

# Ring of Honor Final Battle 2019: Not In This Spot



IMG Credit: Ring of Honor Wrestling

## Final Battle 2019

Date: December 13, 2019

Location: UMBC Events Center, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Caprice Coleman, Colt Cabana

Yeah I know it's been awhile since this show took place but given the place Ring of Honor has been in over the last few...well nearly years now, it took some time to get me to care enough to do the show. That being said, the company has a tendency to be a lot better when they just stick to the wrestling so hopefully that is the case here. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Josh Woods/Silas Young vs. Joe Hendry/Dalton Castle

We do get a nice inclusion from commentary as they say they have three pre-show matches scheduled but they are subject to time constraints. Why is that so hard to figure out? Castle is already running his mouth on the apron as Hendry and Young lock up to start. Young headlocks him down but Hendry powers up and nips up off another headlock attempt. Castle and Woods come in for a wrestle off with neither being able to get the better of things.

With that giving us a standoff, it's Hendry coming back in to suplex

Young. A jawbreaker gets Young out of trouble so everything breaks down, leaving Castle to get in trouble. Young kicks him in the head so Woods can get two off a half nelson. Castle finally suplexes his way to freedom and it's back to Hendry to clean house. Everything breaks down again and Castle walks into Young's backbreaker/clothesline combination. There's a suplex to Hendry and a catapult into a running knee finishes Castle at 9:14.

**Rating:** C. Just a tag match here and that's a good way to open the show. Young and Woods are starting to get some momentum with the fans and it is pretty clear that they are going to be turned face in the near future. Hendry and Castle on the other hand, not so much, as there isn't much to them other than they're a waky pair who can't win much of anything.

The Bouncers, sitting in the front row, aren't impressed with Young and Woods.

#### Pre-Show: Kenny King vs. Rhett Titus

King has Amy Rose with him and it's a battle over who was the Marty Jannetty of the All Night Express. Titus' wife and son are in the front row, more or less guaranteeing that he loses here. As a bonus, King comes out to the Express' theme song. Feeling out process to start and they go head to head for some expressions of anger. They both miss kicks to the head and it's an early standoff.

King sends him throat first into the top rope though and a clothesline takes Titus down again. Titus is right back up to send King outside, meaning a slingshot dive can hit him even harder. After a quick kiss to his son, Titus suplexes King on the floor, only to get spinebusted onto the apron. Back in and a belly to belly suplex into the corner gives King two, followed by the camel clutch.

That's broken up in a hurry and Titus hits a clothesline, setting up a high crossbody for two. King is back up and tries a Lethal Injection, only to get dropkicked in the back. A Royal Flush plants King for two as the mind games are on. Some running kicks in the corner look to set up...something that we don't get to see because Rose grabs Titus' foot. The referee yells at her and it's a low blow into the Royal Flush to

finish Titus at 11:09.

**Rating:** C-. The action was fine but my goodness they are killing anything they could have with Titus every time he loses like this. I'm also not sure how smart it is to have heels win the first two matches (though Woods and Young are borderline) as the action was good, but not good enough that the fans don't need something to cheer for. That and I have no reason to believe that King is going anywhere, because, you know, he never does.

#### Pre-Show: Jeff Cobb vs. Dan Maff

They go with the slugout to start and Maff takes him down off a shoulder. Cobb is knocked outside so Maff hits a suicide dive, so Cobb muscles him up with a suplex back inside. That just earns him a Pounce as the bigger Maff has a rare power advantage here. The Cannonball (WAY too popular a move in wrestling these days) misses Cobb in the corner and he muscles Maff up for the apron superplex.

Cobb hits a clothesline so hard that he falls outside, allowing Maff to come back with a superkick. Back in and they slug it out until Cobb grabs a German suplex. A bunch of strikes in the corner set up a running European uppercut but Maff won't go down. Maff comes back with a spear but another suplex sends him flying again. A powerbomb out of the corner doesn't work for Maff and it's back to back Tours of the Islands to finish Maff at 8:50.

**Rating:** C+. Now that was a heck of a hoss fight as these guys beat the heck out of each other for a little while. That's all you need to do at times, and it's made even better when Cobb is strong enough to throw someone like Maff around. Maff is a monster in his own right and has had a rather nice resurgence in recent months.

Post match they shake hands and exchange chops in a display of respect...I think?

The opening video talks about how samurai fought for honor, but there were some how did not care. Tonight, it's PCO vs. Rush for the World Title. It's as sudden of a jump as it seems to be.

## Villain Enterprises vs. Flamita/Bandido

Marty Scurll/Flip Gordon for the Villains here and Brody King is on commentary. Gordon shoulders Flamita down for a nip up to start and some headscissors work just as well. Marty and Bandido come in to trade rapid fire near falls into a standoff. Bandido snaps off a hurricanrana into a dropkick meaning it's already back to Gordon. That goes badly as Bandido takes him down, allowing Flamita to climb onto Bandido's shoulders for a splash.

Scurll comes in to take over though and a sunset flip gets two on Flamita. We settle down to Flamita superkicking Scurll down and Gordon getting knocked off the apron. A 619 sets up a running shooting star press for two and it's a double Floss Dance into a double moonsault. Gordon comes back in, gets knocked outside again, and Flamita hits the big flip dive (after slipping that is). Scurll is back up with a tornado DDT to Flamita into a superkick from Gordon for two. Bandido is back up to kick both of them down, setting up the running flip dive.

Back in and Flamita superkicks Scurll, followed by a Spanish Fly to plant Gordon. Scurll is back up with a powerbomb/Sliced Bread combination for two on Flamita but Scurll kicks Gordon by mistake. A quick neckbreaker puts Flamita on the floor and Bandido hits a super fall away slam on Gordon. Scurll is right back with the chickenwing on Bandido but Flamita makes the save with a springboard 450. The X Knee puts Gordon on the ropes and Scurll is knocked behind him. That means a 619 into a double 21 Plex for the pin at Scurll at 13:51.

**Rating:** B. Sometimes you need four guys to go out there and have a fast paced tag match to open the show and that's what we got here. Flamita and Bandido can do all kinds of things in the ring and look awesome at the same time so they could be an awesome addition. Then you have the Villains, who are as over as anyone in the company. Good match and a great choice for an opener.

We recap Matt Taven vs. Vincent. They were in the Kingdom together but Vincent (Vinny Marseglia) wanted to do his own thing so he started attacking people. This included a big beatdown with Vincent attacking

Taven and busting him open. Taven: "You've always lived in my shadow and now I'm going to make sure my shadow is covered in your blood." That's a heck of a line as Taven is already more interesting in about a week as a face than he was for years as a heel.

### Matt Taven vs. Vincent

Taven goes straight at him to start and sends Vincent outside for the suicide dive. Kelly rapid fires off Taven's resume as Vincent is backdropped over the barricade. That means a dive from Taven and a jumping enziguri in the corner back inside rocks Vincent again. There's a powerbomb for two and a freaky leglock works on Vincent's leg. That's broken up so Taven grabs a DDT for two more but Vincent sends him outside for a drop onto the apron.

A suplex onto the exposed concrete bangs up Taven's back even more and they head back inside. Instead of staying on the back though, Vincent starts in on the ankle with stomps and bending around the rope. That's broken up though and Taven sends him to the floor for the Flight of the Conqueror, followed by a top rope splash to the apron for two.

Back in and Vincent grabs a Side Effect, followed by Redrum for a near fall of his own. A quick Climax gives Taven two more and a second gets the same, leaving Taven stunned. With that not working, naturally it's time for a hatchet but the attempted murder is countered into a Dudley Dog to finish Taven at 13:32.

**Rating:** C+. I'm as shocked as you are that Taven is working so well as a face. He really does seem to have been missing the point all this time and while he isn't a huge star, he's good enough to work in a spot like this. I could go for more of him, but his ankle injury would put him on the shelf for a long time. That's a shame too, as he's more interesting than he ever has been around here.

Post match Bateman comes out and helps Vincent crush Taven's ankle.

We recap Mark Haskins vs. Bully Ray. Pick any Bully story over the last few years and it's the same thing, with Haskins standing up to him.

## Bully Ray vs. Mark Haskins

Street fight and Haskins' wife Vicky is with him. Ray jumps Haskins from behind with a barbed wire board and even hits Vicky for a bonus. A chair to the back is enough to hit the bell and it's time to head inside, with Ray raking the cuts from the barbed wire. Some release German suplexes send Haskins flying and Ray yells at the referee. Ray throws in a piece of the barricade and tosses Haskins onto it as this is one sided so far.

The Bully Bomb drops Haskins again and let's grab a cheese grater. Ray spends too much time posing though and it's an enziguri to take him down. That's a bit too much selling for Ray though and he throws in a kendo stick. He grabs the mic and talks about how he talked trash about Haskins' family while caning him down. Haskins says hit him harder and flips him off before sending Ray face first into the open chair.

A Van Daminator (pump kick instead of a spinwheel kick) drops Ray and let's have a ladder. Haskins climbs to Pillmanize the arm but Ray shoves the ladder over, sending Haskins crashing into the barricade. Naturally it's table time but Ray also throws in the barbed wire board and stacks it on top of the regular table.

Ray slams him through both and drops an elbow for two, with the kickout earning the referee a shot from behind. Another table is brought in, but first Ray needs to rub Haskins' blood on his face. The middle rope splash is loaded up but Vicky comes back in with a cheese grater to the crotch. They both slam him down and Mark adds a top rope double stomp for the pin at 16:49.

**Rating:** D. It's rarely a good sign when you can cut a match in half and have the same thing. This was a lot of slowly walking around and beating on Haskins until he came back and won. I don't even watch all of the big Ring of Honor pay per views and I knew how this was going to go. It's how every Ray feud/blowoff match goes and most people don't get much out of it, but he's on creative so here we are.

## Alex Shelley vs. Colt Cabana

This was set up on the pre-show. Shelley leads the fans in the COLT

CABANA chants and gets headlocked down for his efforts. A lot of rolling gets Cabana out of a wristlock and then he nearly handstands his way out of another. Shelley cranks on both arms at once for a change but Cabana reverses into a bodyscissors. That's reversed into a surfboard but they get back up for a standoff. They run the ropes until Cabana grabs a wristlock, only to switch into the Superman pin for two. Back up and Shelley grabs the wrist but pulls him down into a crucifix for the pin at 6:33.

**Rating:** C. This was more of an exhibition than a regular match and that's ok, especially considering it would wind up being Cabana's last match with ROH. The fans like both of these guys a lot and it's cool to see them getting to go out there and do something different than what we've been seeing so far. Fun little match too.

We recap Maria Manic vs. Angelina Love. Manic has been tormenting the Allure and now it's time for her to actually have a match.

#### Maria Manic vs. Angelina Love

Angelina has Mandy Leon with her. Maria doesn't waste time and slams Angelina down in a hurry but stops to beat up Leon as well. Some running boots hit Angelina in the corner as this is one sided so far. A Pearl River Plunge connects for no cover so Leon loads up the hairspray, only to have it kicked out of her hands. Mandy has to save Angelina from a piledriver on the apron so Maria beats her up and gorilla presses Love to the floor instead. Back in and a torture rack finishes Love, who didn't get in a single bit of offense, at 6:22.

**Rating:** C. It wasn't a competitive match whatsoever but dang that was fun and exactly what it should have been. There was no reason to have this be anything more than complete destruction and that's exactly what they did. Then of course ROH almost managed to screw up Maria's contract when she could have been a big deal, but that's ROH for you.

We recap Shane Taylor vs. Dragon Lee. Taylor has been champion for a good while now and wants to set all of the records. Lee on the other hand is awesome so this could be interesting.

## TV Title: Shane Taylor vs. Dragon Lee

Taylor is defending and has all of his goons with him. Lee dropkicks him into the corner but charges into a spinebuster. That doesn't seem to matter as he dropkicks Taylor to the floor, only to get slammed onto the apron. Taylor sends him into the barricade and then chokes on the apron for a bit as the beating begins. The big legdrop gets two and Taylor tells him to do something.

Lee dodges a charge in the corner (that would be something) and kicks Taylor to the floor for a heck of a suicide dive. An even bigger no hands flip dive takes him down again and a running dropkick in the corner gives Lee two. Some running strikes to the face have Taylor on the apron so Lee snaps off a top rope double stomp. Another top rope double stomp gets two...so Lee slaps him in the face.

Taylor knocks him right back down and a clothesline turns Lee inside out. The package piledriver gives Taylor two and a German suplex drops him again. Lee gets in a kick to the head in the corner though and the Alberto top rope double stomp gets two. Taylor snaps off Greetings From 216 for another near fall and the frustration is strong.

With nothing else working, Taylor pulls out a chain but Lee is back up to knock it away. Lee is right back with a knee to the face, a Canadian Destroyer and another running knee with the chain wrapped around it for two. The knee pad comes off and another running knee (bone to skull) gives Lee the pin and the title at 14:34.

**Rating:** B. This was a rather great back and forth power vs. speed match as the two of them beat each other up for about fifteen minutes. It's as basic of a match formula as you can get and this one was very good, as the crazy talented Lee gets to take the title from the monster Taylor. I liked this more than anything else on the show and I can't say I'm surprised by that whatsoever.

We recap Jay Lethal/Jonathan Gresham vs. the Briscoes. Gresham lured Lethal to the dark side with promises of success and since Lethal's resume is only lacking a Tag Team Title, here we go.



## Tag Team Titles: Briscoes vs. Jay Lethal/Jonathan Gresham

The Briscoes are defending and for the sake of simplicity, Jay Briscoe will be referred to as Jay and Jay Lethal will be referred to as Lethal. PJ Black is on commentary for a bonus and the Briscoes' family is in the crowd. Mark and Gresham start things off with Gresham taking it to the mat with ease. That doesn't last long so it's off to Jay vs. Lethal for some circling...and a tag to Gresham before there's any contact. The Briscoes take Gresham into the corner for some chopping but he pulls Jay into the other corner to start working on the leg.

Jay avoids the basement dropkick and that means another standoff. Everything breaks down in a hurry and they all head outside with the Briscoes taking over. Mark throws a chair in for the running flip dive, setting up the Bang Bang elbow to Lethal. There's a big boot to Gresham as it's all Briscoes at the moment. Back in and Mark gets taken down by a dragon screw legwhip but Jay breaks up the Doomsday Device.

Jay cutters Lethal off the top and the Doomsday Device gets two on Gresham. We settle back down with Gresham hitting a springboard moonsault press on Mark, setting up the shooting star press for two. Gresham starts working on the leg even more and Lethal kicks the knee. A t-bone suplex gets Mark out of trouble though and it's back to Jay to fire off the forearms.

Everything breaks down again and the Death Valley Driver plants Lethal. Gresham pulls the referee out at two and Lethal gets in a belt shot for the same. The Figure Four has Jay in more trouble until Mark makes the save with the Froggy Bow. The Doomsday Device is broken up though and Lethal rolls Jay up with a grab of the tights for the pin at 21:55.

**Rating:** B+. These guys beat each other up for a long time and it ended with the only realistic outcome. Lethal and Gresham had been set up as the big heels for a long time now and giving them the titles was the only way to go. The match was the awesome, action packed showdown that you would have expected and it was one of the best things about the show so far. Great match and the right result.

We recap PCO vs. Rush. PCO is 51 years old and trying to reach the top of

the world after winning a tournament to gain the surprise title shot. Rush doesn't really care.

### Ring of Honor World Title: PCO vs. Rush

PCO is challenging and anything goes. They stare each other down to start and forearm it out with PCO shouting a lot. A clothesline drops Rush but he stops a suicide dive with a chair to the head. Rush whips him with a camera cord, followed by the running slap in the face in the corner. That means a Tranquilo pose but Rush would rather go over the barricade to get a small ladder. He throws the ladder at PCO and then wedges it in the corner before whipping PCO hard into said ladder/corner.

The posing takes too long though and it's a pop up powerbomb to send Rush outside. PCO misses the Swanton to the apron though and Rush suplexes him onto the timekeeper's table. They fight up the aisle and Rush hits him in the head with a barricade. Rush stacks up a bunch of barricades and chairs before throwing PCO off the stage for a huge crash.

PCO is a bit dead so here's his trainer Destro to pop open the hood of a well placed hearse...and jump start PCO using some jumper cables. Well of course he does, allowing PCO to chokeslam Rush onto the car. Rush suplexes him off of the car and heads back to the ring, only to have PCO stagger after him.

That means it's time for some doors, with Rush standing them up in opposite corners. Rush knocks him down and gets one off a top rope backplash. PCO gets sent through the door but of course he's right back up to send Rush through another door. The PCOsault gets two so Rush goes outside to beat up Destro. The delay lets PCO hit a chokeslam and another PCOsault through a table finishes Rush at 22:28.

**Rating:** D. And no. The problem here comes down to the fact that Ring of Honor was in a terrible place at this point and this is what they give us for the main event of the biggest show of the year? It was just a brawl, but a very slow paced one that should have been about ten minutes shorter. The PCO story is a nice inspirational one about never giving up on your dream, but this was a really rough sit, especially in this spot. It wasn't the right way to go given where Ring of Honor was and it was a

pretty terrible match as a result. Cut this down to ten minutes and put it in the middle of the card and maybe, but not like this.

Villain Enterprises come out to celebrate to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. It's an up and down show with nothing that will blow you away, but a good string of solid enough matches to make it work. That being said, the bad stuff was rather bad and felt out of place on the biggest show of the year. Ring of Honor has gotten a bit better since this show, but they have so far to go to get back to anything close to good that one show doesn't matter.

As it is, the show was more good than bad, but there are some major issues that stand out, including putting the promotion on PCO in a story that a lot of fans aren't going to care about in a bad main event. It could have been worse though, and that's not something you could say very often about this company in 2019.

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