



THE CUBED CIRCLE NEWSLETTER

This week we review Fantastica Mania, JoshiMania and we look into the go home show for the Royal Rumble and more! This is a 8+ page issue and as always feel free to leave feedback either in the comment section, via email or the through the many social networks available.

NJPW FANTASTICA MANIA NIGHT ONE 2012/01/21, KORAKUEN HALL TOKYO, JAPAN REVIEW

Overall Show Thoughts

This was the weaker of the two shows, with only one match that really stuck out, but allot of matches were set up for the second night were we got a lot of quality matches. Luckily if you don't count the filler on the show, like the long breaks and interviews it didn't run that long. The show was a lot of fun though and I really can't say that it was a waste of time and there was some good stuff on the show.

1. Danshoku Dino & Maximo vs. Taichi & TAKA Michinoku

This was basically one big homosexual comedy spot, from Maximo kissing the announcers on the way to the ring, to the focus on the backside of Taichi, it was just reference after reference. There were some good spots to the outside, but the match as a whole was something I would expect from PWG, instead of New Japan Pro Wrestling. Taichi pinned Maximo in 8:04 with a modified rollup. After the match Maximo kissed one of the announcers once again.

** 1/4

2. King Fale & Tama Tonga vs. OKUMURA & YOSHI-HASHI

I was impressed with the speed and agility of Fale and Tonga, but Fale in particular. There was more kissing on the show, when Tonga kissed HASHI's manager when she attempted to interfere. OKUMURA didn't really deliver, his timing was way off and he didn't really contribute anything to the match, besides a great topé con giro off of a

barricade on the outside. After botching a neckbreaker, HASHI hit a senton bomb on Fale for the win in 11:27.

** 1/2

3. Apollo 55 (Prince Devitt & Ryusuke Taguchi) & Tiger Mask vs. Gedo, Jado & Misterioso Jr.

This was the second best match on the show, behind Goto and KUSHIDA vs. Dorada and Rush. It was no surprise that Devitt, Taguchi, Gedo and Jado had a good match, even though Misterioso was in a bit too long. Devitt hit a double foot stomp on Gedo for the win in 12:50.

*** 1/2

4. Hirooki Goto & KUSHIDA vs. Mascara Dorada & Rush

This match definitely felt the most crisp out of all the matches featuring New Japan and CMLL talent on the show, there was far less botching a the match felt much more fluid and less awkward. Rush was impressive and the rest of the match was really fun to watch, a great mix of lucha and strong-style. KUSHIDA submitted Dorada with a modified crossface in 10:24. Goto and Rush did a pull apart after the match building to their match the next night.

*** 1/2

5. CHAOS (Shinsuke Nakamura & Yujiro Takahashi) & Mephisto vs. Diamante, Jushin Thunder Liger & Tetsuya Naito

For the most part the New Japan and CMLL workers were kept separate during the match, besides a few big spots and the finish were Daimante and Takahashi had a bit of a mishap. But, Nakamura and Naito shined from start to finish, Liger was in for some of the important spots and the start of the match, but other than that he stayed on the apron for most of the match. Niato pinned Mephisto in 13:33 with the stardust press (corkscrew moonsault).

*** 1/2

6. Hiroshi Tanahashi & La Sombra vs. Kazuchika Okada & Volador Jr.

All the workers in the match did their part, but there wasn't much of a story to the match and it didn't really feel like a match featuring the IWGP champion. They didn't go that long, but the crowd were into it, like they were with most of the show. Volador pinned Sombra with a crazy looking reverse frankensteiner into a modified Canadian Destroyer in 12:33.

*** 1/4

NJPW FANTASTICA MANIA NIGHT TWO 2012/01/22, KORAKUEN HALL TOKYO, JAPAN

Overall Show Thoughts

This was definitely the better of the two shows, not only was it easy to sit through like night one, but it also had a lot of good wrestling from top to bottom, capped off with a great mainevent between La Sombra and Valador Jr..

The Korakuen Hall crowd was even hotter than the first night making the show all the more enjoyable. We also had a really good match between KUSHIDA and Mascara Dorado which was one of the main highlights of the two shows.

1. Apollo 55 (Prince Devitt, & Ryusuke Taguchi), Tiger Mask & Tama Tonga vs. Gedo, Jado, YOSHI-HASHI & OKUMURA

Everyone did their part, the heel team of Gedo, Jado, HASHI and OKUMURA got the heat on the face team in front of a super hot Korakuen Hall crowd. Everyone was over, Apollo 55 got their spots in, Gedo and Jado got the heat well and Tiger Mask IV was actually a very good face in peril. Tonga got the win in 10:11 when he pinned OKUMURA with a modified double underhook DDT.

*** ¼

2. Jushin Thunder Liger & Maximo vs. Misterioso Jr. & Taichi

Maximo even though I am not that enthused with his antics from a wrestling standpoint, he was so super over with this Korakuen Hall crowd, possibly even more over than Liger. The team of Misterioso & Taichi attempted to remove the mask of Liger, but other than that almost the entire match was comedy with Maximo leading the pack. Maximo pinned Misterioso with a sitout powerbomb in 8:15. After the match Maximo attempted to kiss the referee, with Liger helping out, he was not successful.

** ¾

3. CMLL World Welterweight Title Match
Mascara Dorado vs. KUSHIDA

Yes, there was some botched spots and missed calls in the match, but they weren't enough to really bring the match down as a whole. The kind of botches featured in the match were to be expected, from two workers who work different styles and speak different languages. They put on a very fun match, with some great spots that fitted together well. Dorado pinned KUSHIDA with a springboard dragonrana for the win in 13:22.

*** ½

4. Hirooki Goto vs. Rush

This match was built during night one, when tensions began to brew during the match and boiled over into a post match pull apart. The match could have gone longer, a match that goes just under ten minutes was a bit short to tell the story that they wanted to tell.

The story that they told was a decent one however, Goto was the home hero overcoming the foreigner Rush. Goto pinned Rush in 9:49 with the Shoten Kai.

5. Hiroshi Tanahashi, Tetsuya Naito & Diamante vs. Kazuchika Okada, Shinsuke Nakamura & Mephisto

Nakamura wore a mask for the early part of the match, wrestling in a docile manner, but when the mask was removed he turned into a crazy man. It didn't really feel like Tanahashi was in the match, he spent hardly any time in the ring and when he was, it didn't really feel like the IWGP champion was in the ring. Diamante botched a springboard on Mephisto. Diamante pinned Mephisto in 14:24 with a double underhook facebuster from the top rope.

** ¾

6. World Welterweight Title Match
La Sombra vs. Valador Jr.

This was by far the best match over the two days, both men had great chemistry, the match built really well and didn't just feel like one big high spot. It felt like a really big deal from the crowd reaction and the way that the match was worked. Sombra and Valador were definitely two of the best and most impressive performers of the event. Sombra won with a feint springboard moonsault into a standing moonsault in 21:47.

CHIKARA JOSHIMANIA 2,3,4 DECEMBER 2011

Going into the show I had high hopes, I was expecting a King of Trios style event, that was fun, well paced and featured good wrestling, did I get that? For the most part I did. I wouldn't say that any of the nights were the Super J Cup 1994, but they were all very easy to sit through and most of all, fun.

The show that stuck out the most to me in terms of quality was night three, by far. The last three matches on the show ranged from very good to great and the entire setting felt very special. This isn't to say that the other nights weren't good, but they definitely weren't near the level of night three. This isn't a bad thing at all, in fact it has it's advantages.

Much like King of Trios, JoshiMania was very well paced, night one was fun, but was more of a sample than anything else, night two was good, but still didn't feel like it peaked and then night three caps off the event with a bang and that's the way it should be. Don't go into JoshiMania thinking that you are going to receive classic after classic, or a 1990's five-star Joshi match, you will not get it. However if you go in expecting three shows that are fun, well paced, and very easy to sit through, (with each show ranging from two hours to two hours and twenty minutes) then I don't think that you will walk away disappointed.

Night One December 2nd 2011 Philadelphia, PA

Night one was by far the weakest of the three nights, there was no stellar match or ground breaking performance, which is fine since it built well. At first I questioned Chikara's judgment, surprised at the fact that they had the first show at the Asylum (now gone) and not the last, but looking back at crowd reaction and the lack of heat for some of the matches on the first night I can see where they were coming from.

Nothing was particularly bad on the show, apart from Gami vs. Shimono, with multiple botches and all-round bad work. Which is surprising, given the fact that on Night 3 Gami delivered a very good performance for her age. The anticipated mainevent between Aja Kong and Sara Del Rey was disappointing to a certain extent, it just didn't seem to go long enough. The Toyota Uematsu match and the F.I.S.T. Colony match were the best matches on the show, with both matches being worked well.

If you are going to miss any of the JoshiMania shows this is the one to miss, it has some good fun stuff on it, but nothing that really stands out all that much. One of the only things that I would say you should go out of your way to see on the show, if you are a fan of Joshi, just for the novelty of having them in the ring at the same time having a match, Del Rey vs. Kong, but other than that there isn't really anything of note here.

1. Archibald Peck & Los Ice Creams vs. Kaori Yoneyama, Hanako Nakamori & Tsubasa Kuragaki

** $\frac{3}{4}$

2. Sawako Shimono vs. Gami

**

3. Tim Donst vs. Green Ant

4. Mayumi Ozaki & Mio Shirai vs. Ayako Hamada & Cherry

5. Toshie Uematsu vs. Manami Toyota

*** $\frac{1}{2}$

6. F.I.S.T. (Johnny Gargano & Chuck Taylor) vs. The Colony (Fire Ant & Soldier Ant)

*** $\frac{1}{2}$

7. Aja Kong vs. Sara Del Rey

*** $\frac{1}{4}$

Night Two December 3rd 2011 Everett, MA

Night two's crowd seemed to be the smallest crowd out of all three shows, in spite of this, the crowd was still really into the show and probably more into the show than the crowd in Philadelphia. The show featured four good to great matches and there was absolutely nothing you could call bad on the show.

Sara Del Rey put on the best match on the show with Tsubasa Kuragaki, in a very stiff match. Del Rey really shined throughout all the shows, proving that she is one of the best female workers in the world today, if not one of the best workers in general. The trios match was also one of the highlights of the weekend, which wasn't a surprise given the workers in the match.

From top to bottom this show is really solid and I recommend it for anyone that is interested in Joshi. It wasn't a world beater of a show, but it was still a very fun show that featured some really good fun matches.

1. Cherry & Sawako Shimono vs. Toshie Uematsu & Gami

2. Ophidian vs. Gregory Iron

** $\frac{3}{4}$

3. Hanako Nakamori vs. Kaori Yoneyama

*** $\frac{1}{4}$

4. Mayumi Ozaki vs. Mio Shirai

*** $\frac{1}{2}$

5. Tsubasa Kuragaki vs. Sara Del Rey

*** $\frac{3}{4}$

6. Team F.I.S.T. & Portia Perez vs. Fire Ant, Green Ant, Mike Quakenbush & Manami Toyota

*** $\frac{1}{2}$

7. Aja Kong vs. Ayako Hamada

*** $\frac{1}{2}$

Night Three December 4th 2011 Manhattan, NY

From start to finish JoshiMania night three was just a joy to watch, the wrestling was great, building to the two last matches on the show which were fantastic. The lighting and set up wasn't 100 percent ideal, but it didn't hamper the show one bit, in fact in some ways it made the show more memorable.

We had the last and or first matches of some big Joshi stars in America including: Uematsu, Gami, Ozaki, Yoneyama and presumably Kong and Toyota, which is historic.

I found myself excited for one match after the other, because of the quality and atmosphere, the crowd wasn't hot throughout the entire night, but the environment, stars, crowd, setup and it being the last night of JoshiMania made it all the more special.

The show closed with not one, but two fantastic matches, one was a trios, team Toyota Manami Toyota, Hanako Nakamori & Sawako Shimono versus team Kong, Aja Kong, Mio Shirai & Tsubasa Kuragaki, the match got a lot of time going over the twenty minute mark. Both teams went back and forth pulling out all the stops, hitting all their signature moves and putting on one hell of a match. Both teams consisted of good workers and even though Kong is getting on in years, she played an amazing monster.



The other fantastic match, the mainevent, with arguably two of the best women's wrestlers squaring off, in the form of Sara Del Rey vs. Ayako Hamada, they wrestled relatively stiff and went the perfect length of time. The crowd was super hot for the match with dueling chants for Hamada and Del Rey respectively.

If you are starting to feel apathetic towards professional wrestling, if you are looking for something different to spark your interest, if you are looking for a fun experience coupled with great matches, look no further than JoshiMania night three. And if you have never experienced Joshi before and are looking for a starting point, I can think of no better place.

1. Los Ice Creams vs. Dasher Hatfield & Saturyne

** $\frac{3}{4}$

2. Gami vs. Portia Perez

3. Ultra Mantis Black vs. Brodie Lee

** $\frac{1}{2}$

4. The Batiri & Toshie Uematsu vs. The Colony & Cherry

*** $\frac{1}{4}$

5. Mayumi Ozaki vs. Kaori Yoneyama

*** $\frac{1}{2}$

6. Manami Toyota, Hanako Nakamori & Sawako Shimono vs. Aja Kong, Mio Shirai & Tsubasa Kuragaki

7. Ayako Hamada vs. Sara Del Rey

BITS & PIECES

ROYAL RUMBLE GO HOME SHOW

The go home show for the Royal Rumble was very hit and miss like most things from WWE creative. There wasn't really anything on the show that would deter you or encourage you to buy the Royal Rumble, except for two main things.

The show was capped off with CM Punk delivering a GTS on John Laurinaitis with absolutely no heat, I was gob smacked. First of all if you built up the Punk and Laurinaitis feud for so many months, with it getting really hot last week, why would you have the climax on Raw? Is Laurinaitis just going to get a GTS every week? I sure hope not.

I don't think that anyone would have purchased the Royal Rumble just because of the Punk and Laurinaitis feud, but it could have been a contributing factor for the Rumble and a major contributing factor for a future pay-per view. It wasn't even the case of "the crowd should be into it so we are going to do it." There was no reaction.

The other major contributing factor for the Royal Rumble was the Chris Jericho Highlight reel segment. Jericho teased, teased and teased and finally spoke when he said that at the Royal Rumble the world as you know it will end, he completely dropped the sick with fame gimmick and became serious, this more than anything has me excited for the Royal Rumble.

Of course there is also this new, slightly confusing and counter intuitive stipulation, that any superstar is eligible for the Royal Rumble match. Which could mean that anyone from the Rock to Big Show could win the Rumble, but it also leaves a lot of logical gaps.

MORE STUPIDITY ON TWITTER

We had more stupidity on Twitter this week, although it wasn't from one of the major companies, in fact it was from a very unusual source. On the 24th of January 2012 Davey Richards tweeted the following comment "Pro wrestling is what I do to pass the time between jiu jitsu classes.", now you may just blow off the comment as satire or comedy, but the comments continued, in the twitter altercation between Richards and Kevin Steen which really came across as unprofessional and unbecoming of a champion of any promotion.

In response to Kevin Steen, who tweeted to Jim Cornette "Hey, proud of your champ now?!". Davey Richards then replied to this saying "It's an actual athlete thing kev, you wouldn't understand. Grown men pretending.". The shenanigans pretty much continued for the rest of the day with tweets back and forth and to me it doesn't matter if Richards was doing it to parody someone else or if it was a work in the first place, to build up the

match between Steen and Richards. The fact of the matter is, is that Richards is the face of ROH and that he should behave accordingly, he shouldn't go around tweeting that pro wrestling is just something he does to pass the time, it doesn't matter what the circumstances were.

If it was legitimate and not a work, then I would say good for Steen and good for Del Rey that responded to the tweets, because they were in all honesty, very stupid.

Next Week's Issue

Next week's issue is the big Royal Rumble issue, featuring a full in depth review of the Royal Rumble, with entrant numbers. To accompany the Royal Rumble review, next week's issue will also feature the news of the week, as well as thoughts on the first Raw on the Road to WrestleMania. All that and more right here at cubedcirclewrestling.blogspot.com.

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