Solo

Lance Archer b. Nick Comoroto – Blackout

Keith Lee/Swerve Strickland b. El Desperado/Yoshinobu Kanemaru

– Big Bang Catastrophe to Kanemaru

Max Caster/Gunn Club b. Yuya Uemura/Alex Coughlin/DKC/Kevin Knight – Mic Drop to DKC

Minoru Suzuki/Chris Jericho/Sammy Guevara b. Eddie Kingston/Shota Umino/Wheeler Yuta – Judas Effect to Umino

FTR b. United Empire and Roppongi Vice – Big Rig to Romero

Pac b. Clark Connors, Miro and Malakai Black – Brutalizer to Connors

Dudes With Attitude b. Bullet Club – Last of the Dragon to El Phantasma

Thunder Rosa b. Toni Storm – Final Reckoning

Will Ospreay b. Orange Cassidy – Hidden Blade

Claudio Castagnoli b. Zack Sabre Jr. – Riccola Bomb

Jay White b. Adam Cole, Kazuchika Okada and Hangman Page – White pinned Cole after he collapsed

Jon Moxley b. Hiroshi Tanahashi – Death Rider

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