

## ECW TV report by Phil DiLiegro

ECW TV Report for December 30, 2008

Taped yesterday from Manchester, New Hampshire

The show began with an episode of the Dirt Sheet with the Miz and Morrison. Either WWE seriously pumped in crowd heat or these two guys were more hated than any heel on Raw last night. I imagine it's the former. They teased that they bought everyone in the crowd new cars. They then did some lousy comedy in the form of New Year's resolutions. The partners started arguing with each other over Morrison's abs. They made some jokes about Evan Bourne (mom's basement), John Cena (The Marine), Batista (his concussion), HHH (his nose) and Hornswoggle. They really started piling on Hornswoggle, so Finlay and the little guy came out. Finlay decked Morrison with the microphone but the heels soon got the edge. Hornswoggle ran under the ring to bring out Boogey Man. He then ran off the tag champions. With the exception of the dig at John Cena's acting, this segment was pointless and terrible. I don't think they have had a worthwhile Dirt Sheet on television even though the online version is often pretty good.

Matt Hardy v. Mark Henry

The match is nontitle. Hardy asked for a Greco-Roman knucklelock and snuck in a boot to the midsection (usually a heel spot) to start. Henry quickly took the advantage with his size and did his usual methodical offense for a while. Hardy feigned a comeback interrupted by an Atlas distraction. Henry then got a near fall after a banzai drop. Henry kept the advantage throughout the commercial break and held a bear hug. After another period of Henry's offense, Hardy finally began to make a comeback as Henry missed a splash. Hardy hit a pair of axe handles off of the second rope and the side effect for a near fall. Henry countered out of the twist of fate and then Jack Swagger hit the ring. Swagger hit a gutwrench powerbomb and took off. Henry then hit the world's strongest slam. They teased that Swagger and Henry may have to fight to determine the number one contendership.

This was the prototypical Henry-Hardy match with the champion selling for a long, dry period followed by a hot last minute of two of wrestling. Particularly after seeing many variations of this theme, it is getting to be a bit dull and this match was not very good on balance. However, there was also some typically strong commentary from Matt Striker as he put over the history between these two as well as Jack Swagger's ascendancy well. He also had a nice moment trying to get over the effectiveness of a chin lock when Henry was using a hold.

Hardy NC Henry, 8:32,  $\frac{3}{4}$ \*

Todd Grisham announced that tonight's main event would be a no disqualification tag team match between Miz & Morrison and Finlay & Boogey Man.

A vignette promoting the debut of Kizarny this week on Smackdown aired.

Paul Burchill v. DJ Gabriel

Mercy sakes alive, a Paul Burchill sighting! Katie Lea and Alicia Fox were at ringside and did pretty much nothing throughout the match. Grisham mentioned Gabriel is undefeated on ECW which allows me to point out the stupidity of Michael Cole claiming the same thing (twice) about Dolph Ziggler last night on Raw. Gabriel scored with a couple of arm drags to begin. Burchill then got the advantage with a lariat. As Burchill stomped away, the crowd went silent. He hit a knee lift and a clothesline for a near fall. A snap suplex led to another near fall. According to Striker, Burchill is related to actual pirates which explains a lot. Gabriel finally came back with a slingshot but Burchill returned with another clothesline. Gabriel then was caught going up to the second rope with a leg sweep. Gabriel won out of nowhere with a takedown and rolling cradle. It's very strange to see the pushed guy get beat on for 90% of the match and then have to steal the win from a forgotten wrestler like Burchill.

There wasn't anything all that special to this match, but there was something on commentary I found really interesting. Matt Striker let us know that Paul Burchill left the sport of rugby because "it wasn't aggressive enough". Now when I was growing up, Vince McMahon and Gorilla Monsoon would say the same thing, verbatim, about Jim Neidhart (except it was football, not rugby). And then I read Dave Meltzer's obituary on Dick the Bruiser this afternoon, and back in the fifties they said the same thing about him.

Gabriel d. Burchill, Pin, 5:22,  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

The Raw Rebound focused on the perplexing feud between Shawn Michaels and John Bradshaw Layfield.

No Disqualification: Finlay & Boogey Man v. The Miz & John Morrison

Miz and Finlay began the match. Hornswoggle came in and they executed a schoolboy spot on Miz followed by a double sit down on both heels. On the outside, Boogey Man clotheslined both heels on the floor. Hornswoggle hit a "lowpe" onto both men. The heels took the edge as Morrison swept out Finlay's legs when he was standing on the apron. Miz used the ring as a weapon for a bit before going to a rest hold. Why use a rest hold in a no disqualification match? Miz landed a pair of clotheslines. The champions connected with a double gutbuster and then Morrison pounded away. Morrison and Miz did nothing for a bit as everyone seems to forget that this was supposed to be an extreme rules match. Morrison went for the springboard splash onto his opponent laying on top of Miz's knees (give that move a name, please), but they botched the move as Finlay rolled off to the side. Boogey Man then made a save but retreated back to the corner (Why? It's a no-DQ match.). Finlay landed an atomic drop and a clothesline on Morrison as he made his own hot tag (all the better considering his partner). He then cleaned house on Miz, but in doing so, left himself open to being rolled up by Morrison for the pin. The faces made a comeback after the match with

Boogey Man setting up Morrison for the Celtic cross. Finlay brought three young kids into the ring to celebrate ala the Junkyard Dog two decades ago.

What was the purpose of making the match no disqualification if they were not going to use any weapons or break any rules? They could have done the Hornswoggle spots anyway since they work them into every Finlay match. It was also striking how little they trust Boogey Man as all he did was execute a clothesline and break up a pin. Though I suppose that made for the best match. One positive was that they booked the champions to go over because WWE has booked first-time together teams to defeat their champions before.

Miz & Morrison(x) d. Finlay(o) & Boogey Man, Pin, 5:57, \*¼.

Considering there was not the usual good television match nor any good angles, this was probably the worst episode of ECW in quite some time.