

TJPW Live In Philly: That Was Fun

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Location: Penns Landing Caterers, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Dave Prazak, Veda Scott

This is Tokyo Joshi Pro-Wrestling, a women's promotion based in Japan. As you might be able to guess, we're in Philadelphia over Wrestlemania Weekend and that means we're probably in for a bunch of guest stars. I remember liking the show from last year's Wrestlemania Weekend so hopefully they can do it again here. Let's get to it.

Note that I do not follow TJPW whatsoever so I apologize in advance for missing any plot or character points.

As is customary for the promotion, some of the wrestlers come out to welcome us to the show and do a song and dance routine. With that over, they seem to say a promotion catchphrase and we're ready to go.

Arisu Endo/Suzume vs. Yuki Aino/Zara Zakher

Endo and Suzume's Princess Tag Team Titles aren't on the line. Suzume and Aino start things off with Suzume's dropkick not working. A shoulder drops Aino and it's off to Endo vs. Zara. Aino hits the ropes and charges right into a pop up right hand. Everything breaks down and Endo/Suzume take them both down for stereo basement dropkicks. We settle down to Aino taking over on Endo and dropping a backsplash for two.

Zara comes back in for her own basement dropkick but Endo is up with a regular version for the double knockdown. Suzume comes in to pick up the pace...for all of five seconds before Zara drops her with a clothesline. A rope walk bulldog puts

Zara down though and it's Endo coming back in for a knee to the back of Aino's head.

Everything breaks down and Endo knocks Aino to the floor, only to have Aino grab an apron suplex to bring them back inside. They switch off again and Suzume grabs a sleeper on Zara, followed by a facebuster. Zara is fine enough to pull her out of the air for a toss, followed by a spinebuster to give Aino two.

Suzume is back up with a high crossbody for two of her own before locking hands with Aino for a slugout. Endo is back in but gets caught with a reverse DDT to send her right back to the floor. Zara loads up what looks to be a fisherman's buster but Suzume reverses into a rollup for the pin (on the third attempt) at 11:19.

Rating: B-. Starting a show with a tag match is often a good idea as you can get something fast paced like this to fire the crowd up early. I'm not sure why the champs weren't defending if they were going to win anyway but that's a minor issue at best. What matters is getting the show off to a good start and they managed to do so rather well.

Hyper Misao vs. Billie Starkz

Starkz has Athena with her and Misao looks like a superhero. She then says she is a superhero, so at least I can recognize a costume. Misao offers her a gift (looks like a stuffed animal) but then hammers Starkz down with it to start fast. They trade rollups for two each until Misao elbows her in the face. Misao ties up the limbs and swings her head first into the bottom buckle in the corner a few times.

Back up and Starkz grabs a German suplex for two but a big kick to the head is cut off. Misao hits a running knee to the back and then plants her on the apron for two. We get a bit wacky as Misao grabs the mascot head that Starkz wore to the ring, which allows Athena to hit her with the stuffed animal

that Misao brought. Kind of serves her right for cheating.

The distraction lets Starkz hit a fireman's carry backbreaker into a Swanton for two, giving us the surprised knockout face. A Nightmare On Helm Street gives Misao two, with Athena putting the foot on the ropes. Misao sprays...something in Athena's eyes, allowing Starkz to hit a suicide dive. Another Swanton gives Starkz the pin at 6:07.

Rating: C+. Misao was someone who stood out to me the last time I watched this company and she did so again here. Having her as a superhero who cheats is something that worked well enough and made her a bit more interesting, which is the point of such an over the top gimmick. Starkz and Athena are the far bigger names though and it makes sense for them to win, even in a short match like this.

Viva Van/Yuki Kamifuki vs. Trish Adora/Raku

Adora is apparently a substitute. Raku is one of the women who sang to start the show and is carrying a pillow. Van and Raku start things off with Van hitting a clothesline and posing a bit. Raku instead hits her with a pillow, which would seem to be some kind of rule violation. Van and Yuki are put on the pillow for a quiet two but Van gets up and throws the pillow into the crowd.

We settle down to Yuki sending Raku throat first into the rope, allowing Van to grab a Tarantula. A running facebuster gets Raku out of trouble though and Adora comes in to clean house. Van and Adora trade the big forearms until Van grabs a hurricanrana. A running boot in the corner gives Yuki two but Adora plants her with a Samoan drop. Yuki is back with an Octopus, which Adora breaks up and hits a Rough Ryder. Raku comes back in and is quickly kicked in the face but manages to grab a guillotine. Everything breaks down again and Yuki hits a Fameasser to pin Raku at 8:55.

Rating: B-. They kept this one energetic in the not overly

long run time and that made for a nice sprint. Yuki and Van seem to be a regular team who work well together while Adora and Raku made for a nice makeshift team. Adora continues to feel like she could be a big deal somewhere but that isn't going to happen when she keeps losing over and over, even on a show like this.

Mizuki/Vertvixen vs. Aja Kong/Pom Harajuku

Kong gets the big legend entrance and reception, which is more impressive since she's a replacement for Max the Impaler. Pom and Vertvixen start things off with the latter grabbing a headlock. That's broken up and we have a standoff before it's off to Mizuki vs. the much larger Kong. Mizuki bites the arm to limited success so Kong misses an elbow, allowing Mizuki to hit a basement dropkick.

Back up and Kong picks up Pom to throw her at Mizuki for two, which I guess is the same as a tag. Vertvixen slugs away in the corner and the villains (I think?) stomp Pom down. Mizuki steals Pom's shoe and throws it into the crowd, leaving Vertvixen to hit a hard forearm in the corner. The one shoed Pom manages an anklescissors for a breather and the tag brings Kong back in to wreck the mortals.

The spinning backfist misses and Vertvixen gets in a kick to the head, only for Kong to knock Mizuki out of the air. Pom comes back in for a wristdrag out of the corner but misses a backsplash. Kong seems rather gassed on the apron as Mizuki hits a running shot to Pom's back, only to miss a top rope double stomp. Mizuki is fine enough to put pom over the middle rope and now the double stomp connects. Kong makes the save but gets Stunned by Vertvixen. That leaves Mizuki to hit Pom with a shoe, setting up the Beauty Special (kind of a tabletop suplex) for the pin at 10:31.

Rating: C+. The action was fast paced, but this felt more like a way to have Kong in a match, which is more important than

anything else. The fans seemed way into what they were seeing (as has been the case all show) and it was cool to see a legend in the ring. Odd name aside, Vertvixen feels like someone who could be a star somewhere, but she has been treated as such a jobber whenever she is in AEW or ROH that she has an even longer way to go.

Shoko Nakajima vs. Rhio

Nakajima stands about 4'10 and is billed as a Big Kaiju (a Japanese monster). The much larger Rhino throws her down to start but Nakajima takes over on the arm. That's reversed into a headscissors on the mat but Nakajima flips over into a headlock in a nice display. Nakajima flips away from her and hits a dropkick, only to get planted with a high angle spinebuster.

A full nelson goes on to keep Nakajima in trouble and a backbreaker makes it even worse. Rhio goes up but gets caught with a super hurricanrana, allowing Nakajima to hit a slingshot hilo for two. Nakajima sends her outside for the suicide dive, followed by a running flip dive to make it worse. They trade forearms on the floor and then keep it going inside, where Rhio drops her with a headbutt.

A top rope superplex plants Nakajima hard but she's able to block the package piledriver. Nakajima strikes away until a superkick into a torture rack slam gives Rhio two. Rhio goes up but gets kicked down, setting up a 619 despite being back on her feet. A double arm DDT sets up a top rope backsplash to give Nakajima the pin at 13:24.

Rating: B. This was straight out of the little vs. big playbook and believe it or not, the story still works. Nakajima is a ball of energy who never stops moving and throws everything she has at you to stay in there. Rhio is someone who feels like she could be a star somewhere on the bigger stage after a bit more seasoning, but the talent is pretty

clearly there.

Maki Itoh/Miyu Yamashita vs. Miu Watanabe/Rika Tatsumi

Itoh gets a heck of a reception during her entrance. Yamashita and Watanabe start things off and apparently they have been feuding over the company's top singles title. Yamashita powers her back up against the ropes to start but has to avoid some kicks for a standoff. Tatsumi and Itoh come in for an exchange of headlocks takeovers and a cute-off. Itoh knocks her down and loads up her falling headbutt, only to have Yamashita stand her in place (with Itoh standing there like a board) and roll Tatsumi into place so the headbutt can connect.

Itoh's right hands in the corner are broken up and Tatsumi takes it to the floor as everything breaks down. Tatsumi chokes Yamashita with a belt as we have to go split screen, much to the surprise of commentary. They tease going back to ringside but head over to the bar, with commentary saying this is a great way to showcase the building if you can't be here in person. Watanabe buys some beers (and leaves a tip) but Yamashita and Itoh steal the drinks and raise a quick toast.

That's broken up and the drinks are spilled, much to a variety of chagrins. Back in and Watanabe elbows Itoh down for two before Tatsumi starts in on the knee. The Figure Four has Itoh in trouble but she makes the rope rather quickly. Watanabe tries a reverse Alabama Slam to send Tatsumi onto Itoh but only hits mat. That's enough to bring Yamashita back in but Watanabe powers her into the corner.

A powerslam puts Yamashita down again and the giant swinging into Tatsumi's dropkick gets two. Yamashita blocks a Twist of Fate and kicks Tatsumi in the head before Itoh low bridges her to the floor. Back in and Yamashita hits a delayed AA with Tatsumi having to make a save. Everyone is knocked down until Tatsumi and Yamashita strike it out. Itoh is back in and a top rope Codebreaker into a German suplex (not the smoothest of

transitions) knocks Tatsumi silly. A Skull Kick gives Yamashita the pin at 19:07.

Rating: B. This felt like a mixture of a fun brawl and a regular match which made for a good back and forth fight. The fans were WAY into Itoh here and it makes sense given her incredible charisma. I had a good time with this and it wound up being probably the best thing on a solid show.

Overall Rating: B+. Rather solid effort up and down here, with the worst match being completely decent. Shows like this are meant to be something of a sampler for fans and they got a good result here, with the whole thing working. I've liked everything I've seen from this promotion before and while some of it might not be for everyone, there should be something worth seeing here if you're looking for something different.

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