

Ring Of Honor TV – September 16, 2020: It's Good To Be Home



IMG Credit: Ring Of Honor Wrestling

Ring of Honor

Date: September 16, 2020

Location: UMBC Events Center, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Caprice Coleman

For the first time in nearly six months, we have a fresh show from Ring of Honor and they are starting with a bang. It's the return of the Pure Title, a championship which has a special set of rules and hasn't been around in nearly fifteen years. If nothing else it will be nice to see something other than Best Of lower level wrestlers for a change. Let's get to it.

There's a new opening sequence for the first time in years.

The opening video looks at the tournament, which will feature sixteen men and will focus on the principles the company was founded upon.

Quinn McKay gives us a quick history of the title.

We see the sixteen men in the tournament in no particular order:

Jay Lethal

Matt Sydal

Jonathan Gresham

Tracy Williams

PJ Black

David Finlay

Silas Young

Josh Woods

Kenny King

Rocky Romero

Delirious

Dalton Castle

Tony Deppen

Wheeler Yuta

Rust Taylor

Fred Yehi

There are alternates just in case someone can't wrestle. In Block A, it's Dak Draper and in Block B it's Brian Johnson.

We've got brackets and it's single elimination:

Block A

Jay Lethal

Dalton Castle

David Finlay

Rocky Romero

Silas Young

Fred Yehi

Tracy Williams

Rust Taylor

Block B

Jonathan Gresham

Wheeler Yuta

Delirious

Matt Sydal

Josh Woods

Kenny King

PJ Black

Tony Deppen

We're not done with the rules.

First round matches have a fifteen minute time limit, second round is twenty, third is thirty and the finals are sixty.

Each match will have three judges in case of a time limit draw.

And now for the actual Pure Rules as they somehow haven't been mentioned yet.

Each match begins and ends with a handshake.

You have three rope breaks per match. After they are gone, pins and submissions in the ropes count, but they still must take place in the ring.

Closed fist punches to the face are not allowed though open handed strikes are legal. Closed fists to other parts of the body, save for low blows, are legal. One closed fist to the face is a warning and the second is a DQ.

Standard 20 count.

Any interference means you are FIRED FROM THE COMPANY.

Jay Lethal talks about being around ROH for thirteen years and Samoa Joe giving him his first major break. He is the only former Pure Champion in the tournament and wants to be the first ever two time champion. We see some clips of Lethal defending his title against some legends and he isn't changing anything up because it had gotten here this far. Dalton Castle has beaten him before and that is all that is in his head.

Dalton Castle talks about being a really good wrestler and how good he has been since he was eleven. Then he became the Ring of Honor World Champion and this is the perfect environment for him. No he hasn't wrestled in five months but he has been wrestling for over twenty three years. You think he can't just turn it on? The rules are different though and Castle is ready to suplex Lethal a lot. Castle worries that people are forgetting how dangerous he is because of all of the funny stuff he does. He is a dangerous man and he is showing it in the tournament. This was WAY different from Castle and I liked the new side.

Pure Title Tournament First Round: Dalton Castle vs. Jay Lethal

There are now graphics with some stats, including that Castle has won 85% of his matches with the Bang-A-Rang and that Lethal has won 88% of his matches in Baltimore. I love little things like that and they're a nice touch that shows they have put in some effort during the time off. We also get a graphic showing that the judges (not shown) are Gary Juster, Will Ferrara and Sumie Sakai.

Castle gets a front facelock to start but Lethal rolls over into the ropes, with a voiceover saying that is his first rope break. There is even a clock on screen to show the match time. Dang there is some actual fresh effort around here. They go to the mat again with Castle working on

the arm until Lethal spins out to pull on the arm. Castle stacks her up for two and it's a standoff. Lethal misses a right hand and gets suplexed down and an overhead belly to belly sends Lethal hard into the corner.

Back from a break with Lethal working on the leg, including a shinbreaker. They trade forearms as Coleman talks about how this is real wrestling and not entertainment. The Figure Four is broken up and they're both down for a bit. Back up and the Bang-A-Rang is countered into the Lethal Combination for two. Hail To The King is broken up and Castle pulls him down for the Bang-A-Rang, with Castle's leg giving out in the middle. Lethal has to use his second rope break to save himself and comes back with some kicks to the head. The Lethal Injection connects for the pin at 13:11.

Rating: B-. Lethal was the safe pick here but that pre-match promo made me want to see Castle go forward here. That being said, if you want to make a new star, having them beat Lethal, perhaps in the finals, would be a great way to go. Lethal wasn't wrestling like a heel here whatsoever, but if they're going for just the basics, that is a little more acceptable.

Wheeler Yuta has been wrestling for six years now after turning pro at sixteen. He went to college in Philadelphia just so he could train in the city with Drew Gulak. Yuta trained in the Michinoku Pro dojo in Japan and trained in Germany as well. He is going to want to take people apart and find their weaknesses. Yuta praises Jonathan Gresham and knows Gresham isn't worried about him, so Yuta can win.

Jonathan Gresham talks about being an amateur wrestler because he thought that's what you had to do to become a pro. He saw Ring of Honor back in 2005 and knew it was where he wanted to go because of everything they combined. Gresham has wrestled around the world and his technique is winning the title. It's time to reshape this company as the pure wrestlers see it.

Pure Title Tournament First Round: Jonathan Gresham vs. Wheeler Yuta

Gresham's Tag Team Title is notably absent. They fight over a test of strength to start with the bigger Yuta taking him to the mat. Gresham

bridges off the mat but gets caught in a bodyscissors. That is rolled into a rollup for two each but Gresham rolls over into a surfboard. The leg cranking takes us to a break and we come back with an exchange of head fakes until Yuta scores with a dropkick.

Gresham goes right back to the leg with an Indian deathlock (with Yuta's eyes bugging out in fear). Yuta bails to the ropes for the break and then punches Lethal in the face, earning himself an official warning. Gresham is annoyed so the pace picks up as they slug it out (with legal open hand strikes). A quick arm trap cradle gives Yuta two and a springboard spinning crossbody gets the same.

There's a high crossbody for the same but Gresham is right back on the leg. The Figure Four goes on but they roll over to the ropes (not announced as a break) and fall to the floor to bang them both up. They both beat the count and trade some rapid fire rollups for two each. Gresham stomps on the knee though and pounds it into the mat to make Yuta tap at 10:25.

Rating: C+. This was a different kind of match than the opener and that's a good idea. Yuta frustrated Gresham here and it told an interesting story of Gresham fighting someone who is so similar to himself. Gresham finally just unloading on the knee to win was a good way to go and the match worked as a result. Yuta would be a nice addition if he's sticking around, but Gresham wasn't losing in the first round of this thing.

Overall Rating: B-. It's nice to have this stuff back as the stakes are instantly higher when you don't know who is going to win. The Best Of stuff was nice but when you have nothing more for over four months, there is only so much value. I could go for something other than the tournament going forward (as a supplement, not a replacement), but given how things are going, a tournament is the best idea for the time being and that's understandable.

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