

Proving Grounds: ep 1

January 18, 2015 | The WrestleZone - Universal Studios Orlando

Introduction

*The screen fades in to reveal the sleek new **Proving Grounds** logo, glinting in gold and silver before it rockets forward and transitions into a roaring live crowd shot inside the **WrestleZone** at Universal Studios Orlando. Fans wave signs, scream in excitement, and chant "U-TA! U-TA!" as the camera pans across the audience and settles at the broadcast desk.*

Charles Newhaven: Welcome, folks, to **Proving Grounds**, live right here on Pure Sports Entertainment! We're coming to you from the legendary WrestleZone at Universal Studios in beautiful Orlando, Florida. I'm Charles Newhaven...

Theodore Dunkin: Sup, playas?

Newhaven: ...and alongside me is my partner in commentary, Theodore Dunkin. We're thrilled to bring you tonight's action featuring the *future* of the United Toughness Alliance! And trust me -- it's going to be one hell of a night!

Dunkin: Fo' sho. I'm hyped, Chuck. Got my snacks, got my mic, and got my eye on who's gonna break out tonight!

Newhaven: Speaking of breakout moments, we kick things off tonight with Emily Koresh taking on the ever-dangerous Teddy Alexander. But before we get to the ring, Emily has a few words backstage. Let's take you there now.

The crowd roars as the feed transitions backstage...

The Menagerie Are Home

The screen flickers. An eerie, mechanical grinding hum builds slowly under pitch blackness. Gradually, distorted sounds bleed in -- rusty chains, serrated metal dragging, the dissonant cries of something human... or once human. A shriek tears through the noise.

From the dark, a silhouette emerges.

As light pierces the shadows, we see flashes: twisted bodies crawling backward, a tide of malformed faces clawing at the screen. Somewhere within, a voice cries out for mercy -- equal parts rage and grief. The screen snaps to a lone figure standing at a shoreline, head bowed, face obscured. It raises an arm and points... not at us, but somewhere off-camera. A screeching like metal insects erupts as the screen slams into

Proving Grounds: ep 1

a close-up of a single, bloodshot eye. In its pupil, reflected backward, the words:

"Your Worst Nightmare Is Here."

The eye blinks.

Once.

Twice.

The screen goes white. Chanting begins. Not loud, but persistent. Something ancient. Something wrong. From the void, a shape takes form -- like the full moon, but spinning in layers of clouds and decay. Hidden in that shape... a face. Watching.

The scene cuts.

A young girl sits in a straightjacket, expression vacant. A doctor stands behind her. Suddenly, the doctor vanishes from one side of the room and reappears on the other. And just for a split second -- between frames -- another figure looms where the doctor once stood. Huge. Shrouded. Hulking.

The girl turns and smiles.

The footage burns away -- literally, curling at the corners as flame engulfs the screen. Through the fire, bleeding through one shot after another, we finally cut to the UTA logo.

Now, in front of that logo, a cloaked gathering of masked figures stands. At the front, the smallest among them throws back her hood. It's Emily Koresh -- wild-eyed, confident, dressed in black and crimson Victorian S&M-inspired gear that walks a line between fashion and fear.

Emily Koresh:

"Greetings and salutations, ladies, gentlemen, and the undecided watching from their mother's basement. My name... is Emily Koresh."

She smirks.

Emily:

"These fine degenerates behind me? My family."

She gestures to a grotesque man standing behind her -- reptilian skin, towering frame.

Emily:

"This beast is Caleb. Yes, he's real. Yes, he's mean. And no, he doesn't care what you think."

Proving Grounds: ep 1

She slaps his shoulder. Caleb doesn't flinch.

Emily:

"Over here -- the one-armed nightmare from Abilene -- that's Cain. Don't let the missing limb fool you. He can kill you twice with the other one."

Cain grins. It's not comforting.

Emily:

"And now... the camera, please."

Caleb takes the camera and spins it around to the original cameraman -- who is massive, masked, and nearly seven feet tall. On his back? A clear panel backpack... housing a sleeping, drooling quadriplegic little man in a Menagerie T-shirt. Sharp teeth. Unsettling snore.

Emily (offscreen):

"That's Jebediah. And his twin -- Abe. Technically. And *together...*"

The camera swings back around to Emily.

Emily:

"We're The Menagerie. But this isn't all of us. Oh no. We're *everywhere*. On the bus. In the bar. Hell -- maybe in your bedroom. We don't ask for permission. We don't knock. We break down doors, piss on the carpet, and start eating your family photos."

Emily:

"Now listen close. We've been called freaks. Monsters. A blight on the gene pool. And guess what?"

She leans close to the lens.

Emily:

"They were *right*."

Emily:

"I was once a little girl -- quiet, polite, and pure... until people like *you* called me names. Tried to flush my head in toilets. Told me I didn't belong. I cried. I ran. I begged. And then... I *changed*."

She slowly walks, the family behind her like a cult procession.

Emily:

"One day, I stopped apologizing for being different. And I started making *them* pay. That's when the Menagerie was born. Through blood. Through loss. Through the kind of pain that leaves you smiling in straightjackets."

Proving Grounds: ep 1

Emily:

"Now look at me. Look *at* me. I'm not the shy little Koresh girl anymore. I'm Emily Koresh -- The Queen of Xtreme. The baddest bitch in the UTA. And my brothers? They're not bodyguards. They're *weapons*. My uncle? That'd be Nocturnal. Heard of him? Of course you have."

She laughs.

Emily:

"I'm not here to ask for opportunities. I'm *taking* them. And if you don't like it? File a complaint -- just know we eat paper here."

Emily:

"We don't follow the rules. We don't read your script. And we sure as hell don't play well with others."

Emily:

"The Menagerie isn't just a faction. It's a sickness. And now that we're inside UTA..."

She smiles.

Emily:

"Get ready to rot from the inside out."

Emily:

"Oh, and pick up the new t-shirt while you're at it. Our quadriplegic cousin needs diapers and his Patreon got banned again."

She pie-faces the camera violently.

The feed goes black.

Emily Koresh vs. Teddy Alexander

We return to the WrestleZone with a camera already focused on the squared circle, where Teddy Alexander stands pacing with intent, arms crossed over his chest.

Charles Newhaven:

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to the very first match here on Proving Grounds! And it looks like we're starting hot--with Teddy Alexander already in the ring and ready to go.

Theodore Dunkin:

Man, this how y'all do my people? Teddy can't even get his entrance? Equal opportunity? Please. Let me tell you 'bout the struggle, Charles...

Proving Grounds: ep 1

Before Newhaven can respond, the lights dim and "Freak Like Me" by Halestorm rips through the PA system. The crowd erupts in a mix of boos, gasps, and unfiltered curiosity.

Emily Koresh steps onto the stage, smirking wickedly. She's sporting a torn and faded "Menagerie" tee and tight ring gear with dark red accents. As she walks toward the ring, she pauses in front of a ringside camera, tilting her head creepily and sticking her tongue out with a sadistic giggle.

Franklin (Ring Announcer):
Hailing from Abilene, Texas...

Emily slides into the ring and marches toward the far turnbuckle. She climbs up, arms raised high above her head, basking in the chaotic reaction of the WrestleZone faithful. Flashbulbs go off like fireworks.

Franklin:
Standing 5 feet 5 inches tall, weighing in at 125 pounds...
She is The Queen of Xtreme... EMILY KORESH!

Pyros detonate from the corners as the music fades. Emily backs into her corner, eyeing Teddy with contempt.

(DING DING DING)

Teddy Alexander wastes no time--he barrels across the ring and catches Emily with a brutal shoulder block that sends her sprawling. She's up quickly, but Teddy is already lifting her by the arm. Emily suddenly leaps, grabbing his head--and BITES him square on the face!

Newhaven:
Good God, did she just bite him!?

Dunkin:
This girl is wild! Somebody check her for rabies, yo!

Teddy shouts in pain as Emily follows up with a spinning backfist, but it barely staggers the big man. He answers with a kick to the gut and slams her down with a massive spinning spinebuster! He hooks the leg!

Ref: ONE... TWO--
Emily's foot is on the ropes!

Newhaven:
She knew where she was and used that ring awareness to survive.

Teddy doesn't hesitate--he drags her by the hair to her feet, but Emily rakes his eyes! The ref warns her, but she's not listening. Teddy shakes off the sting and lifts her up for a suplex--no! Koresh twists and lands

Proving Grounds: ep 1

behind him--LOW BLOW!

The crowd gasps as Emily grabs Teddy's head--reverse neckbreaker! Both competitors are down, but Emily is up first. She starts laying into him with sharp stomps.

Dunkin:

Man, this girl's like a human chainsaw! Teddy better get his head back in the game!

Teddy rolls and scrambles to a knee, only for Emily to hit a mule kick to the ribs. She tries for a super fisherman buster--but can't lift him! She lets go and hits a desperate rake across his face.

Newhaven:

Every shortcut in the book, and then some, from Emily Koresh!

She tries a hiptoss--again, Teddy's size thwarts it. Instead, she smacks him with a back elbow and drops a closed fistright between the eyes. Cover!

Ref: ONE... TWO--KICKOUT!

Dunkin:

She almost had him, man! Almost stole this whole thing!

Teddy powers to his feet, shaking the cobwebs. Emily attempts a gutbuster--no dice. She rebounds off the ropes--short lariat! Another cover!

Ref: ONE--kickout!

Newhaven:

Emily is testing every opening, but Teddy Alexander just refuses to stay down.

Out of nowhere, Teddy snaps up with a leg lariat, flipping Emily inside out. He drags her to the outside, and the ref begins the count...

Ref: ONE!

Emily rises and SLAMS Teddy into the barricade. TWO! She rolls him back into the ring and hops up--dropkick to the back of the head!

Emily rushes to Teddy, who is kneeling--he jabs her in the gut, grabs her by the hair--RAGE KILL DRIVER! He SPIKES her straight down between his knees! The crowd erupts!

Ref: ONE... TWO... THREE!

(DING DING DING)

Proving Grounds: ep 1

Franklin:

Here is your winner... TEDDY ALEXANDER!

Newhaven:

He caught her with that Rage Kill Driver--textbook execution--and earns a huge win tonight on Proving Grounds.

Dunkin:

That was some raw power, Charles. Teddy's on another level. But that Emily Koresh? That chick's terrifying. Straight up.

Newhaven:

Absolutely. You have to wonder what Emily and the Menagerie will do next--but for tonight, it's Alexander who walks out victorious.

The camera lingers on Teddy Alexander with his hand raised, eyes burning with intensity, while Emily Koresh rolls to the apron, already plotting revenge as she glares back into the ring.

Falling Skies

We cut to the backstage corridor of the WrestleZone. Brandy Sutton walks briskly through the hallway, dressed in her ring gear and focused, rolling her shoulders and stretching her arms as she nears the entrance area. Her expression is intense, ready for battle--until a voice stops her cold.

???:

Welcome to the big time, kid.

Brandy halts, her body tensing. She spins around to see Graham Clauson rising from where he sat atop a production crate, arms casually folded, his demeanor calm but cautious.

Brandy:

You've got a lot of nerve talking to me...

Graham's expression tightens--caught off guard but not surprised. He offers a small nod, conceding.

Clauson:

Yeah. I had that coming, didn't I?

Brandy storms toward him, fire in her eyes. She gets close--too close--her finger nearly in his face.

Brandy:

You've got a hell of a lot more coming, you jerk! You said you'd be a mentor. Said you'd help me make it...

Proving Grounds: ep 1

and the second you and that burnout got the call-up, you vanished. No goodbye. No advice. Not even a "good luck." Just gone.

Graham holds his ground, eyes locked on hers.

Brandy (continuing):

It was always about the money with you, wasn't it? Fame, contracts... greed. I see it now. But you know what?

She steps back, her voice lowering but no less intense.

Brandy:

I got here without you. I made it on my own. I didn't need you then, and I sure as hell don't need you now.

Graham slowly raises his hands, gesturing for her to cool down.

Clauson:

Alright--slow your roll, Brandy. Take a breath.

He drops his hands, his tone firm but not confrontational.

Clauson:

Look, I bailed on that last place for good reason. It was a mess, and honestly, you were the only one getting any sort of real opportunity there. I took a deal overseas, worked the UK scene, and yeah... maybe I handled things wrong.

Brandy stays silent. Her glare sharpens. Graham sighs.

Clauson:

I did try to reach out. Called. Messaged. You never answered. Maybe I should've tried harder. Maybe I screwed that up, too.

Brandy doesn't blink. Graham reads the writing on the wall.

Clauson:

I'm not here to drag you down or stir up drama. I'm here to say I'm sorry... and to tell you to kick Jalante's ass tonight. You deserve this shot, Brandy. And even if I didn't keep my promise back then--I'm still here now to say you've got this.

He starts walking past her, turning away. A beat later, he throws one last line over his shoulder.

Clauson:

Set 'em on fire, girl.

Proving Grounds: ep 1

He walks off, leaving Brandy standing in the hallway--eyes forward, jaw tight, emotions swirling just beneath the surface. She exhales once and turns toward gorilla position, her mission undeterred.

More than a Simple Match

Inside the UTA locker room, standing in front of a large mirror, Joshua Jones adjusts his bright orange elbow pad. It matches the splash of orange on his otherwise chaotic tights, which feature everything from random color splotches to a giant birthday cake printed on the side. His furry boot covers? Iconic. Jones gives himself one last glance in the mirror, bouncing slightly on his toes.

Just then, the door swings open and in walks "Too Cool" Chris Hopper. Dressed in blue jeans and a polo shirt with his sunglasses hanging casually from the collar, Hopper looks more like a weekend dad than a wrestling legend. He gives a warm smile and extends a hand.

Hopper:

Hey there, name's Chris Hopper.

Jones looks at the hand for a moment, then nods and shakes it firmly.

Jones:

Yeah, I thought you looked familiar. I'm Joshua Jones.

Hopper:

Nice to meet you.

They pull back, and Jones gives Hopper a curious look.

Jones:

What brings you out here tonight? I mean, it's not like you're scheduled for Proving Grounds or anything.

Hopper:

True, but I wanted to see the arena. I like visiting Orlando anyway, and with UTA making this the permanent home for Proving Grounds and Victory... figured it was worth checking out. Plus--

He taps Jones on the shoulder with a smirk.

Hopper:

I get to meet some of the new blood around here.

Jones nods appreciatively.

Jones:

Proving Grounds: ep 1

Thanks. I appreciate the welcome. You never really know what kind of vibe you're walking into until you're here. I'm looking forward to competing tonight.

Hopper:

Of course you are--and you should be. Great things are expected from someone who's main eventing the show.

Jones freezes, brows furrowed.

Jones:

Wait. What?

He scratches his head, clearly confused.

I mean... I didn't think of it that way. It's just one match on one show, right?

Hopper:

You go on last? You're the main event. Doesn't matter if it's Proving Grounds, Victory, Wrestleshow, or Pay-Per-View--when the curtain closes, that's your moment. And if they're giving you that spot, it means they believe in you to deliver and send these fans home on a high note.

He leans in, a bit more serious now.

Hopper:

It's a big deal, kid. And I think you're up for it.

Jones stares at him, a little stunned by the weight of it all. He swallows hard and slowly nods, then cracks a smile.

Jones:

Thanks for the tip... and the pep talk. Really.

Hopper:

Hey, I'll let you get back to your pre-match whatever. Didn't mean to interrupt. Knock it out there. I'll be watching.

Hopper flashes a two-finger salute and exits. Jones watches him leave for a beat before turning back to the mirror. He takes a deep breath.

Jones:

I've got this.

He clenches a fist, smacking it into his palm with resolve.

Jones:

Proving Grounds: ep 1

I've got this. I'm gonna hit Thatcher Rex so hard, he's gonna wake up wishing he'd gone extinct.

Jones slams his locker shut and walks out of frame, the camera fading to black.

Jalante vs. Brandy Sutton

Suddenly, the lights in the arena cut out, replaced with a deep blood-red glow. The opening guitar riff of "Out of My Way" by Seether rips through the loudspeakers. A figure appears on the stage--Brandy Sutton, her eyes closed and fists clenched in intensity as the crowd reacts with a mix of intrigue and energy.

Newhaven:

Another newcomer to UTA making her debut tonight on Proving Grounds. Brandy Sutton brings a dangerous MMA pedigree to the squared circle.

Dunkin:

Oh yeah, I saw this fine momma backstage--she's fire, playa!

Brandy raises a fist to the sky before storming to the ring with quiet purpose.

Franklin (ring announcer):

Introducing first, hailing from Wilmington, North Carolina... standing 5'4", weighing in at 130 pounds...
BRANDYYYY SUTTOON!

Brandy leaps to the apron and rolls fluidly into the ring, striking a low, focused fighting stance--like a coiled predator waiting to strike.

Suddenly, the arena is bathed in blood-red light again as "All Hail Hell" by Midnight explodes over the PA. Flames erupt at the top of the ramp and rising from the pyrotechnic pit is Jalante, the self-proclaimed Daughter of Satan. She glares daggers at the crowd, who respond with loud boos.

Newhaven:

And we've seen plenty of unsettling video packages. Now Jalante is here, and she's making her UTA debut as well.

Dunkin:

Dat girl be wild, yo. Gothic freaky. Not my flavor, you feel me?

Franklin:

And her opponent... from Maplewood, New Jersey... weighing in at 119 pounds... the Daughter of Satan...
JALANTE!

Jalante slides into the ring, raising a pentagram pendant high into the air before screaming like a banshee.

Proving Grounds: ep 1

She plants the necklace in her corner and turns to face Brandy, who hasn't taken her eyes off her.

(DING! DING! DING!)

Jalante immediately rushes Sutton, smashing her with a stiff forearm that drives Brandy into the corner. Without hesitation, she transitions into an illegal choke. The referee counts to four before breaking the hold. Jalante follows up with a snapmare and springs off the second rope into a leg drop. She hooks the leg!

Referee:

1... 2--Kick out by Brandy!

Newhaven:

You're not pinning Brandy Sutton that early, especially not with her credentials.

Brandy fights up, landing a hard body shot. She powers to her feet and nails a textbook suplex, both women scrambling back up. Brandy connects with a stiff uppercut followed by a clothesline! Jalante hits the mat hard. Brandy kneels behind her and applies a surfboard stretch, pulling her arms back painfully. Jalante screams, but Sutton holds tight until finally releasing the hold with a forearm smash to the skull.

Newhaven:

That's the kind of precision you can only learn in MMA.

Dunkin:

Damn right! She movin' like a black belt and lookin' like a ten!

Brandy whips Jalante into the ropes and levels her with another clothesline. But Jalante counters the momentum by ducking the next strike and hitting a swinging neckbreaker!

Newhaven:

Just like that, the Daughter of Satan is back in it.

Dunkin:

These crazy white girls always bounce back, man. Like horror movies--don't turn your back!

Jalante grabs Brandy from behind and locks in a one-arm chicken wing. Sutton fights her way to the bottom rope to break it. Jalante capitalizes with a bridging German suplex!

Referee:

1... 2--Kickout!

Jalante argues with the ref, which gives Sutton enough time to recover and snap on a sleeper hold!

Proving Grounds: ep 1

Newhaven:

And this is dangerous territory for Jalante. Sutton has it locked in tight--this is MMA-grade grappling!

Dunkin:

She 'boutta pass out! Ain't no escaping this level of grip game!

Jalante powers out with a few sharp elbows and whips Sutton over the top rope--with both women crashing to the outside!

Referee:

1... 2...

Jalante hits Brandy with a stiff right. Sutton responds by grabbing the leg and driving Jalante down with a single-leg takedown!

Newhaven:

Sutton shifting back to mat-based dominance!

They re-enter the ring at the count of five. Sutton dropkicks Jalante, who springs back up only to be met with a dragon screw leg whip! Brandy pops up and hits a short lariat, then launches Jalante into the ropes--cross-body block!Another cover!

Referee:

1... 2--Kickout again!

Sutton grabs a front facelock, wrenching it tight. Jalante claws her way free and surprises Brandy with a spinning headscissors takedown, launching her across the ring. The crowd breaks into "JALANTE SUCKS!" chants.

Trying to silence the noise, Jalante grabs Brandy's leg and locks it into a tight legbar. Brandy screams but snags the rope before tapping out.

Newhaven:

Jalante showing she can match Sutton on the ground--but Brandy's instincts are elite.

Jalante hits a diving elbow smash, stomps away, then goes for a spinning DDT, but Brandy twists out--reversal!Sutton climbs the turnbuckle, measuring her prey...

Newhaven:

Sutton's up top--wait for it... RED SEA OF FLAME!!

Dunkin:

BOOM, baby! She hit all of it!

Proving Grounds: ep 1

Referee:

1... 2... 3!

(DING! DING! DING!)

Franklin:

Here is your winner... BRANDY SUTTON!

Newhaven:

Brandy Sutton makes an emphatic debut tonight on Proving Grounds! What a battle!

Dunkin:

I told y'all--this girl's the real deal. Brandy came to bring the hurt and leave with the win. Respect.

A Change in Pace

Suddenly, the arena goes pitch black. The glow of handheld phones and devices flicker like stars across the crowd. A solitary dark orange spotlight pierces the darkness, illuminating the center of the ring as the haunting intro of "White Rabbit" by Jefferson Airplane begins to play.

Just before the lyrics begin, smoke begins to puff from either side of the entrance ramp. Then--

SCREEEEECH!

A deafening, high-pitched screech cuts through the music. The curtains at the top of the ramp burst open--ZHALIA FEARS emerges through the smoke, the UTA Prodigy Championship glinting under the lights. She stops at center stage, waving to the roaring crowd with one hand, a microphone in the other.

With a sprint, Zhalia races down the aisle, slapping hands along the way, and dives head-first under the bottom rope. She rises smoothly, microphone raised. With a sly smile, she taps her lips as if to hush the crowd. The crowd obeys--barely.

Fears:

Well now... what a crowd we have here tonight in the WrestleZone!

Cheers swell again.

Fears:

You know, it's become pretty standard in the UTA for someone to strut out here and start rambling.

"I'm the best this," "I'm gonna beat that," or my personal favorite... "DYNASTY RULES!" Yawn, am I right?

Proving Grounds: ep 1

The crowd jeers in agreement.

Fears:

So I figured--how about a change in pace? A change that includes yours truly... and this shiny little number right here.

She taps the Prodigy title proudly. The crowd responds with thunderous applause.

Fears:

As the first-ever--and current--Prodigy Champion, it just felt right to be here for the inaugural episode of Proving Grounds. We've heard enough Dynasty nonsense lately, especially over on Victory. So I thought... why not have some fun instead?

She pauses. The crowd eats it up.

Fears:

So... who's up for some fun tonight?

The fans roar louder than ever.

Fears:

I thought so. Now, technically, I'm not booked tonight--though next week should be a blast. But you know what? Screw it. I want to defend this title. Here. Now. Right here in this ring, in front of all of you in the WrestleZone!

The place erupts with excitement. Fans begin to stand, wave, and scream for her attention.

Fears:

Yeah! But let's keep this between us, huh? Management might fire me for this. Or strip the belt. Or worse--make me team with Dynasty.

She shudders in mock terror, drawing laughter.

Fears:

So... I need a challenger. Anybody here feeling lucky?

She slips through the ropes and starts pacing the barricades, inspecting eager fans. Finally, she stops in front of a man in a Madman mask and Venture Bros t-shirt.

Fears:

How about you? What's your name?

She sits on the barricade beside him, microphone extended.

Proving Grounds: ep 1

Man:

Dirk Sinclair!

Fears:

Nice! And the lovely lady next to you?

Dirk:

That's my girlfriend, Sahara.

Fears:

Perfect. Well, up and over, Dirk!

Dirk hops the barricade. Something falls from his hoodie pocket--keys and a small box. Zhalia scoops them up and slips them into her own jacket. She then slides back into the ring as Dirk joins her.

Fears:

Alright, let's make it official--can we get a referee out here?

A UTA official rushes down the ramp, slides in, and quickly confers with Zhalia, covering her mic. After a brief exchange, he exits the ring and shakes his head.

Fears:

Aww, boo. Sorry, Dirk. Looks like this can't be a match. Official business and all. That's a real shame...

Dirk shrugs, a little disappointed. Zhalia pouts... then suddenly perks up again.

Fears:

Well, this was fun anyway. I just--oh wait, are those your keys over there?

She points near the barricade. Everyone, including Sahara and security, looks down toward the floor. Meanwhile, Zhalia pulls out the box and the keys, hands them to Dirk--and offers him the mic.

Dirk (nodding):

Sahara.

Sahara looks up from the ground just in time to see Dirk kneeling in the center of the ring. He opens the box--inside, a shimmering engagement ring. The crowd goes nuclear.

Dirk:

We've been together for over two years... and maybe this is a bit out of the blue, but--will you marry me?

The crowd holds its breath for a moment before Sahara screams "YES!" and rushes the ring. Dirk hugs her, slipping the ring onto her finger. Zhalia claps enthusiastically and picks the mic back up.

Proving Grounds: ep 1

Fears:

How about that?! Give it up for the newly engaged Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair!

The fans erupt again in celebration as Dirk and Sahara embrace.

Fears:

Now that's how you change the narrative. Screw Dynasty. We just made history--and a memory--for life. I may get fired, but that was worth every second.

She winks at the camera.

Fears:

We'll be back next week, when my girls--and yours truly--return to action. Until then? Keep this between us. Stay awesome. And remember--if the bad guys wanna bring the darkness, we'll bring the light.

Zhalia exits the ring, handing the mic to the official before circling to high-five the couple one last time. She waves at the fans and walks back up the ramp to raucous applause.

Joshu Jones vs. Thatcher Rex

The roar of a Tyrannosaur bellows through the PA system, shaking the walls of the WrestleZone. The crowd erupts as the lights dim and mist rolls across the stage. The roar fades into the guttural opening of "Serpentine" by Disturbed.

Emerging from the haze is Thatcher Rex, his head turning sharply from side to side before locking eyes on the ring. With determined strides, he makes his way down the ramp, climbs the steel steps, and ducks between the ropes. Once inside, he storms to a turnbuckle, raises both fists high into the air, and lets out a thunderous roar to match his entrance.

Newhaven:

One of the Shoot Kings has made it to Proving Grounds, and that's very exciting for the future of this brand.

Dunkin:

Ain't nobody care 'bout no Shoot Kings, man. Let's get to the cake dude.

The opening chords of "Immortal" by Eve to Adam hit, and the fans light up again. Joshua Jones steps through the curtain, emotionless, nearly trembling as he tries to keep calm. That composure quickly fades--

BOOM!--Jones explodes into a jump and sprints toward the ring.

Newhaven:

Joshua Jones--a baker by trade--bringing something sweet to Proving Grounds.

Proving Grounds: ep 1

Dunkin:

Let me tell you something, Charlie...

Newhaven:

It's Charles.

Dunkin:

Whateva, CHARLIE. This dude right here, that cake? Ain't no lie, playa!

Jones slides under the bottom rope and leaps to his feet, adding an extra bounce just for good measure.

Franklin (ring announcer):

Hailing from Piedmont, California...

Standing at 6 feet 1 inch, weighing in at 217 pounds...

JOSHUA JONES!

Jones dashes to the ropes, rebounds off one side, then the other, building momentum before springing to the middle rope. He grabs the top rope, holds steady, nods to the crowd, then backs into his corner.

The Bell Rings

The bell sounds and both men circle. They lock up--but Thatcher Rex shoves Jones down with authority. Jones scrambles to his feet--

--Rex hits a jumping elbow thrust, sending Jones staggering. He follows up with an elbow drop to the canvas.

Newhaven:

Thatcher Rex showing a burst of power early on!

Dunkin:

'Bout time! Man was slower than molasses when he was a Shoot King.

Jones rises. He fires back with a forearm smash that rocks Rex! Jones hits the ropes--

--but gets caught in a spinning powerslam!

Rex roars and yanks Jones up--double underhook facebuster! Cover!

Newhaven:

Big slam from Rex! The cover--NO! Just a two-count!

Proving Grounds: ep 1

Dunkin:

Ref out here cheatin' again! Gimme a break.

Rex lifts Jones for a belly-to-belly suplex, but--
--Jones flips and lands on his feet!

Rex celebrates prematurely--only to get taken down by a spinning headscissors! The fans pop!

Newhaven:

Incredible counter by Jones!

Jones climbs the top rope--Rex rises--HIGH CROSSBODY! The ref counts:

1...

2...

Kickout by Rex!

Both men rise--Jones with a dropkick! Rex hits the mat again. Jones sprints, springboards off the second rope--

--MOONSAULT--NO! REX GETS THE KNEES UP! Jones crashes and clutches his midsection.*

Newhaven:

Springboard moonsault--DENIED!

Dunkin:

Thatcher got knees harder than my mama's couch!

Referee begins a double count:

1... 2... 3... 4... 5...

Rex begins to stir. He pulls Jones up--

--but Jones explodes up with a vicious knife-edge chop! Rex reels!

Dunkin:

HATE CRIME! Dis can't be legal, Charlie!

Newhaven:

It's perfectly legal, Dunkin. And there's another chop!

Jones corners Rex--standing dropkick! Rex slouches down. Jones charges--running enziguri! Rex crashes

Proving Grounds: ep 1

out of the corner.

Newhaven:

That kick echoed through Miami!

Jones runs--SWEET TOOTH! Cover--

1...

2...

3!

DING DING DING!

Newhaven:

He did it! Joshua Jones wins in his Proving Grounds debut!

Dunkin:

Man... baker just cooked Rex like a bundt cake. I hate how much I like this kid.

Jones rolls off, fist pumping as the crowd cheers wildly. He climbs the turnbuckle, raising his arms in victory as Thatcher Rex rolls to the apron, stunned.

Proving Grounds: ep 1

Show Credits

Segment: "Introduction" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "The Menagerie Are Home" - Written by Ben.

Match: "Emily Koresh vs. Teddy Alexander" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Falling Skies" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "More than a Simple Match" - Written by Ben.

Match: "Jalante vs. Brandy Sutton" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "A Change in Pace" - Written by Ben.

Match: "Joshu Jones vs. Thatcher Rex" - Written by Ben.

Results Compiled by the eFed Management Suite