

Ring Of Honor – September 14, 2023: Hope Spots?

Ring Of Honor

Date: September 14, 2023

Location: Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse, Cleveland, Ohio

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Caprice Coleman

Ring of Honor continues to be in a weird place as the top titles, meaning the World and Tag Team Titles, are being defended in AEW (at least the important title defenses), with the Tag Team Champions not having actually appeared here since winning the titles. I'm not sure if they ever will, but maybe we can get something from Claudio Castagnoli this week. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

Ring Of Honor World Title: Claudio Castagnoli vs. Rocky Romero

Castagnoli is defending. They go with the grappling to start with Castagnoli cranking on the arm. Romero slips out of that and snaps off a hurricanrana to send Castagnoli outside. The big dive is cut off by an uppercut and a gorilla press snake eyes has Romero in more trouble. We hit the armbar until Romero fights up, earning himself a Swing for two. A suplex is countered and Romero snaps off another hurricanrana to put Castagnoli down.

Romero hits a tornado DDT into a 619 into a standing Sliced Bread ford two. Castagnoli powers him up into a backbreaker for two before firing off forearms in the corner. A hard lariat gives Castagnoli two but Romero backslides him for the same. An enziguri staggers Castagnoli but he nails a hard uppercut to retain the title at 10:36.

Rating: B-. This picked up near the end and it's nice to have the World Champion in action on the show. At the same time, this was an ice cold match coming in and commentary spent a good chunk of the match hyping up Castagnoli vs. Eddie Kingston at Grand Slam. This would have been a good choice for a Proving Ground match with Romero lasting the time limit, as they really do need to have one of those go the distance at some point.

Outrunners/Kevin Ku vs. Infantry/Willie Mack

Mack and Ku start things off with Mack shrugging off a chop and grabbing a running hurricanrana. Dean comes in for a bulldog/flapjack combination to Ku so it's off to Floyd. Everything breaks down and Dean hits the big flip dive onto all three villains. Back in and some double teaming puts Dean down and we hit the double arm crank. Stomping ensues and Dean is sent outside so Floyd can dance a bit. The villains take so long posing that Dean brings Bravo in to clean house. A twisting DDT drops Floyd as everything breaks down. Mack slugs it out with Ku and it's the Stunner into Boot Camp to finish Ku at 8:00.

Rating: C. Odds are the Infantry and Mack are going to be the next serious challengers for the Trios Titles and I'll certainly take a team getting some wins to build them up for the shot. The Outrunners and Ku aren't the highest level challengers, but at least they're opponents losing to the Infantry and Mack, who certainly need the wins.

Ethan Page is here and wants to regain his competitive edge. He's here to prove himself to the fans.

Mercedes Martinez vs. Zoey Lynn

Lynn grabs the wristlock to start but Martinez knocks her into the corner for the stomping. A rather delayed brainbuster gets two on Lynn but she avoids a charge in the corner. Lynn scores with some kicks but charges into a spinebuster. Martinez pulls

her up at two and hits a running forearm to the back of the head. The Brass City Sleeper finishes Lynn at 5:21.

Rating: C. This was just shy of an extended squash for Martinez, though Lynn did get in a few shots of her own. Martinez continues to be someone who could be moved up the card in a hurry but instead she's here winning matches like this one. The good thing is she could be moved up at any time, but at some point that elevation has to happen.

Gates Of Agony vs. Cole Radrick/Matt Brannigan

Prince Nana is here with the Gates and it's Kaun running Brannigan over to start. Radrick gets taken out on the floor and it's a Backstabber into a Samoan Drop. Open The Gates connects but Radrick tries to make a save. That earns him a drop onto Brannigan and it's a double pin at 1:46. Total destruction.

Video on the history of Athena and Billie Starkz. This is still probably the most interesting thing on the show.

Starkz is officially served her Minion To Do List, including items like a tongue twister and finding a single banana. Lexi Nair warns her that bad things will happen if the tasks aren't completed and gives her an MIT (Minion In Training) shirt. Starkz is off to work.

Christopher Daniels vs. Darius Martin

Feeling out process to start with Daniels' headlock not getting him very far. Martin gets whipped hard into the corner for a running forearm into a Side Effect for two. They fight over a suplex until Daniels drapes him over the top rope for a middle rope shot to the neck. The chinlock goes on for a bit, followed by a clothesline to stay on said neck. Martin fights up with an atomic drop and a kick to the face. A high crossbody gives Martin two but Daniels pulls him into the Koji Clutch. Martin rolls out and escapes the Angel's Wings as

well, setting up a rollup to pin Daniels at 5:59.

Rating: C+. This match had a story with Daniels working on the neck and then trying a neck submission. It might not be an epic story or anything close to one, but I'll take a basic story being done well enough over a story that is way too complicated and doesn't work out. Daniels can still go in the ring, but these losses almost have to start going somewhere eventually.

Post match Daniels endorses Martin in a nice moment.

Shane Taylor vs. Lee Johnson

Taylor, the hometown boy, gets a heck of a reaction. Johnson scores with a single right hand to start and Taylor just glares at him. A sunset flip doesn't work either and Taylor punches him into the corner. The tosses out of the corner have Johnson in even more trouble and they head outside.

That goes nowhere so they head back inside with Taylor dropping him again for two. The neck crank goes on as Johnson is in even more trouble. One heck of a chop puts Johnson down again and a release Rock Bottom gets two more. Some running clotheslines stagger Taylor and a running DDT gives Johnson two of his own. Cue Lee Moriarty for a distraction though and a package piledriver finishes Johnson at 8:22.

Rating: C. Johnson got about as much out of a series of right hands and a DDT as you could get here and that wasn't the most thrilling match. At the end of the day, Taylor has been presented as a monster in recent weeks (save for the match with Samoa Joe) and he wasn't about to lose here. Not a bad match, but Johnson could have varied up his offense a good bit.

Post match Moriarty shakes Taylor's hand and Taylor seems to have a new associate.

Lady Frost vs. Willow Nightingale

Nightingale kicks her in the face and gets two off a slam to start. Another kick misses though and Frost cartwheels over her for a kick to the face of her own. Nightingale gets knocked out of the corner, setting up some running shoulders to the ribs. Frost grabs the chinlock but Nightingale fights up and hits the Pounce. Some clotheslines give Nightingale two but Frost hits a spinning kick to the face. A moonsault gives Frost two, only to have Nightingale come back with the spinebuster. The Babe With The Powerbomb finishes Frost at 5:16.

Rating: C. Frost is someone with a rather specific gimmick but she has enough skill in the ring to back it up. If nothing else, that moonsault looks good enough to carry her a pretty long way (even if she needs to work on the accuracy). For now though, Nightingale almost has to be on the shows to bring up our spirits that much more as she is the most delightful thing I've seen in years.

Shane Taylor confirms that Lee Moriarty is officially on the team.

Josh Woods vs. Dominic Garrini

Woods immediately takes him to the mat for an armbar but Garrini grapples his way into one of his own. A rollup gives Woods two and they're back up for a standoff. They fight over a gutwrench and then a wristlock until Woods starts snapping off suplexes. The Anarchist suplex finishes Garrini at 2:58.

Griff Garrison vs. Ethan Page

They fight over wrist control to start until Garrison actually runs him over with a shoulder. Page is back with an elbow to the face as Cole Karter and Maria Kanellis-Bennett are here to watch from the stage. Garrison avoids a charge in the corner and drops Page again, setting up a knee drop for two. Back up

and Page hits a running clothesline into a running powerslam for two of his own. The Ego's Edge is broken up and Garrison hits a heck of a forearm for two more. A kick to the face staggers Garrison though and a springboard cutter finishes For Page at 4:22.

Rating: C+. The more I see of Page, the more he's growing on me, especially with that stupid contract storyline seemingly behind him. There's a certain charisma to him and it's making him that much easier to watch. The Maria stuff...my goodness do something with it with someone who matters already. Like Page maybe.

Post match Maria seems to smile at Page. So there we go. Maybe.

Workhorsesmen vs. The Boys

The Boys avoid being sent into each other to start and Brandon takes Henry down for an early two. Henry's missed charge sends him to the floor but Brandon charges into a sneaky right hand from Drake. Back in and the Workhorsesmen take Brandon into the corner to take turns with the beating, including Henry's abdominal stretch. Drake's assist gets caught though and Brandon's small package...is missed, allowing Henry to kick out after about five seconds.

Brandon slips out of a suplex but Henry is right there to cut off the tag again. A missed clothesline allows for the hot tag to Brent though and the pace picks way up. Everything breaks down and Brent is sent into a right hand from Henry. A superkick sets up a top rope double stomp to give Henry the pin at 5:32.

Rating: C+. The power (at least of Drake) vs. speed formula continues to be about as basic of a way to go in wrestling as you can find and it also continues to work. The Workhorsesmen are still on this show almost every week but them winning is certainly new. It gives them a bit more status and that could

be helpful down the line.

Maria Kanellis-Bennett tells Griff Garrison that she told him so and he might need some friends. Cole Karter comes in to make a pearl necklace joke, with Maria saying look it up. Lexi: "Don't look that up."

Tony Nese vs. AR Fox

Nese (with Mark Sterling), fat insults, group training, Fox interrupts so we can start. They trade headlocks to start and Nese grabs a rollup with tights (er, pants) for two. Fox kicks him in various places and gets in some jumping jacks for a little insult. Is it an insult when that's what Nese wanted him to do?

Anyway Fox hits a running clothesline into the corner, followed by a basement dropkick. Back up and Nese hits a running clothesline for two of his own, allowing Sterling to get in a cheap shot from the floor. Fox gets powered into the corner but blocks a superplex attempt. A super sunset flip doesn't work for Fox as Nese rolls through and kicks him in the head.

Nese grabs a bodyscissors but Fox gets up and sends him outside. A hanging DDT gives Fox two on the way back inside and they forearm it out. Fox's twisting brainbuster into a Stunner sets up a cutter for two more but Nese snaps off a German suplex. The running Nese misses as well though and Fox hits Lo Mein Pain for the pin at 9:24.

Rating: B-. It was a competitive back and forth match and that made it so much more interesting. Neither guy is on fire at the moment but Fox seems to be getting a bit of a build. Granted it only means so much when Nese has lost time after time, but any kind of a win for Fox, especially in a main event, is better than nothing.

Overall Rating: C+. The important part of this show was the

fact that it felt as if more things were happening. They were happening at a rather slow pace, but it felt like there were fewer unimportant matches on the show. It's still a mostly skippable show, but I'll take some positive adjustments where I can get them. Now just shorten the show and cut some of the matches and it's that much better. For now though, not a bad show this week.

Results

Claudio Castagnoli b. Rocky Romero – Uppercut
Infantry/Willie Mack b. Outrunners/Kevin Ku – Boot Camp to Ku
Mercedes Martinez b. Zoey Lynn – Brass City Sleeper
Gates Of Agony b. Cole Radrick/Matt Brannigan – Double pin
Darius Martin b. Christopher Daniels – Rollup
Shane Taylor b. Lee Johnson – Package piledriver
Willow Nightingale b. Lady Frost – Babe With The Powerbomb
Josh Woods b. Dominic Garrini – Anarchist suplex
Ethan Page b. Griff Garrison – Springboard cutter
Workhorsemen b. The Boys – Top rope double stomp to Brent

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