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## Daniels works hard for TNA spotlight

BY JIM VARSALLONE

[jvarsallone@MiamiHerald.com](mailto:jvarsallone@MiamiHerald.com)

Sometimes what you see on TV (or read on the Internet) isn't always the case, but truth is Christopher Daniels and A.J. Styles are longtime friends.

So for them to main event the final TNA pay-per-view of 2009, battling for the TNA title, is exciting, impressive and well worth it.

With two stellar workers in the ring, Daniels (as the challenger) confronts his best buddy Styles (the TNA champ) at TNA's Final Resolution pay-per-view on Sunday, Dec. 20 at Universal Studios Orlando.

Daniels vs. Styles is a mat classic. They've waged war before in TNA for X-Division glory. Prior to TNA, they made names for themselves, competing against each other and many more on the indies.

“The one thing that really helped me get to [a main event] level is the variety in my wrestling upbringing,” Daniels said. “I had the opportunity to work on the independent scene where I wrestled different people from different federations.”

At the TNA pay-per-view Turning Point in November, Daniels and Styles and Samoa Joe had a three-way main event for the TNA title with Styles pinning Joe (not Daniels) to retain. Daniels recently pinned Styles in a tag match on TNA iMPACT (9 p.m. EST Thursdays SpikeTV).

“I feel like there was a lot of pressure on us to sort of match the first three-way that we did,” Daniels said.

The three battled in an outstanding main event for the X Division title at TNA's pay-per-view Unbreakable in 2005. Styles also won that spectacular matchup.

“Even though I felt like the match was different, I feel like quality wise we definitely stepped it up and sort of matched the original,” Daniels said. “I felt really good about it, and it's always fun to get in the ring with Joe and A.J.

“I definitely put that as a high point in my career, and certainly the fact that I'm back in the main event picture in TNA is a big plus to me.”

Daniels is 6-0, 224 from Kalamazoo, Mich. and Fayetteville, N.C. He had a background in soccer and theater. Styles is 5-11, 213 from Gainesville, Ga. He had a background in amateur wrestling. In 2006, they teamed to become TNA tag team champs.

Debuting in 1993, Daniels is also a former TNA X Division champ and World X Cup winner. He won Ring of Honor tag team gold and Ultimate Pro titles. Known as the King of the Indies, Daniels competed twice in ECWA's Super 8 Tournament, featuring top indie talent.

“When someone tags you with a label [King of the Indies] like that, a lot of federations bring you in to be the standard,” said Daniels, who keeps close tabs with TNA stars Curry Man and Suicide. “My experience was when I came into places I never wrestled before, most promoters would put me with the guy that they wanted to focus or feature.

“By having a good match with me, it gave them legitimacy in the eyes of their fans. You don't know how many times I went into a company and wrestled a tournament and ended up going to the

finals to wrestle their main guy and making him look legitimate in the eyes of the fans. That was my role for a long time.

“It was good for me in the sense it got me experience around the United States and the opportunity to wrestle all kinds of wrestlers, all kinds of styles.”

In his journey to becoming King of the Indies and furthering his status from a Fallen Angel to a main event player in TNA, Daniels continues to progress.

“I got to wrestle in Japan,” he said. “That helped me get ahead of the curve in terms of ring psychology and athleticism.

“Having experiences like that gave me the ability to adapt in the ring with the people I wrestle. All these different styles made me very well-rounded and now be a go-to player. When they know they want a good match with somebody -- whether it's a big heavyweight or an X Division guy -- they know that I can do it and can perform in that role.”

Debuting in 1998, Styles is a former TNA X Division champ and Legends champ, becoming the company's first Triple Crown winner and first Grand Slam winner. He also won individual and tag team gold in Ring of Honor as well as NWA Wildside singles' titles among many others on the indie circuit.

“We're always adding to our game, and we're always trying to improve,” Daniels said. “Neither one of us rests on our laurels. We understand that one of the obstacles we'll have to overcome in wrestling each other is the familiarity of it all.

“People have seen us back in the day in the ring against each other fighting over the X Division title. Independent fans and fans of Ring of Honor have seen us in the ring against each other. What do we do to change it up to make it special? That's what we have to do. When we wrestle each other at Final Resolution, fans we'll see the changes in our game.”

Leading into Final Resolution, Daniels gained some momentum by pinning Styles in a tag team match on TNA iMPACT! (9 p.m. EST Thursdays SpikeTV).

“If the company feels strong enough to put me in a main event, then it's a vote of confidence in my favor,” Daniels said. “The fact that TNA let me and Joe and A.J. be the main event [at Turning Point] and the fact that I'm going to get a 1-on-1 shot with A.J. for the title [at Final Resolution] says TNA has a vote of confidence in my abilities as a professional wrestler.

“I'm glad they're giving me the opportunity. They're giving me the ball, and it's my job to sink or swim. It's up to me to perform to the best of my abilities and prove to the world and to TNA that they were right to put me there.”

TNA has been ‘right’ in placing Styles in that position.

“A.J.'s been in that position for a long time, in terms of being the guy to carry TNA as a brand,” Daniels said. “I've always been proud of him, as a friend and as a wrestler. I'm someone who's trained with him and wrestled with him. I've always been very proud of his success.

“Now that I'm up there with him and the opportunity I have to wrestle him in a TNA main event, that is a big deal to me, and we're both very happy about this opportunity to show we deserve to be in the main event picture together.”

Did you ever discuss it prior?

“We sort of talked about it,” Daniels said, “but we never really said, ‘Hey, one day you and I are going to main event a TNA pay-per-view in a singles’ match,’ but here we are.”

So is it more important to main event or win the title?

“I don't even think of it as one or the other,” he said. “I can't foresee what the future holds for me as a professional wrestler. All I can do is give my best when I'm in the ring and take the opportunities that I'm given.

“If it happens that I become world champion, then it certainly would be a great accomplishment for me after 17 years in the business. If it happens that A.J. wins the match, I still will have had the opportunity to wrestle for the world title in the main event.”

So is the goal to get to that level or win the belt?

“Well, I feel like I've already accomplished part of that in the fact I'm at that level,” Daniels said. “This will be my second main event in a row, and I feel like I've proven I can wrestle with A.J. Styles and Kurt Angle and the Desmond Wolfes of the world.

“The next accomplishment for me is to win the world title. It's something I haven't done. If it were to happen to me, it's something they can never take away. I would always be a world champion or a former world champion.

“I definitely want to be world champion. Time will tell.”

A former world champion who is the top mainstream persona in wrestling history, Hulk Hogan is now a member of TNA.

“I didn't hear any rumblings about it prior. It all just sort of happened,” Daniels said. “They kept it as under the hat as they could. A lot of us didn't even know about it, until we were told it happened.

“I feel it's a positive step for TNA. All the press we got since Hulk Hogan signed with us, and he hasn't even appeared on our television show [TNA iMPACT 9 p.m. EST Thursdays SpikeTV] or in our arena, yet, and all this is happening. So just imagine what's going to happen when he finally appears and interacts with us. I feel like it's a big deal for us, and it's certainly a step forward for TNA.

“Now that the spotlight is shining brighter on us, it's our opportunity to show the world that TNA deserves to be at the top level of professional wrestling.”

Daniels has met Hogan before and spoke with him at length but never wrestled him.

“It definitely would be a highlight to wrestle Hulk Hogan,” he said. “That's how I felt when I wrestled Sting for the first time. Just getting in the ring with someone that I grew up as a fan watching is a big deal.

“People who I do know who wrestled him, guys like Kurt Angle, have nothing but good things to say about [Hogan] because he knows so much about the in-ring product. He's so smart as to how to work with the fans and get the best, get the most out of everything he does. That would be a great learning experience for me to be in the ring with him.”

How do you feed off the crowd?

“It's just a matter of giving them what they want to see. I know the tools that brought me to the dance, and I try to give them a part of me every time I wrestle. When I know what they're looking for -- high flying or hard hitting or whatever it is -- I try to give that to them, and they'll respond in kind.

“I feel like fans are sort of burned out on what WWE is offering, in terms of storylines, and a lot of times, especially on the [TNA] house shows, the fans are appreciative of guys going out there and working hard and giving their 110 percent in the ring. When I'm in the ring, that's something I'm very aware of. They want to see people go, work hard. So that's what I do.”

- TNA Knockouts champ ODB vs. Tara (formerly WWE's Victoria) is another top matchup during TNA's pay-per-view Final Resolution at 8 p.m. EST on Sunday, Dec. 20 from Universal Studios Orlando.

Three Degrees of Pain: Fall one: Singles match Fall two: Submission match Fall three: Six Sides of Steel cage match: Desmond Wolfe vs. Kurt Angle.

Rhino, Jesse Neal and Team 3D (Brother Ray and Brother Devon) vs. Matt Morgan, Hernandez, D'Angelo Dinero and Suicide.

Last Man Standing: Scott Steiner vs. Bobby Lashley (with Kristal Lashley).

There will be a feast or fired match and more.

- Alex Shelley and Chris Sabin of The Motor City Machine Guns are featured on the promotional poster for TNA's Final Resolution.
- Living in Southern California, Daniels recently signed with Eruption Clothing, a new clothing brand featuring T-shirts, hoodies, shorts and jeans.

Founded by Gwen and John Legge in Orange County, Calif., Eruption was created with extreme-sport enthusiasts in mind, but the brand has quickly evolved and expanded into original, high-end apparel with something for everyone.

The company is attracting other pro wrestlers and mixed martial artists to promote its wear. Visit [eruptionclothinginc.com](http://eruptionclothinginc.com).

- Who wants to experience TNA Wrestling LIVE?

Between now and Jan. 15, TNA fans have the opportunity to demand that TNA Wrestling comes to their city or town.

Each year, TNA holds hundreds of events around the world, but there's still many cities and towns the company hasn't visited.

Fans can demand TNA comes to their hometown by voting; the more votes increase the chances of that location being on tour. The most popular cities/towns, per voting, will be included on the 2010

TNA Live Tour. See TNA Superstars like A.J. Styles, Bobby Lashley, Kurt Angle, Beer Money, Mick Foley, the high flying X Division and the talented and sexy TNA Knockouts.

Just click on the Demand It! button at [tnawrestling.com/content/view/1318/84/](http://tnawrestling.com/content/view/1318/84/) and enter some basic information.

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