

Jeuron Dove talks ECW

By Jeuron Dove dove_jeuron0307@hotmail.com Hello everyone. Hope you enjoyed my look at Raw from last week. I got a wide range of feedback from those who like the show and from those who absolutely hate it. For the record, I don't hate the show, but it could be a lot better. If I hated the show completely then I would likely not watch it at all. This brings me to ECW. Over the last three years ECW has gone from being a show that I really didn't care for into being my favorite show next to Smackdown. If you like the pure art of pro wrestling then you can't help but like ECW. The show usually features one or two good to great matches that are given time to build and there are easy-to-follow storylines. As a matter of fact, ECW isn't a very angle-heavy show at all. It's the exact opposite of TNA Impact. During an average episode of Impact you may have to refer to a notebook just to remember the multiple angles, backstage interviews and other segments of the show aside from the matches. ECW is very easy to digest and for a several-week period, the show had more wrestling content than a two-hour episode of Impact would. One big attribute of the show is Matt Striker. This man went from being an unimpressive prelim-level wrestler and transformed into the best announcer in the business today aside from JR. He brings a knowledge of the product that is only rivaled by JR and Mike Tenay when it comes to calling a match. Although, Tenay isn't close to being the level of announcer he was in WCW. He is clearly the model of what WWE should look for when hiring announcers, writers and people in any capacity. In other words, he's someone who is knowledgeable about the business and has a genuine passion for it. History shows us it's normally those with this unique trait that become the best in the business. Hall of fame level wrestlers, announcers, promoters, bookers and managers all have this one thing in common. It's what makes them strive to be the best. Now I'm by no means saying that Striker is a hall of fame caliber announcer; but he's doing a great job and if he's able to keep it up for the next several years, then one day we may be mentioning him within the same breath as JR and Gordon Solie as being among the best ever. Striker made a comment last week on Superstars about the ECW locker room being the youngest and hungriest in the company. And I think he may be dead on about that. I love SD and their talent, but the level of consistency of the ECW top guys is right up there with them (with the exception of Dreamer, Henry and Koslov). I kind of think of ECW as the developmental show because so many of the guys there come straight from the Florida Championship Wrestling training camp. ECW is probably viewed by many in WWE as the show to get a bit of exposure on before being called up to the big leagues of Raw and SD, but as of late their matches have been at a level way beyond that of Raw and equal to SD. It may be a good thing that their roster is the size it is because it gives everyone a chance to shine and develop more in their roles. Christian and Swagger carry the show as the top face and heel that can both talk the talk and back it up in the ring. Finlay is the established veteran there to help the young guys learn. Dreamer is the last remnant of the original ECW and I guess that's his biggest claim to fame for whatever it's worth. He can turn it on when in there with the right guys, but is far from being the top wrestler on the show. Bourne is the exciting high flier that wows the crowd and can make any match exciting. Henry is the monster heel and the New Hart Foundation has the potential to be among the biggest names of the future. Zack Ryder is umm...himself and the jury is still out to see what he can bring to the table, but he does appear to have some charisma which was nonexistent during his stint with Curt Hawkins and he's not terrible in the ring either. I will give him credit on the uniqueness of his gimmick too. It must take one heck of a real man to wear tights like that. It's very hard to write something about the future of the brand, because it's very unlikely that the majority of these guys will be there by this time next year. I am going to examine the top players and see how things are looking for them. Some are better utilized in ECW and there are those that the higher-ups are already salivating about how to get them to Raw and ruin their careers (likely scenario unfortunately). Regardless of who comes and goes to and from ECW, I always hope that it will remain the little one-hour show that provides a blast of wrestling action whenever we are lacking that for the week. Now let's take a look at the boys: Christian Probably the franchise player of the show. He is the first major name that left WWE for TNA only to come back to WWE. You could say the same for Gail Kim, but she was released from WWE, whereas Christian turned down a lucrative contract extension in exchange for the less hectic TNA schedule and opportunity to be a top guy. He was originally set to return as Jeff Hardy's mystery stalker at the Royal Rumble, but too many fans knew about that and the company instead had him return on ECW. It seemed a little underwhelming at first, but he quickly established himself as one of the best workers in all of WWE and the fans took to him as a genuine star; something he wasn't close to being at the time he left in 2005. He's won the ECW title once and logic says he should hold it again before the end of the year. I can see him on SD next year as he can have a ready-made program with Edge or Jeff Hardy based on their history. He would be a much better fit for that brand since he's not a physically huge guy and his ring style would mesh better with the likes of Edge, Jeff, Mysterio, Punk, Morrison and Jericho. Jack Swagger The All American hero is one of the more important prospects in WWE today. He has all the tools that Vince loves in a headliner. Well, mainly one and that's his size. Luckily, Swagger is a great all-around performer. The man can talk and almost always has good to great matches. I can picture him on Raw one day for some reason. But for his sake he better hope he's drafted to SD. Tommy Dreamer The symbolic face of ECW. At least the original anyway. I know that many "smart fans" have been getting on his case for his workrate and unworthiness of being the champion. Honestly, I know he isn't the best guy in the company, but I'm kind of happy to see him holding the ECW belt. At this stage of his career, Dreamer is probably more concerned with the fact of still having a job and getting something of a push rather than meeting the ever-demanding expectations of people like myself. And I couldn't agree with him more. Congrats on your reign and keep up the good work. Evan Bourne This man has been stunning fans with his superior aerial ability since last year. I didn't know much about him in Ring of Honor when he wrestled as Matt Sydal and I was pleasantly surprised to see that the company didn't alter his high-risk

style once he made it on board. He's one of my favorite performers in wrestling today and one of the few in WWE to get over solely on his in-ring ability. Fit Finlay The workhorse of the brand. Finlay is such an overlooked important figure of the WWE today. He was single-handedly responsible for turning around the women's division years ago and if you were to ask Trish Stratus to name the one person most responsible for helping her become the best WWE women's wrestler ever, he would be it. He's one of the most dependable workers and has that rare ability to literally make anyone look worlds better inside the ring than they really may be. There is a reason why he's on the show with the potential future of the company. It's because everyone realizes there are few today who one can learn from better than him. New Hart Foundation These guys are awesome just for the fact the opening guitar riff of Bret Hart's theme is in their entrance. Well, it would suck if that were the only good thing about them. David Hart Smith and Tyson Kidd are simply amazing in the ring for them to be on the national stage for such a short time. I guess it didn't hurt that they were trained by some of the best ever in Bret and Benoit, and developed their craft internationally before signing to WWE. These two have all the wrestling skills to potentially go down as two of the best to ever lace up a pair of boots in this era. The key will be to see how much they develop aside from that. Vladimir Koslov, Mark Henry and Zack Ryder Koslov was supposed to be the top heel on SD, but it just didn't work out for him as he never developed inside the ring despite working extensively with HHH last year. I presume he was sent to ECW to improve his skills so that he can return to SD or even Raw in the future to be a main-event level star. Strangely, he was working as a smiling babyface the last I saw him. I think Henry has settled into his niche as being the big guy of the show. He's probably as good as he's going to get in the ring and I think he's gone as far as he will go in WWE. I would rather him stay in his current role and at least still mean something to the show than for him to be traded to Raw or SD and mean nothing. Ryder is just progressing so there isn't much to say although he is showing signs of being a decent worker with some charisma. I would love to see him work more with some of the better workers on the brand. Thanks for reading. The final part of this series will wrap up next week with a look at the most complex wrestling organization on earth, TNA. Last but certainly not least, I would like to express my thoughts on the deaths of Farrah Fawcett and Michael Jackson. Fawcett fought courageously to the end during her long battle with cancer and her strength should serve as an inspiration to all. Jackson's death was truly shocking as he was only 50 years old and did not appear to have any serious health problems. This whole situation (along with Misawa's) really makes you appreciate life and is a reminder of how fleeting it can be. I encourage anyone reading this to please let the people closest to you know how much you care about them because you never know when they may be gone. Please send all feedback to the above address and take care.

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