

TNA Impact TV report

By Jeff Hamlin

11.21 TNA Impact

By Jeff Hamlin (jhamlin@vilcom.com)

The Big News: The main event for the company's final PPV of 2008 has been announced. Kurt Angle will face Jeff Jarrett. Uh no. Samoa Joe. Uh, no. It's Rhino, a match that's been given away for free at least ten times over the past six years. In this economy, with all sorts of competition on PPV, that's destined to be one ugly buy rate.

The Main Event Mafia rolled a casket out to the ring to signify the burial of Christian Cage after last week's beatdown. Whenever you see a casket in pro wrestling rings, it just brings to mind lots of negative connotations. Angle still claims that he's facing Jeff Jarrett at Final Resolution, even though no such match has been agreed to by Jarrett. Rhino came out and referred to Cage in the past tense, like he had already signed with the WWE. It's strange enough they donated the final segment of last week's show to someone who isn't even officially gone yet, but now they open up this week's show with the same thing. As badly as Rhino has been castrated over the past two years, he did a good promo running down the mafia and had the crowd solidly behind him. He even got the best of Kevin Nash on the stick. Before things started to make too much sense, Rhino charged the ring. About six TNA Originals watched on while Rhino got destroyed five-on-one. They cut back to Jeff Jarrett and Mick Foley watching from a monitor backstage. Instead of running to the ring and making a save, they just stood there. Sure made them look lame. Rhino got put inside the coffin.

To the back, where Foley mentioned that the Main Event Mafia has done things not even the NWO or Degeneration X ever did. Foley asked Jarrett when did he agree to face Angle, and Jarrett denied making such a claim. Jarrett vowed to get the house in order tonight.

Backstage, the Motor City Machine Guns were acting obnoxious toward Samoa Joe and A.J. Styles. By acting like they hate management, Alex Shelley and Chris Sabin are about to become the coolest heels in the company. Foley walked in and ordered the guns to face Joe and Styles tonight.

1. Black Machismo and Consequences Creed defeated Tanahashi and Sonjay Dutt. At least the announcers didn't forget about the Black Machismo-So Cal Val angle, even though the bookers sure have. They barely had enough time to do the hot tag sequences and go to the finish. Creed got the pin on Dutt with a TKO. *1/4

The Beautiful People were backstage with Cute Kip. Christy Hemme had recruited a new partner in Sojourner Bolt, who jobbed quickly to Kong months ago. I guess that was forgotten here. Angelina Love were hilarious making fun of Hemme's lack of qualifications as a wrestler, thinking she belonged more in a strip club. Love and Velvet Sky are still great heels.

Suicide's time is drawing near. Well, as soon as his bicep heels.

The Feast or Fired match will return at Final Resolution. Judging by all the contracts coming due in the spring, there'll be an even better chance to make this a shoot this year than it was last year. The promo piece mentioned how a new champion was crowned, but showed Petey Williams. If you'll recall, Williams was supposed to get the World Title shot, but wound up getting an X Division shot instead when Scott Steiner simply switched briefcases. They also mentioned the breakup of Kip James and B.G. James as a tag team and Christopher Daniels supposedly getting fired. Of course, Daniels is still with the company, and they could have really helped the credibility of the match by getting Senshi the fired briefcase since he had already given notice.

Jim Cornette, as the third authority figure to appear in the first half hour of the show, had Eric Young, Sheik Abdul Bashir and referee Shane Sewell in his office. Cornette acknowledged Sewell's wrestling past in Canada and Puerto Rico, but said he couldn't beat up wrestlers anymore. Cornette awarded the X Division title back to Bashir, placed Sewell on probation, and in order pacify Young he gave him a Legends title shot tonight against Booker T.

The Beautiful People defeated Christy Hemme and Sojourner Bolt. They really missed an opportunity here to hammer home how much mainstream publicity the whole Sarah Palin angle received. It was only mentioned in passing. Say what you want about WWE, but if this had been Raw there would have been screen shots from MSN, Huffington Post, various other political blogs and everywhere else it turned up over the past week. Another example of why this company just will never seriously challenge WWE. Bolt looked a lot better getting squashed by Awesome Kong than she did working spots at ¼ speed with Love. Hemme got the hot tag, but Love got the pin with a Lights Out. ¾*

Rough Cut: LAX continued. Homicide was the focus, and mentioned he was an altar boy growing up. They showed Homicide's youth growing up and actually interviewed Steve Mack, who was Monsta Mack from the early days of Ring of Honor. He told a story about wrestling the same night he got shot, and used a bunch of tampons to heal the wound. Think next week's installment will include footage from Homicide's latest appearance at an ROH show? Me neither.

The premiere of ODB's Angle was actually very entertaining. ODB's hair now sticks straight up and looks like Bull Nakano. Her guest was Sharmell, and the two actually had good chemistry together. ODB thought she was named after toilet paper. When Sharmell asked for some Don Perignon, ODB mentioned she had him last night and he wasn't all that good. They started arguing about the Main Event Mafia, and it ended with ODB challenging Sharmell to a dance contest at the PPV. Well, that may not be as entertaining.

Kurt Angle did an interview announcing that the winner of the Motor City Machine Guns/Joe-Styles match could pick two wrestlers of their choosing, and they would face Sting/Steiner/Nash and Booker at the PPV in an eight-man match.

Tenay announced Petey Williams would be out of action for a month with a concussion after getting beat down last week by the Mafia.

Samoa Joe and A.J. Styles defeated the Motor City Machine Guns. Very good match. They did topes right away, with Chris Sabin colliding with Joe head-to-head, and Styles coming right back with a somersault tope onto Sabin and Alex Shelley. Guns work all sorts of great looking high spots, but now are being treated in the commentary as heels. After Sabin accidentally crotched Shelley on the top rope, it ended up with Styles pinning Shelley with a Styles Clash. **3/4

Postmatch, Angle, Booker and Nash ran in to beat down Nash and Styles. Sabin and Shelley were nowhere to be seen. Creed and Machismo ran in for the save. Machismo throwing punches to Nash looked completely ridiculous. It ended with the faces, well, Machismo and Creed being laid out and the Mafia standing over them.

After a commercial, Rhino (wasn't he in the casket?), with his head bandaged, walked into the TNA Originals locker room and gave them the latest pep talk that didn't get over.

4. Booker T defeated Eric Young to retain the Legends Championship. Can't wait to see the Legends Championship with the Western States Heritage Championship in the patheon of defunct titles that didn't get over. Young spent the first half of the match crossing up Booker's traditional spots until Booker finally hit a savoc kick. Young made a rally and hit the death valley driver for a two count. Booker eventually got the pin clean with the ax kick. *3/4

Team 3-D was backstage with Jeremy Borash cutting a promo with Beer Money. Apparently, they're about to become faces again without actually doing an official turn. Kind of like Sting turning heel without actually turning. Then again, he's not really a heel either. Anyway, Brother Ray even denounced the Mafia.

Kurt Angle and Kevin Nash defeated Abyss and Matt Morgan. Abyss did his stationary offense against Angle early, and Morgan got a near fall with a bicycle kick. Of course, it would have been silly to have Morgan or Abyss taking the heat against Angle because of the size disparity, so the first few minutes of the match were pretty meaningless. Nash tagged in, and he and Morgan looked roughly the same size. Morgan started selling after Angle snuck in and gave him a chop block. Beer Money walked out midway through the match. Aren't they feuding with Team 3-D? Abyss got the hot tag. Finish came when Abyss chased Angle to the floor, but then cleaned house on Beer Money. As Abyss was about to use a move off the second rope, James Storm hit Abyss from behind with a beer bottle, and Nash pinned Abyss with a big boot. In Mexico 15 years ago, Konnan used the beer over the head angle to set business records. Somehow, I don't think this will have the same effect. *3/4

Mick Foley came out to announce the main event for Final Resolution. It was the strangest speech Foley's ever delivered, where he admitted that the Main Event Mafia had run roughshod over TNA. Meanwhile, the crowd seemed to be reacting to something, but whatever it was had nothing to do with what Foley was saying. Foley, who usually has quite the poker face, was clearly getting flustered. Foley said perhaps the Mafia wasn't only the past and present of wrestling, but the future as well. It's gotten to the point where I'm not sure if the company can't stop burying its own now. Then he announced that the eight-man match at Final Resolution would have a special stipulation that only Russo could have dreamed up, where if any member of the Mafia gets pinned by any member of Styles' team, then A.J. Styles would get the world championship. I was waiting for Foley to make sense out of that, but no dice. Then he announced Angle's opponent at the PPV would be Rhino, which got no pop at all. A furious Angle came out upset that he wouldn't face Jarrett, which sure buried Rhino bad. As if that hasn't happened countless times since 2006. Angle said he had never pinned Jarrett. That would seem to be right since Angle made his debut just as Jarrett was leaving the WWF in 2000 when he held Vince McMahon up for hundreds of thousands of dollars to drop the Intercontinental title to Chyna before jumping to WCW. Talk about something that will never happen again. Anyway, Angle teased a match with Foley and then slapped him. This brought out Jarrett. They tried to play this up like it was a huge confrontation, but Jarrett got a disappointing pop. Foley had enough going against

him in this angle, then he had to be Jarrett's set up man. Definitely one night I'm glad I wasn't him. Then again, after he went home, he climbed into bed with his wife who was once a model. Maybe I do want to be him. Jarrett said he can't fire Angle because "of that stipulation in his contract." I have no idea what he was talking about. Anyway, Jarrett announced that Angle's match with Rhino would have an added stipulation. If Angle wins, he will get his wish and face Jarrett. If Rhino wins, Angle's contract is null and void and he's gone from the company. Jarrett stuck his hand out to shake, but Angle slapped him. Jarrett teased slugging him, but instead Rhino ran out and gored Angle.

SUMMARY: If you haven't already, listen to the superb interview that Dave and Brian did with Johnny Devine on Wednesday. Then take a look at the online poll regarding the three major promoters in combat sports in North America. Those two items will tell you all you need to know regarding this company right now.