

Lucha Underground – July 20, 2016 (Season 2 Finale): See You... Long?

Lucha Underground

Date: July 20, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

We'll wrap it up here with the season two finale and the final part of Ultima Lucha Dos. That means Pentagon Jr. challenging Matanza for the Lucha Underground Title, Taya vs. Ivelisse and Rey Mysterio vs. Prince Puma in a major battle of the generations. They've got their work cut out for them to top what they did last year and I'm not sure they can pull it off. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of all the major events this season, which really was divided up into two parts with the pre and post Dario return. Also there's a lot of stuff that was basically forgotten, including Aerostar being a time traveler. They really do pack a lot of stuff into this and it's done a great job of making me want to see the big finale.

Vampiro is in full Emperor Palpatine mode as Pentagon Jr. bows to him before the title match. Pentagon has to destroy the monster that broke him but there is still fear inside him. Vampiro takes him to a room full of Pentagons, who the real Pentagon must destroy. With those imposters easily dispatched, it's time for the big showdown with the masked master. Pentagon rips the mask off and Vampiro says he's ready but not before changing his name from Pentagon Jr. to Pentagon Black.

Trios Titles: Drago/Fenix/Aerostar vs. Johnny Mundo/Jack Evans/PJ Black

Mundo and company are defending but there's no Taya. Johnny gets in a backbreaker to start on Fenix and it's quickly off to Drago who gets in a spinning DDT. Black comes in sans tag but misses his top rope Lionsault. Aerostar's corkscrew crossbody takes Black down again and a slingshot

corkscrew splash gets no count as the referee actually remembers who is legal. It's off to Fenix who superkicks Jack before the good guys clean house, only to have the referee stop the triple dive because they're not legal.

The distraction lets Fenix get stomped down in the corner as the champs take over. Evans comes in for a whip to crotch Fenix before a double belly to back suplex into a neckbreaker gets two. Everything breaks down again as Striker keeps talking about the referee, which has gotten more attention here than anything else. Jack's springboard is broken up with a superkick and a Canadian Destroyer plants Johnny.

Aerostar dives on the other champs and Fenix hits a great looking frog splash for two on Mundo. A slingshot splash from Aerostar and the springboard 450 from Fenix add up for two. The referee goes down so Mundo keeps getting beaten up until his partners FINALLY help him out with a belt shot to Fenix's head. A triple belt shot to the head gets two (seriously?) so Black kicks the ref in the head.

The champs go nuts with Chikara's BDK's Ragnarok (Evans and Black hold Fenix up by the arms while a running Johnny flips him forward for a big crash onto his back) but there's still no referee. Johnny puts the title on Fenix's face but here's Angelico on crutches to take Mundo out. Aerostar gets back up and springboards into a reverse moonsault to drop Evans. Another crutch shot sets up a Fenix Driver (Fire Thunder Driver) for the pin on Mundo at 11:50. That makes Fenix the first Triple Crown Champion.

Rating: B. Good choice for an opener here with a group of people going all over the place with a bunch of high spots and insanity. Angelico coming out made sense as Johnny won the title in the first place cue to Angelico being injured, presumably by Mundo in the first place. The referee stuff got a bit annoying as the story came out of nowhere but then was dropped halfway through the match. Still though, good opener here and that's why you have matches like this one.

Dragon Azteca Jr. vs. Black Lotus

So Lotus mistakenly thinks Azteca's father killed her parents and is out

for revenge, which actually makes sense for a change. They start fast with some running flips and a headscissors to send Dragon down. As Vampiro says Lotus is sexy and turning him on, Azteca baseball slides her to take over for the first time. Azteca misses a flip dive but easily whips her into the barricade with some force. Back in and Dragon misses a high cross body (he isn't the most accurate) to give Lotus two, only to have him pop back up with a roaring elbow. Azteca goes up but Pentagon of all people runs out to crotch him at 4:20.

Rating: D. I think we've seen our first Ultima Lucha match to be sacrificed due to time restraints. To be fair though, it's not like this match had the biggest build in the world. This story has been kind of all over the place and the announcers can't talk about it because they haven't seen any of the buildup. You can barely talk about this one but Lotus looked fine while they lasted.

With Vampiro's blessing, Pentagon breaks both of their arms. After a break, Pentagon says he'll destroy Matanza with the new knowledge his master gave him. Now he's Pentagon Dark and ready for anything, including taking down the monster because there is zero fear. Actually, let's just do the title match RIGHT NOW.

Lucha Underground Title: Matanza vs. Pentagon Dark

Matanza is defending, Dario is in his corner and there must be a winner. Pentagon immediately hits a flip dive over the top to put the champion down. Vampiro keeps talking about the differences between Pentagon Jr. and Pentagon Dark as Pentagon knocks Matanza around ringside, including a hard whip into the barricade. An AA (not a Death Valley Driver announcers) has Matanza in even more trouble and he punches the post to make it even worse.

Some chairs to the back (including a La Parka guitar strum) knock Matanza around ringside and Pentagon whips him through some chairs. Matanza gets in a few right hands, only to be superkicked up against the barricade. Pentagon throws him through more chairs as this has been about 95% Pentagon through the first five minutes.

More chair shots to the leg keep Matanza in trouble on the floor and they

FINALLY head inside. Dario: "Matanza! REMEMBER MAMA!" Matanza takes a third superkick and a running Codebreaker for two. A Backstabber gets the same so Dario is holding up the key. Pentagon wedges a chair in the corner (because wrestlers never learn) and is quickly sent head first into it for Matanza's first major offense.

Matanza sends him flying with a pumphandle suplex and a standing moonsault gets two. Pentagon stands up after a German suplex and tells him to bring it. That means superkick #5 to the champ before a modified Wrath of the Gods (not an Irish Car Bomb Matt) gets two. Pentagon goes outside and stops a dive with a chair to the head, followed by a Canadian Destroyer to really knock Matanza silly.

Vampiro gets up and hands Pentagon a barbed wire baseball bat (the next logical step) but Dario knocks it out of his hands. Pentagon goes for Dario's arm but Matanza hits him (weakly) in the back with the bat and hits Wrath of the Gods to retain at 11:32. The fans are NOT happy with that ending and swear quite a bit.

Rating: B. Uh what? No seriously, what was that ending? Pentagon completely dominated Matanza the whole match, shrugged off most of his offense and then gets beaten by two moves? That felt like they had no idea how to get out of this and just said "oh just have him hit his finisher to retain". No build to it, no logical storytelling, no reason for Pentagon to lose that fast.

This match needed another five minutes or so and a lot more offense from Matanza if you're going to go with that ending. Having Pentagon lose after a hard fought war is fine but having him lose after he basically squashed Matanza for ten minutes isn't. If nothing else it makes your unstoppable monster champion look weak instead of like the killer he's supposed to be. A recharged Pentagon is a great choice to give him a fight but they toned Matanza WAY too far down this time and it hurt the story a lot.

Post match Vampiro goes to help Pentagon but gets shoved away.

After a break, Vampiro takes his medicine, saying he failed.

Taya vs. Ivelisse

Basically they're the two best women in the promotion (not named Sexy Star that is) and they've been feuding for a few weeks so here's a match. Ivelisse takes her into the corner and drives Taya face first into the middle buckle ten times in a row. Vampiro keeps trying to get back into things as Taya knocks Ivelisse face first into the apron to take over on the floor.

Taya is sent into the chairs and they fight on the steps before crashing down. Back in and Iveliss kicks her down a few times before grabbing a release German suplex. A bridging German suplex gets two and there go the lights. Back with Catrina in the ring and hitting a double arm DDT drop (think a Bubba Bomb but a double arm DDT instead of a full nelson). The lights go off again and Catrina disappears, allowing Taya to hit a double stomp for the pin at 6:20.

Rating: C-. The match was fine enough but another screwy finish is a little annoying. It also doesn't really settle anything between Taya and Ivelisse but rather sets up something for the next season, which seems to be the problem with this whole show: not a lot is actually being decided here in favor of setting something up down the road.

Post match Catrina appears again to give Ivelisse the Lick of Death.

We get a voiceover from Konnan of all people, talking about finding a new protege to train. Apparently he's talking about Prince Puma, who gets a highlight video including beating up people in some warehouse. This turns into a quick video setting up Puma vs. Rey Mysterio.

Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Prince Puma

The King vs. the Prince and I'm fine with this as the main event as it really is a dream match by Lucha Underground's standards. Rey even has the El Rey network logo on his back for a nice touch. They start fast (of course) and it's time to flip around a lot into a standoff. A headscissors from Rey is countered and Puma shakes his finger as we're at another standoff.

Rey changes the plan a bit with some kicks to the head but the sitout bulldog doesn't work. The fans cheer for different area codes before Puma bends Rey around his shoulders for a modified torture rack. Rey is able to escape and send him outside for that sliding splash under the bottom rope. The West Coast Pop gets two and a big springboard tornado DDT gets the same for Rey.

Mysterio tries a top rope hurricanrana but gets muscled up into a series of rolling suplexes (variety pack) for two. With nothing else working, Puma takes him up top for a super Razor's Edge but since there's no way that can happen, Rey gives him a reverse super hurricanrana for a near fall of his own. They slug it out with the fans being split on who to cheer for in a good sign. Another sitout bulldog is countered into a huge Backstabber, followed by a Blue Thunder Bomb for two. That move can't win anywhere.

The spinning kick to the head puts Rey in 619 position and Puma actually pulls off the move steal for a change. A 450 (not a 630 Striker) gets two and I feel like I'm in a math class. Puma gets two more off a fireman's carry into a kick to the head and goes up top. With Striker saying it's the I'm sorry, I love you moment, Puma misses the 630 and crashes down instead. Rey enziguris him into a 619 but Puma grabs the boots and spins him into a Tombstone. That's countered as well into a reverse hurricanrana (I don't think I've seen that before) to set up the 619 and a top rope West Coast Pop puts Puma away at 26:28.

Rating: A-. I'm ok with Puma winning here as it's basically the end of Creed: Puma is the future but he's still got work to do to be the luchador he wants to be. This was a sweet wrestling match and felt like a main event level match. Given the way the title match ended, this was absolutely the right call for the main event as it doesn't leave a bad taste in your mouth to end the show.

Puma goes to leave but Rey says these are Puma's people and leaves him to pose.

The announcers wrap it up but Pentagon hits Vampiro with the barbed wire bat and superkicks Striker (should have gotten a bigger pop). The bat is

raked across Vampiro's head for some blood before Pentagon hits him over the back (covered in a rather thick looking jacket) with the bat. They go inside where Pentagon licks the blood and kicks Vampiro hard in the head. Pentagon says he's the new master and licks some more blood before kicking Vampiro in the face again.

We go outside and Dario Cueto is ARRESTED. The police van pulls away as Dario lifts his head up and smiles to end the season. No really, that's the end of the season. No other stories are addressed and we're out for another few months.

Overall Rating: B. On its own, this is a strong show with a very good main event, an acceptable World Title match and a good Trios Title match. The only bad match is less than five minutes and I can live with seeing Catrina getting a little more physical if I just have to. I like the way they changed things up by going with the dream match for the good ending instead of having the fans boo the show out of the building when Pentagon lost. That's smart and a sign that someone knows what they're doing instead of just going ahead with their plan and dealing with the fans hating it.

Unfortunately, this was more than just a regular show. As soon as last season's finale ended, this became something everyone wanted to see. There was a huge set of expectations to go with this season and it made this finale a show with a lot additional weight on its shoulders. That's where things took a bad hit here.

All season long there were stories built, be it the big ones like Dario having a master, Councilman Delgado and everyone talking about what a big deal this was. Then there were individual ones like Marty the Moth vs. Killshot, Aerostar being from the future or whatever else you want to name. At the end of it though, all we get is this one storyline development that seems more like a teaser than any major change.

A term I've seen used to describe this show is "more like a mid-season finale" and I really can't disagree. At no point did this feel like some big conclusion. Instead was much more like a show where we come back in six weeks to see what they have next. I think a lot of that has to do

with knowing a third season is guaranteed though as last year was kind of up in the air, meaning they had to pack a lot into the first finale.

Overall this season was kind of all over the place. It started off with Dario and Matanza having to get back to the Temple and focused on Mil Muertes and Catrina in power but that wrapped up pretty cleanly and was barely mentioned again. The titles started changing hands a lot more frequently to keep things moving but it never felt like there was a big moment coming at the end of the season like with Muertes' inevitable title victory. It's still a good season but it seems like it cracked under some of the pressure, which they'll need to fix next time around.

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Lucha Underground – July 13, 2016: The Non-Calm Before The Lucha

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Date: July 13, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

It's week two of Ultima Lucha Dos and now we should be moving on to the bigger matches instead of last week's unannounced mini tournament and that means we're likely getting a title match this time around. This should be a lot of fun as Lucha Underground knows how to do the big shows. Let's get to it.

The opening recap focuses on the Gift of the Gods Title and King Cuerno vs. Mil Muertes in a death match.

Gift of the Gods Title: Siniestro de la Muerte vs. Daga vs. Mariposa vs. Marty Martinez vs. Sexy Star vs. Killshot vs. Night Claw

Elimination match, the title is vacant coming in and this is Claw's debut. Killshot goes after Marty to start and there are no tags here. Speaking of tags, Marty puts the stolen dog tags down his trunks. Star kicks Mariposa in the mask to knock her outside but Daga kicks Star outside as well.

The other three start slugging it out in the middle with some quick rollup attempts for two each. Claw gives Daga a 619 but Muerte takes Claw down with a lifting reverse DDT. Daga drops Claw with a clothesline but gets kneed in the head, followed by a standing C4 to eliminate Muerte at 2:55.

We take a break and come back with Star knocking Mariposa off the top for a crash onto Daga, followed by a parade of dives. Back in and Daga grabs a guillotine choke on Marty, only to have Claw break it up with a guillotine legdrop. Well to be fair no one ever cared about logic around here. Claw makes up for it a bit with a super hurricanrana and Phoenix Splash to get rid of Daga at 11:10.

Everyone heads outside and Claw moonsaults off Dario's office for your biggest spot of the season. As is so often the case in Lucha Underground though, there's almost no time to let it soak in though as Killshot is up with a Death Valley Driver to send Mariposa into the apron. Claw comes back in to superkick Killshot for two but the Phoenix Splash misses, allowing Killshot to hit something like a One Winged Angel to put Claw away at 13:50.

We're down to Mariposa, Marty, Star and Killshot and all four head to their own corner. They pair off as you would expect with the good ones taking over with some double teaming. Star dives over the top to take out Marty, leaving Mariposa to grab a sunset bomb for a quick two on Killshot. Marty curb stomps Killshot though and Mariposa adds the Butterfly Effect (Vertebreaker) for the elimination at 16:01.

Back from another break with Star getting a Fujiwara Armbar on Marty until Mariposa makes the save. The family starts double teaming but Marty punches his sister by mistake, allowing Star to grab a quick pin at 22:29. Star tells Marty to come back in and we get a KILL THE MOTH chant. A Black Widow has Marty in trouble but he pretty easily powers out and punches Star in the jaw for two. Star isn't done though and grabs a cross armbreaker out of nowhere for the submission at 25:51.

Rating: B. That was the best possible winner as they've built Star up so well this season that you have to go somewhere with her at some point. Having her beat Mariposa and Marty back to back is a great way to cap off their feud as well. Night Claw was looking great at first and then was just out in the middle, which is one of the issues with these massive elimination matches. No one else really stood out here but the only thing that really mattered here was the winner anyway.

Joey Ryan and Cortez Castro tell Mr. Cisco that he's cleared of all charges if his wire gets information on Dario Cueto.

Preview for next week's two hour finale.

King Cuerno vs. Mil Muertes

Death match, which I believe means hardcore. It's a brawl to start with Mil throwing him to the mat but Cuerno gets in a few shots in the corner to take over. Mil is sent outside for the running Arrow but comes right back with a TKO to plant Cuerno. Some chair shots don't seem to do much good as Cuerno kicks him away and dives off the balcony with a big cross body.

They both stagger to their feet and go up to the musical guest area with Mil hitting him in the head with a mic. Cuerno is kicked off the stage

for a crash and it's time for a ladder and a table. Mil takes too much time setting up said ladder and Cuerno kicks him in the head back inside, followed by a running clothesline to put him on the floor. Vampiro keeps calling this all violent and insane but it's not exactly that much.

They head outside again and go up the steps with Mil going head first through a glass window. There's no effect of course so Cuerno goes through it as well, leaving him to fall back down the steps. He won't stay down again though and it's a tornado DDT off the wall. Cuerno finds another table, prompting Matt to wonder how many can possibly be underneath a ring. The table isn't used quite yet though as Mil wins a slugout and moves the steps around instead.

Cuerno backdrops him onto the ladder though and pulls out ANOTHER table, giving us four around the ring. As so many have before, Cuerno makes the mistake of going after Catrina and gets speared through a table. Back to back powerbombs put him through two more tables and Cuerno is basically done. A crowbar shot to the head destroys Cuerno even further and a Tombstone puts him out of his misery at 13:49.

Rating: B+. The ending really made this one as Cuerno set the monster off by going after Catrina, which has long since caused Muertes to lose his mind like this. Cuerno getting closer and closer but just not being enough to stop Muertes was a good story as well and the violence helped move things along. It's not quite as good as some of the other brawls like this but Muertes is in his element here and it showed.

We look at Vampiro vs. Pentagon Jr. from last year to set up Matanza vs. Pentagon Jr. next week.

Vampiro pours out his medication and says it's time for him to go get his student ready.

We go to Dario's office where he meets with the wired Mr. Cisco. Apparently Cisco is just here to check in but Dario doesn't need anything. Cisco insists that he's a loyal soldier but he sounds a bit too nervous. Dario won't let him leave and asks if Cisco is wearing a wire. The wire is found so Dario grabs the mic and tells the cops to come get him. Dario picks up a bull statue and BEATS CISCO TO DEATH. He picks up

the red phone and anxiously tells someone that it's time to end the show.

Overall Rating: A-. Now that's more like it. Last week's show was a lot of fun but this felt like they were actually going for something important. Star winning was a good idea and the main event was one heck of a brawl. The interesting thing about Ultima Lucha though is that it the first two weeks really are just setting the table for the big showdowns next week, which really do a great job of making you want to see the finale. Well done here and the show was awesome like I was expecting coming into this season.

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