

DiLiegro's ECW TV report for November 24

ECW TV Report for November 25, 2008

Taped yesterday from Providence, RI.

Extreme Rules: Tommy Dreamer v. Jack Swagger

Swagger took Dreamer down to the mat early on and controlled him there. Dreamer grabbed a kendo stick from the apron and went to work. A side Russian leg sweep landed for Dreamer who then slammed Swagger on top of a chair. That doesn't seem like the most efficient use of the chair. Striker reminded us that the last extreme rules match saw Dreamer defeat Colin Delaney. On the outside, Swagger reversed a whip and fired Dreamer into the post. Swagger wasted time allowing Dreamer to retake the advantage after hitting a crossbody from the apron. Back inside, he hit a chair shot to the back but a suplex attempt was reversed by Swagger into a northern lights suplex. Swagger bridged for a two count. Swagger then fired Dreamer into the chair as the match went to break. Coming back, Swagger used the chair and a kendo stick to work over the leg of Dreamer. He used the chair to assist with a half-Boston crab until Dreamer reached the ropes (good stuff, it's always fun to see new variations on moves). Dreamer reached the ropes and grabbed the kendo stick on the floor and used it to break the hold. He came back using a garbage can lid until Swagger turned it back around with a low blow and knee lift. Swagger set Dreamer up on top of a garbage can but missed a Vader bomb. Dreamer used a garbage can to assist with his baseball slide into Swagger in the tree of woe. Dreamer went to set up a table allowing Swagger to recover and land a belly-to-belly suplex. Dreamer slipped out of a power slam attempt and into a DDT for a near fall. Swagger then countered into a drop toe hold sending Dreamer into the chair. Swagger connected with the doctor bomb through the table to end the match.

This was a strong match as it went beyond just a garbage match. The wrestlers used the weapons to complement what was going to be a pretty good wrestling match, anyway. As far as accomplishing the goal of putting Swagger over Dreamer strongly, this feud achieved its goal. Repeated wins over the same opponent are an obvious yet effective way to push a wrestler along. Dreamer is an interesting case as he's always fairly over with the crowd, yet since he is not pushed, the benefit of having Swagger beat him may be small. Still, it's a good start. Later in this show, they would tease a Matt Hardy-Jack Swagger feud which sounds like its two months too soon.

Swagger d. Dreamer, Pin, 14:23, ***¼.

Backstage, John Morrison and the Miz were backstage doing a promo putting over and plugging Survivor Series. Morrison got a dig in at John Cena for "months and months of video packages." Boogey Man showed up out of nowhere and scared off Morrison and Miz. This was largely a waste of time. Elsewhere, Matt Hardy was being interviewed backstage. He said his brother Jeff was home feeling better and resting up. Jack Swagger then walked in and said he was coming after Hardy's title next. Elsewhere, Mark Henry stole candy from Hornswoggle and taunted him about tonight's main event. At least, he gave him back his candy.

DJ Gabriel v. Jared Gainem

Gabriel and Alicia Fox did their dance in the ring before the match. Gabriel landed a knee lift and hip lock to begin. He connected with a standing drop kick. He then threw the jobber out of the ring via the giant swing. Back inside, Gabriel went to the mat after a side headlock takedown, followed by a suplex. Meanwhile, Grisham and Striker were reminiscing about the Piledriver album (released in 1987 by the then WWF). He then won with the European uppercut off of the middle rope. The victors celebrated with more dancing after the match.

This was a decent enough squash. Based on what little we have seen, Gabriel appears to have some upside going forward. After the match, Grisham asked Fox why she was here on ECW. She met Gabriel over in the UK and they have a connection, you see.

Gabriel squash, 3:10.

The Raw rebound featured Chris Jericho winning a number one contender's match and then getting destroyed by John Cena. I have no idea what the segment accomplished. Even top babyface draws who were booked like monsters (Goldberg, Road Warriors) generally did not destroy their opponents until the match itself. Doing it beforehand really defeats the purpose. John Cena's scripted promo last night struck me as Vince McMahon lashing out at the low advertising rates his show draws as Cena incessantly put the fans over. That may have worked better if they did not do a segment earlier with Kennedy which demonstrated why the ad rates are so low. And they also replayed DX shilling merchandise because I suppose that was one of the most important things to take away from Raw.

After airing highlights of Ricky Ortiz's last win three weeks ago, they plugged his appearance on the Sci Fi show chase which follows ECW. By the way, Ortiz is still being billed as undefeated on television even though he did a job in a dark match to D-Lo Brown before this TV taping. It's a small thing, but there's no reason for a guy billed as undefeated on television to job off-camera.

Finlay v. Mark Henry

Henry dropped Finlay on the top rope to start. He then connected with a clothesline. He put Finlay down on the mat and used his weight with stomps and the like for a bit. After a rest hold, Henry went for the shillelagh on the apron and threw it to the floor. Why wouldn't he just give it to Atlas? Henry then went for another splash in the corner but Finlay got up his boot. Finlay teased a comeback but walked right into a snap body slam. Henry missed a splash and took a powder. Finlay tried to surprise him with a crossbody off the apron but Henry caught him and rammed into the ring apron as the match went to commercial. Returning from break, Finlay fought out of a rest hold but was then thrown into the corner. Henry then went back to a neck vice. After another escape, Finlay then maneuvered into a chin lock. Finlay came back with a jawbreaker from his knees and a drop kick for a near fall. Henry came back with a clothesline of his own and a splash in the corner. Finlay was sent out to the floor. There, Atlas began chasing Hornswoggle around. The distraction led to Finlay getting a second shillelagh and nailing Henry in the leg. He then connected with a missile drop kick off of the second turnbuckle. Atlas was going after Hornswoggle so Finlay had to chase after him and make a save. Henry chased after him and the two began brawling on the ramp. The match ended in either a double countout or a disqualification as the show concluded. There was no formal announcement from the ring announcer.

They had a marginally better match than they did three weeks ago even considering this one had an indecisive finish. Again, it's worth noting that this show had a large quantity of wrestling for a one hour show (with no overrun). I clocked all three matches at twenty-two minutes in total (twenty-nine total minutes minus about seven minutes for the two commercial breaks during the opening and closing matches). By contrast, last night's Raw had about thirty minutes of total wrestling (again excluding commercials) on a show that's over twice as long. For those who enjoy a more wrestling-driven product as opposed to an angle and (generic, scripted) interview-driven one, ECW offers a nice alternative to the rest of WWE's programming.

Finlay drew Henry, DCO, 12:00, **.