

[We fade up on the bank of television monitors that can only mean the return of everyone's favorite segment - the Control Center. A voiceover is heard.]

"And now... here with your Battle of Saskatchewan Control Center... Mark Stegglet."

[We fade to a different shot of monitors, now with Mark Stegglet standing in front of them in a navy blue suit, white dress shirt, and a red tie.]

MS: Hello everyone, and welcome to this very special edition of the Control Center. I'm Mark Stegglet and I'm here to help run down all the big matches coming to Mosaic Stadium - a completely SOLD OUT Mosaic Stadium I might add - on July 22nd and 23rd... that's right, a historic two night event in the Great White North brought to you by Mooselips Beer and Tourism Saskatchewan. Like I said, the live event is SOLD OUT... so the only way you can join us for this epic encounter will be LIVE on Pay Per View.

[Stegglet grins.]

MS: Now... we all know we've got the Stampede Cup - a twenty-four team version of the greatest tag team tournament in all of wrestling - going down over the two nights and we'll get to that a little later... but right now, I want to talk about the three non-tournament matches currently slated to go down.

[A graphic comes up that reads "NIGHT TWO" and has a picture of Kurayami with the Women's World Title over her shoulder.]

MS: We heard about this one on Fight Night. When confronted with a half dozen women upset with Kurayami for her recent attacks on them, Javier Castillo decided to put together the Six For The Shot match we'll see at Liberty Or Death with the winner moving on to Mosaic Stadium to get their shot at Kurayami for the gold!

[Another graphic comes up, this one also reading "NIGHT TWO."]

MS: The wrestling world was SHOOK to the core when this one was announced at Fight Night as well, fans. Arguably the greatest Canada-based wrestling promotion of all time - the Universal Wrestling Federation - lives on once more for one night when the last man to hold their championship...

[Stegglet grimaces.]

MS: Juan Vasquez... shows up to defend the gold against the legendary Youth Gone Wild! Fans all over the world have been asking how this came together... how Juan Vasquez is going to be allowed back on AWA television after what he pulled last year... what kind of shape will Youth Gone Wild be in and so much more. We don't have much detail yet, fans... but I am told we should expect more information on this match at Liberty Or Death next week!

[And another change in graphic.]

MS: How about this one, fans? The AWA World Heavyweight Title will be on the line on Night One as the champion - whoever he may be after Liberty Or Death - will defend the gold against the now-proclaimed winner of the 2017 Rumble, Kerry Kendrick... who will no doubt be joined by his main squeeze, Miss Sandra Hayes. Can Kendrick strike gold in the Canadian tundra? We'll find out at the end of July.

[The graphic fades, leaving Mark Stegglet all alone.]

MS: And then... the big one... the reason we're all going to be in Regina this weekend in July...

The return of the Stampede Cup.

[Stegglet grins.]

MS: Right now, let's take a look back at the history of this legendary tag team tournament...

[We fade from the Control Center to a shot of the Stampede Cup trophy, shining and dazzling as it rotates on its pedestal, the camera trained upon it in all its silver and ruby jeweled splendor. The voice of Gordon Myers provides the voiceover.]

"The first time I ever heard that the AWA was going to do be doing a tag team tournament, two words came to mind... thank God."

[We fade up on a black and white shot of Gordon, laughing softly.]

"Tag team wrestling has always been one of my favorite things in this sport. So much energy. So exciting. Some of the best matches in wrestling history have been with tag teams and... well, for a while that all kind of went away. No one cared anymore.

But the AWA cared."

[We get a montage of some of the early AWA tag teams - The Russians, Werewolf Gregorson and Despair, and of course, Kentucky's Pride.]

"And then they said "we're gonna call it the Stampede Cup."

[Gordon smiles, a twinkle in his eye.]

"Yeah. I liked that a lot. Because for old timers like me, we remember when Texas was the hottest place on God's green for wrestling. Sure, you had the Lynches up in Dallas... yeah, you had the Shanes down in Amarillo... but if you wanted to see the best in the world in Texas, there was only one place to truly go.

South Laredo."

[We cut to old footage from an episode of LWC Stampede, now sepia-tinted for nostalgia's sake. We get an establishing shot of the South Laredo Rodeogrounds. There are about six hundred fans in attendance. The camera pans over the small crowd, and then over the wooden walls of the old arena, where a lot of fans can be heard screaming and shouting. We pan past a dirty, shabby looking ring, with old-looking ropes and creaky wooden floorboards, a make-shift, dirt entry-way, and the steel guardrails don't match, but there's sort of a nostalgic feel to it all, as the camera pans to the announce position, where Biff Lincoln and Aaron Wexler both sit, wearing coats and ties. Biff sports his trademark sneer, while Aaron has a pleasant smile.]

Aaron Wexler: Hello, fans, and welcome to Sunday Stampede! I'm Aaron Wexler, alongside Biff Lincoln.

[We fade back to the black and white shot of Gordon.]

"The Stampede Cup was born out of love for tag team wrestling... and named out of respect for one of the greatest promotions that ever put on a show. How could I not love it? And that was before the bell even rang."

[We cut to a shot of the Laredo Entertainment Center, footage marked December 25th, 2009.]

"That first one was over two nights. Christmas Day and the 26th. You know, a lot of people thought the AWA was crazy for running major holidays - still do in fact - but that's how it was back in the day. You ran the big holidays because everyone was at home after opening their gifts and having lunch, looking for something to do. So, you go down to the wrestling show. Those nights... way back when... were so special to so many of us in the business and... well, in a lot of ways, the people you work with... they're as much your family as your actual family sometimes. So, it was always something to look forward to."

[We get a shot of some of the teams in the first year of the Stampede Cup - Shane and Bobby Taylor, Strictly Business, the Outlaws, the Bishop Boys, and Rough N Ready as we hear Gordon's voice from that night.]

"The Stampede Cup.

To the thirty-two men who walk into Laredo, Texas tonight - it can change everything.

A shot at the National Tag Team Titles.

One million dollars.

The Stampede Cup can change everything.

And it starts... now."

[We get a few short clips from some matches throughout the initial tournament - Bailey Fitzgerald using a sunset flip to score a first round upset over the National Tag Team Champions, Calisto Dufresne and Adrian Freeman... Shane Taylor hitting his own brother with the Black Beauty studded glove... Mike Sebastian diving off the top rope with a frog splash on a prone Shannon Stokes. The present-day voice of Gordon is heard once again.]

"It was... magnificent. Bucky and I were in heaven. We called so many tag matches back in the day down in the South and to see this tournament unfold... well, it was a special night."

[We get a shot of Calisto Dufresne spiking Cletus Lee Bishop skullfirst into a metal briefcase... and then of Dufresne, Freeman, and Ben Waterson celebrating their victory of the first-ever Stampede Cup tournament.]

"Okay, maybe I wasn't too happy with who won it or how but... that's the game, right?"

[Gordon chuckles as we fade from the shot of the Southern Syndicate trio back to the current Gordon shot.]

"And... that was just the beginning. Every year, it seemed like it got bigger and better... teams you'd only dreamed of seeing in the States..."

[A shot comes up that says "December 26th, 2010" with Violence Unlimited raising their first Stampede Cup trophy over their heads, having defeated the National Tag Team Champions, Rough N' Ready to win it.]

"In 2011, we went up to THREE nights with twenty-four teams! Boy, was that exhausting... but worth every minute of it..."

[We get a few quick action clips of 2011's Stampede Cup... Supernova hitting Calisto Dufresne with the Heat Wave splash in the corner... Kolya Sudakov nearly separating Ricky Armstrong's head from his body with the Russian Sickle... James

Lynch turning a Jackson Haynes powerbomb into a tightly-cradled rana... and then a final shot of the Lynch brothers hoisting the Cup over their heads.]

"Seems like things have changed a lot since then..."

[Cut back to Gordon, his eyes glistening a bit as his voice falters.]

"There wasn't a tournament at all in 2012... I won't lie, I worried it might never come back... but the next year it was in Oklahoma, I think... and somehow the stakes were higher than ever... because this wasn't just about the prestige... the money... the trophy..."

This time, the winner was also named the very first AWA World Tag Team Champions."

[We see a sequence of stills showing some of the participants that year - The Blonde Bombers, The Samoan Hit Squad, MAMMOTH Mizuawa and MAMMOTH Maximus, Stevie Scott and Juan Vasquez, and SkyHerc.]

"It was a loaded field - everyone wanted the honor of being the first World Tag Champions. The National Tag Champs were in it. Two former Stampede Cup winners. Everyone!"

[Cut to a clip of Adam Rogers, Robert Donovan, and the Lynches doing wild battle all over the ringside area.]

"Even a young man that the AWA faithful would soon come to know as the White Knight fought for it... getting all the way to the Finals with a legendary partner..."

[We get a shot of Ryan Martinez and Gunnar Gaines battling it out with the Blonde Bombers...

...and Larry Doyle SMASHING his loaded boot over Martinez' skull...

...and leading to the Bombers and Doyle celebrating their victory.

And back to Gordon with a sad smile.]

"But it wasn't to be that night for young Ryan..."

[He gets a twinkle in his eye.]

"...but don't worry, kids... things would turn out just fine for that young man.

In 2014, the Stampede Cup make history again... this time by hosting the event in Tokyo, Japan..."

[Cut to a shot of a map with a graphic of the Cup traveling overseas Indiana Jones style...

...and then fade into a shot of the world-famous Tokyo Dome.]

"Of course, I didn't make it to Japan for that one but Bucky tells me the atmosphere was ELECTRIC!"

[We cut to some action shots from the tournament matches that night in Tokyo. Lenny Strong of the Lights Out Express and Kenji Nakamura of the Shadow Star Legion trading brutal forearm strikes mid-ring... a debuting Brian James flinging Kenny Stanton across the ring with a head and arm suplex... Noboru Fujimoto dumping Danny Morton on the back of his head with a half nelson suplex...]

"History was made by the AWA that night in Tokyo... and when it was over, Violence Unlimited had made history of their own by becoming the first two-time winner of the Stampede Cup."

[A shot of Haynes and Morton holding up BOTH of their Stampede Cups at a post-show press conference.]

"But after that..."

[We cut back to Gordon, sadly shaking his head.]

"Some idiot in the office or at the network decided nobody wanted to see an entire event focused on tag teams."

[Gordon sighs.]

"The Cup was back in 2015... but it was different. It was spread out over weeks of shows. The Finals? Just got thrown onto Saturday Night Wrestling."

[Cut to a shot of Air Strike celebrating with the Cup.]

"It was still a big win... but the magic was gone. It felt... wrong."

[Fade to black...]

"But then..."

[A graphic comes up with several different media outlets showing the announcement of the return of the Cup.]

"Then the Battle of Saskatchewan was announced. Two nights. One of the biggest events financially for the AWA ever. And the sponsors? They wanted the Stampede Cup. They wanted two nights of the greatest tag team wrestling in the history of our sport..."

[Cut back to a smiling Gordon.]

"And damn it, that's exactly what they're going to get."

[With a blast of color, Gordon Myers is now seated beside the Stampede Cup, a big grin on his face as "Limelight" by Rush begins to play in the background as Gordon starts to run down the list of teams in this year's tournament.]

"One of the most exciting young tag teams in the sport - "Cannonball" Lee Connors and Downpour, the Shooting Stars are in the tournament... and are also one of the eight teams who received a seeding and a bye into the second round!"

[The graphic of Connors and Downpour, fists held up on one hand with their forearms crossing each other's, hits the screen...]

"One of the newest tag teams in the AWA, just recently making their tag team debut on the Power Hour but now heading to Canada with the opportunity of a life time - Alexander Kingsley and Curt Sawyer!"

[A new graphic comes up with a smirking Kingsley with his arms crossed and Sawyer with his trademark axehandle draped over his shoulder.]

"Representing SouthWest Lucha Libre... a former Stampede Cup competitor in their own right... the always-popular and ever-exciting masked duo known as The Hive!"

[The two high flying "insects" show up on a graphic, the shapely young lady known as Queen Bee, standing between Bumble Bee and Yellow Jacket.]

"From Japan... making their long-awaited debut... The Machines!"

[We get a shot of two masked men, arms crossed in dark grey full-length bodysuits.]

"Another former Stampede Cup competitor and one of the most dangerous teams in the business... the Samoan Hit Squad!"

[Mafu and Scola glare menacingly into the camera, arms spread and in mid-shout.]

"Another team coming from Japan... they are the reigning Tiger Paw Pro Global Crown Tag Team Champions... AND a former two-time AWA World Tag Team Champions combination... one of only eight seeded teams in the tournament... Lenny Strong and Aaron Anderson... the Lights Out Express!"

[We get a Tiger Paw Pro promotional show of Anderson and Strong holding up their titles after their championship victory.]

"One of the most thrilling teams to watch in the tournament... a pair of luchadors that are one of the most viewed duos on the Internet... representing Guerreros Del Mundo... Arminius and Destro Star!"

[The two luchadors stand in front of the camera, holding up a Mexico flag between them as Angelica Westerly looks on with pride.]

"This one is a bit of a mystery, fans. Recently, Blake Colton abandoned his tag team partner, Curtis Kestrel, and said he'd found a new partner who guaranteed him a spot in the tournament. Turns out that new partner was telling the truth because this spot is going to Blake Colton and his mystery partner!"

[The Canadian powerhouse stands, arms crossed alongside a black silhouette of his partner.]

"One of the most dangerous and dominant trios in AWA history have entered the Stampede Cup... and we don't know which two will be in it to win it! Wade Walker, Isaiah Carpenter, and Pedro Perez... the Dogs of War are in the Stampede Cup tournament... and they're one of teams who've received one of those very valuable seeds giving them a bye to the second round."

[We get a promotional shot of all three Dogs of War staring into the camera threateningly.]

"This one is a To Be Determined spot as there is currently a Combat Corner Wrestling tournament underway with the winning team receiving this golden opportunity. The Finals of that tournament will take place on July 2nd in Philadelphia and we'll have our answer then."

[A big CCW logo is splashed on the screen with "To Be Determined on 7/2."]

"From Japan's Rising Pro company, the Yamamoto Brothers will add a little more international intrigue to the biggest tag team tournament on the planet!"

[A promotional photo of the Yamamoto Brothers comes up on the screen reading "Courtesy of Rising Pro."]

"One of the top contenders to the AWA World Tag Team Titles... and yet another one of the eight seeded teams in this tournament... the Soldiers of Fortune!"

[Cut to Joe Flint standing at attention as Charlie Stephens holds up an American flag on a wooden flagpole.]

"Another top AWA tag team who have recently been making some waves - the ever-dangerous duo known as Ringkrieger are in the Stampede Cup tournament!"

[A graphic with Daniel Ross and MISTER standing, arms behind their backs, with a RESPECT THE CANVAS flag hanging behind them is shown.]

"This one could prove to be problematic, fans. As of right now, the duo known as the Gold Standard - Takeshi Mifune and Bret Grayson - are in the tournament. However, if Grayson defeats Johnny Detson for the World Title at Liberty Or Death, we're told Grayson will defend the title against Kerry Kendrick at the Battle of Saskatchewan and an alternate team will take this spot in the tournament."

[The photo has Grayson kneeling, holding up the US flag, as Mifune stands behind him, arms crossed menacingly.]

"Another one of those treasured eight seeds belongs to this duo... now part of the Experience with Michael Aarons... it's Chaz and Chet, the American Idols looking to make a major impact by becoming the 2017 Stampede Cup winners!"

[The Wallaces stand back to back, making finger pistols at the camera for their promotional photo.]

"Another three man team here where we've yet to be told what two men will be competing in the tournament - Malcolm Sweeney, Rory Smythe, and Callum Mahoney! This European trio is looking to go all the way in Mosaic Stadium at the end of July."

[The three men stand side by side, Mahoney in the middle, in their graphic.]

"At Liberty Or Death, two teams will clash inside a steel cage for the World Tag Team Titles. No matter the result - both champions and challengers will be in the Stampede Cup. And they BOTH will have seeds that send them to the second round. System Shock and Next Gen are in the tournament!"

[Dueling graphics this time showing the champions and the Number One Contenders.]

"How about this one, fans? Representing Tiger Paw Pro... the Kabuchiko Assassination Maniac Squad! One of the most talked about teams in all of wrestling are heading to the Stampede Cup... and it's a welcome back moment for both of these men."

[Cut to a graphic of Cain Jackson and "Hot Stuff" AJ Martinez standing in a ring in Japan, arms raised after a victory.]

"The final seeded team in the tournament, earning that bye to Night 2... former World Tag Team Champions... former Stampede Cup competitor... Eugene Robinson and Idol Austin... Dynasty!"

[We get an older promotional photo of Robinson and Austin holding the EMWC World Tag Team Titles over their shoulders.]

"Three teams to go. Now, we know two of those teams. Those were announced at Fight Night but let's make them official... and remember, these two teams will be

meeting in the first round of the tournament on Night One... otherwise no doubt they would've been seeded. First, one of the most legendary tag teams in the history of our sport... former World Tag Team Champions... Shadoo and Derek... the Prophets of Rage!"

[A VERY old promotional photo comes up of these two, also from their EMWC days as they hoist the World Tag Team Titles of that promotion in the air.]

"And their opponents on Night One... they are the only team to win the Stampede Cup twice... they are former AWA tag team champions... former Tiger Paw Pro tag team champions... arguably the greatest tag team in the last decade... Jackson Haynes and Danny Morton... Violence Unlimited!"

[The famous shot of Morton and Haynes holding both of their Stampede Cup trophies in the air comes up on the screen.]

"And finally... and this one is very special to me... one of the greatest tag teams in AWA history... well... I think we'll let them tell it..."

[We fade to black.

Black and white photos of the first AWA tag team tournament for the National Tag titles fade in and out as some bluegrass plays.]

"History. We made it. First. Broken Wishbones..."

[Photo of Tin Can Rust and City Jack hitting their clothesline & belly-to-belly suplex "Dark and Bloody Ground" finisher on Jarrod O'Lachlan from the first round of the National tag tournament shows.]

"...and Beatdowns...

[Photo shows Rust covering the prone body of Mark Shaw as Adam Rogers looks on.]

TCR: Two nights... Four matches...

[Multiple photos flip through the battle Kentucky's Pride had with Juan Vasquez and Raphael Rhodes.

Shot of Rust being busted open by a Rhodes headbutt; Vasquez connecting on a standing moonsault to City Jack; and finally City Jack's massive form in the air from the top, right before crashing down on Rhodes.]

CJ: Two ol' SOBs, fightin' for their place, fightin' for respect, honor...

[Photos show the finals, the war between bitter rivals of Kentucky's Pride and Adrian Freeman & Calisto Dufresne.

City Jack lunging at his hated enemy Dufresne; Jack crushing Freeman's jaw with a forearm Metropill shot; Dufresne hitting a brass knuckled punch to Jack's knee; Rust hitting a double clothesline; a Dark and Bloody Ground on Freeman. Last photos show City Jack and Tin Can Rust holding up the new AWA National Tag Team title belts.]

TCR: That night we won, we made it. We made AWA history and ain't nothing took that away from us...

[The victorious title win photos fade to as the bluegrass turns more somber and photos now show photos of the 2010 Stampede Cup.]

CJ: We came damn near close but no luck...

[Quick flip of photos show Danny Morton of Violence Unlimited powerfully slamming City Jack to the mat and then later Rust and Jack hanging their heads in the locker room.]

TCR: The Cup. Thing we ain't never got the right to take. Thing we sure as hell had the chance to have...

CJ: The Stam-pede Cup, an honor for every two man team out there in the whole wide world. An honor showin' a team bein' the best of 'em all...

[The photos fade as the bluegrass turns more upbeat and distinctive - My Old Kentucky Home, in fact - as the faces of Tin Can Rust and City Jack show on the screen for the first time. Rust is sour as ever while Jack has his typical wide smile.]

TCR: But this year? This Cup?

CJ: This honor? This chance?

TCR & CJ: It's ours and we will make history again!

[City Jack gives a wink while Rust stares out determined eyes as the shot fades.

We fade back to Gordon Myers, live and in living color, with a big grin on his face.]

GM: The final entry in the 2017 Stampede Cup and one of my favorite duos of all-time, Kentucky's Pride!

[Gordon rubs his hands together.]

GM: Now that we know the list of 24 teams - minus the CCW entry's identity... let's take a look at the bracket for this huge event in Mosaic Stadium on July 22nd and 23rd.

[The shot of Gordon fades and is replaced by the official bracket for the 2017 Stampede Cup.]

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[As we see the graphic on screen, we can hear Gordon speaking over it.]

GM: So many great first round matches - battles like The War Pigs versus Ringkrieger... like Kentucky's Pride versus the Samoan Hit Squad... and of course, Violence Unlimited versus the Prophets Of Rage. And then you look at Night Two when the seeded teams come into the mix and all the potential matchups there - we might see that unknown CCW team get the chance to do battle with the Tiger Par Pro Global Crown Tag Champs, the Lights Out Express. What about a potential showdown between The Gold Standard and The Shooting Stars? The American Idols against Arminius and Destro Star! Kentucky's Pride versus Dynasty! And someone's gonna get a shot at taking on the tag champions in non-title action, potentially earning themselves a future title match. Could it be a match like Next Gen versus Alexander Kingsley and Curt Sawyer? Or maybe System Shock versus Ringkrieger?

[The graphic fades as we go back to Gordon.]

GM: So many tremendous potential matches. So much to look forward to. I'm excited, I know you're excited, and you better believe these twenty-four teams are excited! We're heading to Canada! We're heading to Mosaic Stadium! We're heading for the Stampede Cup! And we're heading for the Battle of Saskatchewan! Fans, it's been an honor being here with you tonight and I'll see you in the Great White North!

[We fade out on a grinning Gordon Myers.]