

Ring of Honor Best in the World 2018: Right Down The Middle



IMG Credit: Ring of Honor Wrestling

Best in the World 2018

Date: June 29, 2018

Location: UMBC Event Center, Cantonsville, Maryland

Commentators: Colt Cabana, Ian Riccaboni

It's pay per view time and even though I've already seen the next TV show, none of that matters as we have a few weeks to spare because of Ring of Honor's wacky TV schedule. The main event here is a triple threat between World Champion Dalton Castle, Cody and Marty Scurll but the real highlight should be the Young Bucks challenging the Briscoes for the Tag Team Titles. Let's get to it.

It's a pretty simple opening video with a look at the matches and a discussion of people wanting to be the best in the world. It works fine and it's not like Best in the World is something that can give you a lot of directions.

The announcers run down the card in case you came in a few minutes late.

Six Man Tag Team Titles: Los Ingobernables de Japon vs. Kingdom

The Kingdom (Matt Taven/Vinny Marseglia/TK O'Ryan) is defending. O'Ryan and Evil start things off and a hard shoulder to TK means it's already

time for Sanada vs. Taven. That doesn't last long either as it's quickly off to Marseglia and Bushi but everything breaks down before that can go too far. The ring is cleared and Taven does the Tetsuya Naito pose. That's a pretty high level call out, even for a rising star like Taven.

Things settle back down with Evil (somehow a face in this match) getting beaten into the champs' corner. The fans are behind Evil as he hands O'Ryan's boot to the referee so he can get in a kick to the thigh. Sanada comes in off the tag and ties Taven up but O'Ryan can't do the same. Fans to O'Ryan: "YOU ARE STUPID!" That means O'Ryan gets tied up as well for a double kick to the back. Marseglia comes back in but Rockstar Supernova is broken up.

Everything breaks down again and Sanada dropkicks Taven's knee out. Bushi hurricanranas Taven and O'Ryan at the same time but Marseglia makes the save. A German suplex/springboard elbow drop combination gets two on Bushi but he manages to mist Marseglia. That's about it though as Rockstar Supernova retains the titles at 11:09.

Rating: C-. It was a little too chaotic at times for my taste but that's how almost every indy style tag match is going to go. This was a good choice for an opener as the Six Man Titles can often be. You get a fast paced match with some big spots and a title match always feels at least somewhat important. It's also nice that the Kingdom is getting some traction as champions, which the belts need given how weak the "division" has been since its inception.

We recap Bully Ray vs. Flip Gordon. Ray doesn't like smaller guys who haven't earned their spot, turning himself into a real bully. He even attacked Gordon after offering him a handshake for being in the military. Gordon is standing up for himself and his generation tonight.

Gordon is ready to be the young boy that beats up the old man.

Bully Ray vs. Flip Gordon

Gordon comes out draped in the American flag. Ray tries to jump him during the entrances but gets superkicked and speared. A big slingshot dive drops Ray again as the announcers are treating Gordon like the

biggest underdog ever. Gordon follows up with a springboard forearm to the floor and Ray is rocked in the early going.

They get back in with Gordon's running shooting star into the middle rope moonsault connecting for two. Ray runs him over for a breather and you can feel the confidence rise. The Vader Bomb (with a Vader pose in a nice touch) misses but the Star Spangled Stunner is blocked with a low blow to give Gordon the win at 5:23.

Rating: D. Gordon was showing fire here but this felt like another angle disguised as a match in this long story. I don't know if it's because Ray can't work a full match anymore or if it's just playing to his brawling style but these short matches that keep leading to something else are rather weird choices for pay per views. At least it's going somewhere and isn't Cheeseburger though.

Post match the beatdown continues until Eli Isom and Cheeseburger come out for failed save attempts. Ray beats all three down with a chair until Colt Cabana makes a save with his own chair.

Riccaboni wants someone to destroy Ray.

Sumie Sakai/Jenny Rose/Mayu Iwatani/Tenille Dashwood vs. Hazuki/Kelly Klein/Hana Kimura/Kagetsu

Kagetsu is the Stardom Champion and we get a staredown over the titles. Sakai wants to start for the team and gets kicked in the face by Kugetsu. Well that'll teach her. Kimura comes in and wants Dashwood, meaning the brawl is on. Before that has a chance to go anywhere, it's Klein coming in to throw Jenny around. Of course the fourth pairing comes in with Iwatani Sling Blading Hazuki. I might be a bit more excited if you didn't know the tags were coming as soon as the sequence started.

The villains (Klein's team in case you get confused by the teams with a bunch of names thrown together because you don't do your Stardom homework) come in and triple team Sakai with three boots on her face at once, allowing Kimura to hold up the Oedo Tai (stable) sign for a cute visual. Sakai DDTs Klein and the hot tag brings in Dashwood to clean house, including a double Taste of Tenille in the corner.

A high crossbody gets two on Dashwood and Sakai comes back in with a missile dropkick. Everything breaks down again and Sakai gets a guillotine choke on Kimura. That's muscled into a delayed suplex for two on Sakai but Kagetsu hits Kimura with the sign by mistake. Sumie dives onto a pile and hits a dragon suplex for the pin on Kimura at 10:27.

Rating: C. I say this a lot and I'm going to keep saying it until it's no longer a problem: I have no idea who these people are and I don't know why I'm supposed to care about them. It's a bunch of Stardom talents and some names from Ring of Honor, who I don't know either for the most part. The division does exist, but it's not going to go far if I have to do outside research to figure out who these people are or what they're doing here. Give us some quick videos or translated promos if necessary, but find a way to let us know what's going on.

We recap Austin Aries vs. Kenny King. Aries had the TV Title won but King's interference turned the win into a DQ. That sent Aries over the edge so he beat King down, setting off a feud. King is tired of being seen as Aries' lackey and wants to prove that he's an equal, plus more.

Austin Aries vs. Kenny King

None of Aries' multiple titles are on the line. Feeling out process to start with a lockup not giving either of them an advantage. Aries' headlock works a bit better and they shove each other around until King gets backdropped to the floor. Back in and the brainbuster doesn't work as King slips out and slaps him in the shoulders, which hurts more than you would expect. King sweeps the leg a few times (with no Karate Kid reference) and they head outside again with King knocking him down for a third time.

They go inside again with Aries dropkicking King down to break up a springboard, setting up a top rope ax handle. The slingshot hilo gets two and Aries adds his middle rope elbow to the back for the same. Aries' chinlock doesn't last very long as King is right back up with a springboard Blockbuster.

A reverse exploder cuts King off in short order though and it's the Last Chancery to put King in real trouble. King is in the ropes pretty quickly

and is fine enough to slip out of a Death Valley Driver on the apron. He can't slip out of a neckbreaker across the middle rope though as Aries keeps building towards the brainbuster. The suicide dive is cut off by a kick to the head and King loads up a Royal Flush on the floor...but he lets it go and hits it inside instead.

Aries grabs the rope too (he must have been watching King) and then grabs his titles to leave but King dives onto him in a big crash. King picks up one of the titles and gets brainbusted (suplexed but fair enough) on the floor. Fans: "YOU KILLED KENNY!" Ok that was funny. Another brainbuster back inside is good for the pin at 15:33.

Rating: C. Aries' time in Ring of Honor hasn't been the best in the world (hey....) but maybe it's been his time with King. I liked the setup for their feud but it wasn't the most thrilling match. To be fair though, King has never exactly been one to have a great match on the big stage. Aries is good for an upper midcard role, but I don't know how much further he's going to get around here.

We recap Jay Lethal vs. Kushida. Lethal is trying to get back towards the World Title picture and to do so, he's facing everyone who has beaten him in recent years. Kushida has traded wins with Lethal and tonight it's the rubber match.

Kushida vs. Jay Lethal

This should be fun. Kushida won't shake hands so Lethal cranks on the wrist, only to be wrestled down to the ground for an early standoff. The fans are split here (well duh) as the grappling continues with Lethal's headlock working a bit better this time around. Lethal misses a basement dropkick but Kushida shows him how to do it properly. Three straight running flip dives have Lethal (who likes to use three straight regular dives) in more trouble.

Back in, a top rope ax handle, complete with the Randy Savage finger wag, gets two on Lethal and we hit the chinlock. They're certainly moving fast so far. Back up and neither guy can hit a suplex so Lethal kicks him in the back and then the leg. Said leg is taken down with a shinbreaker as Lethal has shifted into Flair mode, though he does add a handshake to

make up for earlier.

Something like a Texas Cloverleaf (without Lethal reaching through the legs) keeps Kushida in trouble until a rope is grabbed. The Figure Four doesn't work so Lethal dropkicks him to the floor and NOW the three dives connect, only to have the third countered into a Fujiwara armbar. The arm is fine enough for the Lethal Combination and Lethal counters the handspring into a torture rack (Ian: "He'll be your hero.").

Since no one keeps a torture rack on that long, he goes up for the elbow, which is countered into a cross armbreaker. Lethal spins out and gets the Figure Four, which is broken with another rope break. They kick it out with Kushida rocking Lethal and shaking his hand for a nice callback.

Lethal enziguris him down but the Lethal Injection is countered into the Hoverboard Lock. It doesn't last long so Kushida tries Back to the Future, which is reversed into a rollup into the Figure Four, which is reversed into a small package to give Kushida two and a nice ovation from the crowd. Lethal kicks him in the knee again and now the Lethal Injection is good for the pin at 17:34.

Rating: B+. Shocking that two of my favorites around here have easily the best match of the night so far. Lethal wanted to win no matter what and the announcers were right there to talk about how much more aggressive he was being compared to the other matches. The leg vs. the arm work was a good story and they were both working hard to have a great match. Lethal is on fire right now and Kushida is always good for a strong performance. Very good match.

We recap Punishment Martinez vs. Adam Page for the TV Title. Martinez, being the slightly psychotic guy that he is, attacked Page a few weeks back for reasons for general evil. Page then cost him the IWGP United States Title so Martinez cost him the TV Title. Martinez went on to win the title himself and is defending it tonight.

Page doesn't care about Martinez injuring his head because he's ready for tonight.

TV Title: Punishment Martinez vs. Adam Page

Martinez, who walks out of a casket and has some....I guess ghouls with him, is defending and Silas Young is on commentary. This is also a street fight so Page jumps him at the bell to start things in a hurry. They're on the floor in a hurry and fighting through the streamers because Ring of Honor fans love their traditions. A suicide dive sends Martinez into the barricade and Page whips him into it a few more times.

Martinez gets in a shot to the back so Page pelts a chair at his head. Well that's kind of upping the violence in a hurry. The chair is wedged into the corner and for once, the person who sets it up doesn't go into it as Martinez goes back first into the chair. A table is set up against the post but Martinez is fine enough to hit a Last Ride onto the apron. Back in and Martinez hits a rather good chair shot before throwing Page into the barricade.

Martinez sets up four chairs next to each other (two by two) and then has another one folded on top of it, which can't possibly end well. Page avoids the chokeslam and whips him onto the barricade before using it for a superplex. Back in and Page forearm him in the sore back and the package Tombstone onto a chair...gets two. Egads man come on already. Martinez is fine enough to hit the stomp onto the apron and it's time to zip tie Page's wrists together.

A table is set up but Page breaks the zip ties and knocks Martinez outside. Martinez gets speared through the table and a moonsault drops him again. Page takes too much time posing though and gets kicked onto the pile of chairs (which the camera misses). Back in and Martinez pours out the thumb tacks but gets backdropped onto them. Again though he's fine and a chokeslam through the table ends Page at 15:07, though all four shoulders seemed to be down.

Rating: B. Heck of a fight here, even with Martinez's questionable at best selling. Page has become one of my favorites around here as what you see is what you get, though in a good way. These guys beat each other up and it felt like they wanted to hurt each other. I had a good time with this and the ending leaves the door open for a rematch. Good stuff.

We recap the Young Bucks vs. the Briscoe Brothers in a battle of two of

the three best teams ever around here. The Briscoes are the heels vs. the face Bucks for a change and this is about as much of a guaranteed great match as you're going to get around here. A few weeks ago, the Briscoes beat the heck out of the Bucks and Cody during a title match to set this up.

Tag Team Titles: Briscoe Brothers vs. Young Bucks

The Bucks are challenging and it's Nick vs. Mark to start. It's an early standoff until Nick gets in Mark's face and knocks Jay off the apron. A low bridge sends Nick outside but he's fine enough to kick Jay in the head. Everything breaks down and the superkicks are blocked (the Briscoes must be psychics), setting up double face to face staredowns. The Briscoes hit the ropes though and NOW the superkicks connect.

Nick dropkicks them both and a double basement dropkick has Jay in trouble. A Razor's Edge/neckbreaker combination gets two on Matt and we settle down to a more standard formula. The fans are split here (again, well duh) as Mark stomps away and Jay gets in a choke behind the referee's back. Matt tries to slide to the floor and run around but has to stop for a superkick, allowing Mark to stomp him down again.

Another superkick is enough for the hot tag off to Nick, who wastes no time with the springboard flip dive. Nick knees Jay in the face but Mark pulls him off the ropes into a rear naked choke of all things. Matt gets Blockbustered and it's the neckbreaker into the Froggy Bow for two on Nick. The super crucifix bomb is broken up by Matt and a double clothesline takes the champs down. An exchange of superkicks actually goes to the Briscoes and the Jay Driller plants Matt with Nick having to make a save.

The Doomsday Device is broken up by a springboard cutter and a victory roll gets a rather close two. With Mark knocked to the floor, the Bucks hit a springboard Doomsday Device for another near fall on Jay but Mark takes out the referee. Mark brings in a chair, which is promptly superkicked right back into his face. The Meltzer Driver gets two on Jay as Mark makes another save.

Another Driver is loaded up but Mark pelts a chair at Nick's head (that

looked BAD, in a painful way) and the Jay Driller on a chair gets two on Matt. An elevated piledriver on a chair can't get a pin? Now the super Razor's Edge/neckbreaker combination is enough to put Matt away at 17:00. That last move looked great but they didn't need to do that and the Jay Driller.

Rating: A-. Yep this was awesome and that's really not a surprise. The Briscoes are an awesome team and can put on a great match with just about anyone. When you have the Bucks with their heads on straight and they're being serious, they can carry their end of an excellent match too. This was the best thing on the show so far and that tends to be the case with the tag matches.

Post match the Briscoes continue the beating until....So Cal Uncensored makes the save? That's very out of character for them and the Bucks look confused. They stare each other down but there's no violence.

We recap the World Title match...with Ian narrating over a graphic instead of a video package. Basically Marty Scurll and Cody have both pinned Dalton Castle and have title shots tonight, though they're having some issues of their own over who should win the title.

Ring of Honor World Title: Marty Scurll vs. Cody vs. Dalton Castle

Castle is defending and Brandi, Bernard and the Boys are all at ringside. On top of that, Castle has pretty much every injury you can imagine coming into this. Actually Cody ejects Bernard and we're ready to go. The champ is knocked to the floor with a Disaster kick but he pulls Cody outside for a whip into the barricade. Marty gets hurricanranaed down and Castle hammers away as well as he can with one good arm.

Cody comes back in with a Downward Spiral but Castle pulls him outside, only to get superkicked by Marty. Back in and Cody begs off from Marty but pulls him into a release suplex. All three are in again and it's Castle throwing Marty into Cody. Marty gets knocked to the floor and Castle hits a kind of super judo throw (started as a superplex) but Marty is back in with a chickenwing on the champ.

Cody gets back up and adds a Figure Four at the same time, but Marty and

Cody get in a fight that breaks up both holds. That's the only way you could have Castle survive that so it makes sense. Castle rolls to the floor and Brandi has to save Cody from Shattered Dreams (nice touch). The distraction lets Cody get in the low blow instead and it's time to put on the Ring of Honor. This is of course REALLY STUPID as you don't let Marty that close to your fingers.

The snapping ensues and Marty takes the ring, only to walk into the Bang A Rang for two as NWA World Champion Nick Aldis pulls the referee. Cody dives out onto him, allowing Marty to hit a belt shot for two as Brandi saves. The referee throws out all of the seconds, leaving us with a three way slugout.

A right hand puts Cody on the floor so he pulls out some powder, which of course is knocked back into his hands. It doesn't seem to matter as he hits Cross Rhodes on Marty with Castle stealing the two. The chickenwing goes on but Cody is back in for the save, only to take Cross Rhodes from Marty. A quick Bang A Rang to Scurll gives Castle the surprise pin at 13:16.

Rating: B-. The ending actually didn't surprise me as it was almost too obvious that Castle was losing. It wound up being fine enough as he would lose the title at the TV tapings the next day but still, nice moment there when it was almost a guarantee that he would lose. Marty is likely dropping back down the card after this, which is probably the best idea as I'm not sure how strong of an option he is near the top.

Cody on the other hand will be fine as he's going to be pushed to the moon almost anywhere he goes and is winning the NWA World Title in September anyway. Good main event, but nothing compared to the other matches, which has been a calling card of Castle's title reign.

We're off the air less than 45 seconds after the fall.

Overall Rating: B. I don't remember the last time I saw a show that went from so lame and middle of the road to awesome in such a short amount of time. Everything after Aries vs. King was anywhere from good to great but everything before then felt like a lifeless house show with a budget. As luck would have it, they split things right down the middle and the

really good stuff easily outweighs the weaker parts. Rather strong show, even if it took me this long to get through it.

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