

= Hard Justice (2008) =

Hard Justice (2008) was a professional wrestling pay @-@ per @-@ view (PPV) event produced by the Total Nonstop Action Wrestling (TNA) promotion that took place on August 10 , 2008 at the Sovereign Bank Arena in Trenton , New Jersey . It was the fourth event under the Hard Justice name and the eighth event in the 2008 TNA PPV schedule . Seven professional wrestling matches were featured on the event 's card , three of which were for championships .

The main event was a Six Sides of Steel Weapons match for the TNA World Heavyweight Championship , in which the champion Samoa Joe defeated the challenger Booker T to retain the title . Another heavily promoted bout was a Last Man Standing match between Kurt Angle and A.J. Styles , which the latter won . The card also featured a match for the TNA World Tag Team Championship , which saw Beer Money , Inc . (James Storm and Robert Roode) defeat The Latin American Xchange (Hernandez and Homicide) to become the new champions . A New Jersey Street Fight was also held pitting the team of Christian Cage and Rhino against Team 3D (Brother Devon and Brother Ray) . Cage and Rhino were the victors in the contest .

Hard Justice featured the start of a storyline between veteran wrestlers and younger wrestlers in TNA along with marking the beginning of Jeff Jarrett 's return to active competition . 35 @,@ 000 was the reported figure of purchasers for the event by The Wrestling Observer Newsletter . Hard Justice had a reported attendance between 2 @,@ 300 and 3 @,@ 500 people . Canadian Online Explorer writer John Pollock reviewed the show and felt it featured the " usual assortment of wacky finishes and outside interference " but that " all in all it was a solid show . " Wade Keller and James Caldwell of the Pro Wrestling Torch Newsletter both reviewed the event , praising the Last Man Standing match saying it was a " superb " and " epic match . "

= = Production = =

= = = Background = = =

The fourth installment under the Hard Justice name was announced in January 2008 with an August 10th date attached . In May , TNA hoped to host a PPV event in the Northeastern United States sometime before the end of the year . Hard Justice was the PPV under consideration . TNA issued a press release in late @-@ June revealing that Hard Justice would be held at the Sovereign Bank Arena in Trenton , New Jersey . Tickets for the show went on @-@ sale on June 27 . TNA released a poster to promote the event featuring the The Latin American Xchange (Hernandez and Homicide ; LAX) and Samoa Joe ; the poster also promoted a musical appearance by rap artists Filthee , Grandmaster Caz , and Ice @-@ T. The official theme for the show was " AyAyAya " by Filthee .

= = = Storylines = = =

Hard Justice featured seven professional wrestling matches that involved different wrestlers from pre @-@ existing scripted feuds and storylines . Wrestlers portrayed villains , heroes , or less distinguishable characters in the scripted events that built tension and culminated in a wrestling match or series of matches .

The main event at Hard Justice was a Six Sides of Steel Weapons match for the TNA World Heavyweight Championship between the champion Samoa Joe and the challenger Booker T. Joe and Booker T previously fought at TNA 's Slammiversary PPV event on June 8 in a King of the Mountain match for the title , which Joe won to remain champion . The duo also fought at TNA 's previous PPV event Victory Road on July 13 , which ended in a no contest after interference from Sting allowed Booker T to gain an unofficial pinfall counted by his legitimate wife Sharmell instead of an official referee . On the July 17 episode of TNA 's television program TNA Impact ! , Booker T proclaimed that he was the new TNA World Heavyweight Champion before Management Director

Jim Cornette announced that Booker T did not win the match and that Joe was still the TNA World Heavyweight Champion , despite Booker T having taken possession of the title belt . Cornette then scheduled a rematch between the two for the title at Hard Justice ; Joe did not retrieve physical possession of the title belt after this , instead chose to reclaim the physical belt after he beat Booker T at the event . On the July 24 episode of Impact ! , Joe and Booker T made the contest a Six Sides of Steel Weapons match .

The predominate storyline heading into the event was the rivalry between A.J. Styles and Kurt Angle , both members of The Angle Alliance . On the February 14 episode of Impact ! , TNA held the scripted wedding of Angle 's real @-@ life wife Karen Angle and Styles despite Angle and Karen still being married on @-@ screen . Afterwards , Karen and Angle separated in the storyline on the March 13 episode of Impact ! . TNA continued to build the situation with Angle attempting to reconcile with Karen on the May 15 episode of Impact ! ; TNA began to phase out the marriage between Styles and Karen also . Karen refused Angle 's request on the May 22 episode of Impact ! , leading to Angle turning on and assaulting Styles later in the episode due to his jealousy of the affection Karen showed for Styles . This led to a match between the two at Slammiversary which Styles won after a distraction by Karen . The two faced in a Lumberjack match on the June 12 episode of Impact ! , which Angle won before it ended in a brawl between Styles , Angle , Tomko , Christian Cage , Rhino , Abyss , and Team 3D (Brother Devon and Brother Ray) . Afterwards , Team 3D and the team of Cage and Rhino became involved in the feud with Team 3D joining Angle , while Cage and Rhino sided with Styles . The two teams then fought in a Full Metal Mayhem at Victory Road , which the team of Angle and Team 3D won . The teams fought again on the July 24 episode of Impact ! , this time in a Six Man Tag Team Elimination Tables match , which Angle and Team 3D also won . On the July 31 episode of Impact ! , while Styles stood in a ring surrounded by a steel cage , Angle attacked Styles from behind and slammed him back @-@ first into the mat , rendering him unconscious . As a result of this action , Styles challenged Angle to a Last Man Standing match at Hard Justice ; Angle accepted the challenge .

The TNA World Tag Team Championship was defended at Hard Justice by LAX against Beer Money , Inc . (James Storm and Robert Roode) . On the June 12 episode of Impact ! , Roode and Storm teamed to face LAX for the World Tag Team Championship . The match was originally won by Roode and Storm before being restarted due to interference . LAX won the restart to retain the championship . After the bout , Roode and Storm assaulted LAX and their manager Héctor Guerrero . Management Director Jim Cornette scheduled a title defense at Victory Road between LAX and Roode and Storm under " Fan 's Revenge " Lumberjack rules on the June 19 episode of Impact ! . At Victory Road , LAX defeated the newly renamed Beer Money Incorporated to retain the World Tag Team Championship . On the July 17 episode of Impact ! , Roode and Storm began assaulting various wrestlers , crew members , and fans in retaliation for their loss at Victory Road . Later in the program , Roode and Storm once again attacked Guerrero , prompting LAX to come to his rescue . On the July 31 episode of Impact ! , Roode and Storm defeated the team of Christian Cage and Rhino for a World Tag Team Championship match at Hard Justice . On the August 7 episode of Impact ! , the team of Cage , Rhino , and LAX fought the team of Roode , Storm , and Team 3D in an Eight Man Tag Team match , which the latter lost . After the contest , Roode and Storm slammed Homicide through a glass table , injuring his right eye in the storyline .

Team 3D fought the team of Christian Cage and Rhino in a New Jersey Street Fight at Hard Justice . This match was a break @-@ off from the rivalry between A.J. Styles and Kurt Angle . After Team 3D , Cage , and Rhino became involved in the rivalry , Team 3D injured both Cage and Rhino in the narrative leading into Victory Road . Rhino was knocked out on the June 19 episode of Impact ! , while on the June 26 episode of Impact ! Cage was slammed through a glass table by Brother Ray . After the match at Victory Road and a Six Man Tag Team Elimination Tables match on Impact ! , Team 3D cost Cage and Rhino a shot at the World Tag Team Championship on the July 31 episode of Impact ! . Afterwards , Cage challenged Team 3D to a New Jersey Street Fight at Hard Justice , which Team 3D accepted .

= = Event = =

The telecast began with a live performance of the event theme song " AyAyAya " by Filthee along with Grandmaster Caz and Melle Mel . Ice @-@ T was advertised to perform but was absent with no reason given and was replaced by Mel . It later came to light that Ice @-@ T was unable to attend as a result of " travel problems . "

= = = Miscellaneous = = =

Hard Justice featured employees other than the wrestlers involved in the matches . Mike Tenay and Don West were the commentators for the telecast . Jeremy Borash and David Penzer were ring announcers for the event . Andrew Thomas , Earl Hebner , Rudy Charles , Mark " Slick " Johnson , and Traci Brooks participated as referees for the encounters . Lauren Thompson and Borash were used as interviewers during the event . Besides employees who appeared in a wrestling role , Rhaka Khan , Sheik Abdul Bashir , Raisha Saeed , Jacqueline , Héctor Guerrero , Salinas , Johnny Devine , Abyss , Sting , and Kevin Nash all appeared on camera , either in backstage or in ringside segments .

= = = Preliminary matches = = =

The opening bout was for the TNA X Division Championship between the champion Petey Williams and the challenger Consequences Creed . The duration of the match was 12 minutes and 30 seconds . Williams was accompanied to the ring by Rhaka Khan , who interfered in the contest trying to aid Williams to no avail . Near the end of the match , Sheik Abdul Bashir walked out to the ring and bashed Creed across the back with a steel chair , which allowed Williams to force Creed 's head into the mat with his signature Canadian Destroyer maneuver . Williams followed with the pin to win the match and retain the TNA X Division Championship . After the bout , Bashir continued to attack Creed .

The second contest of the show was a Six Woman Tag Team match pitting the team of Gail Kim , ODB , and Taylor Wilde against the team of Awesome Kong and The Beautiful People (Angelina Love and Velvet Sky) . Kong was accompanied to the ring by Raisha Saeed . Wilde won the match for her team with a pinning maneuver on Love at 11 minutes and 27 seconds .

The TNA World Tag Team Championship was defended by LAX against Beer Money , Inc. in the next encounter . Jacqueline accompanied Beer Money to the ring , while Salinas and Héctor Guerrero accompanied LAX . The duration of the encounter was 14 minutes and 15 seconds . Filthee , Grandmaster Caz , and Melle Mel performed LAX 's theme during their entrance . Near the end of the contest , Jacqueline and Salinas both interfered in the match . This led to Roode smacking Homicide in his injured right eye with a beer bottle while the referee was not looking . Storm then gained the pinfall to win the TNA World Tag Team Championship for his team .

TNA held a Black Tie Brawl and Chain match between Jay Lethal and Sonjay Dutt , which lasted 11 minutes and 14 seconds . In this match , both competitors were tied together via a chain and dressed in tuxedos . The only way to win was to strip their opponent of the tuxedo and either make them submit or pin them afterwards . Lethal won the encounter after jumping off of a turnbuckle to drive his elbow into Dutt 's chest and followed with the pin .

= = = Heavily promoted matches = = =

The fifth match on the card was a New Jersey Street Fight pitting the team of Christian Cage and Rhino against Team 3D (Brother Devon and Brother Ray) . In this match , weapons were legal to use and there were no count @-@ outs or disqualifications . Early in the match , both teams fought throughout the crowd , at which time they both used weapons against eachother . The match ended when Cage performed a frog splash aerial maneuver onto Ray from atop a ladder , followed up by Rhino performing his signature Gore maneuver into Ray against a table placed up in the ring corner . Rhino then pinned Ray to win the contest at 15 minutes and 22 seconds . After the match , Team

3D 's associate Johnny Devine came out to help attack Cage and Rhino , however , Abyss came to their rescue and slammed Devine back @-@ first onto the mat with his trademark Black Hole Slam maneuver while Team 3D made their retreat .

A.J. Styles fought Kurt Angle in a Last Man Standing match next . In a Last Man Standing match , there are no disqualifications or count outs , instead to win the match the competitor has to force their opponent to not be able to reach a standing position by the count of 10 . However , this match was only promoted as a Last Man Standing match , instead it was held under Texas Death match rules where a wrestler must pin or submit their opponent and then have them fail to respond to a count of 10 . Styles got the first fall of the night , when he forced Angle to tap out to Angle 's own signature submission maneuver the Ankle lock . Angle made it to his feet before the count concluded . Angle gained a pinfall later on in the match after slamming Styles off the top of a padded turnbuckle with a suplex . Before Styles could reach his feet to beat the count , Angle slammed Styles onto the mat back @-@ first with his signature Olympic slam maneuver and gained another pinfall to start the count over . Styles beat that count as well , with Angle trying for the Olympic Slam again before Styles ' countered it into his signature Styles ' Clash maneuver and pinned Angle . After Angle reached his feet , Styles and Angle fought up a padded turnbuckle with Styles gaining the advantage . At this time , Styles grabbed Angle by the neck and fell backwards from the turnbuckle and drove Angle head @-@ first into the mat . Angle failed to reach the 10 count afterwards , with Styles being declared the winner of the contest at 24 minutes and 50 seconds . Following the encounter , the referee called for medical attention for Angle who was scripted to appear as if he had suffered a neck injury . Styles then entered the ring once Angle reached his feet and lifted Angle up and dropped him on his head . As Styles walked up the ramp , he was attacked by Sting , who drove Styles ' head into the ramp with his signature Scorpion Death Drop maneuver , as Kevin Nash looked on .

The main event was a Six Sides of Steel Weapons match for the TNA World Heavyweight Championship , pitting the champion Samoa Joe against the challenger Booker T , who was accompanied by Sharmell . The duration of the contest was 12 minutes and 44 seconds . Early in the bout , Booker T hit Joe in the face with a steel chair , resulting in Joe bleeding from the forehead . Later on , Booker T slammed Joe back @-@ first onto two chairs with his signature Book End maneuver , however , Joe kicked out of a pinfall attempt . Joe gained the pinfall victory to retain the TNA World Heavyweight Championship after bashing Booker T over the head with a guitar that had appeared in the ring after the lights had suddenly went off and back on .

= = Reception = =

A total of 3 @, @ 500 people attended Hard Justice , while the The Wrestling Observer Newsletter reported that 35 @, @ 000 people bought the event . However , the attendance number has been disputed , with it also being reported that Hard Justice drew an attendance of 2 @, @ 300 people .

Canadian Online Explorer writer John Pollock reviewed the show and felt it featured the " usual assortment of wacky finishes and outside interference " but that " all in all it was a solid show . " Pollock commented on the musical performance shown at the beginning of the telecast , stating the " crowd is silent in appreciation . " " Crowd is very hot for this opener and the atmosphere should hopefully add to this show , " stated Pollock when covering the TNA X Division Championship match . Pollock discussed the Street Fight in his review , commenting that the " crowd was really hot for this match . " As for the Last Man Standing match , Pollock said it " was an outstanding match . " Pollock also felt that the main event got " zero time . " Pollock noted that the fans in attendance started chanting " Fire Russo " during the Black Tie Brawl and Chain match in his review , which was a reference to TNA writer Vince Russo .

Wade Keller of the Pro Wrestling Torch Newsletter rated the matches out of five stars in his review of the event . He gave the main event 2 3 / 4 stars and discussed the amount of time it was given , stating it was " just enough time for a suitable main event " but that it did not " leave much flex time for things to run past the bare minimum for a PPV main event title match in a cage much less do whatever they 're going to do with Sting and Nash . " Keller also disapproved of unprotected use of

weapons in the bout , commenting that TNA management needed to start fining " wrestlers for taking unprotected chairshots to the skull " because it was " just not worth the long @-@ term cumulative risks associated with blunt trauma to the skull over years of wrestling . " He gave the Last Man Standing bout 4 stars and said it was a " superb match " with a " scaring finish " since the " potential for something going wrong given Angle 's legit neck problems was substantial " even if " everything was planned " to work out that way . Keller rated the Street Fight 1 1 / 2 stars and stated it " was pretty clunky late and early on the crowd brawling got a little repetitive " and that it felt " like yet another weapons match . " " The match was okay , but nothing more . The tuxedos and chain served as more of a circus @-@ like distraction than a valuable prop for the match , " said Keller in his coverage of the Black Tie Brawl and Chain match , which he gave 1 1 / 4 stars . Keller gave the World Tag Team Championship match 2 stars , but did not give his opinion outside the rating on the contest . He did comment on the X Division Championship match , saying it was a " very good match " and gave it 3 stars .

James Caldwell , also of the Pro Wrestling Torch Newsletter , published a review of the show in which he also gave ratings out of 5 stars and some comments on the top matches on the card . He considered the main event " underwhelming " due to the " audience having sat through every possible gimmick match combination prior to another Joe @-@ Booker bout that everyone knew was going to end with some sort of gimmicky finish " and that it was " not memorable " but that it would " generate talk about Jarrett . " He gave the bout 2 stars . " That was an epic match , " said Caldwell when discussing the Last Man Standing match . However , he felt the bout had a " silly pin @-@ and @-@ count- ' em stipulation " and that the " all @-@ too @-@ real neck injury angle , followed by some post @-@ match activity that took away from Styles 's win . " Caldwell felt the match made Styles look " like a star when he won , then he came across like a punk attacking Angle , then a fool being in position for Sting to take him out " but that he had a " memorable , star @-@ making victory over Angle . " He disapproved of Styles being " used a means to the end of explaining Sting 's purpose @-@ driven TNA life . " Caldwell rated the encounter 4 stars . As for the Street Fight , he said it was a " fun brawl for the audience " and gave it 2 1 / 2 stars . Caldwell believed that the World Tag Team Championship match had " good heat " that " over @-@ rode the stream of outside interference , referee incompetence , and overall over @-@ booking " and that it was " refreshing to see TNA use an injury angle from TV to set @-@ up the finish of an important PPV match . " He gave the match 3 stars . The X Division Championship match was given 3 stars and he said it would have been " great " if it had avoided involving " outside interference . "

= = Aftermath = =

The feud between Samoa Joe and Booker T ended after Hard Justice . On the August 14 episode of TNA Impact ! , Management Director Jim Cornette announced that Joe would defend the championship at TNA 's next PPV event No Surrender on September 14 in a Four Ways to Glory match . Cornette stated that over the weeks leading to the show three qualification matches would take place to determine the challengers to Joe . Booker T won the first qualifying match was on the August 21 episode of Impact ! by defeating Rhino . Kurt Angle defeated Kevin Nash on the August 28 episode of Impact ! to qualify for the contest . The final qualifier was Christian Cage , who defeated A.J. Styles on the September 4 episode of Impact ! . Booker T could not attend the event due to Hurricane Ike , making the bout a Three Ways to Glory match instead . Joe retained the championship at the show .

The finish to the main event and the segment after the Last Man Standing match led to several matches and segments following Hard Justice . Sting was announced at No Surrender to be the challenger for the TNA World Heavyweight Championship at TNA 's Bound for Glory IV PPV event on October 12 . Sting ended up defeating Joe for the title at the event due to Nash betraying and hitting Joe with a baseball bat . Styles went on to challenge Sting at TNA 's Turning Point and Final Resolution PPV events for the title , failing to win on both occasions . These matches were part of a storyline between veterans wrestlers , which made up The Main Event Mafia , and younger wrestlers , called The TNA Front Line , in TNA . Meanwhile , the finish of the main event led to the return of

Jeff Jarrett at No Surrender , when he aided Joe in retaining the TNA World Heavyweight Championship by hitting Angle with a guitar .

The rivalry between A.J. Styles and Kurt Angle continued after Hard Justice leading into No Surrender . On the August 14 episode of Impact ! , Styles fought Angle in an Olympic Wrestling match for Angle 's 1996 Summer Olympics gold medal in freestyle wrestling . Styles defeated Angle to win the medal on the telecast . Styles and Angle fought a week later on the August 21 episode of Impact ! in a ladder match for the medal , with Styles retaining the medal . Styles then went on to feud with Angle 's on @-@ screen bestfriend Frank Trigg , who attacked Styles with a kendo stick during Styles ' Four Ways to Glory qualification match with Cage , costing Styles to bout in the process . This led to Styles challenging Trigg to a bout at No Surrender , which Trigg agreed to but only if it was contested under Mixed Martial Arts rules on the September 11 episode of Impact ! . Styles and Trigg fought to a no contest at No Surrender due to Styles accidentally hitting Trigg in the groin . Afterwards , Styles beat Trigg with a kendo stick to end their feud . On the September 25 episode of Impact ! , Styles was ordered to return Angle 's gold medal by Jeff Jarrett , who had taken a role as a TNA management authority figure . The medal was returned to Angle on the October 9 episode of Impact ! by Jarrett .

Sonjay Dutt and Jay Lethal ended their rivalry at No Surrender . Dutt attacked Lethal after he was defeated by Sheik Abdul Bashir on the August 14 episode of Impact ! . On the September 11 episode of Impact ! , TNA promoted a Ladder of Love match at No Surrender with the winner becoming engaged to SoCal Val . Dutt won the contest at No Surrender when Val betrayed Lethal and aided Dutt . Beer Money , Inc (James Storm and Robert Roode) went on to defend the TNA World Tag Team Championship against The Latin American Xchange (Hernandez and Homicide) at No Surrender in a rematch . Beer Money , Inc retained the title at the show . Petey Williams defended the X Division Championship against Consequences Creed in a rematch on the August 21 episode of Impact ! , with Bashir once again interfering by attacking Creed , resulting in Creed winning by disqualification and Williams retaining the X Division Championship . TNA promoted a Three Way match between the three for the X Division Championship for No Surrender , which Bashir ended up winning to become the new champion on the telecast . Team 3D (Brother Devon and Brother Ray) and the team of Christian Cage and Rhino ended their conflict after Hard Justice . Team 3D instead went on to fight the team of Abyss and Matt Morgan at No Surrender , which the latter won .

= = Results = =