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## An interview with Christopher Daniels

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On Monday night, June 15, I had the pleasure to chat with TNA superstar [Daniels](#) in preparation for his upcoming match with "The Franchise" Shane Douglas at TNA's Slammiversary pay per view this coming Sunday live from the Palace of Auburn Hills outside of Detroit, Michigan.

Daniels was a gracious guest and we talked about a variety of subjects in the wrestling industry over the course of our near half hour talk and showed why he was the classy entertainer that everyone said he is.

**This Sunday you are facing "The Franchise" Shane Douglas at Slammiversary. I don't recall you ever having a big program with Douglas before. Is there your first one-on-one match with him or have you battled each other before?**

I worked with a couple times of times when we were doing national [weekly] pay per views but never a singles match; this will be the first time one-on-one. I am sure we can do some good television and some very interesting matches.

I think Shane is a great competitor, a great athlete and a great wrestler. He's got an incredible wrestling mind. This will be one of the few times in my career that I will be going into a match having less experience than the person I'm wrestling. It's a big deal to me, not only because it's Shane but also because Slammiversary is one of our big PPVs, and I try to continue the trend of excellence that I have for TNA.

**It's hard to fathom that TNA Wrestling has already been around for seven years and is continually growing at a consistent clip. You have been there since basically the beginning. Did you ever imagine it would ever grow like it has, or were you skeptical in the beginning?**

I wasn't skeptical. I didn't think we were in danger of closing. When we were in Nashville [for the original weekly TNA pay per view broadcasts] the talk at the water cooler was that our business model wouldn't work; we would run out of money; the people supporting us would back out. It came really close but it never really happened. It never materialized into that. Instead every step we've taken has been a step forward; a positive step. It's been slow but sure progress for us.

*(Since TNA Wrestling was founded in 2002 it has grown from a start-up group based in Nashville that ran weekly pay per view broadcasts on Wednesday nights. It then added a one-hour television show on Friday afternoons Fox Sports Network. They then transitioned into a traditional monthly pay per view supercard format. The FSN show then became a one-hour show on Spike TV on Saturday*



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nights, which grew into a one-hour slot on Thursdays in prime time. That Thursday night show has now become two hours long and is a staple of Spike TV.)

And we have a TV show being seen by close to 2 million people each week and those numbers don't seem to be faltering. It looks to be an upward trend for us. All I can do when I go out there when it's my turn in the ring is to put the best foot forward to wrestle the matches I'm capable of having and show how versatile I am by working with someone like Suicide [current TNA X-Division Champion] one month and then Shane Douglas the next month. I feel I'm one of the most well rounded guys on the roster.

The more versatile you are as a performer the more you can bring to the table and not be pigeonholed in one spot. They've used me for the X-Division and for tag teams. They've put me guys that outweighed me by 50-100 lbs. and I always felt I've gone out there and had entertaining matches.

**TNA has an interesting roster that combines many independent standouts and homegrown stars with some of the industry's biggest names. What's it like having these successful veterans around to work with and learn from?**

Well I'm happy with it because I'm in the position where sometimes I'm the experienced guy in the locker room and so in TNA guys come to me for advice but then I can also turn to guys like BG James and Kip James, Booker T and Kevin Nash; I can talk to them to get their opinion on what I'm doing in the ring and try to continue to improve myself. I feel once you feel you can't learn anything it's over. I've been doing this for sixteen years, but I still learn new things and try and improve my product and my game, and I feel that's what makes me valuable; not just being well rounded, but that desire to continue to improve to get better, not just for myself but for the benefit of TNA.

**You have seen so much and been a part of so much of TNA's history. What stands out as your most memorable moment or moments?**

*(Throughout 2005 Daniels battled with Samoa Joe and AJ Styles in a three way feud over the TNA X-Division Championship. Their triple threat match for the X-Division Title at the Unbreakable pay per view in September 2005 is considered one of TNA's best matches in history. The three men would continue to battle each other through a series of singles, triple threat and tag matches throughout the rest of 2005.)*

I feel the high point has got to be the three way with AJ & Joe. Also holding the X-Division title longer than anyone else (*six months*). That still hasn't been touched for an X Division reign for those guys. And then to be to put in that position to main event a pay per view and have such a match that today is still being called one of the best matches in the company's history. It means a lot to me and means a lot to wrestle two guys I consider my close friends and to look back at that and see where we are now and where we came from. And no one can change that. No one can take that match away from us. That's a big deal and something I am very proud of.

**And on that note, you have had so much success Championship wise as well, including six NWA and TNA World Tag Titles and four TNA X-Division Championships. Is it a big thing for you to be a champion and have a Title belt or is it just business as usual?**

I always look at it as the company's seal of approval. It means a lot to me as a performer to know the company appreciates me enough to have me as their representative. I don't take it lightly; it's not just another day at the office. There is a responsibility that comes with that. When I had that opportunity there was that ability to go the extra mile to what I had to do in order to make it seem to the fans that the best wrestler had the belt at the time.

**So you get to carry the belts with you in the airport all the time right? I'm sure that always proves to be fun at the metal detectors.**

(Hahaha) It's not so bad. You always get the people who want to know what you are the champion of, and I'm never one to shy away from those questions. It's always fun to have those guys challenge you to a match while going through security.

**Because of TNA you have had a nationally distributed career anthology DVD releases, been made into an action figure and been a part of a top selling video game. Is all the stuff like that just a cherry on top of being able to perform night in and night out?**

Well I feel like it's one of the signs you've made it to a certain level. When my first action figure came out it's another thing that they'll never be able to take away. To me it's just reaping the benefits of my hard work. The fact that my kids can have an action figure of their dad, that is something I'll always have. That's something I can look back and they can bring it to school and say 'this is my dad.' That's a big deal to me. If it never happened I wouldn't be sad, but the fact that it did, makes me very happy and proud of the things I've done.

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**With all those title victories, especially in the tag division, do you have anyone you could consider your favorite tag team partner?**

*(Daniels was a two-time NWA-TNA World Tag Team Champion with AJ Styles in 2006, and formed a long-term partnership in TNA with Elix Skipper as part of the Triple X stable. Triple X were three time NWA-TNA World Tag Team Champions.)*

I'm really appreciative of all my partners. The best two I've probably had were probably AJ and Elix. I just feel we [Elix Skipper and Daniels] had a different dynamic. We were a tag team first and foremost. We were probably the strongest unit TNA ever put out. The difference between that and me and AJ; AJ and I came from a background where we spent years wrestling each other and becoming familiar with each other like that, and then to become part of a tag team where we so familiar with each other. It was a need to see how much we could compliment each other. Despite how successful we got as a tag team people still viewed us as 'AJ and Chris' rather than a unit. That's not to take away from the team it's just that AJ had such a strong singles career so it's hard to look at him as part of a tag team. If AJ and I had a chance to stick together longer we could've been the tag team that people talk about like in the sense that they talk about America's Most Wanted [Chris Harris & James Storm]. AMW is probably the most famous team that TNA has produced as a homegrown team. I feel like if AJ and I had that type of longevity as a team we could've been easily talked about in the same scenario as one of the best teams that TNA has ever produced.

**Or do you have a favorite opponent that you look forward to getting in the ring with?**

My favorite rivalry would have to be with AJ Styles and Samoa Joe. That stuff stands head and shoulders above a lot of other stuff I've done. But to get away from those two and mention others I've always felt I've had very good chemistry with guys like Low Ki and American Dragon. When I was going through [Ring of Honor](#) and had a series with those two I felt we always produced quality matches. Those are the guys I feel I've worked well with. I feel I also work well with current X-Division guys like Suicide, Chris Sabin, Alex Shelley, and Jay Lethal. I've had excellent matches and excellent feuds with Jay. I feel he is one of the best X-Division style wrestlers in the world today. I've been doing this for 16 years and been doing it at the level I've been doing it in TNA for the past seven years, so it's hard to say one guy is better than another guy without slighting someone.

**You have to considered one of the pioneers of TNA's X-Division. What do you think makes the X-Division so special?**

The desire of the guys to show their best stuff. Trying to a better match than we did the night before. It was that heart and soul that we had as wrestlers is what TNA capitalized on when they put us all in the ring together with each other.

There is a market for it. The fans still want to see action. The word on the marquee still says wrestling, and I feel that in a TNA X-Division match you're getting 100% action and 100% wrestling. I'm proud of the things I've done in the matches I would label X-Division matches.

**The X-Division has had so many great athletes come and go through its storied history. There were a lot of great matches and rivalries over time but there many others that fans never got to see. So in your opinion, who would win in a triple threat match between yourself, Curry Man (who is one of my all-time favorites) and current champion Suicide?**

(Hahaha) I would say probably me because my peripheral vision isn't limited by masks. I would definitely have a foot up on those two guys. It would be a great match, but I would get very tired from the dancing.

**Speaking of names, you've made your name in pro wrestling primarily as "The Fallen Angel" Christopher Daniels. Now it seems as if are being billed primarily as "Daniels" on TNA television. Was there a big reason for the sudden name shortage?**

That was a TNA decision, and one I didn't bother to fight or deal with. Whatever they called me I would be the guy going out there putting 200% in my matches. Some people still call me Chris and some call me "Fallen Angel," and I still get those chants wherever I go. I just go out there and do what I do best and that is wrestle.

**With you performing as much as you do, I don't know how much of a chance you get to check out talent on the independent scene. Is there anyone out there currently that you think would have a great chance at making it on a national stage?**

I don't get a chance to do a lot of indys anymore. I got a chance to see a [PWG](#) show front to back and guys like The Young Bucks are definitely a team making some noise. They are getting the spotlight put on them thanks to ROH, and I think a lot more people will become aware of them. I'm also a big fan of Chuck Taylor and Kenny Omega. I've always been a big fan of Joey Ryan's work. He's a guy who not only understands the athleticism but also the entertainment of professional

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wrestling. I think he's phenomenal. I think Scott Lost is phenomenal. Those are the guys that I know are just a break away from being on the scene and being world-renowned.

**You have accomplished so much in your career already. What are the future goals for Daniels in the wrestling industry?**

I feel like it wouldn't be out of the realm of possibility to put Chris Daniels as a World Title contender. I feel like this run I'm having with right now with the people I'm working with I feel like TNA is broadening my horizons a little bit. I hope the day comes in TNA where Christopher Daniels is in the title picture.

**Is there anyone out there that you haven't stepped into the ring yet that you would love to face?**

There are guys promotionally speaking I won't be able to wrestle with but I would love to wrestle Chris Jericho. I still feel he's one of my favorite wrestlers. He's probably the epitome of the guy that understands the fine line between athlete and character. I think right now he's doing some of the best work of his career. He is someone I would've enjoyed working with. Never say never I don't know what's going to happen for me in the future and maybe some day Chris Jericho versus Daniels will be a match someone can see somewhere.

**Just this past weekend the wrestling world lost one of their most influential figures in Mistuhara Misawa. Do you have any thoughts on his unfortunate passing?**

It's definitely tragic. I think it's a fear we all have in the back of our minds that we are going to die in the ring. He carried his promotion on his shoulders and I think that may have contributed to his early demise; just that pressure of being the man in his company for such a long time. It's pressure I can hardly imagine. If it were my shoulders that the company rested on I don't know how I would've handled it. Plus the fact that he handled it with grace and dignity for so long. It's a tragedy that it happened the way it did but his legend goes way beyond him.

Thank you to Daniels for time and insight, and make sure to tune into TNA Wrestling *Impact* every Thursday night on Spike TV and don't forget TNA Slammiversary this Sunday night live on pay per view.

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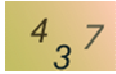


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