

Joe Babinsack reviews FIP Fallout 2008

Fallout 2008 Full Impact Pro www.fullimpactpro.com \$15.00 Reviewed by Joe Babinsack FIP – Full Impact Pro for the less informed – continues to be one of my favorite promotions, mostly because it comes closest to my ideal of a promotion. With FIP, we see a solid roster, filled not only with top indy names, but also with lots of younger talent, all scrambling for position. With FIP, we see DVD's revolving around guest stars, around themes, and around concepts long ago established as interesting, profitable and enjoyable. With FIP, we also see a strong sense of making the most of the talent at hand, and mixing in guys from ROH, from Pro Wrestling Riot, and from Chikara Pro Wrestling. And, to top it off, the FIP web site actually has a top ten list for singles wrestlers, and a top five for tag teams. Talk about old school! Fallout 2008 is a DVD centered around several themes. For one, it provides a top card featuring some of the best young talent in the business. On another level, it features the dominance of the best young heel group around, the YRR. And also, it shows an ongoing creative effort, as well as a mindset, that is allowing younger and new talent to make their names in the promotion. Unlike ROH, which underwent a shake-up, and then fell almost immediately in the same old rut, little brother promotion FIP completely shook up the promotion last year, and continues to make changes and formatting shifts. Once upon a time, FIP was the heel playground of Dave Przak's DP Associates. Today, the YRR dominates, but underneath, another long time heel team, the Heartbreak Express, has completely shifted from dominating tag team, into heel managers extraordinaire, with Sensational Sean Davis bedazzling in white suits, Baby Doll returning as a regular to provide some historical ties, and Phil Davis taking on the role of Head of Security. What's great about HBX's transformation is that they are passing on the torch to new teams, namely their protégés in Damien Wayne and Rex Sterling, as well as the centerpiece of the new Heartbreak Enterprises, Go Shiozaki. Go has already returned to fight in Pro Wrestling Noah, but his action in FIP (and elsewhere) has established him as one of the future greats. One fascinating storyline at Fallout 2008 is the bully boy antics of Sal Rinauro of the YRR, and the pushing around of Chris Jones. Jones is the prototypical undercard babyface, who takes exception to Rinauro's disrespecting of the Florida Heritage Title. Quite frankly, Rinauro takes things a lot further than I would have expected on a relatively PG showing, but hey, pushing the envelope here and there makes such things more impacting and notable. The storyline itself is quite enjoyable, and a welcome change from the normal, but it's one of those things I'd prefer to let the viewer enjoy on his/her own pacing. There's no need for spoiling such a well crafted homage to days gone by. The YRR, as has been said, is the dominant heel faction, a playground bully sentimentality (as opposed to a gangland style brutality) where veteran heel Sal Rinauro sort of leads his pack of young, restless and ready for action buds in a quest to grab all the gold in FIP. Well, with Go Shiozaki manhandling to top, FIP Heavyweight Championship Gold, I'm not so sure how that's going to work out. But with Kenny King, who's the blue-chipper of the crowd, and Jason Blade holding on to the Tag Belts, and Sal holding on to the (disdainful in his own eyes) Florida Heritage Title, there is the nifty display of gold and pack mentality that goes with it. The thing is, the YRR is played out not as the "we'll beat you up" but as the "we're not going to let ourselves be beaten" faction. They bully the undercard, they bully the mid-card, and they bully the promotion from top to bottom, and it's just different enough and distinctly entertaining to boot. Forcing guys to fight in the opener to see who might get a shot at the Florida Heritage Title is interesting and displays the YRR in all their inglorious actions, no matter what we can say about the match between Shawn Osborne and CJ O'Doyle. An interlude of sorts occurs when the Dark City Fight Club, now of ROH fame, but the team of Kory Chavis and Jon Davis – one time adversaries but now violent tag team – continues to show why they must be reckoned with on bigger stages. The Lifeguards are long time Florida based faces, and show solid tag team action, with the typical pretty boy/big guy combination and action that drives successful tag teams throughout history. The YRR jump back on center stage with the vastly interesting challenger named Nooie Lee, as he takes on the always cocky, Chasyn Rance. Typical YRR stuff here, and the storyline with Chris Jones continues.. Another tag match features the awesomely talented British Lions up against the HBE team of Damien Wayne and Rex Sterling. Wayne and Sterling have the names, but one of them seems misplaced. Not sure how far this team will do, but they're in the capable guidance of Sean and Phil Davis, so there's a lot of potential. Potential is the word for the British Lions. These two kids are shaped in the mold of Ricky Morton and teeny bopper fan favorites. Both are solid in their work, and they have that tag team look that goes beyond the gimmick and gimmicked ring wear. The first of four top notch matchups involves Erick Stevens and Tyler Black. Everyone's expecting Black to go far, and I've been high on Stevens, especially from his FIP work, for the past year and a half.. FIP has a certain pacing and style that may not come across well with the ROH mentality, but FIP's the place where guys get valuable ring time, and great matchups as well. Black/Stevens isn't match of the year, but it's the kind of match where you can see potential and appreciate effort. Next up is MsChif, my favorite Women's World Champion, up against Rain. I typically complain how the gals get treated in FIP and ROH, but this is hopefully an exception to lead to a new mentality. MsChif and Rain slug it out and put on a solid match, and aren't treated like an afterthought or a special attraction. What makes it more interesting is both are considered "Age of the Fall" members in FIP, and Dave Przak plays it off well. Go Shiozaki defends his FIP World Heavyweight Title against turning face Roderick Strong in the strangely positioned next match. The combination of veteran Strong and strong and up-and-coming Shiozaki is another one of those match making beauties on the FIP stage. Strong has the crowd behind him, even with his history of being a heel, and the old school foreign menace plays out with some twists by Go Shiozaki and the Heartbreak Enterprises.. Do you think long time nemesis Erick Stevens will save the day for Strong, if he has to? Sure you do. The Briscoes are favorites in FIP, as would anyone taking on Kenny King and Jason Blade of the YRR. In this case, it's not just a matching up for a good fight, or just experience, but a measuring stick match. I've wondered from time to time just how good the YRR is,

if it's just a great dynamic, or if these guys are learning and making use of their positions to learn from the best. Kenny King is all over the place, well, in terms of wrestling all over the indy scene. Jason Blade is the prototypical young stud wrestler, not so much with personality, good look, and well placed in the YRR. But King shines against the Briscoes, and Blade holds his own. Once again, the FIP style isn't for everyone, and to be honest, it's a style of professional wrestling that you need to appreciate on certain levels, whether it's nostalgia, willing to see young talent emerge, or just enjoying the old school format and booking mentality, but the point is, this isn't a high spot, high flying, super speed pacing type of match my friends who love ROH want to watch. It's stripped down like ROH in terms of angles, but there are angles and storylines (as the culmination of Sal Rinauro/Chris Jones plays out) and there is an expectation of watching tomorrow's stars get their much needed experience. That's why I love to watch, and support, Full Impact Pro. Joe Babinsack can be reached at chaosonejoe@yahoo.com Motor City Madness, Anniversario Yang, and slew of other DVD reviews on the slate.