

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 backplash 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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