

Ring Of Honor TV – July 29, 2020 (Best Of Jonathan Gresham): 18th Time's The Charm



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We're up to a name you might have expected to be around a little sooner with Jonathan Gresham. He is one of the best technical guys going today and has been a Tag Team Champion since last year but somehow he doesn't make it into the first seventeen Best Of shows. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Video on Gresham.

Gresham welcomes us to his home and talks about what he has been doing since the quarantine started. Believe it or not, this mainly includes a lot of working out and training. Anyway, on with the matches.

From ROH TV, September 4, 2019.

Bandido/Mark Haskins vs. Jay Lethal/Jonathan Gresham

Haskins and Gresham start things off with the technical exchange you knew was coming. A standoff lets Gresham pose a bit as the tiny chants seem to be going for Haskins. Another takedown gets Haskins nowhere and we take an early break. Back with the technical off continuing, this time with a series of headlocks being reversed into a series of headscissors. They shake hands with Gresham tagging in Lethal and bailing to the floor.

Bandido comes in to a very well received reaction and it's another standoff as they're still not all the way into second gear so far. They trade flips with neither being able to get anywhere, including a pair of no count covers into another standoff. The fans are rather appreciative and a handshake means it's time to try it again. This time Lethal gets kneed in the ribs and it's Haskins coming in for a double basement dropkick. Lethal fights back but Haskins blocks a sunset flip and stomps on the arm to take him right back down.

That doesn't last long though as it's already back to Gresham, who sends Haskins into the ropes while Lethal dropkicks Bandido off the apron. We take another break and come back with Lethal yelling at Gresham for low bridging Bandido to the floor. Gresham doesn't have time to argue though as he sends Bandido into the apron and grabs a chair, which is too far for Lethal. That and it would be a DQ as the referee was watching.

Gresham shoves him down and everything breaks down with Haskins hitting a Death Valley Driver to send Gresham into Lethal for two, with the kickout offering a shock. A Samoan driver gives Haskins two more so he does it again, setting up Bandido's frog splash for two with Gresham diving in for a save. Gresham sends Bandido into the steps, leaving Lethal to Figure Four Haskins.

The hold stays on for a long time until Bandido comes back in to powerbomb Gresham onto Lethal for the save. Gresham and Bandido slug it out with Gresham nailing an enziguri, only to get caught with a pop up cutter. Lethal comes back in and gets caught in a torture rack into a GTS. The 21 Plex sets up Haskins' Sharpshooter to make Lethal tap at 18:22.

Rating: B+. The ending more than pushed this one over the line as they took their time getting started and then blew it away at the end. The closing segment had me wondering if they would actually give Lifeblood the win before actually doing it and it was really entertaining as a result. This was the idea of "send them out there and let them tear the house down" and it worked very well.

Then it was time to face Jay Lethal one on one. From Death Before Dishonor 2019.

Jay Lethal vs. Jonathan Gresham

Lethal doesn't think much of Gresham not offering a handshake but Gresham has to show off what a jerk he has become. They go to the wristlocks (of course) to start with Gresham taking him down and stomping on the arm. That gives us a standoff so Gresham headlocks him down, only to have Lethal shake out for another standoff. Gresham can't get the Octopus so Lethal rolls him up for two instead.

They hit the mat and it's another standoff as Gresham can't out wrestle him yet. The stalemates continue until Lethal sends him to the apron for a baseball slide to take the knee out. Back in and Lethal dropkicks him right back to the floor, setting up the freaking suicide dive. Back in again and it's Lethal hitting the cartwheel dropkick for two as Gresham is in trouble for the first time.

It's too early for the Figure Four so Gresham's knee is fine enough for a standing Lionsault, though the knee is still a little banged up. Gresham takes him down by the arm and cranks back on it while also pulling on the leg for a bonus. A keylock goes on but Lethal drives him into the ropes for another break. Lethal's arm is banged up but it's fine enough to hit a powerslam and now the Figure Four goes on.

They roll to the ropes and then out to the floor with the crash being the only thing that breaks the hold. Gresham's chair is taken away so they stop to yell at each other about who caused their losing streak. The slugout starts on the floor and winds up in the ring with the Lethal Injection being broken up with a kick to the arm. Since the Injection isn't working, Lethal goes with an RKO for two instead.

The Figure Four goes on again and is broken in another hurry so it's another Lethal Injection attempt. This time it's countered into a backslide for two, so Lethal tries it AGAIN, this time to have his arm go out. Lethal counters la majistral into a cradle for two but Gresham unloads with strikes to the head. The Octopus goes on and Gresham cranks WAY back on the arm for the tap at 17:21.

Rating: B+. I REALLY liked this one as Lethal was his usual great self but Gresham was fired up and needed to prove himself. Couple that with giving him a target like the arm and there was almost no way Gresham could lose here. It was a heck of a performance too as Lethal was giving it all he had but fell short in the end. They played a great chess game with Lethal having to protect the arm but going for the win with the Injection but eventually giving out after Gresham worked over the arm as much as he could. This was great and one of the best things I've seen from ROH in a long time.

Post match, respect is shown.

Finally we have Gresham wanting to prove himself. From ROH TV, January 15, 2020.

Jonathan Gresham vs. Alex Shelley

Jay Lethal is here with Gresham. They fight over arm control to start and that's an early standoff. Gresham spins him down and works on the leg on the mat but Shelley spins out for another standoff. Back up and Gresham misses a moonsault press as we take a break. We come back with Shelley Downward Spiraling him into the buckle to take over.

They run the ropes until Shelley's leapfrog is pulled down by the leg with Shelley dropping a knee on said leg. A few rolls send us into a Figure Four on Shelley but he channels his inner Dunne and bends the fingers apart for the escape. Gresham takes him down by the knee again and we take a second break.

Back again with Gresham hitting a shinbreaker, only to have Shelley snap off an enziguri with the good leg. Shelley pulls himself up but loses a chop off, mainly thanks to another kick to the ribs. The same rollup that

Shelley used to win the first match gets two and a superkick rocks Gresham again. They trade headlock takeovers into headscissors (kind of late in the match for that sequence) until Gresham stacks him up for the clean pin at 11:35.

Rating: C+. The technical stuff was good here but they didn't do that well into going into the history between these two. It was treated like some big showdown match but instead it was just a nice, back and forth technical exchange. Gresham working the knee was fine, but there was very little to suggest that he was some new big time heel, especially one who had just won a title by cheating.

Post match Shelley shakes hands with the champs before leaving in peace to end the show.

Gresham wraps it up by talking about his connections with a promotion called Lucha Memes, which is doing some good things. More on that later.

Overall Rating: B. Gresham is one of those guys who would work anywhere anytime because there is always a use for a pure technician. It might not be the most thrilling guy or someone who can be the top star in a promotion, but he is someone who looks awfully good to have on a card. That's what we had here, with some excellent stuff that is worth your time to check out.

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