

## Ryan Capuano's final ECW report

E-mail: Cap42086@hotmail.com

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### Pre-Show Thoughts:

So. We have a lot to talk about. But before that, I have an announcement to make. This, unfortunately, will be my last article for the Wrestling Observer/Figure Four Weekly. It's been something that's been building for weeks now, and after last week's show, I had had enough. I talked to Meltzer and handed in my notice. He has left the door open for me if I ever wish to return, but we'll see. As of right now, I need a break. It's been a really, really weird year for me personally, professionally, and as a wrestling fan. I need a change in my life and sadly, my heart just isn't into the product. I'm not the same guy who cried in the Windy City Field House back on February 24th, 2007, as he watched Samoa Joe give his farewell speech. I'm not the same guy who cried on November 14th, 2005, coming home from vacation to a RAW Tribute to Eddy Guerrero. I'm not the same guy who cried on December 27th, 1990 at his first house show, because the Undertaker gave him a scary look when he was coming down the entrance ramp. Four-year-olds are not meant to come face to face with their own mortality like that, goddamn it! So that's that. Maybe I'll come back someday. Maybe the passion for pro wrestling will re-enter my life somehow, but for now, I just have too much on my mind to give it the thought it warrants. We at least had a few laughs along the way, and in the end, no matter how inconsequential it seems, it means something.

Now then. On to SummerSlam 2008, a fairly average show, saved by the final two matches. Let's count the snowflakes for the matches, shall we?

Jeff Hardy vs. MVP \*\*1/4 (Solid opener, but these two really don't have the chemistry to rise to the next level against each other.)

Santino Marella and Beth Phoenix vs. Kofi Kingston and Mickey James \*3/4 (The women wrestled circles around the men, which is more so a compliment to their talents, rather than a detriment to the men's. Nevertheless, I'm the only one not on Santino's bandwagon and this match is a good example of why.)

Matt Hardy vs. Mark Henry DUD (Un-fucking-believable.)

CM Punk vs. JBL \*\*3/4 (Booked perfectly. JBL brought his A-game, which, as we all know, isn't exactly much. Nevertheless, the match was fine and Punk's "I will bleed for this" line at the end sold it for me.)

HHH vs. The Great Khali \* (Ah, who gives a shit?)

Batista vs. John Cena \*\*\*1/2 (Very good match. Didn't have the necessary momentum or atmosphere to bring it on to another level, but it was really well paced and these two did a good job selling the story of one-upsmanship.)

Undertaker vs. Edge \*\*\*\* (Excellent match! Of course when a match is thirty-six minutes long, there will be pacing issues, and this match started off really slowly without much intensity. But from the cage collapse on, it was brilliant. Had the first fifteen minutes been better, this would have hovered around \*\*\*\*1/2 or even more, but as it stands, it was a terrific effort with a great story and a fine way to end this feud.)

So the last two matches were really the only two to write home about. But they certainly made that show. And with that, another SummerSlam is in the books.

And before I get into the report, I just want comment firstly on Colt Cabana's debut on Smackdown! last week as Scotty Goldman. This man will have no trouble getting over with the WWE crowd and I look forward to what he will accomplish. Secondly, Takeshi Morishima. The man I love. The man who wrestled two dark matches for the WWE this week. Former ROH World Champion and one of the best workers in the world worked dark matches against Charlie Haas and fellow former ROH Champ Jamie Noble. I saw a picture of Morishima on NOAH's website shaking hands with Vince and John Cena, and it was truly a surreal image. Here's to hoping it goes through and we get Morishima vs. Umaga. Oh, badass.

And did anyone else see Dr. Keith on RAW last night? Absolutely fantastic. (Keith, if you read this, I saw you coming out of Rage two weeks ago, but you were too far away, so I didn't get a chance to say hi. And yes, I saw Wilco instead.)

### Show Review:

Evan Bourne, Super Crazy, and Tommy Dreamer vs. Chavo Guerrero, John Morrison, and The Miz w/ Bam Neely

Super Crazy started off with some good offense, including a nice standing moonsault on Morrison. Bourne played the face in peril for most of the match, eventually making the hot tag to Dreamer. Dreamer cleans house and sends the heels outside. Crazy hits a rope flip to Miz and Morrison, and Bourne hits a BEAUTIFUL moonsault from the top turnbuckle onto Neely and Chavo to the outside. Dreamer tries to pull Morrison back in, but Miz sneaks up from behind and hits his high knee/neckbreaker combo that I can't remember the name of because the announcers just called it a neckbreaker. Either way, Miz pinned Dreamer.

FINAL RATING: \*\*3/4 Really fun match with lots of action. Bit of a spotfest, but it was entertaining in the short time it was

on.

### Ricky Ortiz vs. Gavin Spears

Gavin Spears is Shawn Spears of FCW fame. Ortiz works a headlock for most of the first part of the match. Spears comes back and works the arm, only to get overpowered by Ortiz. Ortiz hits a bunch of shoulder blocks, and eventually gets the win with an Ultimate Warrior big splash.

FINAL RATING: \* When Spears was in control, he showed more offense and potential that Ortiz has in any of his four victories combined. Think Cody Rhodes when he first debuted, just worse. Whoever thought it was a good idea to say that this guy was ready to come up to the big show was sadly mistaken.

A WWE Universe factoid pops up. Lo and behold, RAW beat Monday Night Football for the second week in a row in ratings. Is anyone buying that? I mean, seriously. It's like they're assuming their viewers don't have calendars and don't realize that, you know, it's not football season. A complete insult to the intelligence of the viewers, especially football fans.

Finlay and Hornswoggle jig merrily down the ramp and into the ring. Finlay calls out Knox again. He gave him an opportunity last week to beat him up and he didn't take it, so he's giving it to him again. Knox once again backs down, but Finlay isn't having it. Knox retreats back up the ramp, and Finlay comes charging at him. The two have an intense, realistic brawl that's eventually broken up by Dean Malenko, Mike Rotundo, and two referees. Great segment.

The RAW Rebound focuses on the best thing in wrestling right now: Shawn Michaels and Chris Jericho's bitter, bitter feud.

### Matt Hardy vs. Mark Henry w/ Tony Atlas - ECW Championship Match

Hardy works the leg early on and tries to end it with the Twist of Fate, but Henry shoves him off and goes on the offensive with power moves and rest holds. Atlas gets in a punch behind the ref's back for good measure. Hardy is able to slip out of a full nelson and take back control. He hits a bunch of stiff shots and eventually, gets the twist of fate, but Atlas, like on Sunday, pulls him off, but the ref did not see it. Hardy goes up top, frustrated, and attempts a moonsault, but Henry gets the knees up. Atlas interferes one more time, and after the World's Strongest Slam, Henry retains.

FINAL RATING: \*\* Hardy is one of those guys that makes you wrestle up to his level. I realize I've said this in the past, but it was never more evident than it was here. He got a decent match out of Henry, who slowed it down at every turn. It would have been more effective to have Henry kick out of twist of fate, rather than be saved, but beggars can't be choosers. This could have been a lot worse.

### Final Thoughts:

A good show tonight. Entertaining matches and one very good non-wrestling segment. The whole show had a really good flow throughout. Not really much else to say here, but very well done overall.

And that'll do it for me here. Thanks very, very much to everyone who has been reading my column these past fourteen months. Thanks for all your comments, good and bad. By the way, if you're planning on sending me an e-mail saying, "Thank god you're gone!" or anything along those lines, don't bother because I'm just going to delete it. Thanks, of course, to Dave Meltzer, Derek Burgan, Dr. Keith, Dan Wahlers, Todd Martin, Ryan Mulligan, Jeff Hamlin, Phil DiLiegro, and Joe Babinsack for being my colleagues and my friends. Thanks to Rhett Titus for being the sexiest man alive and having the great entrance music I've ever heard. Thanks to Kevin White Jr. for filling in for me when I needed it. Special thanks to readers James Beane, Nathan Cabrera, Fahd Shoab, and Herman Segle for continuously supporting me and writing in even though I've always been very lax on writing people back. Well, it's been a bizarre ride. I've gotten a lot of enjoyment out of this experience, I've grown as a wrestling fan and critic, I've been some great people, I used Dave Meltzer as a reference for a job I applied for even though I didn't even get called in for an interview, I had an interesting altercation on AIM with a man claiming to be New Jack, I've had my life threatened and my soul condemned on multiple occasions, and I was quoted on a German wrestling site for referring to Bobby Lashley as "Steroid Jones." Good times, great memories. Feel free to drop me a line whenever. And with that, I bid you all good luck with everything you ever do and with everyone you ever meet. See ya around.

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