

HEAT SHEET #16

In This issue:

Reviews of UPW's Undisputed Glory and Jingle Jam

Recaps of IPW's The Good, The Bad and The Brutal, and The Santa Rumble

Heat Sheet's Coming up in 2021

2020'S
FAVE FIVES



A Letter from the Editor

I want to let you in on a secret. Wrestling is... planned. The outcomes are predetermined, the wrestlers don't (always) hate each other as much as they say they do, and some of the bad guys are actually great people. It turns out it's all a work.

But... That doesn't mean it's not a meritocracy.

I was in Townsville recently, and had the opportunity to sit down for a chat with the Australian Wolf Mason Childs. We will be bringing you that article in the new year, but a few things that Mason said got me thinking.

Sure, the winner of a title bout may be 'chosen', but I look at the guys holding titles in Southeast Queensland at the moment, and it's not hard to see why they have been chosen. The wrestlers who have been 'given' opportunities have no doubt worked long and hard for that gift.

The talent that sees a promoter get behind a particular wrestler has been built and honed over hours in the gym and in the training ring. It has been paid for in sweat and pain and often in cold hard cash in time on the road and time in seminars and classes, watching tape, and taping their injuries.

Cream rises to the top.

Of all the affectations that have arisen in wrestling in recent years, one of them that most annoys me is the 'you deserve it' chant, and I find it annoying for two reasons. Firstly, it seems to imply that wrestling is a karma factory, that eventually people get what they deserve, and that if you are diligent and hard-working and hone your craft you will inevitably get to the top. It's not: for all its pre-determined outcomes, wrestling is still life. Wrestling is littered with people who worked hard and didn't make it, who had talent but perhaps through injury never reached the heights they could have. Bad things happen to good people, that is life, that is wrestling.

Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, it is redundant, because nobody gets to that level without a combination of talent, effort and commitment that literally demands the promoter take notice.

As you read through our fave fives this issue, it's worth remembering that everybody has different tastes. Your favourite may be different to my favourite, which is different to Ais's or Lachy's or anyone else's favourite, but one thing holds true for all: everybody deserves it.

Support local wrestling.

Matt McQueen

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The Round Up

UPW's Undisputed Glory

Review by Aisling Taylor

Undisputed Glory was the second last event of the year put on by UPW. It had promised to be the pay-off to many stories that have been building for a long time, and not only did it end some stories, it started others too, setting up arcs ahead of UPW's Christmas show Jingle Jam, which we also have reviewed.

The show opened with the finale to the featherweight tournament that began in Over The Top 3, and ended with Kanji Kid vs The Circus of Tragedy's Pogo. To get to this final bout, Kanji had beaten Ricky Rembrandt and Ivan Black, and Pogo beat LFB and Cluck. It has to be said that both men have put in the work to get here, whether legitimately or through cheating – getting to a tournament finale takes fortitude. Another thing that takes fortitude are the six near-finishes that this match contained. Despite this, the match was incredibly well-paced and showed good physicality and athleticism from both Pogo and Kanji, as well as featuring many satisfying and painful-looking chops. Even though most of the match had the men evenly balanced, in the end Kanji Kid was able to gain the win and become the first ever FeatherWeight Champion. Now the main question would become who will be Kanji's first Challenger.



I doubt this is how Billie Mac thought her day was going to go when she woke up that morning

The second match of the night was a women's match between The Circus of Tragedy's Jynx and Billie Mac, who was accompanied by Strawberry Adams. With UPW's new Women's Division, the number of female wrestlers at the brand is growing quickly, but it took Jynx even less time than that to start throwing her weight around. As the most established wrestler of the three, and a member of a formidable faction, it would be reasonable to theorise that Jynx could demand a women's title into existence. But even without a title to fight over, it is clear to see Mac and Adams are hot on her heels and eager to win more matches. The match was a good length considering it was clearly an uphill battle for Billie, so when Jynx won, no-one was too surprised. And when she

started attacking Mac even after the match was over, no-one was incredibly surprised by that either. Strawberry Adams attempted to come to her friend's aid, but her in-ring inexperience meant that

she was laid out by Jynx pretty quickly. With the potential for a women's title on the horizon, UPW really needs someone who could properly dispute Jynx's top spot claim.

Nearly three years and exactly 31 matches ago, The Stockman's streak began. On November 13th, 2020, Moko Kai became the latest person to attempt to threaten Stockman's legacy. To Vegas Starr, Stockman's hype man, this seemed like another empty challenge. But to Moko Kai, this was a challenge that would define him and his quest to 'spear everyone'. Not only would this be a genuine challenge for both men, it had the audience divided. While Stockman is no longer a babyface, he had been a crowd favourite for much of his career, and there was a vocal, if minority, section of the audience determined to cheer him. Moko Kai is one of the UPW audience's newest favourites, so there were obviously some conflicted emotions, especially because of the stipulation insisted on by Vegas Starr that if the Stockman loses the streak he has to leave UPW.

It's sometimes hard for a match with a lot riding on it to deliver, but despite the incredible stakes, the match itself delivered: Moko Kai went after the Outback Outlaw from the off, seeming to feed off the audience as he fought to overcome both the Stockman and the lurking Vegas Starr. On the way he survived both the choke slam and the railway sleeper, which had seen 31 others before him pinned in the centre of the ring. He survived an attempt by his opponent to turn his own move against him when he took a spear and got back up, and in the end he hoisted the Stockman on his shoulders for a Samoa Drop before hitting a spear of his own to end the streak and the Stockman's UPW career.

Despite not being there for the entire streak, I couldn't stop myself from being overcome with emotion at the gravity of the situation. While Moko won the match, neither he nor the crowd celebrated in the way one might have pictured he would. The room was sombre – no one could deny that Kai had earned the win, but we all also knew that this was the end of an era. It is a match that needs to be sought out. From a night of landmark matches, this one changed the entire tone of the event and has forever changed how UPW will sit in my mind as a brand.

After the last match we understandably needed a breather, so the intermission was well placed. And after we all returned to our seats, the triple threat tag match between Cluck and Duck, Malibu and Rembrandt, and Book of Love served to remind us all that wrestling can be fun, for a number of



Not even the Stockman can stop himself from being pushed back a couple steps by a spear from Moko Kai

reasons. First, despite Jesse Love appearing to embrace the team concept, the Gospel remained actively upset at being forced to wrestle as a team, and neither seemed comfortable sharing the glory, coming very close to sabotaging each other on more than one occasion.

Second, the team of former champions made up of Rembrandt and Malibu were experienced enough to know that triple threat matches have a lot of moving parts and create a lot of opportunities, and they were open to team ups and alliances throughout the match. Lastly, Cluck and The Showerman are always a wonderful comedic presence, even if this time they were sans Tugboat. With the match underway it was immediately chaos. But in chaos someone always thrives, the immediate assumption would be Cluck and Duck taking the win, but not this time. While it's true that to win a triple threat match you still only need to pin one other team, you have to avoid being pinned by two, and that often means cooperation of convenience. For Cluck and Duck that meant working with Rembrandt and Malibu, but that in turn put Malibu and Rembrandt in a better position to win the match and titles. It was this uneasy alliance that Love and Gospel were able to exploit just long enough to overcome their own 'artistic differences' and get the pin, even if they weren't happy about winning together.



Do you think Gospel shifts positions to make sure the camera gets his good side?

In a night of landmark matches the main event would have to be the pay-off to a long-built story, and the main event was Jack Tucker Vs Thirteen. It would be unfair to both men involved for me to gloss over the fact that this is one of our top matches of the year (which you can read about later in the issue). Since Tucker's debut, Thirteen has been a constant thorn in his side, coming after tag titles, sabotaging heavyweight title shots, and being altogether rude and adversarial. So when Thirteen snatched the heavyweight title in a triple threat match against Tucker and Malibu, there was no doubt this match is where it would all come to a head. I would hesitate to call it a barn burner, but only because we were technically in a shed. It was a real shed burner.

Despite Thirteen's significant size advantage, Tucker proved his strength and determination over and over again, even with ringside shenanigans by the rest of The Circus of Tragedy. Pogo tried to use the sparklers to injure Jack Tucker but ended up as prey to the sparkler himself, and at one point as Jynx sought to impact proceedings, she was promptly head-butted by a yet-unnamed UPW trainee who I hope we see more of in future. With Thirteen's lackeys properly taken care of, Tucker could focus on what he does best: winning the match. Which he did, making him the UPW Heavyweight Champion and hopefully ushering in an age at UPW that is a little less tragic.

If you have never seen a UPW show, I would heavily recommend seeking this one out. It showcased a lot of what UPW has to offer: comedy, emotional moments, epic payoffs and one of the state's best developing women's divisions. UPW also plan to keep putting on two shows a month in 2021, so try and get out to one of the shows, because wrestling is almost always better live and in the room.

Recap: IPW's The Good, The Bad, and The Brutal

Titles were on the line in the first match of the night as Jesse Love and Tim Hayden defended their tag belts against Wacol's Most Wanted, eventually prevailing in what was a close match.

IPW have been promising us a Bull Rope match since before reboot. This time they kept RIP under wraps long enough to get the rope safely to the ring as Reaper and Dick Brutal went after each other



His name is SLAMMIN Sam, at this point can LFB even be surprised?

with some old school country violence. Brutal lived up to his name to get the win.

Due to injury, Kiwi Thriller indicated that he had to pass up his shot at LFB's Unified Title, handing the opportunity to Slammin Sam. LFB and Sam had an open, back and forth match, only for Kiwi Thriller to subsequently decide that he was well enough to wrestle, getting Slammin Sam removed and going after a less than fresh LFB. Even with those shenanigans, LFB might have held onto his title had it not been for duh, Tim Hayden's interference, which floored the champion and saw Thriller pick up the win and the title.

After taking the heavyweight title of old pal Bodhi Jackson at the last show, Luxford had to face the former champion again tonight to cement his place at the top of the tree. Jackson was fired up for the contest and was causing real problems for the champion, prompting the Lone Ranger to attack the Ref, drawing the DQ and the loss but keeping the title, and bringing about a rebooking under No DQ rules for Santa Rumble.

Jackson and Luxford are not the only IPW veterans with some significant history. Ashe and Flashman had gotten into it ever since Ashe had brutalised Flashman's rookie charge, Chad Atlas, and they were at it again tonight in a street fight. Jace the Ace may have sent Skhorn to the back, but that

didn't mean he was going to stay there, and when he returned with Sinder, the three of them proceeded to demolish the biggest little man.

For the first time in IPW history, the Hawk Memorial Trophy was to be contested in a tag match, and it was a tag match between four mainstays of IPW. The Viking, Skhorn would team up with Sweet Ass to take on the Sons of Hawk, RIP and Cruz. RIP and Cruz have a great mix of antics and athleticism, in a big man/small man combo that works well on the occasions they can get in the ring together. Here it was enough to pick up the win and get the trophy in honour of Hawk.

UPW's Jingle Jam 3

Review by Lachlan Albert

Bringing in international stars, especially WWE stars, is an easy way to get fans invested in a show. The appearance of Chavo Guerrero Jr (accompanied by Power Ranger John Tui) brought an enormous crowd for UPW's Jingle Jam 3, and everyone who came was treated to an absolutely stacked card.



Chavo. That is all.

While Malibu is no longer UPW Champion, he was never pinned for the title, meaning that he still sits near the top of the food chain. That made him a perfect match for another former UPW champ – the returning EC Diamond. The match was everything you'd expect from Diamond's return to a UPW ring, with quick, technical moves and smart, tactical wrestling. In the end a victory roll pin won the match for Diamond, putting him near the front of the line to challenge new champ Jack Tucker. The two competitors showed respect after the match with a handshake, and the crowd showed their respect for two fan favourites.

One thing you can always expect from a UPW show is Vegas Starr running his mouth. Even without the massive Stockman to fight his battles, Vegas has no problem telling everyone how great he is. Thankfully for the fans, there looks to be a new dominant force in UPW to fill the gap left by Stockman, and it's the much loved Yeet Stevens. Yeet had the crowd on side immediately and pulverised Starr, finishing him off with an insane delayed vertical suplex before yeeting him from the ring.

In his first Featherweight Championship defence, Kanji Kid was matched up against Ivan Black. Black may have lost some hair to Ricky Rembrandt, but he hasn't lost any of his in-ring cunning or over-inflated ego. Kanji's experience won out, though, as he finally managed to hit a Krane Kick for the victory.

New UPW Champion Jack Tucker came to the ring to announce that he would be a fighting champion, and an open challenge was given, which was answered by... Santa Claus? The jolly man in red came to the ring, but quickly revealed himself to be the Gospel Matthew Gabriel and his sack containing the UPW Tag Team Titles, of which he claimed to be the sole holder. Gospel laid out Tucker as he was announced as the challenger for tonight's main event championship match. Some taunting words towards Chavo Guerrero as he left showed just how confident Gabriel felt about taking down Tucker at the end of the night.

The Circus of Tragedy were set for tag team action against the Cluck and Duck Connection, and chaos ensued. The Circus were tonight represented by featherweight Pogo and big man Thirteen, and were accompanied by Jynx, mirroring featherweight Cluck and big man Showerman being accompanied by Tugboat the Duck. These teams know each other very well, leading to lots of antics and a starring role for Tugboat, who became a major target for the Circus. With a Guerrero in the crowd, though, Cluck had an idea and tossed the duck to Thirteen before falling to the mat clutching his head as the referee turned around, resulting in a clever disqualification win for the Connection.

In the main event Jack Tucker, as is often the case, showed explosive offense early but was overpowered by a bigger opponent in Gospel. Gabriel grounded the champ and laid in a lot of offense, but the heart of the working class man allowed him to get a roll-up victory as Gospel was distracted by his need to taunt Chavo Guerrero.

Obviously Gabriel wasn't happy with losing the match and began to ferociously beat down Tucker. Thankfully, Guerrero had finally gotten sick of Gospel and crashed into the ring, hitting a beautiful Three Amigos suplex combination. John Tui made an impact with a massive headbutt, and Tucker dropped Gospel with a huge Working Class Cutter. With Gabriel laid out, the show finished in perfect fashion with Guerrero heading to the top rope for a perfect Five Star Frog Splash before raising Tucker's hand in victory.

Recap: IPW's Santa Rumble

Impact Pro Wrestling held their Annual Santa Rumble Event at William Duncan State School on 5 December, and a whole lot went down before all of the presents were unwrapped.

Flashman and Ashe kicked off proceedings with a 'Kendo Stick on a Pole Match', and despite the weapon of choice arguably working in Ashe's favour, Flashman was able to pick up the win.

Skhorn had been at ringside for match one, but was between the ropes for match two, taking on a returning Blizzard for a spot in the Santa Rumble match itself, with Skhorn picking up the win.



It takes practice to master the villain entrance positioning

It's been a big twelve months for Bodhi Jackson. At Santa Rumble 2019, he was one half of the IPW Tag Champions 'the Impact Rangers' with Luxford. He went on to win the Rumble, and then when IPW had been Back in February, he managed to lose the tag titles (sans partner), and win the Heavyweight Title in the one night. After COVID and reboot and Luxford returning with an axe to grind and all that went on in between, he now found himself challenging his former partner in a last man standing match to regain that heavyweight title. It was a bridge too far on this occasion for Jackson as Luxford picked up the win to hang on to the championship.

Alexander Kasimir showed that he was not afraid to be the guy who beat up Santa Claus, cutting off the man of the moment as he was handing out gifts to the IPW Audience. Unfortunately for Kasimir, this Santa was actually returning IPW stalwart CJ, who flattened Kasimir with a CJKO.

At Heat Sheet we make no apologies for the fact that we love women's wrestling and IPW has a developing roster of talented young women. Two of them, Chase Cooper and Morgan Frye, squared off next in a match that did nothing to resolve their issues, ending as it did in double DQ after both laid hands on the ref.

Which brought us to the Rumble itself. If you haven't done so already, check out the highlights on IPW's Facebook page. We got an impressive debut from Eugenie Singh before she was eliminated by Jesse Love (stay tuned through 2021 as Eugenie charts her first 12 months as a pro wrestler right here in the pages of Heat Sheet). We got Reaper almost going the distance, being first in the ring, and one of the last four left at the end of the night, and we got LFB eliminating Skhorn to jump to the top of the IPW Championship picture.

2020's Fave Fives

By Matt McQueen, Lachlan Albert, and Aisling Taylor

Fave Five Wrestlers

Lucille Brawl

It might be argued that no Queensland wrestler has been more adversely impacted by COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns. Brawl entered 2020 on a wave of momentum after a late year debut that promptly saw her in the ring against Shazza McKenzie at Go Girls and Jessica Troy at MCW. By March she was the holder of an AWL contract guaranteeing her a title shot courtesy of her Battle Royale win at PWL Project Revolution 2. She had made the trip to EPW teaming with Bobby Bishop against Edith Knight and Davis Storm in a match that had all of us at HSHQ chomping at the bit to see a rematch on our home turf. 2020 was shaping to be a banner year for Brawl... and then it stopped.

Kinda.

Because while there is no getting around the fact that Brawl has not been seen in an 'official' wrestling event since AWL: Enter Phase One, she has continued to be a force in South East Queensland Wrestling. Alongside her partner in crime(fighting) Bobby Bishop, she is driving the Three Count train. She has expanded her streaming and online presence, and through the careful mentoring of her younger, decidedly flightier sister, Strawberry Adams, she has maintained her in-ring input.

Luxford

Jamie Luxford has been a mainstay in the wrestling scene as long as we have been here. But the moment that secured Luxford's space in our Favourite Wrestlers list is when he super-kicked Bodhi Jackson. One of our first IPW shows was Back in February, and Luxford was on the poster. He was part of the tag champion team The Impact Rangers, and they were meant to defend their titles on the night. But Luxford wasn't at that show, and instead of postponing, Bodhi decided to defend the tag title solo, and lost. Not being able to be part of defending your own title would probably vex any wrestler, and what made it worse is that in the main event of that same show, Bodhi Jackson became the new Heavyweight Champion. So when we returned to IPW for Reboot, one question



was front of mind: will Luxford get Justice? The super-kick to Bodhi Jackson's face seems to have only been the beginning, and we are eager to see where it goes.

Tim Hayden



In last year's Fave Fives, Tim Hayden tied with Sirius-Lee Clean in our favourite character category. This year, Tim Hayden is back as one of our favourite wrestlers for a number of reasons. He has an electric in-ring presence that is difficult to look away from. The heads of many brands he has wrestled at this year bring up how hard-working he is, and there is even a rumour that he is Sirius-Lee Clean! In one of the weirdest wrestling years on record, Tim Hayden made himself a champion. Literally he and Jesse Love are IPW's Tag Team Champions. Everyone hopes 2021 will have more stability and fewer surprises, and we hope that 2021 also has more Tim Hayden.

EC Diamond

Every match EC Diamond had this year could be called a standout. From VPW's Elimination Lockdown cage match to the excellent triple threat match at AWL with Nova and Kade, to that same night winning the AWL title, to challenging La Flama Blanca for IPW's Unified Title, to closing the year out against Malibu at UPW, Diamond has made every match count. Diamond is a top-level performer putting on high-quality matches in every company in South East Queensland, in many cases in the title picture, with overflowing in-ring skill and charisma, and he's only in his mid-twenties. Seeing EC earn the AWA gold from Mitch McCarthy in February wasn't just one of the great moments of this year, but a vision of the future of Southeast Queensland wrestling for a long time to come.



Jack Tucker

Jack Tucker ends 2020 as the Holder of the UPW Championship, the most important title at what has been Queensland's most active promotion. That alone puts him into the conversation for our fave five wrestlers of 2020, but including him on that basis alone would do him a disservice.

It's not just the fact that he won the title, but that in doing so he put on a match of the year contender against Thirteen, putting an emphatic full stop on a two year program of mind games, shenanigans and near misses orchestrated by the Circus of Tragedy leader. He won the OTT 3 rumble, and used his title shot against ex tag partner Malibu to deliver a match which would have itself been a match of the year contender if it had not been cut short by interference from the aforesaid circus. In his first defence he overcame perennial threat Matthew Gabriel in another high quality match, which in turn led to one of the great wrestling moments of the year when a Gospel post-match attack led to Chavo Guerrero and John Tui hitting the ring to make the save.

In 2020, Jack Tucker arrived, and I don't imagine he is any hurry to leave.

Fave Five Newcomers

Jynx

The first time Jynx was seen at a UPW event, she didn't have a name. She was the latest piece in the Circus of Tragedy puzzle, a wildcard, an unknown who immediately made her presence felt. By the next event, OTT 3, she had a name and an opponent, the outgunned Strawberry Adams, and proceeded to go through Adams with a display of power and dominance that set the tone for the rest of the year.

It would be unfair to Adams and Billie Mack to suggest that Jynx was untested by their efforts. As the UPW women's division took shape and the challengers grew in experience, there were moments in which they were able to reveal chinks in the Jester's formidable armour, but it wasn't until Undisputed Glory that we saw the first indication of a genuine threat. How that plays out in 2021 will likely be one of the stories of the coming year.

Chase Cooper

2020 has been a pretty good year for women in Queensland wrestling. Chase Cooper is one of the women this year has been good for. While she is not the newest female wrestler at IPW, she is quickly making a name for herself as someone who will take any weapon she can get her hands on to anyone who will get in her way. Cooper is a great example of why inter-gender wrestling is the future. Her ability is never in question and she isn't marketed as the victim of the match – she is going to wrestle and no one can stop her. She is a favourite among much of the IPW audience and has lots of potential to be on



our favourite wrestler list for next year, and we have no doubt that she will continue forging a mighty path for herself, and the rest of the women in Queensland wrestling.

Ivan Black



The Newcomers list doesn't often cross over with the Best Matches list, but Ivan Black had a year that many wrestlers would love to have, and he managed to do it in his debut year. Black immediately established a strongly hated character with everything in place, down to the green/black colour scheme and Ikea monkey jacket. He backed up the character with a trilogy of top-grade matches against Ricky Rembrandt, culminating in a Hair Vs Career match. Ivan wasn't always successful this year – he lost some hair to Ricky Rembrandt and was knocked out of the Featherweight Championship tournament by eventual winner Kanji Kid –

but if his first year in the ring is anything to go by, there's a whole lot of success in his future.

Yeet Stevens

Yeet Stevens's debut year has shown that the big man is ready to make a big impact in the scene. His first public appearance had him almost hold off The Stockman in UPW's Over The Top Rumble. Appearing at the secret "not a show" Fight Club for Three Count, Yeet was thrust into the main event for a battle of goliaths against Draegan and Rip Rielly. In his first singles match, Stevens arrived at UPW and wiped the floor with Vegas Starr. Through all of this, Yeet showed two things that will get him very far in the ring – an ability to immediately get a crowd out of their seats in support, and a deep love of throwing people with reckless abandon.

Wacol's Most Wanted

Skinny D and Cockroach may bear a passing resemblance to wrestlers you have seen before, but Wacol's Most Wanted burst onto the scene at Purge: New Dawn as something new and exciting and wonderfully chaotic. Their online content has been consistently top notch and they have appeared at UPW, IPW, QWA and Three Count, and never failed to win over the audience with the theatrics, athleticism and heart of what is easily the most disturbing (and heart-warming) bromance of 2020.



A special mention should also be made of their online promos and vignettes. In a year where the opportunities for in-ring action have been limited Wacol's Most Wanted have regularly provided top shelf storytelling through their posted videos and promos.

It takes a special kind of crazy talent to shiv one of Queensland's great wrestling hopes Xander Sullivan in the training ring. It takes a special kind of talent to do that, and still end the year as overwhelming crowd favourites.

Fave Five Characters

The Stockman

Wins and losses don't matter. Until they do. Until the numbers take on a power of their own, and everything else becomes almost a support act. The hat, the Drizabone coat, the steady unhurried procession to the ring with all the pent up energy and inevitability of an approaching storm, all of that, compelling as it is, gets subsumed by the maths. The outback outlaw was a force of nature again in 2020, and his power, hitched to Vegas Starr's directed cruelty made perfect sense. As much as the UPW Audience hated it, he was unstoppable. Until...

To truly become a star, you need to beat someone who matters. Which is why Moko Kai is a UPW star today.



Jesse Love

Jesse Love is an acquired taste. His character is very easy to hate, and he is very good at making us hate him. A character like Love would fit right in many 2000s rom coms that haven't aged well, as the slimy friend of the main character who never gets his comeuppance. In wrestling we get to see characters like Love get comeuppance. But despite his ability to make us hate him, one moment that highlights just how versatile his character actually is, can be seen in his relationship with Tim Hayden. The Bromance between Hayden and Love has flourished since becoming the Tag Team

Champions, and if we had to pick a cast for a buddy cop movie, it would be these two. Even though he is very hate-able we can't help but value what Jesse Love brings to IPW's roster, because who would we hate then?

Todd Eastman

The Manager, the mentor, the Svengali, the (often) evil genius wielding his wiles and occasionally weapons to manipulate events and secure success for his guys is a classic trope of wrestling. It makes sense, as while Vince McMahon may prefer a never ending successions of eye candy valets or otherwise unused wrestling talent, the value of a genuine manager, a person who can talk for (though not necessarily instead of) the wrestler, and comes across as providing legitimate brains for the brawn, offers a whole host of moving parts. Wrestling is storytelling, and not all of those stories are told in the ring, or indeed at wrestling events.

Todd Eastman had a quieter wrestling year than he expected. He didn't take over any wrestling promotions, and he didn't get to take as many selfies as he planned, but pre COVID he (or his charges) were amongst the dominant forces against multiple brands. Post COVID, while the performance opportunities have been limited, Wrestle Radio Australia has continued, and Eastman has taken us inside the minds of a host of Australian wrestling talent.

Pogo the Clown

You know those things that at first glance look like they are for children, but once you stop to think about them, they are anything but?

Ladies and Gentleman, I give you Pogo the Clown.

Ever since he first made his appearance as Thirteen's disciple and favourite whipping boy, there has been something unsettling about the former Mojo Powers. This is a clown, but a darker, more disturbing clown than you would want at your child's birthday. There is something serpentine in his movements, in his lithe angularity, but all too human in his sneering cruelty. His willingness to subjugate himself to his master's bidding carries a whiff of domestic violence and great gulping lung-fulls of Stockholm syndrome. Lest you fear that it is all sizzle and no steak however, Pogo has shown an ability to match it in-ring both in the UPW tag and featherweight divisions.

At Undisputed Glory he came to the ring with balloons and new gear, a calculated slap in the face to anyone who wants to see the pest as a harmless troublemaker. Do a google search on Pogo the Clown, and hug your children a little closer.



Outback Adam

Last year Outback Adam's Wildlife Warriors tag-team partner, Combat Wombat, made our list for best characters, but this year it's impossible to go past Adam for ocker pride. Making it to the final two of AWA's Purge hardcore rumble in January, Outback Adam showed that he had the heart to go with the khaki. It's hard to tell whether crowds love Adam quite as much as they love his inflatable croc companion, Steve, but as soon as the dubstep remix of Home Among The Gumtrees drops, everyone is thrilled to see the hyperactive eco-enthusiast's antics. With the in-ring skills to back it up, the always-smiling Adam is impossible not to love.

Fave Five Matches

LFB vs Tim Hayden 2/3 Tables Match - IPW's Reboot

Reboot was one of the first shows we went back to in 2020 after things were starting to open up again. We had our own table, trivia-style, and were sitting second table-row from the front. IPW worked hard to make sure that everyone could still have a great view and have it feel like an IPW show. The specific match was originally meant to be a trip threat but CJ, the third competitor, had injured himself and would be unable to compete. Despite being a man down, this match is probably my favourite table match ever and definitely one of our favourite matches of 2020. LFB and Tim Hayden not only spent the match displaying incredible strength and athletics, they also put each other through tables so hard that some of the tables shattered. We took home pieces of the shattered tables. And often when I describe to someone the fallacy of calling wrestling fake, I will find footage or pictures of this match because it represents just how impressive wrestling can be. I would tell you to find this match but I am just gonna link to the match instead: <https://youtu.be/x5jXnQLbz24>



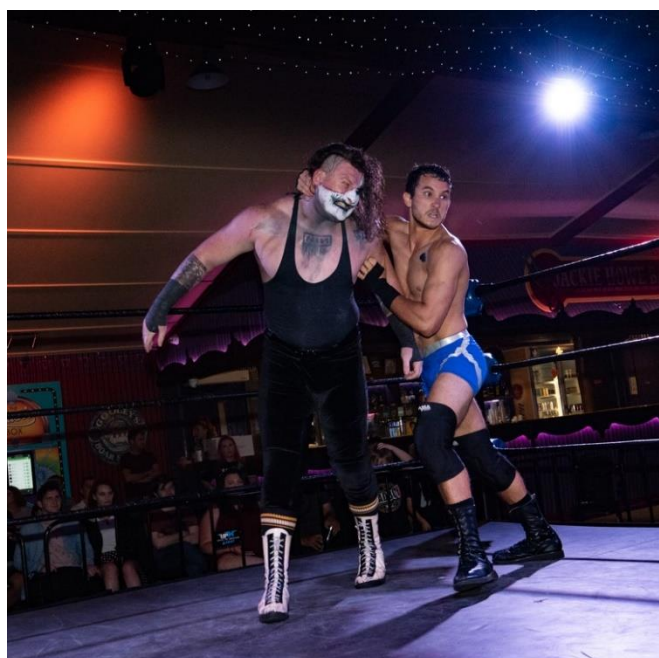
Jules Canan vs Craven vs Ritchie Taylor – Wide Bay Pro Wrestling Fight Back

When Wide Bay Pro Wrestling managed to bring Melbourne's Smashmouth Ritchie Taylor and Perth's "Example of Greatness" Jules Canan to Queensland, they could have put on a great match. Instead, they went one better and threw in Craven, who had spent 2019 wrestling in America, Mexico and Singapore, as well as his native Western Australia. These three clearly wanted to prove

to the local crowd that they were as good as the hometown heroes, so their triple threat match very quickly spilled into the crowd, with Canan launching himself from stage to floor, Craven and Taylor throwing blows while standing on fans' chairs, and the school hall walls themselves taking some damage after being used as a weapon. When Jules Canan stood tall at the end of the night, all three men involved had proved that Australian wrestlers are at the peak of the industry.

Jack Tucker vs Thirteen – UPW's Undisputed Glory

When I was first introduced to Thirteen and informed about UPW, I did what we all do: I went online, I researched, I looked for a match, and I found Tucker v Thirteen. Tucker's debut saw Tucker over-achieving in ways that he had no right to against the strength and power of Thirteen, until he was brought low by a crow bar. So Tucker's first taste of Thirteen and UPW was my first taste. I was kinda there at the start. I was absolutely there at the end.



One can't talk about Tucker v Thirteen at Undisputed Glory without mentioning the previous two years. Since that first match, Thirteen had assembled the Circus of Tragedy, a freak show who came to dominate proceedings at UPW, and whose particular talent was messing with the working class man. After all, it had been the Circus who had interfered in Tucker's title match against Malibu, causing a rush of blood to the head that saw Tucker give Thirteen a chance at the UPW title. He took it, and the title. If Tucker wanted to get to Thirteen (and the title) he would need to go through the Circus. So he did. The Monster Kasm was unmasked at Fight for Life 3, but coming into Undisputed

Glory, that still left Pogo the Clown and Jynx between Tucker and his prize.

The former was brought down by his own cruelty, taking a burst of fireworks to the face after trying to administer the same medicine to Tucker. The latter was removed from the equation by an incensed UPW trainee. But that still left Thirteen. As Tucker and Thirteen brawled around the Shed at Aussie World, as Thirteen tried to choke him out with a bin lid, or went again to the ubiquitous crowbar, there were genuine doubts as to how Tucker could prevail. But he did prevail, seemingly growing in determination and strength with every attempted cruelty by Thirteen. When the end came with Tucker knocking Thirteen off the apron and through a table to pick up the pin, on the outside it came with an air of inevitability.

That first match I watched online had seemed like a mismatch – Tucker against a stronger, more experienced, more driven opponent. Undisputed Glory was not a mismatch, it was a coronation.

Mitch McCarthy vs Rip Rielly Hardcore Match - AWL's Enter Phase One

Take a journey with me, to 3,000 years in the past, to February 2020. It was a very different world, but there was still wrestling. In Mitch McCarthy's first title defence of the AWL Heavyweight Title, he wanted to set the tone for what his title could contain, so the first title defence against the Purge Rumble winner Rip Rielly would be a hardcore match. And neither Rip nor Mitch held back. With no context this match could seem like the finale to an arc that had been building for years. But having happened in February, Rielly's heel turn was relatively recent, so this no-holds-barred mentality is more of a character trait than the outcome of a long-fought rivalry. But McCarthy was prepared for a difficult fight, using wax strips, baking trays and many more weapons to defend his title, which he successfully did. But not before a match that was so evenly matched and drawn out, that even the audience was feeling exhausted at the effort both men made to gain the title.

It should be noted that after the match was officially over, EC Diamond cashed in the Homecoming Cup to pin McCarthy and become the new Heavyweight Champion, but because fewer than five people knew of Diamond's plan to cash in, it wouldn't be fair to Rielly and McCarthy to include it as part of the match, even if Diamond ended the night as the Champion.

Ricky Rembrandt vs Ivan Black II – UPW Fight For Life



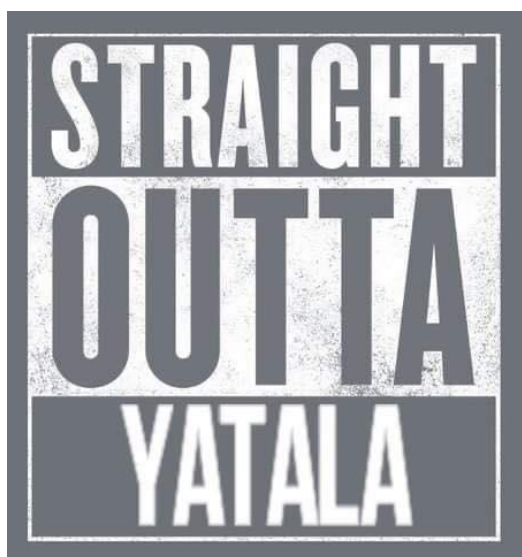
Some matches are great because of the in-ring action, and some are great because of the circumstances and promos surrounding them. Rembrandt and Black had both in their second matchup. After beating Ricky by sneaky rule-breaking in their first encounter, Ivan entered into the inaugural Featherweight Championship tournament and assaulted first-round opponent La Mosca Rosa backstage to easily advance, but Rembrandt didn't like Black's cheating ways and challenged him to a match. The match went on to be a technical marvel, with high impact and clever grappling. Black winning the match with a combination of a brutal turnbuckle shot and his

finishing Killswitch finished the match on a high note while leaving the fans wanting more.

Coming Up

UPW-The Awakening kicks off 2021 at UPW HQ on Saturday 16 January 2021. Both Jack Tucker and Kanji Kid have got their first defences under their belt after a big Jingle Jam Show, so it will be all about getting the New Year off on the right foot. Tucker will have a real challenge to start the year, taking on Tim 'Seriously Clean' Hayden, the first time the UPW audience has seen Hayden since March 2020. We are also looking forward to seeing how Moko Kai responds to being the big dog in the UPW yard, particularly if newcomer Yeet Stevens is barking through the fence.

We understand that UPW have an Aussie World show pencilled in for Friday 29 January, but no details have yet been announced for that show.



Venom Pro Wrestling are back at the Yatala Showman's club on 23rd January for Straight Out of Yatala. I don't know what to expect, as Venom's only show since lockdown began was an open air show at Boonah Showgrounds, and we didn't get to that one. If I recall correctly, the title holders are Tim Kade, Tequila Young (Origins), the Night Terrors (Tag Team) and Tarlee (Women), so we will be excited to see which of those belts are in action at Yatala. Whatever is on the card, I expect there will be a very pumped up Venom Crowd, looking to get their first serious wrestling fix in a while.

IPW return for the new year on Saturday 6 February 2021, with IPW Presents: Triumphant! at William Duncan State School. As always IPW finished off the year with a bang, and we have a new number one contender for Luxford's Heavyweight title in LFB. That promises to be a quality match. If that's not enough, former unified Champion Zeke Andino is slated to return to the IPW ring for the first time in nearly two years.

Coming Up in Heat Sheet

Mark your diaries: in 2021, Heat Sheet will land on the first Wednesday of each month with a rundown of all the wrestling action, features on your favourite wrestlers, wrestling promotions and more, including the 'Wrestler Diaries' by IPW rookie Eugenie Singh. Catch all that at heatsheetmag.com, and check out our great new logo designed by the amazing redneckkungfu.



