

Dragon Gate USA: The Rebirth: Welcome Back

Dragon Gate USA: The Rebirth

Date: April 16, 2025

Location: Palms Casino Resort, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Joe Dombrowski, Rich Bocchini

So this is Dragon Gate USA, which (I believe) is an official spin off from the Japanese Dragon Gate promotion. This is the first time that Dragon Gate USA has run a show in over ten years, though it isn't clear if this is the start of an ongoing relaunch. I have no idea what to expect here but let's get to it.

Note that I did not follow the original promotion/Dragon Gate (assuming that matters) so I apologize in advance if I miss any storylines or character points.

Kzy vs. Marcus Mathers

They stare at each other to start before locking up and trading some waistlocks. Kzy...I think dances out of a waistlock but Mathers is right back with a wristlock. A Worm gets Kzy out of a wristlock but Mathers wants to keep this serious. We get a dance tease until Mathers hits him in the ribs. That earns Mathers a running Blockbuster and we hit the chinlock. That's broken up like you might expect from a chinlock, allowing Mathers to hit a spinning high crossbody.

Kzy gets kicked down for two and Mathers grabs a chinlock of his own. A pair of belly to back suplexes put Kzy down but he blocks a regular suplex attempt. Kzy's running forearm and uppercut drop Mathers, who is right back with a sunset flip out of the corner. A middle rope Stunner into a Blue Thunder Bomb gives Mathers two and an RK0 drops Kzy again. The fisherman's buster gives Mathers two but he misses a 450 and

gets caught with a running uppercut. Kzy hits a headscissors driver and Impact (Jay Driller) sets up a frog splash to give Kzy the pin at 10:38.

Rating: B. Good, back and forth opener here as Mathers continues to shine when he is given the chance. I've seen both of these guys in the ring before and they have both done well before. Kzy felt like a big enough deal, with commentary recapping his title history from Dragon Gate. It's a nice way to get things going for the relaunched promotion and it went well for both guys.

Post match respect is shown. Mathers leaves and Kzy gets the mic to talk about how Dragon Gate USA is back.

AZM/Starlight Kid vs. Konami/Natsuko Tora

These are women from Stardom and Konami/Tora are part of the HATE faction so I'm going to assume they're the villains. Hate jumps the other two to start fast and the brawl is on fast. Thankfully we go split screen with Konami striking away at Kid before we settle down to Konami throwing AZM down by the hair. The double arm crank is on until the Kid makes the save, only for Tora to come in with a choke.

With those broken up, Konami kicks AZM in the back, leaving Tora to mist her down. The referee almost gets decked but he's up to count two off a suplex to AZM. Back up and AZM manages a suplex of her own and it's back to Kid for a high crossbody. Kid takes both villains down for a double dropkick against the ropes. A standing moonsault gives Kid two but the much bigger Tora is back up for a slugout. Tora knocks her down for a standing backsplash and a near fall. Konami comes back in for a Disarm-Her but Kid headscissors her way to freedom.

It's back to AZM, who is quickly kicked down and Tora hits a running crossbody to take both of them down. The two of them nip up though and stereo armdrags bring the villains off the top. AZM's Fujiwara armbar has Konami in trouble but Tora is

back in to run her down with a shoulder. The Cannonball crushes AZM and Konami's running kick to the chest gets two, with Kid making the save. AZM sweeps Konami's leg though and a rollup gets the pin at 11:35.

Rating: B-. I was getting into this one near the end as they were telling a nice story, with the heroines vs. the villains and it made for a good story. AZM and Kid were fighting from underneath throughout and eventually overcame hate with better wrestling technique. Good match here, with Stardom getting to showcase their star power as usual.

Ho Ho Lun vs. Rhys Maddox

Maddox is 17 and a newcomer, as you might have guessed due to being 17. They fight over wrist control to start and Maddox breaks out of a full nelson. Maddox knocks him into the corner and hits a basement dropkick for two. Lun kicks the knee out to take over though and it's time to twist the leg around.

A leglock goes on to keep Maddox down as commentary tries to compare him to Shawn Michaels or Terry Gordy. Back up and Maddox hits a bottom rope springboard cutter and they're both down for a bit. The leg is fine enough to hit a springboard forearm for two but Lun is back with a missile dropkick. Maddox hits a DDT for two but Lun grabs two rollups for two each. The third rollup, with the legs tied up, finishes Maddox at 8:41.

Rating: C+. This was just ok with Lun being the veteran who was trying to carry things and only being able to get it so far. The leg stuff in the middle went nowhere as Maddox was right back with springboards and that's never a good thing to see. It was a decent enough match, but neither of them really stood out.

El Cucuy/La Estrella/Ultimo Dragon vs. Sovereign

Sovereign is Evan Rivers/Judas Icarus/Travis Williams (the

latter two are known as the Northern Armory in TNA). Dragon is the star of WCW fame and had a big hand in starting Dragon Gate. Cucuy (who looks a bit evil and is described as the Mexican Boogeyman) starts with Williams and runs him down with a shoulder. Estrella comes in and is taken into the wrong corner and it's off to Icarus.

A whip into the ropes is cut off as Estrella walks on his hands but gets sent outside. The cameraman gets taken down and Rivers' clothesline to the back of Estrella's head gets two. A bodyscissors lets Rivers fish hook Estrella's mouth before it's back to Williams for a shot to the face of his own. A stomp to the arm gets two and Icarus chokes away on the mat. Rivers accidentally sends Icarus into Williams in the corner though and the tag brings in Dragon.

The rapid fire kicks (well as rapid as he can get) have Rivers in trouble and Dragon spins Williams into a leglock. Everything breaks down Cucuy hits a double hip attack in the corner. Estrella adds a running dive to the floor and the rather large Cucuy hits a flip dive over the top. Back in and Dragon grabs la majistral for the pin on Rivers at 9:17.

Rating: C+. This was about getting Estrella in the ring on this show and that is not a bad idea. He's a legend in wrestling and in Dragon Gate in particular so this makes a lot of sense. Sovereign didn't feel like the best team, though having the Boogeyman go after the villains was a bit odd to see. The fans seemed happy to see Dragon though so we'll call this a success.

Rich Swann/Willie Mack vs. Alec Price/Jimmy Lloyd vs. Ben-K/Hyo

Swann has gotten a haircut and...yeah I don't know about that. Hold on though as Swann and Mack get the referee to dance during the entrances for the fun moment. Hyo seems to be a male stripper, or at least something else that gets women to

put money in his pants. Hyo and Price start things off with Price bouncing on the mat to escape a wristlock. Swann and Lloyd come in for an exchange of leapfrogs before Swann shoulders him down.

Hip swiveling ensues but Lloyd is right back up with a running neckbreaker. Price comes in to help drop Swann and Lloyd (who is not a small guy) hits a dive, which sends Swann out to the floor. That means Mack can come in for a slugout with Ben-K, who manages to knock him down. Everything breaks down and Swann gets caught in a gutbuster/running dropkick combination. Price and Lloyd hit stereo dives to the floor as everything breaks down. Back in and Ben-K and Hyo go up, only to get caught by Lloyd and Mack.

That means a double Doomsday Blockbuster from Price, followed by a dropkick to send Mack outside. Swann gets planted with a double flipping DDT and Price hits a dive onto the floor. Back in and Ben-K spears Price down, only to get leg lariatied by Mack. Swann is in with a Lethal Injection to Hyo and Mack hits a big running flip dive onto Price and Lloyd. That leaves Swann to hit the 450 to pin Hyo at 9:33.

Rating: B. Yeah this was fun, with everyone just going nuts until someone got the pin. That's what this kind of match should be and it was as entertaining as you would have expected. Swann and Mack have worked well together for a long time and they still have that chemistry. Ben-K and Hyo got to showcase themselves well enough, while Price and Lloyd were just kind of there to make it more of a brawl, which was only so much of an addition.

If nothing else, it's nice to hear Swann's music again.

Here is Matt Sydal, who praises the previous match and talks about how awesome it was to be in the first group of wrestlers who went over to Dragon Gate. Now Dragon Gate is back here in America and these fans are here on a Wednesday so they want

this stuff put into their veins. Sydal asks us to come out for their other show on Friday night and thanks the fans for coming out. Perfectly fine speech here for a special moment.

Paradox vs. Z-Brats

That would be Dragon Kid/Susumu Yokosuka/Yamato vs. Ishin/Kota Minoura/Shun Skywalker. Yokosuka and Minoura slowly circle each other before fighting over wrist control. Minoura kicks him down and flips off the fans before handing it off to Skywalker and Kid. Skywalker goes to the eyes to take over but gets armdragged down. Yamato and Ishin come in, with Ishin holding up the referee's hand.

They trade shoulders with Yamato taking him down and stopping to gaze at the fans. Everything breaks down and the Brats jump Paradox on the floor. We go split screen as the beating continues outside, including some of them going to either the stage or into the crowd. Ishin chokes Yamato on the stage before going back to ringside to trade opponents. We settle down to Skywalker taking Kid into the corner, where some double boot choking ensues. Minoura kicks him back into the corner before Ishin's DDT gets two.

Minoura lets Kid chop away and Kid is fine with doing this rather than trying a tag, only to snap off a headscissors. Yokosuka and Ishin come in, with the former getting to clean house in a hurry. Yamato and Ishin fight over a suplex until Ishin finally gets him over as everything breaks down again. Skywalker soaks in some booing before helping Ishin double team Kid with right hands. A pump kick drops Kid again and Ishin's splash gets two. Yokosuka saves Kid on top though and it's a super hurricanrana to bring Skywalker down.

Minoura gets caught in the wrong corner for some running clotheslines but gets out of Yamato's Galleria. A Stundog Millionaire drops Skywalker and we hit a parade of knockdowns. Yamato plants Ishin, who pops back up with a German suplex. A

lariat drops Ishin right back and everyone is down for a needed breather. Ishin and Yamato chop it out until Kid is back in with a tornado DDT. An assisted reverse implant DDT gives Yamato the pin on Ishin at 20:18.

Rating: B. It was an entertaining, fast paced match but I'm not sure this is going to be some kind of game changer like some of their previous matches have been. All six looked good and did their things well, but it never got to that high level that had me desperate to see what was happening next. Still though, rather good main event and worth a look.

Post match Yamato says the promotion made new history tonight. Rich Swann comes in to praise the winners and says without them, he would not be the wrestler he is today. Swann respects Yamato but challenges him for this Friday. Yamato seems to accept.

Overall Rating: B. This might not have been a classic show but it was more than good enough. It was a bunch of talented wrestlers getting to work a style which works well for them. You didn't need to have a deep understanding or knowledge of what happened coming into the show and it still worked well. Good stuff here, making it a solid return for the promotion.

Results

Kzy b. Marcus Mathers – Frog splash

AZM/Starlight Kid b. Konami/Natsuko Tora – Rollup to Konami

Ho Ho Lun b. Rhys Maddox – Rollup

El Cucuy/La Estrella/Ultimo Dragon b. Sovereign – La Majistral to Rivers

Rich Swann/Willie Mack b. Ben-K/Hyo and Jimmy Lloyd/Alec Price – 450 to Hyo

Paradox b. Z-Brats – Assisted reverse implant DDT to Ishin

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Defy Wrestling: Can't Deny It: I Wouldn't Admit It

Can't Deny It

Date: April 4, 2024

Location: Penns Landing Caterers

Commentators: Jack Farmer, Rich Bocchini

This is from Defy Wrestling and that's not a promotion I know very well. I've seen a bit from them before and I do remember liking them so there might be something worth seeing here. The main event will see Kenta defend the World Title against Gringo Loco, which should at least be good. Let's get to it.

Schaff is in a four wheeler (or whatever you call a vehicle for driving through the woods in the mud) and wants everyone in the BMF battle royal for his Pacific Northwest Title.

Tag Team Titles: Bollywood Boyz vs. Man Like DeReiss/Michael Oku

DeReiss and Oku are challenging and have Amira with them. Oku is apparently a replacement for Leon Slater who isn't here due to travel restrictions. DeReiss raps his way to the ring and seems to be rather popular. Gurv and DeReiss start things off with the latter powering him up against the ropes. Some

running shoulders put Gurv down and we hear the Birmingham, England (DeReiss' hometown) area code or whatever he keeps shouting.

Oku comes in and gets armdragged into an arm crank as it's back to Gurv for more arm pulling. That's broken up as Oku sends him into the corner, where he jumps over DeReiss for a kick to the chest. They head outside where Gurv hammers away on Oku, setting up a middle rope bulldog for two back inside. Oku fights out of the chinlock rather quickly so it's a top rope elbow Hart Attack for two instead.

A quick shot to the face lets Oku go up for a frog splash high crossbody and it's back to DeReiss to pick the pace way up. Everything breaks down and Oku hits a big running flip dive, followed by DeReiss' powerbomb for two. Stereo half crabs (Oku's signature) have the champs in trouble but they reverse into stereo Sharpshooters. That's broken up as well so it's a 3D to send Harv into Gurv for two. Harv shrugs it off and sense Oku outside, setting up the Bollywood Blast for the pin on DeReiss to retain at 16:36.

Rating: C+. Nice enough match to open the show here, though it really did start to break down near the end. There is only so much drama to be had out of a thrown together team challenging for the titles but it was about all that could be done. The Boyz aren't the flashiest team in the world but they can do their thing more than well enough.

CCK vs. Moonlight Express

That would be Chris Brookes/Kid Lykos (with Kid Lykos II) vs. Mao/Mike Bailey, because Mike Bailey is everywhere over Wrestlemania Weekend. Mao flips the rather tall Brookes off to start so Brookes teases leaving. Not that it matters as he comes back so Mao can start with Lykos. Mao takes him down and flips him off so it's off to Bailey, who can't get into a test of strength with Brookes (as Bailey barely comes up to his

shoulders).

Brookes pats him on the head so Bailey starts kicking away in a much smarter move. That lets Bailey pat him on the head for a nice touch and it's Lykos coming in for a change. A poke to the eye just makes Bailey kick him even more and there's a double dropkick to send Brookes outside. Stereo moonsaults (from the same corner) take out CCK on the floor and we head back inside.

This time Mao is sent crashing outside, allowing Lykos to hit a top rope Codebreaker on Bailey. We pause for some exchange of fluids from CCK to Bailey (who does have a funny face in reaction) before Lykos shouts BRAINBUSTER. Bailey blocks it so Lykos does the same thing again and, again, is blocked. Serves him right for telegraphing his offense. Mao comes in and sends CCK into each other but CCK is right back with stereo octopus holds.

Those are broken up so Brookes and Mao trade strikes to the face for a double down. Bailey is back in to strike Lykos down, setting up a running shooting star press for two. Brookes misses a kick to the head so Bailey moonsaults onto Lykos on the floor. Back in and the Express miss stereo Ultimate Weapons but Lykos calls for the brainbuster AGAIN and AGAIN it's broken up.

Bailey's tornado kick (which he didn't advertise) hits Lykos and a rollup gets two. Brookes is back in with a kick but Map kicks him right back down. Lykos is back in with the unadvertised brainbuster for two on Bailey so Brookes adds a top rope double knee for two of his own. Mao is taken out again so it's a Gory Bomb/Diamond Dust combination to finish Bailey at 16:13.

Rating: B. They got rolling near the end there and it was just one big move after another. Bailey is kind of perfect if you want a bunch of cool looking stuff with pretty much no selling

in between so he fit in well here. Brookes stands out alone because of his size but he can move well out there to balance it out. Good stuff here, as they just did a bunch of stuff to show off.

Respect is shown post match.

Women's Title: Vert Vixen vs. Jazmin Allure vs. Trish Adora

Vixen is defending and Mega Ran is a guest commentator. The champ is sent outside to start, leaving Adora to lift Allure up and bent her over the knee in a rather wacky looking hold (the wave to her mom makes it even better). Back in and Vixen makes the save, including a running elbow to drop Adora.

They go outside with Allure hitting a big dive, setting up the chinlock back inside. Adora comes back in but gets her leg kicked out, allowing Allure to hit a Sling Blade. Allure kicks at both of them but Adora pulls a high crossbody out of the air. Vixen's missile dropkick puts the other two down, followed by a nasty German suplex to plant Allure.

A Blue Thunder Bomb gets two but Adora is up for the save. Allure drops Adora again and runs the corner for an armdrag to Vixen. That means it's time for Adora and Vixen to trade kicks to the face until Adora is knocked outside. Allure's guillotine is broken up and Vixen plants her with a powerbomb, followed by a brainbuster to retain at 12:52.

Rating: C+. This was the definition of a match that just kind of happened as they were getting in as much stuff as they could in their limited amount of time. There wasn't much in the way of a story and while Allure stood out, the other two did well enough. Good enough for what it was, but they needed a better layout.

Pacific Northwest Title: BMF Battle Royal

This is an eight man battle royal, which appears to be either

a Royal Rumble or gauntlet match, with Schaff defending. Luke Jacobs is in at #1 and Galeno del Mal is in at #2 with Mal hitting a hard shoulder to take over. Charles Crowley is in at #3 (as this is apparently a Royal Rumble with 57 second intervals) and dances around ringside as Jacobs takes over. The other two pause as the dancing gets inside, followed by Crowley slams Jacobs.

LJ Cleary is in at #4 and fires off some strikes, setting up a springboard armdrag on Mal. Shota is in at #5 as the ring is filling up quickly. Shota runs into and gets kicked down by the much bigger Mal and it's Gene Munny in at #6. A slingshot spear hits Crowley and house is quickly cleaned by the less than serious Munny.

Ricky Knight Jr. is in at #7 and easily fireman's carries Cleary and Munny at the same time for a double Samoan drop. Schaff is in at #8 to complete the field and house is quickly cleaned. In this case, cleaning doesn't mean eliminating though as everyone pairs off. Munny gets clotheslined out, leaving Cleary and Crowley to fight out to the apron. Both tease getting back in but Munny pulls them out, leaving us with five.

Schaff cuts off Shota's tornado DDT attempt and throws him out. Knight is eliminated as well, leaving us with Schaff, Jacobs and Mal. Jacobs catches Schaff up top and grabs a superplex (instead of knocking him to the floor), followed by a pop up powerbomb to Mal. That doesn't go well though as Mal tosses Jacobs and we're down to two. Schaff low bridges Mal over the top but he barely hangs on, giving us a Shawn Michaels reference. They slug it out on the apron until Schaff grabs a Death Valley Driver to retain at 15:00.

Rating: C+. This was another match where it felt like they were trying to get in as many people as possible. That isn't the worst idea on a show like this, but it doesn't exactly let anyone but the winner show off. Thankfully they didn't spend

too much time with the ring full, but it was more or less “everyone comes in and then Schaff beats the up”, which isn’t much of a match.

Sovereign vs. Dragon Gate vs. C4XKC

That would be:

Sovereign: Evan Rivers/Judas Icarus/Travis Williams

Dragon Gate: Ho Ho Lun/Kzy/Shun Skywalker

C4XKC: Cody Chhun/Guillermo Rosas/KC Navarro

Skywalker headscissors Chhun to start as Mega Ran talks about work he has done on entrance music and completely ignores the match. Navarro comes in to yell at Kzy but neither of them can actually make much contact. Icarus sneaks in for a hard clothesline on Kzy as Sovereign comes in to stomp away. Kzy gets pulled back into the corner but it’s Rosas coming in to clean house.

Everything breaks down and it’s time to start the rapid fire dives. Rivers sends Rosas into the corner and it’s Williams cranking on the arms over the ropes. Rosas is back up with a heck of a clothesline and the tag brings Chhun back in to pick up the pace. A DDT gets two on Williams and everything breaks down again.

Skywalker’s standing moonsault knees hit Chhun for two but Williams is back in with a moonsault for two of his own. We hit the parade of people knocking each other to the floor until C4XKC take over on Williams. Stereo rolling kicks to the head give C4XKC a triple pin on Williams at 12:40.

Rating: B-. As you might have expected, there is only so much you can get out of a match involving nine people in a single ring. While the teams probably have their own backstories and histories, we only got so much of those things here as commentary wasn’t exactly telling us much. The action was good and they did what you would have expected, but it would have

been nice to know more about what I was watching.

The #1 Defy Match Of The Year is Judas Icarus vs. Mike Bailey. One might think they would give the date of the match but oh well.

Defy World Title: Kenta vs. Gringo Loco

Kenta is defending. They circle each other for about a minute until Kenta grabs a wristlock. Loco flips away and they stare it down again as this isn't in the fastest gear to start. Kenta snaps off a headscissors and they head outside with Kenta taking him down again. The fight heads into the crowd with Kenta hammering away even more. Back in and some knees to the head let Kenta gloat a bit more.

An offer of a handshake just lets Kenta poke him in the eyes but Loco plants him down for a change. Loco works on the arm for a bit before going big with a double springboard moonsault for two. Some chops against the ropes just seem to wake Kenta up so he comes back with a release fisherman's suplex. A tornado DDT gives Kenta two and he grabs the STF.

With that broken via the ropes, Kenta goes up but dives into a spinning sitout powerbomb for two. They head to the apron and slug it out where another powerbomb is countered into a DDT to plant Loco hard. The count is barely beaten so Kenta drops a top rope double stomp for two. Loco grabs something like a powerslam spun into an F5 for the same and they head up top.

Kenta tries a super Falcon Arrow but gets reversed into...uh well a super Falcon Arrow actually. The referee gets bumped and Kenta grabs a DDT, plus a chair for a bonus. A bunch of shots have Loco down but he counters a belt shot into an over the shoulder Tombstone. There's no referee so Loco goes up, only to get kneed down for two. The Go To Sleep retains the title at 23:07.

Rating: B-. Lame ending to a pretty good match, as the chairs

and ref bump felt like they needed a way to add drama. I'm not sure how regular Loco is in Defy but he felt like someone who was just there for the sake of having a challenger with a name. They were getting going near the end and then they did the stuff with the chair to bring it right back down. I was expecting more from this and it wound up being just strong enough for a main event.

Respect is shown to end the match. How nice of Loco to shrug off the rampant chair shots.

Overall Rating: B-. I remember having a great time with the first Defy show that I watched and this didn't really come close to that. The biggest problem here was nothing about the show stood out. Save for maybe the battle royal, there was nothing on here that you couldn't see on any decent independent show. This is the kind of show that I'm going to forget by the end of the day and that's not something you want to say about any show, let alone something on the biggest wrestling weekend of the year.

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