

Ring of Honor TV – May 18, 2016: Six In A Row

Ring of Honor

Date: May 18, 2016

Host: Kevin Kelly

It's the week after Global Wars, meaning we should be getting some fresh storyline stuff instead of all the New Japan stuff that has dominated more than a month of shows now. Ring of Honor is fine on its own and can go without having all the stuff from the outsiders over and over again. Let's get to it.

And never mind as this is going to be a special episode entirely devoted to Jay Lethal. Well at least he's a Ring of Honor wrestler.

Opening sequence.

Kevin Kelly talks about how Lethal has been a champion for over two years straight, which stated at Supercard of Honor VIII (hey I was there) when he turned heel and joined Truth Martini to become TV Champion. We see the end of his match against Tommaso Ciampa to win the title.

After a quick highlight reel, we go to the 13th Anniversary Show (as in eleven months after Lethal won the title) with Lethal defending against Alberto El Patron.

TV Title: Jay Lethal vs. Alberto El Patron

Lethal is defending of course. Alberto superkicks Donovan Dijak to start and takes Lethal out to the floor for early control. A top rope clothesline drops Jay and we're already in a chinlock. Back up and Lethal crotches him in the corner to take over for the first time. The referee actually calls it accidental, which makes me want to see what intentional would be.

Truth Martini chokes Alberto a bit but Jay gets caught in the cross

armbreaker over the top rope. We take a break and come back with El Patron countering a cross armbreaker from the champion, only to be clotheslined out to the floor. The announcers talk about the KRD (Knights of the Rising Dawn, a masked group at the time) leaving, even though we didn't see them in the first place. To be fair this was aired on pay per view so there was no break live.

Jay hits three straight suicide dives to send Alberto over the barricade and the champ takes a breather on the inside. Patron sends him into the corner though and the top rope double stomp gets two. Back up and they slug it out until the Lethal Combination gets two. The top rope elbow (Hail to the King) is blocked but Alberto has to put Matrini in the cross armbreaker.

Jay tries another elbow but Patron counters into the armbreaker, only to have Truth offer a distraction so Jay can hit him in the head with the Book of Truth for two. Alberto grabs the Codebreaker on the arm, only to eat a bicycle kick. Jay's arm gives out when he tries the Lethal Injection so Truth blasts Alberto with the book, setting up the Lethal Injection for the pin at 12:33 (original match time).

Rating: B-. Certainly not bad here and a win over a former WWE World Champion is certainly a good rub for Lethal. The book cheating is still annoying but at least the right guy won and Lethal continues to look awesome. This would be about it for Alberto in Ring of Honor as he was just brought in for the title shot against Jay.

This brings us up to a discussion of Lethal vs. Jay Briscoe for the undisputed title. Here's their title vs. title match from Best in the World 2015. This is the review from Best of 2015 when more of the match was broadcast.

ROH World Title/TV Title: Jay Briscoe vs. Jay Lethal

They shake hands to start and we're ready to go. The House of Truth tries some early interference and get thrown out to make this one on one. Well two on one as Truth Martini is still at ringside. Lethal drops to the floor twice in a row to start but the fans declare it awesome anyway. Well to be fair that was indeed some AWESOME walking around on the floor.

A lockup doesn't go anywhere so they trade wristlocks with both guys challenging, only to have Briscoe take over with a front facelock.

Both guys get back up and it's time for the slugout with Briscoe being sent out to the floor. Lethal follows him out and drives Briscoe into the barricade to keep his control as we take a break. Back with Briscoe kicking Lethal in the head, only to be sent to the floor for a suicide dive. Lethal loads up another but Briscoe decks him with a hard clothesline and a big suicide dive of his own. Martini finally does something by grabbing Briscoe's leg, allowing Lethal to stomp away some more.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before Briscoe fights back up and grabs a neckbreaker. Back from another break with the Lethal Combination getting a quick two. The Macho elbow is broken up for a bit, only to have Lethal shove Briscoe off to stop a superplex. Now the elbow gets two but a Koji Clutch is quickly broken up.

They head to the apron with Lethal hitting him low to save himself from a Jay Driller through the table. Well I'd hope he broke it up as it would have meant a bad case of death otherwise. Martini's distraction earns himself an ejection and NOW the Jay Driller puts Lethal through the table as we take a third break.

Back with both guys inside and Briscoe running into a superkick, only to counter the Lethal Injection with a discus lariat. The fans are losing their minds over this stuff, though I'm still getting over the rolling out of the ring earlier. Lethal grabs the Injection out of nowhere for a very close two and Corino can barely keep going. With nothing else working, Lethal grabs a Jay Driller, followed by another Lethal Injection to finally become undisputed champion at 27:13.

Rating: B. The clipped version was good and I'm assuming the full version is even better. Lethal winning clean here, especially after going through the table like that, was a great way to make him look like the top guy in the promotion. Briscoe is pretty easily the most decorated name in the company's history so having him lose a major match like this, especially going down fighting, isn't going to cost him that much. This was good

stuff all around and felt like a major showdown so well done all around.

We talk about Lethal defending both titles at the same time until Martini caused him to lose the TV Title to Roderick Strong back in November. We see the end of the title change.

Lethal was still World Champion though and defended the title against AJ Styles at Final Battle 2015. The match is clipped on the broadcast but here's the full version.

Ring of Honor World Title: AJ Styles vs. Jay Lethal

Lethal is defending and has Truth Martini/Taeler Hendrix with him. Styles, who has a bad back coming in, is part of the Bullet Club but comes out alone. We get some big match intros and we're ready to go. Feeling out process to start as they seem to have a lot of time to work with. AJ gets the better of a technical sequence and Lethal bails out to the floor. Back in and AJ grabs a headlock as the announcers debate whether Elgin vs. Lethal will be for the title or not.

We get the drop down into the dropkick from Styles but Lethal hiptosses him down for a basement dropkick of his own. It's time for some big chops until Lethal gets caught in the Calf Cutter, sending him straight to the ropes. AJ has to avoid a book shot from Martini and gets dropped onto the apron, drawing a TRUTH MARTINI chant.

Lethal gets smart by sending him back first into the barricade and the pace slows down. We hit a camel clutch as the fans swear at someone over something. A suplex into the corner (also becoming too popular lately) rocks Styles' back for two more and Lethal grabs the world's least convincing bearhug. Shockingly enough, Jay Lethal holding a bearhug doesn't last long as AJ comes back with forearms and clotheslines, followed by a suplex into the corner of his own.

The springboard forearm is caught in the Lethal Combination for two and the champ takes over again. They fight over a suplex until AJ takes him over for a neckbreaker. I've always liked that move. Styles can't get the Clash so Lethal throws him into the air and pulls him down into a neckbreaker for two of his own.

Lethal gets tired of this wrestling stuff and throws AJ over the barricade and into the crowd. Ever the genius, Lethal tries a suicide dive with AJ still behind the barricade. AJ, also not that bright, tries the forearm off the barricade but really just collides with Lethal instead. Naturally the fans think it's awesome because you could put an ROH label on Lord Littlebrook vs. Little Beaver and they would declare it wrestling.

Back in and Jay grabs a Koji Clutch, only to get countered into the Calf Cutter, sending Jay into the ropes again. A big Lethal Injection out of the corner gets two but AJ snaps off a Pele, followed by the Bloody Sunday. Styles loads up something else but gets thrown over the top and through a table, absolutely destroying it in the crash. AJ dives in at nineteen and the Lethal Injection gets two (of course). Instead, Lethal uses Jerry Lynn's cradle piledriver (due to Jerry saying AJ would win) to set up the second Lethal Injection to retain at 22:09.

Rating: B+. This wasn't a masterpiece or even a classic but it was a pay per view quality main event. Lethal pinning Styles clean was a good way to make Lethal look great as AJ has been considered one of the best in the world for a long time now. I'm not sure how long Jay holds the title but if they want to pull the trigger on something, giving it back to Elgin in Tokyo would be rather smart.

And now, WE GET MORE HONOR RISING. Yes seriously, we're getting another match from this show because four straight weeks wasn't enough.

Ring of Honor World Title: Tomoaki Honma vs. Jay Lethal

We're joined in progress with Honma headbutting Lethal in the back to break up the Lethal Injection. Jay is knocked to the floor for a top rope headbutt to put both guys down in a heap. Honma pulls him back inside but eats a superkick, only to turn Jay inside out with a clothesline for two.

An enziguri drops Honma but again he pops up and hits a middle rope headbutt. Honma misses his top rope headbutt though and Jay gets a breather. The referee gets bumped though, allowing Los Ingobernales to interfere. A Book of Truth to the head has no effect on Honma (he has a hard head you see) so Naito kicks him low, setting up the Lethal

Injection for the pin to retain at 15:32 (original match time).

Rating: C-. Honma has a hard head and that's all I know about him from this match. He seems to be a cult favorite so it makes sense to have him get the shot on a show like this but the ending seemed to be more about setting up Honma's next feud than anything else. Still though, the match was good enough, even if there was a lot of it clipped out.

Kelly says goodbye but says next week it's a special look at Bullet Club. For those of you keeping track, that would be the sixth straight week with no new content.

Overall Rating: C. This is a tough one to rate so we'll go right in the middle. Let's take a quick look at the good and bad things here. First of all, this was about Ring of Honor (save for the required look at Honor Rising, which I'm sure we'll hear even more about next week). It also helped that the wrestling was good, which always makes the show go by faster.

Now for the obvious bad: we haven't had a new show with just the Ring of Honor crew since March 16. Think about that for a minute. We've now gone over two months since we either got a full Ring of Honor card or anything original. They've even taped TV since then but no, wait, let's look at Jay Lethal and the Bullet Club before we actually get to that. I don't know if it's a syndication issue or whatever but it's beyond ridiculous at this point and needs to be fixed immediately, as in not after at least one more "special" episode.

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