

HEAT SHEET



**ISSUE
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A Letter from the Editor

For our editorial this month, we are reposting, with his blessing, a recent Facebook post from the Godfather, Davis Storm. We at Heat Sheet are absolutely on board with the sentiments he expresses and couldn't come up with a better way to say it.

"Thank you to everyone who shared the tweets & Facebook post regarding Acknowledgement of Country over the past 24 hours.

I think many might question why I am so passionate about this issue? Well a large part of the reason is the lady pictured here. Nerelle McKinley is a proud Noongar Woman & has been a friend of mine for almost two decades.

Stories about the issues Nerelle has faced in her lifetime due to the formerly discriminatory practices of the Australian government are deeply troubling. Despite the racism that she has encountered all her life, Nerelle has kept her head high, lived a positive & productive life & is someone that I consider a role model.

On the two separate occasions that I read the Acknowledgement, she took the time to thank me afterwards. The sense of pride she was awarded by a few simple words.....

'I would like to begin this show by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today'.

When you simplify this issue, you find that these words mean something to our Indigenous friends, co-workers & patrons in the wrestling industry. If, with a few simple words, I can bring them a greater sense of inclusion, then I will fight to hear those words spoken at every wrestling show in the country

Thus far, representatives from two of Australia's most recognisable promotions have reached out publicly & privately to say that they will be moving to see Acknowledgement of Country added to their shows. I want to thank them for seeing the value that this adds to our industry for a community that has often felt excluded on their own land.

I've also heard that this is a practice that Warzone Wrestling & Suplex Wrestling are already employing. Congratulations to both groups on leading the way in Australia.

I will leave you with the words that I spoke last Saturday night during EPW's show opening.

'We recognise the importance of this acknowledgement as part of reconciliation to lead to a better future for a united Australia.'

Photo by Pix Photography



Our cover this issue is EC Diamond working on his title-holding pose

The Round Up

UPW: Revival

By Matt McQueen

United Pro Wrestling held their first ever show at UPW HQ, Caboolture South, with Welcome to the Neighbourhood.

UPW had been advertising that doors open at six pm for a seven o'clock start. It's the timing they use for their shows at the Shed, and it no doubt made sense to keep to the same timetable for their first Caboolture Show. They hadn't counted on the enthusiasm of their new location though. By the time I arrived at UPW HQ at 6.20, most of the audience was already there, seated in the bleachers around the ring waiting expectantly for the show to start.

It was probably the only hiccup in what was an otherwise very well put together and paced show.

The wrestling kicked off with EC Diamond v Sirius-Lee Clean. This was a great choice for the opening match, and on the assumption that there were a few first timers in the audience was a great example of what wrestling, and in particular UPW wrestling, is about: two good in-ring performers who are able to get across their characters, tell a story in the ring, and get the audience invested in what they are doing. By the time EC Diamond picked up the pinfall win, the whole audience would have known that wrestling was good guys against bad guys, that bad guys try and cheat to win, but through



Thirteen would make a perfect Hansel and Gretel witch

resilience and force of will and with the support of the crowd, good will triumph.

Vegas Star took on the Kanji Kid in match two. I was familiar with Vegas Star as a preening heel manager and mouthpiece, but this is the first time I'd seen him have to fight his own battles. Clearly he is still developing, relying heavily on a vertical suplex as his weapon of choice, and occasionally struggling against the speed of his more experienced opponent. It was an even contest though, and if the first match on the card had been a useful introduction for a new audience, this match continued their education, with the lesson that sometimes the cheating pays off, with Vegas Starr getting the pin, his feet on the ropes for extra leverage.

The first title match of the night also gave us our good look at the reformed Circus of Tragedy. Pogo the Clown had come out from under the ring at Ascension to distract Jack Tucker and assist 13, and this would be the first time we saw the two in a match as they took on the Cluck and Duck Connection.

Showerman and Cluck are a fun act, the silliness of their characters sometimes distracting from the quality of their in-ring work. On the other hand, there is something overtly disturbing about the 13/Pogo relationship. In this match they were able to play as pantomime villains: 'Yosemite Sam' to Cluck and Duck's 'Bug's bunny in a dress', but the characters and their interactions are potentially darker and more problematic than they are presented here.

The match itself hinted at the dark side without going too deep down that particular rabbit hole. Cluck and Showerman won after 13, who had been distracted by Tugboat all match, accidentally hit his partner with the duck, leaving Pogo out cold and himself having to take on the champions 2 on 1. He came up short and the champs retained.

Jesse Love opened the second part of the show, coming to the ring with Noman Mikalov and cutting a heel promo on the Australian audience. There was only one person who could avenge that sort of insult, and sure enough Jack Tucker came out to defend our national honour. Tucker is not a big guy, but his athleticism means that he never looks mismatched against larger opponents, and he and Love put on a solid match to bring the crowd back after the break. Tucker won despite Love having support outside the ring.

I imagine that the Stockman has a pretty healthy appetite, so it was lucky that the UPW bookers decided to feed Verde Tonto to him to stop him from getting too hungry. I'd not seen Tonto before, and given this was a house show, it might well have been his debut. For a minute or two it looked genuinely promising as the masked wrestler managed to evade his opponent, but like many Stockman matches, once the big man got his hands on his opponent it was over pretty quickly.



Stockman's teaching methods are unique, especially when explaining gravity

Before the dust had settled on that match however, Ricky Rembrandt came out.

At Ascension we had seen Stockman destroy Rembrandt at the suggestion of Vegas Starr. Here Rembrandt got some measure of revenge, laying out the manager, and getting out before Stockman could do anything about it. Both Rembrandt and Stockman are looking for a shot at UPW champion the Gospel Matt Gabriel, but clearly they aren't going to get to him until they have sorted out the business between themselves.

The wrestler who does have a shot at the Gospel is Malibu, who jumped to the front of the line following a pre-show brawl at Ascension. At Welcome to the Neighbourhood he challenged for the UPW Title.

Gospel is an accomplished technical wrestler, with a significant weight and power advantage over Malibu. He also has a willingness to cut corners if he thinks it will be to his advantage, and a cast of minions ready to do his bidding should he require it. On paper, Malibu never stood a chance. What Malibu has though is a level of ring smarts and an opportunistic streak a mile wide. He clearly came in to the match knowing that he might get only one or two opportunities and intent on taking them when they arose. In an entertaining main event, and probably my favourite of the few Malibu matches I've seen so far, he tested the Champion, and while it was clear that he might have to sneak the victory, there were a few places during the match where he looked a possibility to do just that.

The Gospel must have thought it was a possibility too, getting himself disqualified and losing the match rather than the title, and setting up a no DQ rematch at Thy Kingdom Come.

There was a lot to like about this show: new characters or new twists on old characters, good in-ring performances supported by (and in support of) interesting, logical, storytelling. Word is that UPW were pretty pleased with how their first house show went down, and I can certainly see why.

IPW: Back in February

By Matt McQueen

IPW were Back in February on the 8th of February at William Duncan State School.

Bodhi Jackson won IPW's Santa Rumble in December. In doing so he eliminated his tag team partner Jamie Luxford from the final three. #justice4luxford

Against that background we were looking forward to seeing the Impact Warriors defending their tag belt against Jesse Love and his mystery partner, and when Tim Hayden was announced as Love's partner we were even more interested. Hayden and Love seem a natural pairing. Both arrogant, both entitled, and if neither are quite as good as they think they are, it's still an awful lot of fun letting them know it.

Unfortunately for reasons unknown to us, and presumably unknown to IPW commissioner Jace the Ace, or Bodhi Jackson, Luxford was not in attendance.

Not having a partner was not going to stop Jackson though – he came to the ring with a belt over each shoulder and declared that he would defend the titles solo. Maybe this was bravery, maybe this was a display of youthful pluck, but from where we were sitting it looked like overconfidence. Love is an ex IPW champion. Hayden for all his preening has recently been a title challenger. Both are more than prepared to use questionable tactics to further tilt the scales in their direction.

There is bravery, and then there is hubris. Sure enough Love and Hayden worked Jackson over, tagging out and shifting the momentum whenever he got on top, and finally finishing him off with a title belt to the face while the ref was distracted, to steal the win and the tag team championships. #justice4luxford

The second match saw veteran Slammin Sam trying bravely to wipe the annoying kiwi grins off the faces of Sweet Ass and Kiwi Thriller. Sam was at least smart enough not to take them both on, with Sweet Ass performing managerial duties for his partner on this occasion. That didn't prevent him getting involved of course, and both New Zealanders took the opportunity to work on Sam's leg, from both inside and outside the ring. While it didn't stop Sam from getting to the top rope to deliver one of the best top rope splashes I've seen, when the time came to slam his opponent, the leg buckled, leaving him vulnerable to a pin and allowing Kiwi Thriller to pick up the win. For what it's worth Sam was still favouring his leg two hours later when the show finished, so possibly bad news for the veteran.



Dick Brutal practicing his Lion King Simba lift on Reaper

My first IPW show was last year's "Reunion".... And one of my favourite matches at that show was the Reunion Rumble, ultimately won by Ashe. Although they didn't win, Dick Brutal and Reaper both made an impression in the early part of that match, so I was interested to see them go against each other. There was a definite clash of styles: the speed and agility of Reaper, contrasting well with the more straightforward brutality of his opponent. I was just getting into the match when Reaper dropped Brutal onto the ring apron, taking himself and Brutal out. Only Reaper was able to beat the ten count, scrambling back into the ring at 9 and a half to get the win.

In many ways the IPW shows revolve around GM, Jace the Ace. I don't mind that, he is a great talker and he has a fun love/hate rapport with the crowd. He acts as ring announcer as well as GM, and does ringside live commentary with Tre. From where I was sitting it also seemed like he was timekeeper, or at least was responsible for ringing the bell to start and finish the match. And here is where I get picky. There were a number of matches on the show, where because he was commentating, there was a delay between the ref calling the match and the bell ringing, and that two or so seconds (no more than that) was enough to leave me confused, and to flatten the pop for the finish. Maybe that's just me.

LFB, La Flama Blanca, the white flame – it's important that we get the name of the IPW unified champion correct.



R.I.P. probably has an issue with the fact that LFB isn't actually on fire

At Back in February he defended his belt against RIP in a battle of the Acronyms. The challenger was able to control the pace of the match early, clubbing and throwing LFB around at will, and not allowing the champion to get any momentum. A desperate suicide dive to the outside finally gave LFB an opening, but it was the motivational intervention of BoJack to see off an interfering Dick Brutal and remind LFB of his legacy which inspired the champion to the win.

Both Chad Atlas and Nick Breeze are newer performers, and whilst it might have been apparent from a slight lack of flow, that didn't stop them from putting on one of my favourite matches of the night. In a nice twist, they were fighting for the right to be mentored by

Queensland wrestling institution Flashman, and I can see that either would benefit from being taken under the wing of the biggest little man. In a largely technical match, Atlas's intensity won out over Breeze's fluidity. Breeze insisted he had a foot under the ropes while the pin was counted (not from where we were sitting), and complained about the result, earning a stunner from Flashman for his petulance.

Ashe and CJ are two IPW veterans: they've been on the roster together for years and have wrestled each other many times before. You might have thought that in that time they would have found some better way to resolve their differences than the wanton brutality on display at Back in February. As expected, Ashe came to the ring with a kendo stick, and used it to devastating effect

throughout the match. It is an indication of his prowess that a kendo stick always looks like a weapon, never a prop, in Ashe's hands.

CJ on the other hand comes across as the sort of wrestler who is prepared to take whatever punishment is thrown at him in order to justify his own retaliation. This was a hard hitting match that spent very little time in the ring. That was fine for us, as a great deal of action happened along the entranceway and into the crowd on our side of the ring, but absent a big screen, I suspect a lot of the action may have been lost on some of the fans in attendance. As it moved back into the ring, CJ was finally able to pick up the win after a devastating stunner.

The main event, as advertised, was Santa Rumble winner Bodhi Jackson challenging the Viking Skhorn. I'll be honest, I didn't give him much chance, but there was a vocal section of the IPW crowd that were firmly behind the challenger, and not afraid to let the champion know what they thought of him. Jackson clearly fed on this energy from his fans, and after enduring the early onslaught, worked his way into the match. He took the champion off his feet with a clothesline, and then hit two consecutive frog splashes to swing the tide.



Ashe taking advantage of CJ's fear of sleep paralysis

Whilst Skhorn was able to regain the upper hand, it was clear that the momentum had shifted, and what had initially seemed unlikely was now a distinct possibility.

By the time Jackson was able to lift Skhorn onto his shoulders for a series of f5 stunners (my description), the champion's days were numbered.

Ultimately it was a hard fought win for the underdog, and a good portion of the IPW locker room came out to celebrate and congratulate with the new champion. But... and let's be clear about this, from our point of view the win itself was less interesting than what it portends for the future. In the space of just two shows, Bodhi Jackson has turned on his tag partner, lost the tag belts in a match he probably could have avoided, and has then taken solo gold for himself, winning the biggest prize on offer. I can't help thinking there is one member of the roster who won't be seeing this as a feel good story. #justice4luxford.

*Photos from Barb's Photos

Lucha Fantastica: Saint Valentine's Battle

By Lachlan Albert

Buenos noches, señors and señoritas. The *mariachi* music is playing. The merch table is covered in masks. The tequila is cheap. It's time for Lucha Fantastica.

Tonight's general manager, Victor Diaz, welcomes us to the world of Lucha, and this is clearly not a regular wrestling crowd at the Triffid. Everyone is here to have fun but they have no idea what to expect. There's a tension in the air until Victor as Victor introduces ref Patricio and the lovely ring assistant, Lilith, but the tension is finally cut through when Victor introduces us to the *luchador* in the ring. Not wrestling tonight, but here to party, Chico looks divine as he takes on his major role for the evening – pouring tequila over the top rope directly into the mouths of fans at ringside. It's official, the crowd has bought in.

It's a good thing they did, too, because this show needs some fan investment to not look completely outlandish. This is clear when the first *luchador* comes to the ring: a werewolf. That's it. This jacked guy looks like Popeye from the neck down and a cheesy Halloween party from the neck up. His opponent isn't any more typical. Looking totally natural in fluorescent green from head to toe, the alien is as much a crowd favourite as the werewolf. The two start wrestling and the magic begins – a crowd not used to wrestling explodes for every chop, every back body drop, and every clothesline. This, in a way, is the most invested wrestling crowd ever, and the men (or whatever they are) in the ring feed off it.

Until, of course, the alien busts the back of his head open on a *topé suicida*.

The crowd doesn't know what to make of it as the alien returns to the ring, the entire back of his head turning black from the blood seeping into his morphsuit. Everyone is clearly shocked when the extra-terrestrial not only continues to fight, but quickly manages to nab the win and celebrate on the turnbuckle.

After the match we quickly work out the format of the night – Chico returns with Victor and Lilith, more tequila is poured, and two new luchadores enter to do battle. This time, the first combatant is a retro-style police officer, probably some kind of inspector, who clearly is enjoying the boos he generates from the crowd. We're also introduced to the only *luchadora* of the night, who comes to the ring dancing but is clearly ready for a brawl. It would shock me if these two hadn't worked together before, because they put on a technical showcase for the crowd, who are incredibly impressed. The quick counters, back and forth pinfall attempts, and agile dodges have the crowd happy before a big slap to the face of our *luchadora* sends them into a rage. Thankfully, at the end of the matchup she comes out on top and the rowdy fans celebrate.

With more tequila for the fans, Victor introduces a new immediate fan favourite, a tall young man dressed as a taco. Delightful. His opponent is the hard drinking and hard hitting El Gringo, who staggers to the ring with hellfire in his eyes. This might be the silliest match of the night, with exposed butt cheeks getting slapped, genitals getting hit left right and centre, and a crowd-pleasing finish that comes when Gringo attempts to spit beer in the face of Taco, but instead is blasted with a spit of tequila from Chico so that Taco can take the win.

While we take a break from the wrestling, we dance under instruction from our *marachi* before Lilith returns with what at first appears to be a burlesque performance. It's not, though. It's sword swallowing. It's a frankly bizarre but hypnotising act that has a highlight when Lilith passes a long straw through her nose, out of her mouth, and offers it to fans to drink through. Definitely not what I was expecting to see tonight, but hey, better than standing around doing nothing during intermission I guess.

We return for a match with some weird religious overtones. It's the singles debut of El Cupido, who's ready to shoot arrows and show off some stunts. His opponent is El Padre, an overbearing priest who the crowd immediately boos, but there's a noticeable turn from about half of the crowd when his robe comes off and reveals a body that's clearly spent some time at a Gold's Gym. Despite the danger this physical matchup imposes, the fans are thrilled to see the cherub come out on top.

Before our main event, it's time for a little more nonsense. A couple of "lucky" participants are picked from the crowd and, with a level of hedonism normally reserved for the ancient gods, they take shots of tequila from Chico's belly button. Thankfully it looks like Chico is an artist with a razor, because that could otherwise be a very hairy shot.

Finally, our main event is a tag match. We're first introduced to Los Diablos, a team straight from the underworld. One member of this team looks like an exact double of the devil, while the other has a definite X factor and a penchant for heading into danger. Thankfully, a duo of ancient Aztec warriors is here to fight the good fight. They've definitely got some *cojones* and one has a familiar mask and the confidence of a king. This match is, frankly, chaos. This crowd has never seen *rudo* tag-team antics, and they hate every second of it. Thankfully, at the last possible moment, the smaller of the Aztecs gets tagged in and, like an absolute beast, manages to take the demons down to send the crowd home happy.

It's easy to forget how much fun wrestling is. It's such a spectacle. Moves that we take for granted are so impactful. These characters are larger than life. The feeling of being in a crowd and watching these people smash into each other is wholly unique, and I'm grateful to Lucha Fantastica for reminding me that sometimes it's important to stop thinking so much about wrestling and make sure I'm really enjoying wrestling.

Venom: Reload

By Aisling Taylor

Back at the Showman's Club for the second Venom show of the year, and the advertised matches indicated that it was going to be a good night. Before the official show even began we were gifted with a dark match between Cyprien and Black Jack. As the audience gets drinks and chips and gets settled, the two men go at it, trading blows back and forth with Cyprien eventually gaining the win.

Before the official matches could begin, Tim Kade came out to complain about his lack match announcement, promptly saying he would wrestle anyone (even Todd Eastman) and wouldn't leave the ring until a new challenger approached. He didn't have to wait very long, as Jake Nova appeared, accompanied as always by Todd Eastman. However the Eastman vs Kade matchup we were hoping for became even more unlikely when Jaxon Cross also claimed the right to challenge Kade to a rematch. Former GM Anthony quickly came out to fix the problem, announcing the main event as a Triple Threat for the title.



See they're Buds!

With all that politics out of the way, it's time for the first official match of the night to begin: Renegade up against Craven. Before the match even started, Renegade and Craven quickly established themselves as buds, Craven dancing around to Renegade's (very catchy) entrance music, and the pair sharing many high fives before the match began. Their mutual respect was palpable as both men showcased their strength and athletic prowess. Craven eventually got less friendly when he used Renegade's attempts at finishers to turn the tables and eventually gained the win. But even after the match ended, Craven and Renegade were quickly back to being friends again. Overall it was a great high energy match that makes us want to see more of Craven in future.

Up next was the best bad guys in pink: Gen Next Level taking on Detective Dick Riggs and Charlie D. The Detective and Charlie have teamed up before to take on El Cartel at High Voltage IV. Throughout the match Gen Next Level continued their trend of quick tags and keeping the other team separated, a move that both tires out their opponent and allows them to conserve energy. Ryder and Brave dominated for most of the match while showcasing how formidable they are. After claiming the win

against Dick Riggs and Charlie D, Gen Next Level continued to beat up Riggs and D while Todd Eastman cut a promo, announcing they were coming for the rest of the tag division next.

The first title defence of the night came as Jason Hyde challenged Tequila Young for the Venom Origins title. It's no secret that everyone at Heat Sheet loves Jason Hyde and his ability to fly, so we were glad to see him given the opportunity to challenge for a title. The match showed great sportsmanship between Hyde and Young in a somewhat rare Babyface vs Babyface match. The match not having an obvious villain left us feeling like either man could win the title, and their athleticism confirmed that feeling. Soon enough a villain did appear, however, as Zac Reynolds inserted himself into the match, claiming that the Origins title still belongs to him and taking the belt (wilfully forgetting the time he lost the title to Tequila Young). Reynolds wasn't the only intruder during the match as a mysterious ninja appeared to defend Young and Hyde from Reynolds. The ninja returned the belt to Tequila Young before promptly kicking him in the face. In the end the referee ruled in Young's favour, stating a double disqualification that meant that Tequila Young retained. Though with both the ninja and Zac Reynolds after him, who knows how long he will be able to hold the title.

The last match before intermission saw Aaron O'Malley go up against Rip Rielly. The battle of the beards saw the much faster O'Malley trying to use his speed to conquer the monster that is Rielly. Being flippy and uncatchable didn't keep O'Malley out of Rip's clutches for long, with Rip waiting out O'Malley for him to tire himself out. Rielly then proceeded to attack O'Malley, ultimately leading to his eventual disqualification.

The first match after intermission was my most anticipated match of the night: the fatal fourway between Bobby Bishop, Blair Seeker, EC Diamond and Ryan Thorne. Bishop entered the ring first, followed closely by Seeker sporting EC Diamond's ring gear. Next to arrive on the scene was Thorne receiving his usual raucous applause from the crowd. Finally the real EC Diamond arrives and once the match starts he wastes no time letting Blair know what he thinks of the cosplay. All of the men in the match were obviously hard working and driven, and the match itself did a great job of showing it. After a well-paced fight Ryan Thorne was able to win by making Blair Seeker submit.

Next was scheduled to be Flashman vs Kobra, but after plenty of complaining and comedic delaying from Flash, Kobra offered to make it a handicap match with Bruiser as well. Flash agreed, with his



Practicing the perfect crowd surf

confidence (and bodyguard) returned, and almost immediately started attacking Kobra with Bruiser's help. After plenty of traded blows and even a successful lift of Bruiser from Kobra, Flashman sacrificed himself so that Bruiser could take out Kobra and win the match.

Main event time, and as advertised earlier it's a triple threat. With a surprising agility that became the theme of the night, Nova, Cross and Kade all started trading chops, flips and dives. Anyone who would argue that Jake Nova is getting past his prime needed to see this match, he proved that he is still a main eventer and a worthy contender for the Heavyweight title. Jaxon Cross was quick to show that he still has a claim to the title by being a strong and worthy opponent for Tim Kade. Speaking of Kade, Tim had a new intensity and drive that I hope we continue to see as the year and his heavyweight reign continues. Kade was able to retain in a quick finish. A really fresh match from roster regulars that is already an early contender for match of the year.



When you don't get what you want you stamp your feet

*Photos from Barb's Photos

Foreign Correspondent

By Lachlan Albert

The Thornbury Theatre isn't a great venue for wrestling – it's small and flat and the acoustics aren't quite right. It might be Australia's best wrestling venue, though, just because it regularly hosts some of Australia's best wrestling.

Melbourne City Wrestling's Clash of the Titans event hit the high watermark that has come to be synonymous with MCW. In fact, it opened with one of the best heel performances I've seen in a long time. Former MCW Heavyweight Champion Dowie James didn't hold back when he interrupted the opening of the show to yell at fans about their disrespect for wrestling, and like all the best bad guys, everything he said rang true. The MCW diehards do chant for referees and cameramen while there's wrestlers in the ring giving it their all. Dowie isn't wrong. He's just being a jerk about it.

When Dowie started complaining about the fans latching on to high-flying risk takers like Royce Chambers instead of established grapplers, Royce came out to confront him for it. Chambers took

control of the situation before Dowie ran off, tail between his legs. Perfect timing for Chambers, because he was scheduled for the opening match.



Zeke searching for the secret to staying horizontal in the air for longer

MCW does this thing called Air Force Three. It's their fun little name for a triple threat match with upcoming, pacy young talent. Opening the show was the trio of Royce Chambers, Zane Zodiac, and Queensland's own Zeke Andino. The match started with some great triple-threat technicality before Dowie James was once again out of the curtain, bashing Chambers with a chair to send a message to not only Royce, but also the fans. This led to Chambers hanging around on the outside while Zodiac and Andino put on a quick little clinic. If Zeke is how other states think of Queensland wrestling, we're gonna be alright. Royce fought through the pain to make it back into the ring, but Zodiac saw his opportunity and took Royce right back down, getting the pin as he did. A super fun match that kept

everyone involved looking like an in-ring threat.

Someone I was really excited to see in MCW was Commonwealth Games medallist and world-class Judoka, Jake Andrewartha. Jake was accompanied by his new coach, Siren Monroe, and was set to take on Leo Pratt, the Absolute Mad Lad. Pratt may be a mad lad, but Andrewartha is an absolute unit, and he wouldn't be beaten like just any other competitor. Pratt had a plan, though, and tried to get in Jake's head by getting uncomfortably close to Coach Monroe before trying to lure Andrewartha to the outside and take a count out victory. Unfortunately for Pratt, this didn't work, and according to my notes, "Ouch. Ouch. OUCH!" which led to an Andrewartha victory. Former Queensland staple AJ Istria appeared on the screen to... challenge Jake? It wasn't clear, but it seems like Andrewartha was excited at the idea of testing himself against Istria.

The next match was like lightning. PWA tag champs The VeloCities took on MCW Academy's first graduates, The Mile High Club. Tyson Baxter is back from injury to reform the Mile High Club with Jett Rouka, and the two of them are so agile that they give The VeloCities, world renowned for their agility, a run for their money. During this match there's some lighting difficulties and the crowd proves Dowie James right by focusing on this instead of the match in the ring, but a bit of darkness doesn't prevent these two teams from wrestling a super quick and technical match. Eventually the VeloCities take the win and establish a path for a Sydney vs Melbourne tag team title match.

MCW hasn't had a women's championship for very long, but it has had a dominant champion in the form of Steph DeLander. Her opponent, Avary, is one of the best up-and-coming talents Australia has to offer, and Avary promises to bring the belt home and represent all the trashbags out there as their champion. The match is really good, with SDL showing her immense power and Avary pushing through, showing enough heart, soul, and technical proficiency to wrest the title from its inaugural champ. Avary celebrates with her new prize but is quickly confronted by Melbourne stalwart (and recent Ring of Honour signee) Kellyanne in a title challenge.

Markus Cool is a soccer hooligan who likes his opponents to be as rough and tumble as he is, but unfortunately for him, he is facing the reinvented Loverboy Lochy Hendricks. His old cocky, cheating, rock'n'roll attitude is gone since his Uncle Paul refused to train him in Florida, instead discovering a more zen, peaceful side of himself. A freelove-rboy. Cool really tries to rile up Hendricks but Lochy stays chill. Markus eventually tries to brain Lochy with soccer boots, but ends up dropping them, giving Loverboy the chance to pick them up and revert to his old ways. But this isn't the old Loverboy. Lochy drops the boots and relies on technical mastery, taking the submission win with some kind of inverted STF, and the crowd seem to love(rboy) this new Lochy.

The Intercommonwealth Championship is put on the line by the massive Danny Psycho against the equally massive Caveman Ugg. These two must be carrying at least 250kg between them, but the match looks like a replay of VeloCities vs Mile High Club. The behemoths flip and run and twist around each other before settling into more classic big-man antics including chops that could fell mighty oaks and no-selling ridiculous moves. How do you no-sell a suplex? Like, how is that physically possible? Unfortunately this great match gets interrupted by several of Danny Psycho's masked 'stalkers' at ringside, distracting the champ and leading to Ugg delivering a massive slam to take the title. Psycho's lead stalker is revealed to be Melbourne wrestler Edward Dusk making his MCW debut, angry that he beat Psycho in a retirement match a couple of years back in a different promotion, but instead of retiring, Danny just went and wrestled for a different company. You know what? That's fair, Dusk.

A promo reveals that MCW's next show will feature Jimmy Havoc, which leads half of the crowd to cheer and the other half to squirm uncomfortably.

The tag team titles are on the line between the Brat Pack and the Natural Classics and I have zero notes on this match. None. I couldn't look away to take them. The match was just really damn good. The Brat Pack ended up retaining their belts via a rollup with a fist full of tights. Turns out when you put two great tag teams together they have an awesome match. Who wouldda thunk it?

MCW has taken inspiration from New Japan and their MCW World Heavyweight Championship matches are now preceded by a short clip listing every former champion, showing off their lineage of stars who are now working for New Japan, Ring of Honour, NXT, and WWE, finishing with their

current champion, MCW Triple Crown winner (and since the event, Ring of Honour signee) Adam Brooks.

Brooksy's opponent for tonight is a man I can't be unbiased about, one of my favourite wrestlers on the planet, Perth's Davis Storm. The Messiah has over 18 years of experience, trained under Antonio Inoki, helped found EPW in Perth, and earned the nickname of The Godfather of Australian Wrestling by being perhaps the country's most well regarded and prolific trainer.

Unsurprisingly, the match is good.

The Godfather and the Loose Ledge spend about half an hour being purposely a little rough, a little staccato in their moves, wrestling in a way that doesn't look like a match, but a fight. Storm put some early damage on Brooksy's left arm, and it pays off part way into the match when Adam



Renegade and Jake Nova channeling James Adultman to take down Storm

goes to use that arm to push himself across the canvas and it gives way, allowing Davis a chance to dissect the arm further. After he gets back into the match, Brooks is constantly repositioning himself around Storm so that he can hit moves with his right arm instead of his left. It tells a story without looking like purposeful storytelling, and that's when wrestling is at its best.

After hitting a brutal Alabama slam onto the ring apron, Davis grabs the belt to show off while MCW staff check on Brooks. When Brooks gets up, Davis hits big move after big move, only getting two after each. Finally, Brooks pushes Storm off the turnbuckle during a superplex attempt and hits a swanton for the win.

If you're ever in Melbourne, see MCW. It's a no brainer.

*Photos from Barbs Photos and Callum Rule Media

**Photos from previous shows

Heat Seeker

Ricky Rembrandt

Q: Who is your all-time favourite wrestler?

A: I can't name a single wrestler, so I'll give you my top 3. In no particular order: AJ Styles, CM Punk, Shawn Michaels.

Q: What is your all-time favourite match?

A: Another impossible question to answer. Again, my top 3: Shawn Michaels vs HHH (Summerslam 2002), CM Punk vs. John Cena (Money in the Bank 2011), Bret Hart vs The British Bulldog (Summerslam 92)

Q: What is the favourite match you have had?

A: My favourite match occurred only months ago at United Pro Wrestling event: Ascension (November 2019). I wrestled Thirteen and couldn't be more proud of my performance, and of his, it was voted Match of the Year by my peers. If I could name a runner-up match though, it would also be from 2019, when I faced EC Diamond for the UPW Championship. It meant so much to me because I had just overcome a battle with cancer and it was my first main event since returning. I was able to keep up, and even win the title that night.

Q: What is your favourite move to perform?

A: I began my career primarily as a submission specialist, opting to avoid most lifting type moves on account of being smaller. I've always done a top rope elbow drop, but over the last couple of years I have adopted it as a finisher and it feels great to execute.

Q: What titles do you hold or have you held?

A: I've been a champion on a few different occasions, and I'm always proud to be in that position. My championship record is: 1X QCW South Qld Champion, 1X AWA Tag Team Champion (as last of Next Level), 1X UPW Paragon Champion and 3X UPW Champion.

Q: Where, when and against whom did you make your wrestling debut?

A: I debuted in April of 2012 in Townsville for the North Queensland branch of QCW. Island Boy Si ran the fed and we drove 1400 km to help out for their inaugural show. I competed in a Triple Threat match against Kamikaze Kid and Cleatus Jones. The match was terrible in retrospect.

Q: Where and when did you start training to be a wrestler?

A: I began my journey at IPW on the Gold Coast sometime in 2010, but only trained there for a month and half. It wasn't until December 2011 that Queensland Championship Wrestling started up on the Sunshine Coast. I started full time training under Jimmy Sparx and never looked back.

Q: Describe yourself in three words,

A: Professional, Perfectionist, Virtuoso

UPW
I-N-V-A-S-I-O-N
FEBRUARY 8, 2019

Xander Sullivan: Queensland's Champion

Xander Sullivan brought me into the local wrestling scene. When I saw him wrestle at a 2017 House of Hardcore show, I had to see another 'forehead-guy' match and before I knew it, I was attending shows every month and even getting involved with a magazine. So I was very excited when I was given the opportunity to sit down with Warhead himself, and delve into his wrestling life, and now, I present you with the results.

Xander Sullivan came upon wrestling by chance. While flipping through channels at the age of ten, trying to find something - anything - to watch, he stopped on Monday Night Raw. He was confused but intrigued.

"The match that was on – it was Cena and Degeneration X versus Rated RKO and Umaga – and I just kept watching and thinking to myself, 'this is fucking rad!'"

From then on, he was hooked and would watch pay-per-views with his father. This love of wrestling persisted throughout the rest of his life. He began amateur wrestling at thirteen, telling me he had hoped it would pan out like Kurt Angle: he would become an Olympian, win gold with a broken

freaking neck, and then arrive at the WWE and be set for life, but of course that hasn't happened yet.

"I was in that in-between of just finished high school but not at university, had nothing to do, and I decided to look into training. I looked up training schools and started with IPW. I first started training with them on the 7th of January in 2015 and had my first real match on the 2nd of May that same year."

I had to pause and ask for the dates again, because I was a little taken aback at how short the space between them was. He chuckled and said, "Yeah, it was a pretty fast turn-around." Xander's in-ring character is very easy to understand: passionate, full of heart, a man with an iron



Xander winning Venom's coveted best forehead award

forehead to back up his iron will. He sticks to the mat and bases for others. A traditional babyface who will have won you over in one match.

When I asked him how he came to this character, he told me, "...the best wrestling gimmick, or character, is always you, times a thousand. I knew I wanted to use my real name for wrestling, because Xander Sullivan was always a wrestler. The gear I wore in my debut match even included my amateur wrestling singlet."

When I asked about what wrestling influenced him the most, Xander responded with Zack Sabre Jr. and Daniel Bryan. He based his in-ring style on those two and kept evolving it from there, creating something unique to him. Around the same time as he started wrestling, he started watching Japanese wrestling and became a big fan. "Misawa, Kenta Kobashi, All Japan, King's Road, Tomohiro Ishii, Kota Ibushi, Shinsuke Nakamura..." he listed off as additional influences on his wrestling.

As for his current taste in wrestling, Xander had a ton of praise to deliver to his peers. When I asked what his favourite wrestling in Australia was at the moment, he responded with, "PWA is the best wrestling in Australia right now. It's got the production, the in-ring work, the whole kit and caboodle. But we're not far behind. I love AWL. I'm extremely proud of them and will always throw my lot in with them. By the end of this year, AWL will reach its final form and catch up with PWA."

As for individuals, Xander pointed out Jason Hyde as one in particular to watch, calling him spectacular, and I'm fully inclined to agree. He also pointed to Gen Next as the best tag team in Queensland, full stop, saying, "They've taken the proverbial torch and run an extra two laps with it." According to Xander, Headstrong is just on hiatus, never broken up (a fact I am very happy to hear), but he was worried about the tag division when they both started to pursue singles competition. Gen Next filled that spot and vanquished those worries.

"Another who I think is great is Jake Nova. Jake Nova is the best wrestler in Queensland. You know, Melbourne has Adam Brooks, Sydney has Robbie Eagles, and Brisbane has Jake Nova." When I asked about his favourite matches of his own, he listed a top five: "Number one is my match with Jake Nova for the Heavyweight title at Homecoming V. It felt like the first time Xander Sullivan had arrived as a wrestler. Then the Three Stages of Hell Match with Sebastian Matters, Mick Moretti at Pro



Sticking by his bold fashion statement
no matter what

Wrestling League, when I lost the Venom Pro Wrestling Championship to Jaxon Cross, and Headstrong versus Next Level in 2018, when we won the titles off them.”

I had prepped one question I was really curious about – I asked Xander to name a match that he thought everyone needs to watch. He thought hard, and remarked it was so hard to choose a single match because all of his favourite matches are steeped so deep in the context of their story. He came to the choice of Kazuchika Okada vs Hiroshi Tanahashi at Wrestle Kingdom 10.

“It’s the culmination of such a long feud. There’s a moment in that match where Okada goes for the Rainmaker after he’s taken so much punishment, and Tanahashi slaps him across the face. They both go down, but Okada is still hanging on, he still has the grip on the wrist. He hasn’t let go of the victory yet. It’s just the perfect storm of long-term storytelling.”

For those unaware, Xander Sullivan is the currently reigning Australian Wrestling League Openweight Champion. In fact, he’s the inaugural Champion and the first two-time Champ. At Homecoming VI in 2019, he beat out Sebastian Matters, Adam Brooks, and current AWL Heavyweight Champion Mitch McCarthy in one night and became the first person to hold that belt above his head. While Brooks and McCarthy both moved on from the Openweight title, Matters did



A knee to the face often has the opposite to apples when it comes to doctors

the opposite. He challenged Xander, and the two engaged in a bloody and brutal feud built up over the whole year. AWL’s last show of 2019 culminated with a battered and bruised Xander Sullivan holding the title above his head, blood streaming down his face from a crown of barbed wire, victorious at last. The series of matches can be found and watched across AWL’s social media, and I would highly recommend watching them.

Also worth watching are the promos Xander released in anticipation of these matches, who he made sure to mention were only possible with the help of Jordan Olive and Alex Shepard. The Openweight Championship and this feud largely defined Xander’s 2019, so of course it was a big part of our conversation. When I asked how winning the title – both for the first time and

second – Xander told me, “The first time was wonderful! I was very proud. It was such a wonderful feeling, that the company trusted me so much. The second time felt different. It felt like an amazing

sense of achievement. Sebastian and I had great chemistry in our matches. When I won it back, I knew we had cemented that title as something prestigious and worth fighting over.”

There were many moments in this feud you could point to as your favourite, mine personally was the barbed wire crown, but Xander said his was Sebastian’s knockout victory at PWL. “After he knocked me out with the chain, hearing the outrage from the crowd and their support of me... hearing that crowd was my favourite moment.”

So what’s next for Xander Sullivan and his title? Well, in the very immediate future, Xander’s first defence of his newly won-back belt is at AWL’s Enter Phase One on the 29th of January, against Daniel’s Republic member CJ. Xander also has more long term plans, including continuing to work and train towards becoming a better wrestler: “I want to be as smooth as possible – I want to work on my footwork, ring positioning, that sort of stuff... I never want to look sloppy.”

Aisling and I were very curious to know when we would be seeing a woman challenge for the Openweight Championship, and Xander responded positively. “Anytime. Lucille Brawl’s got that contract to use. One person I would absolutely love to wrestle would be Jessica Troy.”

More generally, Xander want to wrestle more challengers whose style contrasts well with his: he wants the high flyers. “I want to wrestle in MCW and PWA. They’re amazing shows, and a great opportunity to build Queensland. I want to represent Queensland on that stage, to be, symbolically and literally, the champion of Queensland.”

As I got distracted thinking of all the wonderful match-ups that could’ve be achieved by just going out of state, Xander brought up the possibility of travelling overseas. “I’ve got dual citizenship between Australia and America and want to wrestle over in America as well. England as well, but England at the moment is very saturated with talent, especially Australian talent.” Where ever he goes, I will always be cheering for Queensland’s Champion.

And that’s where we wrapped up. I had satisfied all my curiosities. Our chat provided me insight in my favourite Australian wrestler. I hope it’s provided you the same. The future is bright for Australia, and for Xander Sullivan. I want to give to a big, big thank you to Xander for agreeing to sit down with me, and for shouting my coffee out of the goodness of his heart.

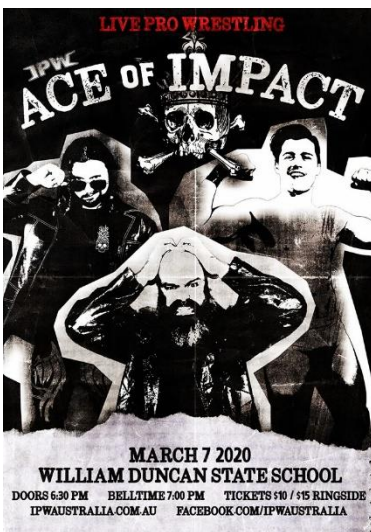
*Photos from Barb’s Photos

Coming Up



defence of the AWA title against ‘the Monster’ Rip Rielly.

The newly formed **Australian Wrestling League** will have its first show under that banner, putting on AWL: Enter Phase One at Kedron Wavell Services Club on 29 February. That show will see Xander Sullivan defend the QLD Openweight Title against CJ of the Daniels Republic, JL Gold and Jason Hyde take on Gen Next for the tag belts, and Mitch McCarthy make his first



On the same night, **United Pro Wrestling** will be at Aussie World for ‘Thy Kingdom Come’, where Ricky Rembrandt takes on Vegas Starr for a chance to get payback against the Stockman, Pogo the Clown makes his solo ‘debut’ against Jack Tucker, and Malibu gets another chance to dethrone The Gospel, this time in a no DQ match.

Impact Pro Wrestling Australia will be at William Duncan State School on 7 March for Ace of Impact. I’ve not seen any matches announced yet, but new tag champs Love and Hayden have been teasing a big announcement for a week, so chances are it will be something designed to underwhelm and infuriate us. Early mail suggests that we will get more of CJ’s rampage through the roster and no doubt further development of the Bodhi Jackson fairy-tale.

7 March is also the date locked in for **UPW**’s second ‘house’ show at UPW HQ, Caboolture South, titled There Goes the Neighbourhood. I anticipate the card will become clearer after ‘Thy Kingdom Come’, but

Coming up in HeatSheet

We’ve got loads of stuff in the pipeline for the coming months: features on Sebastian Matters and Renegade, a deeper look at Impact Pro Wrestling, and a chat with the guys who keep it all above board as we sit down with some of Queensland’s referees. That and our regular coverage of the South East Queensland Scene.



I’m willing to bet that we will see Stockman v Rembrandt (all disrespect to Vegas Starr intended).



HEAT SHEET

Graphic tees
don't count as
Halloween
costumes

