

# Ring of Honor TV – December 21, 2016: How to Treat a New World Champion

## Ring of Honor

Date: December 21, 2016

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Kevin Kelly

Final Battle has come and gone and we've got a new World Champion. Other than that we have a heel Cody Rhodes in Kevin Sullivan's back pocket because ROH has decided to sacrifice one of the biggest free agents on the indy scene for the sake of KEVIN SULLIVAN AND THIS HORRIBLE STORY. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Final Battle main event with Kyle O'Reilly winning the ROH World Title.

Opening sequence.

Wait...why are we in an arena? I was promised a Best Of show last week and we've got an arena? Cool actually as I don't want to wait around for the storyline advancement.

Here's Kyle to open the show for his first address with the title. He's going to defend the title with honor like all of the former champions, such as Samoa Joe and Bryan Danielson. He says he could go on and on but I'm not sure for how long given that he's the 24<sup>th</sup> champion.

Cue Adam Cole to say he didn't sign up for a No DQ match because he's a wrestler. This brings out Dalton Castle to say he doesn't like being a peacock left out of the conversation. He's a dangerous man in the ring but more importantly he's related to a math teacher, which means he's next in line for a title shot after defeating Cole at All-Stars vs. Champions.

Now it's Bobby Fish to come out and congratulate his brother on winning the title. Oh and he'd like a title shot too due to winning Survival of the Fittest. Cole goes on another rant about wanting the title shot so Kyle tells them all good luck because anyone can have

a shot.

We'll be having a tournament (because one just ended at the last show) called the Decade of Excellence Tournament with the winner facing the champ at the net pay per view. The participants are all people who were here over ten years ago, which might not be the best marketing plan. And we've got brackets!

Mark Briscoe

Christopher Daniels

Chris Sabin

Colt Cabana

BJ Whitmer

Jay Briscoe

Jay Lethal

Jushin Thunder Liger

Nigel has made a six man tag between Cole/Young Bucks vs. O'Reilly/Castle/Fish. I've heard worse.

Decade of Excellence Tournament First Round: Mark Briscoe vs. Christopher Daniels

Apparently Daniels mentored Mark when he first got here. Feeling out process to start with shoulder blocks having no effect all around. The threat of Red Neck Kung Fu backs Daniels up but he does his own crane pose. Mark hammers away in the corner until an STO gives Daniels a breather.

Back from a break with Daniels still in control and something like a neckbreaker getting two. Briscoe fights back and hits a running uppercut in the corner, followed by a high collar suplex to send Daniels flying. Christopher comes right back with a Blue Thunder Bomb into a Lionsault for two. They head outside as this just kind of keeps going with Mark dropping the Cactus Jack elbow from the apron. Back in and the Froggy Bow misses, setting up Angel's Wings to give Daniels the pin at 11:03.

**Rating:** C. The match was fine enough for a pair of veterans with no real animosity towards each other but needing to have a match in a tournament. That's the problem I have with most of these things but at least Daniels is getting rewarded for his awesome talking in

recent weeks. Good little match here.

### Lio Rush vs. Caprice Coleman

Before the match, King offers Rush a spot on the team but that doesn't seem to be happening because Rush stands for respect. Coleman: "I see why they don't hand you the mic too much." This turns into a huge rant about Coleman beating Rush like he stole something and getting thrown in jail for it, only to come back here and beat Rush again even more. Rush wins off a missed charge into a rollup at 20 seconds.

The Rebellion beats Rush down until Donovan Dijak and Jay White make the save.

### Young Bucks/Adam Cole vs. Kyle O'Reilly/Bobby Fish/Dalton Castle

The Bucks beat down the good guys to start because the Bucks are the most popular wrestlers in the company. Cole takes the advantage but gets into a slugout with Kyle, who actually loses early on. Kyle sends him outside for a running knee from the apron as all six are on the floor.

That means a bunch of superkicks from the Bucks so the fans can chant TOO SWEET for a long time. A triple dive takes the good guys down and a bunch of apron bombs allow even more Bucks dominance. Things settle back down to Cole putting Cole in a camel clutch while the Bucks kiss Adam's cheeks because this is yow you push a new WORLD CHAMPION.

Back from a break with Nick getting crotched on top but the Bullet Club breaking up the tag attempt. Three straight superkicks knock Kyle out and the Swanton off the apron keeps the Bucks looking perfect. Kyle finally blocks a splash with raised knees and the hot tag brings in Dalton for three straight German suplexes.

Stereo German suplexes get a triple two count on the Club, followed by a double clothesline to put Matt and Castle down. That means the hot tag off to Fish and everything breaks down with ReDRagon taking over. We've had enough offense from one of the best teams ever so let's have some more superkicks, only to have Kyle pull Nick into the triangle choke. The cross armbreaker makes Nick tap at 11:41.

**Rating:** C. The win helps a lot but GEEZ was there no other option than having the Bucks go crazy like that on the brand new World Champion? I get it: the Bucks are the most popular act in the

company right now and can do superkicks. That doesn't mean we have to have them beat up anyone they want like this.

Next week is the Best of 2016. Kind of odd to have a regular show and then the compilation but I've heard worse ideas.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This was a rather up and down show as some of the booking made me want to pull my hair out but the wrestling was good enough to make up for parts of it. I like the idea of Kyle fighting half the roster for the title but I could go for less Bucks being treated like the most untouchable thing ever. Then again, Kyle did make one of them tap out to end the show and that helps a lot.

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# Ring of Honor TV – December 14, 2016: It Makes You Appreciate NXT

## Ring of Honor

Date: December 14, 2016

Location: William J. Meyers Pavilion, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Ian Riccaboni

This is another special show with the Women of Honor getting the spotlight for a change. I saw one of these shows before and had a

good enough time with it though it's hard to keep caring when they only make air a few times a year. ROH has promised to make this a bigger deal for years now so it's really hard to buy their promises. Let's get to it.

#### Deonna Purrazzo vs. Candice LeRae

Purrazzo has been all over as of late, including on Smackdown and NXT. LeRae is from Mr. Toad's Wild Ride which pretty much guarantees that I'll be a fan. We get a quick introduction from both women so they're already one up on the WWE cruiserweights. Feeling out process to start with Purrazzo working on the arm until the much more experienced LeRae taking her down to the floor for a suicide dive.

Back in and Candice tries to run up the corner but gets dropped down onto the ropes to send us to a break. We come back with Purrazzo working on the left arm and adding in a kick to the bicep for two. A few forearms and a top rope double stomp to the back gets two for Candice. She makes things a bit odd with something like a crotch grab suplex (Did I mention she and Joey Ryan are regular partners?) for two more. Not that it matters as Purrazzo grabs another Fujiwara Armbar for the tap at 10:04.

**Rating:** C. Here's the problem with specials like this one: there's no story or reason to care about either of these women, at least based on what they've done in ROH. Why should I be interested in two women facing off with no characters or story behind it? This really was the definition of "just a match" and that's rarely enough to make anything work.

#### Veda Scott/Kennadi Brink vs. Faye Jackson/Sumie Sakai

Scott is gone from the company since this was taped. Jackson and Sakai have Solo Darling with them. Faye and Veda start things off with the much bigger Jackson running her over. It's off to Kennedy, who is taken down with one of the worst looking hiptosses I've ever seen. Speaking of hips, Kennedy is sent face first into Jackson's, shall we say, hips, for two.

It's off to Sumie for a missile dropkick but she's taken into the heel (I'm pretty sure at least) corner. The announcers keep talking about various matches from house shows that I guess we're supposed to have seen. I mean, there's no indication of storylines or anything like that but that's pretty standard for a lot of ROH

material.

Veda gets two off a spear and Solo offers a blend of her "special drink" to bring Sumie back to life. Instead it's just a tag to Faye for her stumbling elbows. Various hip theme attacks have Veda and Kennadi in trouble, including a rolling splash (Chocolate Thunder) for two on Scott. Some very bad looking heel miscommunication sees Brink drop Scott, setting up a top rope Cannonball for two on Kennadi. With Scott and Sakai on the floor, Brink grabs an Anaconda Vice for the tap at 7:34.

**Rating:** F+. This was one of the worst matches I've seen in a good while and it's more proof that some people just aren't ready to be on a national TV show. Jackson is clearly green and the match fell apart as a result. I'm really not a fan of her kind of offense either as it's a mixture of comedy and dominance, which isn't something that often works.

We recap Mandy Leon vs. Taeler Hendrix which is the result of Leon issuing an open challenge. Hendrix got beaten up so she sent in Jessica Havok to take care of Mandy. See, that's a simple story and while Leon's promo (saying she's a Woman of Honor over and over) wasn't great, this is better than anything else we've had so far.

#### Mandy Leon vs. Jessica Havok

Leon goes right after the monster and is knocked down with ease. Some HORRIBLE forearms have little effect on Jessica but a huge running legdrop misses. A wheelbarrow slam gets two on Mandy and we take a break. Back with Mandy grabbing a sleeper, only to be driven back into the corner. Something like White Noise gets two on Mandy but Havok pulls her up. Thankfully the announcers are right there to remind us about Havok being a hired gun who only wants to inflict pain. Cue Deonna Purrazzo for a distraction, allowing Mandy to grab a rollup for the pin at 7:01.

**Rating:** D-. There isn't much of another way to put this: Leon looks outstanding in her gear but she's one of the worse in ring performers of this group. Then again it's not like these women get much ring time and Havok really didn't do much to help her out either. Not a good match whatsoever but they were certainly trying. Havok chokeslams them both post match.

Video on Kelly Klein, who is treated as a killer.

## ODB vs. Kelly Klein

Both come in undefeated. ODB shoves her around to start and takes it outside for a ram into the post. The idea here is that Klein has been a big fish in a small pond but is now getting to fight someone with some experience and more talent. Things stay bad for Klein on the floor as ODB hits some hard chops. Back in and Klein scores with some forearms to take over as we go to a break.

We come back with Kelly still in control until ODB low bridges her outside for a breather. Some shoulders drop Klein and it's time for a few flask shots. Of booze that is, not to Klein's head. Now, because ODB is gross you see, she rams Klein's head into the buckles while simulating the shots going to her crotch. See it's funny. Klein grabs a northern lights suplex for two until ODB runs her over for the same. Not that it matters though as Klein grabs a guillotine choke for the referee stoppage at 13:05.

**Rating:** C+. Not bad here as Klein is continued to be treated as the undisputed star of the division. Having her beat ODB is a good idea and helps to set her up as something big...if this division ever goes anywhere. That and seeing ODB getting knocked out is always entertaining, unlike almost anything else about her.

**Overall Rating:** D. These shows are so hard to grade as there's almost nothing to compare them to. The matches range from horrible to watchable but I have almost no idea who these people are and there's nothing for them to build towards with all of one show every four months. Either build a division up or do something else because this is getting a bit old. Not the worst but it makes you realize how good the NXT women really are.

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# ROH Final Battle 2016: TV Not Required

## Final Battle 2016

Date: December 2, 2016

Location: Hammerstein Ballroom, New York City, New York

Commentators: Steve Corino, Kevin Kelly

This has been a fairly big request so I might as well get it out of the way before it's way too late. Final Battle is the biggest Ring of Honor show of the year and this edition is headlined by Adam Cole defending the ROH World Title against Kyle O'Reilly. The card isn't the strongest in the world but there's always potential. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We open with Story Time with Adam Cole, who has a story about two knights. One of them went on to become the King but everyone was jealous of him. The King had all all the friends he needed and all the other knight had was a shot at the throne, which he failed. Then he failed again and again until Kyle O'Reilly is out of shots. Cole drops the story and promises that tonight, Kyle fails all over again.

Opening sequence.

The announcers run down the card (as in the one you already paid for) which now includes a triple threat instead of a fourway as Bobby Fish's mother passed away, forcing him out of the match.

## Rebellion vs. Motor City Machine Guns/Donovan Dijak

The Guns are still in search of a permanent partner because trios are suddenly awesome. The Rebellion is the former Cabinet (Caprice Coleman/Kenny King/Rhett Titus) because Rebellion might actually be an even weaker name. To really show how rebellious King is, he has an upside down ROH logo on his trunks. Sabin and King run the ropes a bit to start with a grand total of nothing happen. Gotta love that

non-offense from these rebels.

A quick triple team puts Dijak down and it's Titus, billed as the BIG DAWG with a similar ROH logo on the trunks, getting triple teamed right back. Shelley does a little Ric Flair strut and helps hold Titus up for a middle rope splash from Dijak. A good right hand (Corino: "PS!") drops Sabin though and it's time for the Rebellion (and their dastardly trunks to take over. Coleman, the true rebel here due to his slacks, gets in a few stomps of his own.

More triple teaming ensues until Sabin gets in a tornado DDT. That means Dijak gets to clean house with a top rope chokebreaker (close enough at least) getting two on Titus. The fans are WAY into Dijak here but the chants are cut off as the Guns start speeding things up. Well as speedy as they can make them at this point in their careers.

Dijak actually busts out a springboard flip dive to make my eyes pop open. Feast Your Eyes sends Titus into a powerbomb for two with Coleman and King diving in for the save. Another powerbomb puts King down but Skull and Bones are broken up. The Sky Splitter sets up the Big Dawg (frog) splash to put Sabin away at 12:27.

**Rating:** C+. Now this is a good way to start a show: with a mostly meaningless six man tag featuring a bunch of flying around and fast paced offense that gets the crowd going early on. Unfortunately that's about it for the good stuff as the Rebellion might be the least interesting idea for a gimmick this year. It's one of those cliched names that you throw out there on a tiny indy show, not the biggest show of the year for one of the biggest promotions in the country.

We recap Silas Young vs. Jushin Thunder Liger. Young got annoyed at a fan dressing up like Liger so he wanted to beat up the inspiration for never showing his face like a coward.

#### Jushin Thunder Liger vs. Silas Young

Young has Beer City Bruiser with him. A cheap shot puts Liger trouble but the threat of a surfboard sends Silas bailing to the floor. Back in and we hit the surfboard until Silas grabs the referee for the break. A neckbreaker puts Liger down and the Bruiser offers a cheap shot (it's not like he's going to do much else) to keep Silas in control. Young actually goes for the mask because he really is that evil.

Liger gets caught in a backbreaker for two but manages to get in a double clothesline for a breather. It's too early for the Liger Bomb though and a big neckbreaker gets two for Young. That means it's time for a shot of beer, which is spat on Liger's mask. It's enough to make Liger hit a brainbuster but a top rope splash hits knees. Misery puts Liger away at 11:04.

**Rating:** C-. Nothing to see here but above all else the right person won. Liger is still an attraction and a win over him seems to mean something, which is exactly what someone like Silas needs. It's nothing great but it did its job well enough. I'm still not sure where they're going with Young but we've waiting on it for a long time.

We recap Colt Cabana vs. Dalton Castle, which is your standard short term tag team breakup feud with Cabana playing heel.

#### Colt Cabana vs. Dalton Castle

You can tell Colt has turned as his music into something much slower with rap lyrics. Castle comes out in a chariot pulled by the Boys. Dalton immediately poses on the middle rope with his legs crossed like a gentleman. A quick takedown puts Colt on the mat and he bails to the floor, allowing Castle to do his strut after faking Cabana out on a suicide dive. The Boys are thrown in so Castle uses them as stepping stones to set up a dropkick. Now that shows some thinking out there.

Another trip to the mat goes badly for Cabana but he finally pulls Dalton out of the corner to take over. A quick Billy Goat's Curse sends Castle diving for the ropes, which looked quite a bit like a tap. Dalton grabs a hurricanrana before sidestepping a Lionsault press. Colt pops up but can't hit the Chicago Skyline. He can however reverse the Bang A Rang into a rollup for two but Dalton grabs the Bang A Rang for the pin at 10:22.

**Rating:** C. Castle is another guy who could be something special if he's given the right kind of push. However, his character is one of those kind that has a firm ceiling above its head because of the nature of the persona. He's getting better in the ring though and those eyes being all buggy make things even better.

Jay Lethal gives a great promo about how he won't be remembered if he doesn't do something memorable. Tonight he's going to show why he's the best wrestler in the world, like he's been for years.

## Cody vs. Jay Lethal

Brandi Rhodes gets in a chuckle worthy line with "Where we're going we don't need Rhodes." Lethal has a vest containing his wish list, which include Cody. We're not quite ready to go yet though as the Addiction comes out to interrupt. They're cool with the night off after what they went through at Ladder War. Daniels talks about growing up watching Dusty Rhodes and how important it is to have wrestlers like Cody on the roster. Addiction will be sitting in on commentary.

Feeling out process to start as they hit the mat early on. A hiptoss exchange goes fine until Lethal gets in a dropkick for the first major offense. Cody comes right back with a very delayed gordbuster and starts in on the arm. Addiction keeps putting over the idea of Cody having experience in big matches and not buckling under the pressure.

A skinning of the cat is broken up by Jay dropkicking Cody in the face (that's a new one) to send him outside. That means three straight suicide dives with Cody being ready for the third and breaking it up with a Disaster Kick. Back in and another Disaster Kick grazes Jay's hands but he backflips on the impact anyway. Eh it wouldn't be Ring of Honor if there wasn't an unnecessary flip.

Lethal comes back with a Crossface but Cody rolls into a modified Indian Deathlock of all things. After a rope is grabbed, Cody turns him inside out again with a clothesline and the frustration sets in on the kickout. The moonsault press misses, which Kevin calls Cody's first mistake. Oh I'm sure I could find a few. Jay starts striking him in the face but we've got a ref bump, allowing Cody to kick Jay low for the surprise heel turn. Cross Rhodes puts Lethal away at 13:12.

**Rating:** B-. Best match of the night so far but it still wasn't great. Turning Cody heel is certainly interesting though as you don't often send in someone like Cody and then have them do anything other than be a short term conquering hero. A win over Lethal is still a big deal, even though Jay has taken a few steps down from where he was recently. Good enough match too.

Post match Cody mocks the Code of Honor and flips Lethal off. Addiction chases him away while Corino jumps back in on commentary to say "he was right all along." Rhodes shoves Corino down but Steve

keeps his cool.

Long recap of the Six Man Tag Team Title tournament. Lio Rush is replacing ACH, who has left the promotion.

### Six Man Tag Team Titles: Kingdom vs. Kushida/Jay White/Lio Rush

The titles are vacant coming in and I still have no idea which one is TK O’Ryan and which is Vinny Marsegila. Before the bell, Corino says the Father (likely meaning Kevin Sullivan) said the evil was coming and that’s clearly Cody. Things start very fast with Rush hitting a standing C4 and frog splash for a pretty hot two.

After a break on the floor, White takes O’Ryan down until it’s off to Kushida for a dropkick to the head. Rush comes in for some YES Kicks but Taven sneaks in for a DDT to take over. O’Ryan adds a spear for two as things settle down into your normal formula. The first hot tag brings in Kushida for the Hoverboard Lock but O’Ryan is quickly in the ropes.

The announcers are nice enough to start explaining why we should care about the Kingdom as Kushida scores with a double Tajiri handspring elbow. Everything breaks down and White gets two off a missile dropkick. To really pick things up a bit, White gets caught in a half crab from the top rope, only to have Kushida put Vinny in the Hoverboard Lock on the top for the save.

A superplex breaks the submissions which don’t count because they’re in the ropes and it’s time for Rush to get to show off because ROH LOVES that guy. Kushida gets in a big dive to take all of the Kingdom down, only to have Taven dive onto the even bigger pile. Back in and Rush has Vinny beaten so TK dives off the top to take out the referee. Rush goes crazy with his strikes but the triple powerbomb crushes Lio to give the Kingdom the belts at 15:22.

**Rating:** C+. This is a good example of just throwing titles out there and not bothering to put anything important behind them. There’s no reason to care about Six Man Tag Team Titles when there were barely any trios in the first place. It comes off like someone else did something so now we’ve got Trios Titles. That doesn’t mean it works and the match wasn’t great either, making this the finals of one heck of a waste of time, especially with the winners being a reincarnated stable that is missing all the parts that made it work in the first place.

We recap the rapidly changing TV Title picture. Will Ospreay took the title from Bobby Fish, only to lose it two days later to Marty Scurll. Dragon Lee is involved here as well because we need to bring in other people from around the world whether they're interesting or not. Fish is out of the match due to a death in the family earlier in the day.

#### TV Title: Will Ospreay vs. Dragon Lee vs. Marty Scurll

Scurll, dubbed the Villain (I can work with this) is defending. As you might expect, everything starts fast with all three doing a bunch of flips without making any real contact. Will and Lee chop it out before all three wind up on the floor, only to have Lee hit a big flip dive. Back in and Will's standing shooting star gets two on Lee, starting a British double team.

With Lee dispatched, Ospreay and Scurll start slugging it out until Marty gets caught in the Tree of Woe. Cue Lee for the Alberto Del Rio top rope double stomp and a near fall. A running hurricanrana pulls Ospreay off the apron and down to the floor but Will pops back up for a big running flip dive of his own.

A very fast series of dives has Scurll in trouble but he catches a final dive in his crossface chickenwing. Lee dives in for the save and it's time for the circle chop fest. Ospreay does a double Tajiri handspring spinning kick to the face. Well that works. Scurll gets tired of this nonsense and BREAKS LEE'S FINGER, setting up the chickenwing to retain the title at 11:04.

**Rating:** B+. See, now this is something I can get behind. They didn't bother trying with anything other than fast paced action and that's what we got. I was having flashbacks to the Cruiserweight Classic here as it was all about speed and nonstop action, which is why you bring people like these three in. It might not have been the highest quality match but it was a lot of fun and highly entertaining.

We recap the Tag Team Title match, which is just about the Briscoes wanting their ninth title reign.

#### Tag Team Titles: Briscoe Brothers vs. Young Bucks

The Bucks are defending. Mark and Nick get things going but it's quickly off to Jay (now with hair, making it easier to tell them apart) for an elbow. That goes nowhere so it's a big staredown. The double superkicks are countered with the Bucks being sent to the

floor, only to come back in for the slingshot dropkicks. A flip dive takes the challengers down and even more dives have them reeling.

The Briscoes are a bit more old school though and will have none of this being on defense thing, meaning a big double clothesline takes the Bucks down. Jay drops a BANG BANG Elbow off the apron because he's not that original. We settle down to the Bucks in trouble because ROH is a weird company where the heels are faces and the faces are weaker faces because the heels are cool heels in Japan, which makes them faces by default.

Nick gets up and sends Jay outside for a tornado DDT off the apron, only to have the Briscoes come back in for a double superkick of their own. Unfortunately that means the Bucks start with their own superkicks and Corino SHOUTS THE MOVE'S NAME A LOT. Eh I'll still take it over Joey Styles.

The draped over the ropes Swanton to Jay sets up More Bang for Your Buck on Mark, sending the fans even further into Buck-Love. Jay comes back in with a superkick of his own and the Jay Driller sets up the Froggy Bow for a very close two on Matt. A springboard Doomsday Device gets the same and the Briscoes can't believe it.

That's a bit too much selling for the Bucks though and it's Nick cleaning house with a bunch of strikes because he can beat up both Briscoes on his own. The Meltzer Driver gets two on Mark and then, I kid you not, TWENTY EIGHT SUPERKICKS IN A ROW give the Bucks a double pin to retain the titles at 16:08.

**Rating:** B. I know the Bucks are annoying but they're still two of the best high fliers going right now. The superkicks get really, really annoying at times (albeit nowhere near as bad as the "we're cool heels like the NWO" schtick) but at least you get some good matches out of them. The Briscoes will be fine when they do whatever is up next for them and that's been the case for years.

The lights go out....AND WE'VE GOT BROKEN MATT HARDY! They'll be coming to ROH soon (probably around Wrestlemania season) to make the Bucks and the Briscoes obsolete. The fans are WAY into the DELETE chant. The Bucks look stunned.

We recap Kyle O'Reilly vs. Adam Cole in a video that aired on ROH TV. The idea is they've spent years associated in some way and Cole is obsessed with keeping the title away from Kyle at all costs.

## ROH World Title: Adam Cole vs. Kyle O'Reilly

Cole is defending and this is now anything goes as per Kyle's request to not have to be held responsible for his actions. Kyle wins an early slugout and gets the armbreaker over the top rope. It's not clear why he lets it go but Cole kicks him in the head for his general stupidity. Back in and Kyle kicks away before getting shoved off the top to give the champ control.

Even more kicks have Cole reeling but he stops a dive with a belt shot. That's how a heel should use the weapons and it even draws blood from Kyle's forehead. Kyle can't stand up due to the blood loss so Cole puts a trashcan over him for a superkick. O'Reilly starts no selling chair shots (Seriously?) and suplexes Cole onto an open chair for....well very little actually.

Instead he takes Cole outside again and dropkicks a trashcan into Cole's chest for a big crash. It's table time and, after fighting it off for a bit, Cole gets belly to back superplexed through the table for the big crash. That's not enough for Kyle so he grabs a guillotine choke on the apron and kind of DDT's Cole off the apron and through a second table.

Kyle looks under the ring (where they keep all those freaking streamers) and finds a chain for a callback to their match in Dallas. Cole (busted as well) gets in a low blow for two and it's time for thumbtacks. The triangle choke has Kyle in control so Cole powerbombs him onto the tacks for the break. O'Reilly one ups him with a BRAINBUSTER ONTO THE TACKS, followed laying down on those tacks while locking in the cross armbreaker for the submission and the title (announced after a few seconds for some reason) at 19:14.

**Rating:** B+. I wanted to see more of this and that's a good thing. It felt like the needed a few more minutes to really flesh it out but Kyle laying in the tacks after dropping Cole onto them made it feel like he really just wanted to beat him no matter what. Cole felt like a jerk throughout but he just didn't have heart to keep up with Kyle, which is wrestling in a nutshell. It's not a classic but it told a story, albeit one that should have had its trigger pulled a long time ago. Maybe it's just that I'm not a huge fan of this feud but I never got into the big emotional impact here.

O'Reilly celebrates to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B+. The first half of the show isn't as strong as

the second but it's still more than good enough to set up the main events. Nothing really stands out above everything else but nothing was bad and the last three matches range from good to very good. This show's problem is the lack of a strong build, as nothing on here really feels like it's something worth seeing. That makes it a rare instance where it's better to watch the show with no TV build as the pay per view is actually very strong and better than most stuff ROH puts out.

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# Ring of Honor TV – December 7, 2016: An Early Christmas Present

## Ring of Honor

Date: December 4, 2016

Location: William J. Myers Pavilion, Baltimore, Maryland

Attendance: 600

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

We're past Final Battle and that means a few weeks before we actually get anything substantial in storyline terms. It's really hard to say what we might get here but it could be anything from a house show to some nothing TV matches, but there's almost a

guarantee that it won't be anything storyline driven. Let's get to it.

### Will Ferrara/Cheeseburger vs. Tempura Boyz

Joey Daddiego, Ferrara and Burger's trainer, is on commentary. Ferrara and Burger double team Sho in the corner to start as we hear about Daddiego working on the Americans' weight training. It's off to Yo as the beating begins but Sho runs over to pull Cheeseburger off the apron to break up a hot tag attempt.

That goes nowhere though as Burger gets the hot tag a few seconds later, meaning it's time for all the chops. Everything breaks down and the palm strike into a jumping Flatliner...only gets two as we take a break. Well it's a special show so they have to fill in time. Back with Cheeseburger taking a package piledriver for the pin at 8:00. The post break stuff was less than a minute.

**Rating:** D+. Not much to this one but that's going to be the case on the whole show. There's nothing interesting to this one but at least the Tempura Boyz stand out a little bit instead of being a very similar kind of act than you see so often. Also it's not like you can ever have too much talent on a roster so this is all fine. Not a good match or anything but fine enough for what it was.

Post match here are Prince Nana and Donovan Dijak to destroy Ferrara and Cheeseburger. Daddiego gets in and says this isn't happening so let's have a match.

### Joey Daddiego vs. Donovan Dijak

Daddiego slugs away but can't do much on the much bigger Dijak. A brainbuster gets two on Donovan but Nana crotches Daddiego. Feast Your Eyes gives Dijak the pin at 2:29.

We recap the Cabinet getting rid of their gimmick and calling themselves...the Rebellion. That's really the best they could come up with? The idea of just scrapping the thing was out of the question? They also attacked Dijak and the Motor City Machine Guns at a house show.

Video on Kevin Sullivan/Steve Corino/BJ Whitmer. Thank goodness Corino just left the promotion instead of making us sit through this anymore.

### BJ Whitmer/Damien Martinez vs. War Machine

As expected, they don't even bother with the wrestling and just head outside to set up tables. The big brawl takes us to an early break with neither team in any real control. Back with a wrestling match having broken out with Whitmer and Rowe down off a double clothesline. Everything breaks down again with Hanson and Martinez slugging it out on the floor. The referee gets shoved and the match is thrown out at 7:16. Not enough to rate it but this was the kind of brawl it should have been.

Rowe gets chokeslammed through a table and Hanson gets kicked a lot. Kevin Sullivan talks to Hansen and apparently they knew each other back in the day. Hansen used to call himself Steve NEW SCHOOL Corino so Sullivan calls out the real Corino. This means a staredown between Corino and Hansen which goes...nowhere. Much like EVERYTHING ELSE IN THIS STUPID STORY!

#### Briscoe Brothers/Silas Young/Jay Lethal vs. Motor City Machine Guns/Lio Rush/Jay White

There are three people in this match named Jay. The referee is so confused by the horrible naming decisions that he doesn't ring an opening bell (or maybe I just missed it) but Lethal shoulders Rush down to start. Rush starts firing off strikes and kicks Lethal in the head, setting up a big dive to the floor. That triggers a parade of dives to put everyone down as we take a break.

Back with more chaos, albeit slightly more controlled chaos. Mark takes a trashcan to the head and stops to chat about it on commentary for a bit. Lethal gets in trouble but there isn't a heel corner for him to get caught in. Some quadruple teaming allows Lio to fire off some YES Kicks but Young tags himself in to save Lethal.

Rush gets caught in the corner as the Rebellion comes out to watch for reasons of general annoyance. We take a second break and come back with Rush handstanding his way out of a cutter (not a fan of the guy but that was cool). The hot tag brings in White as everything breaks down.

Everyone else winds up on the floor so Rush's frog splash hits Lethal's knees. White gets the tag but Mark makes a blind tag to kick White in the head. The Guns do their rapid fire stuff to Young and a double suplex staggers Jay Briscoe. White's Kiwi Crush actually gets the pin on Jay Briscoe at 15:22 in a big upset.

**Rating:** B-. Rush is slowly growing on me though I still find him

vastly overrated. White getting the pin is a nice touch though as he and Briscoe had that great brawl for one of White's earliest matches. This was the high energy match that this promotion is capable of putting on and it worked well for this nothing show.

**Overall Rating:** C. For what we had here, this was actually a watchable hour. I like the idea of giving the lower stories and talent a show of their own like this as it's not often they get a chance to shine. There are even stories to them most of the time, even though they don't get to be on the pay per view. At least they get a chance to advance them, though unfortunately one of them is Sullivan vs. Corino. Good little show here, which was a nice surprise.

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# Ring of Honor TV – November 30, 2016: Something About Final Battle

## Ring of Honor

Date: November 30, 2016

Location: William J. Myers Pavilion, Baltimore, Maryland

Attendance: 600

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Steve Corino, Alex Shelley

It's the go home show for Final Battle 2016, meaning we're a few weeks away from any interesting content. Ring of Honor continues to be all over the place with the build towards pay per views and I'm sure this will be exactly the same. Things have been up and down of late and I have a feeling that's going to be the situation here. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

#### Lio Rush vs. Jonathan Gresham

Feeling out process to start and Gresham annoys Lio with an errant forearm to the face. They hit the mat with the arms interlocking for a quick standoff. Lio lights up the chest with a hard kick but Gresham kicks the arm to even things out. An enziguri puts Rush on the floor and a middle rope moonsault is awkwardly caught as Lio almost looks like he tried for a Big Ending.

We go to a break and come back with the pace having slowed down a bit. Rush slaps him in the face and kicks him in the head (partially blocked), followed by a superkick to send him outside. Back in and Gresham rolls away before Lio can dive so they trade rollups for two each. That means a round of applause, followed by Rush Hour (C4) for two on Jonathan. It's FIGHTING SPIRIT time so suplexes and C4's mean nothing. Back to back Rush Hours finally keep Gresham down and a top rope elbow puts Jonathan away at 10:57.

**Rating:** C+. This is where you almost have to be an ROH fan to like the style. The lack of selling and all the strikes get old in a hurry but this was FAR easier to sit through than a lot of the other stuff this promotion and so many others like it have done over the years. Rush still doesn't do much for me but he's a much better fit now that ACH is gone.

Post match the Motor City Machine Guns come in and put both guys over.

Video on Adam Cole/Kyle O'Reilly with Kyle talking about how they'll never be apart because Cole has started a war he can't finish. Kyle still isn't great on the mic but this is the best I've ever heard him talk.

We run down the Final Battle card.

#### Addiction vs. Briscoes

Jay and Kazarian start things off with the Briscoe taking him down

off a headlock. A dropkick sends Jey into the corner so it's off to the partners for more headlockery. I guess Mark learned by watching his brother. Mark and Daniels finally get in each others faces and it's time for the big brawl. The Briscoes get the better of it (well duh) and the dives take us to a break.

Back with the Briscoes stomping on Kazarian until Daniels gets in a few elbows to the back of Mark's head. The slow down begins with a Daniels waistlock but, as you might expect, the fans are still all the way behind the Briscoes. Kazarian's spinning springboard legdrop gets two and we take a second break.

Back with Kazarian grabbing another waistlock. This one only lasts a few seconds before it's back to Jay for all his usual stuff.

Everything breaks down and Daniels hits his big suicide dive around the corner to take out Jay. Back inside and it's Mark's Redneck Kung Fu taking care of Kazarian, followed by a Rock Bottom suplex for two. Jay comes back in but the Doomsday Device is countered with a powerslam out of the air in a very Rick Steiner style counter. Not that it matters as the Jay Driller into the Froggy Bow give the brothers the win at 18:00.

**Rating:** B-. The opening drags it down a bit but the ending sequence was really good and that powerslam looked awesome. Above all else though the Briscoes won before their title shot so at least we don't have #1 contenders going into their title shot on a loss. Good main event here though, which is a solid way to hype the show.

The Addiction actually shakes hands after the match.

Adam Cole talks about how he and Kyle O'Reilly came in together as Future Shock but only Cole has moved on to the main event. No matter how hard O'Reilly worked, he was always a step behind Cole. Why do we keep having to do this? It's been proven time after time that Cole is the better man but we just have to do this one more time at Final Battle.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was another awkward ROH go home show but the fact that they actually talked about the pay per view is an improvement. The main event got a strong push forward and the Briscoes are on a roll going into the show. Unfortunately the opening really didn't matter but at least the last two thirds worked.

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# Ring of Honor TV – November 23, 2016: Two Unknowns Are Better Than Three

## Ring of Honor

Date: November 23, 2016

Location: William J. Myers Pavilion, Baltimore, Maryland

Attendance: 600

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Steve Corino

We've only got two shows left until Final Battle and that means we won't be hearing most of the matches for a few more weeks because ROH can't figure out a schedule to save their lives. Next up is going to be the remainder of the Six Man Tag Team Title tournament as we need opponents for ACH and company. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Silas Young vs. Kyle O'Reilly

Feeling out process to start with Kyle grabbing a full nelson to no avail. A kneebars works a bit better but Silas throws him outside, leaving a nice sweat puddle on the floor. That's much more in Silas' wheelhouse and he sends Kyle hard into the barricade as we take a break. Back with Adam Cole on commentary and Kyle using another

kneebar to get out of trouble. A cross armbreaker makes Silas' night even worse and the brainbuster puts Young away at 12:37.

**Rating:** C-. If they want Silas to become a bigger deal, I'm really not sure how they're going about it. After the break, this was all Kyle beating the heck out of Young, who barely had any offense in the second half of the match. ROH needs some fresh talent at the top of the card and if they want to push Young then they need to push him instead of jobbing him out in such dominant fashion.

Post match Young criticizes a Jushin Thunder Liger fan for dressing up in a costume. Silas is out here every week facing the music but Liger is a coward. There's a Final Battle match.

Jay Lethal is ready for his Final Battle match with Cody Rhodes. I'm assuming that was announced on ROH's website because it wasn't announced on TV. That's one of the things they really need to work on. I know a lot of their stuff is online but you can't throw up a fifteen second graphic and have Kelly mention it?

The Motor City Machine Guns talk about how brutal the Ladder War was before going into a rant about how Adam Page turned on them earlier this year. This turns into the Guns talking about how much they love the ROH roster and it sounds like they're going after the Bullet Club. I'm not entirely sure what they were going for here as it was a bit all over the place.

The Addiction wants their titles back but more importantly, to prove they're the best. They get the Briscoes next week. As has been the case recently, this was great fire.

Dalton Castle is still missing the Boys (Where did they go anyway?) so Colt Cabana offers him some replacements.

#### Colt Cabana/Dalton Castle vs. Preston Quinn/Ken Dixon

Castle and Dixon start things off and it's time for the chest thrust. The Bang A Rang finishes Ken in 55 seconds. You don't see squashes like that around here too often.

Post match Castle says he knew he could make Colt smile. Cabana says he saw a lot of himself in Castle but maybe it's better if they go their separate ways. Colt goes to leave but Castle says not so fast. He'd like a goodbye hug but Cabana knees him low. Well that was rather uncalled for, especially considering he was willing to leave in peace thirty seconds ago. Cabana as a heel could actually be

interesting as I've never seen it before. Colt beats up the Boys and stabs Castle with a feather.

### Six Man Tag Team Title Tournament Semifinals: The Kingdom vs. Team CMLL

Yay for people we don't know and the announcers won't explain! O'Ryan and Hecheiro start things off but it's quickly off to Taven, who gets rolled up for some near falls. Vinny and Ultimo Guerrero, the latter of whom Corino praises because EVERYONE knows who Ultimo Guerrero is. A triple team beatdown has Vinny in trouble as we take a break. Back with Okimura not being able to sunset flip Taven thanks to some old fashioned cheating. Everything breaks down and Guerrero gets triple teamed, only to pop back up and clean house.

Corino: "I LOVE THIS GUY!" Good for you Steve, because we can barely remember his name as he's been in an ROH ring all of twenty minutes and has never even gotten an introduction. Hecheiro grabs a leg lock on Taven with T.K. making a save as we go to a second break. Back the Kingdom taking over via a dive to the floor, followed by a modified triple bomb for the pin on Hecheiro for the pin at 11:04.

**Rating:** C+. The match was entertaining though I'm still not sure if the faces or heels won. I mean, I know the Kingdom are heels but was I supposed to cheer for Team CMLL? Why? Just because they're from Mexico and are here as visitors? I was having a hard enough time keeping track of who was who, let alone wondering if I should be happy with the winners. At least Taven is someone ROH fans is familiar with and it's a much clearer face vs. heel picture in the finals.

The Briscoes are ready for their tuneup next week because the Addiction are just a step on the way towards Final Battle, where they'll get the titles back.

**Overall Rating:** C. I liked this show a lot more than the recent episodes as they advanced several stories and fleshed out a lot of the Final Battle card. That's been lacking in recent weeks and they nailed it this week. The wrestling was fine enough and hopefully they can give us the big go home show next week, though ROH tends to lack in that area a lot of the time.

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# Ring of Honor TV – November 16, 2016: It's a Problem Until ROH Fixes It

## Ring of Honor

Date: November 16, 2016

Location: William J. Myers Pavilion, Baltimore, Maryland

Attendance: 600

Commentators: Steve Corino, Kevin Kelly

We're on a fresh taping cycle now and that means we're almost up to Final Battle. The big story this week seems to be the rest of the first round of the Six Man Tag Team Title tournament as we get the final four all set up. Other than that we're probably going to get some more on Kyle O'Reilly vs. Adam Cole. Let's get to it.

We open with a video of Adam Page attacking Bobby Fish and dueling speeches from both guys.

Opening sequence.

Six Man Tag Team Titles Tournament First Round: Addiction/Kamaitachi vs. Team CMLL

That would be Ultimo Guerrero, Hechiero and Okimura because there was nowhere near enough trios to fill in a tournament so here are a bunch of imports. Okimura and Kazarian start things off as Corino does everything he does to explain who the CMLL guys are. They hit the mat to start with neither guy getting an advantage, save for Kazarian grabbing an arm trap rollup for two.

A cutter out of the corner gets the same on Kazarian so it's off to Hechiero, who grabs a choke on the mat and rolls around for a bit. Ultimo (a guy in his mid 40s who has won a ton of titles in CMLL) comes in and everything breaks down with Kamaitachi being sent

outside for a brawl in the crowd.

Back from a break with Addiction in control with Hechiero getting beaten down. That lasts all of ten seconds as it's off to Guerrero for a slingshot Bronco Buster (cool move) as everything breaks down. Kamaitachi hits a dive, followed by a Falcon's Arrow on Guerrero. Daniels says he has this though, meaning Kamaitachi's top rope knee hits him instead. A reverse superplex plants Daniels for the pin at 13:04.

**Rating:** C-. I've said this before and I'm going to say it again until ROH fixes this problem: who are these people and why should I care? I keep having to ask it because ROH never bothers to do anything about it. Kelly mentioned something about ROH, CMLL and New Japan all working together to present the best wrestling in the world.

That's fine in theory but when the action is just ok, I need WAY more in the way of connecting with the characters. Take Okimura for instance. Corino's explanation came down to "he wanted to be a big star in Mexico....and now he is!" Good for him. Now what does he do? That happens WAY too often around here and it's happening with so many people ROH brings in.

Addiction and Kamaitachi break up post match.

Here's the Cabinet, out of their outfits. Actually never mind as Caprice Coleman rips on ROH for giving them such a horrible gimmick. The announcers don't seem to care so Coleman says there are more of them than anyone knows.

We look at Dalton Castle challenging the Young Bucks to a World Tag Team Title match in the middle of an eight man elimination tag, which cost he and partner Colt Cabana their shot. Colt wasn't pleased.

Castle can't find the Boys but Cabana says they're not needed.

Colt Cabana/Dalton Castle vs. Keith Taylor/Shane Lee

It really does amaze me that Taylor and Lee's pants manage to stay up. Taylor and Castle get things going and that means an early chest

thrust. Cabana comes in and headscissors Lee down as we have to hear about the World Series. I'm still not over that yet Corino. Lee runs Castle over with a clothesline and we take a break. Back with Taylor dropping a huge leg but Dalton slips over for the tag anyway. Corino: "Shades of Ricky and Robert!" No Steve, it's not.

Everything breaks down and the big guys are dropkicked out to the floor, setting up a double strut instead of a double dive. Back in and Castle can't quite suplex Taylor due to a bad case of physics. Dalton kicks Colt in the face by mistake and the Pop Up Powerbomb into a middle rope splash gives Lee the pin at 10:54.

**Rating:** C+. Not bad at all here as Taylor and Lee are starting to become a bigger team instead of being just a glorified freak show. It really helps that they look completely different than most teams in ROH. What good is it to have so many versions of the same team or act? It's why I don't get why you have ACH and Lio Rush in the same promotion. Cabana vs. Castle is....I'm not sure what that's going to be actually.

Adam Cole is ready for all challengers.

TV Title: Adam Page vs. Bobby Fish

Fish is defending and has taped ribs so Page jumps him before the bell to take over. Kyle O'Reilly comes out to cheer his partner on and we take a break. Back with the champ still in trouble as Page bends the ribs around the ropes. Page loads up something off the apron but gets suplexed down onto the floor in a big crash. Back in and Page is thrown with another suplex, only to score with a shooting star off the apron for a big crash. We take a second break and come back with Page getting a near fall off a flip clothesline but a really quick kneebar retains Fish's title at 13:01.

**Rating:** C+. Another good match here though the ending was REALLY sudden and hurt things a little bit. I'm starting to get into Fish's title reign and I'm having a good time with Page too so I would have been fine with either one leaving as champion here. Also it was nice to not have a bunch of people interfering here, which happens way too often.

Post match Adam Cole comes out to call out O'Reilly but Jay Lethal comes out as well, leaving Cole surrounded by challengers to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. This was fine but I'm not sure what they're going to set up for Final Battle. The World Title is set and we'll get the two Tag Team Title (two and three man versions) matches but the rest of the card isn't the most clear, which isn't a good sign with two weeks to go. Good enough TV show this week though with the title match feeling important.

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# Ring of Honor TV – November 9, 2016: Almost Everything I Can't Stand About ROH

## Ring of Honor

Date: November 9, 2016

Location: Lowell Memorial Auditorium, Lowell, Massachusetts

Commentators: Steve Corino, Kevin Kelly

There's not a lot going on at the moment with the big story being Adam Cole vs. Kyle O'Reilly and a secondary story of the Six Man Tag

Team Title tournament. I mean, it's not like there are enough teams to run such a tournament and a bunch of the teams have been brought in but let's have it anyway. Let's get to it.

### Toru Yano vs. Michael Elgin

Yano is a GHC Heavyweight Tag Team Champion, which is the Tag Team Title of Pro Wrestling Noah, which is invading New Japan. So yes, we now have TWO Japanese promotions represented here in Ring of Honor and arguably in this one match. Yano, the comedy guy, bounces off Elgin a few times until Elgin shoulders him down with ease.

That means hiding in the corner and offering a left handed handshake. Elgin knocks him outside but misses a charge into the steps. Yano uses the distraction to cut off a turnbuckle pad and smash Elgin in the back (it's a big CUSHIONED PAD but Elgin sells it anyway) as we take a break. Back with Yano pulling on Elgin's beard but getting caught in a falcon arrow for two. An atomic drop puts Yano down but for some reason Elgin can't follow up.

Instead he gets the wire cutters and unhooks another pad, which he uses to hit Yano in the face. See, that first one just wasn't good enough. A buckle bomb is countered and Elgin is catapulted into the buckle, only to have Yano blocking a signature low blow. Yano hits it a few seconds later and rolls Elgin up for two. The Elgin Bomb finally finishes Yano at 11:23.

**Rating:** D+. Do you know why this match took place? Back in the G1 Climax Tournament, Yano defeated Elgin and cost him a spot at the top of his block. So to translate: we're watching a match in November because of a match in a Japanese tournament back in August. Oh and it was comedy. As in the Santino style of comedy: do the same spots every single time because they're OH SO FUNNY. Like I've said: this place is New Japan's dumping ground and I'm getting sick of it. Video on Dragon Lee, a visiting wrestler from CMLL.

We look at the Bullet Club going after ReDRagon and specifically Bobby Fish's TV Title. Fish thinks Page is in way over his head.

### Bobby Fish vs. Dragon Lee

This is a Proving Ground match, meaning if Lee wins or goes to a time limit draw, he'll get a title shot within thirty days. Oh and Lee is the CMLL World Lightweight Champion because we don't have enough belts floating around. Fish had bad ribs coming in so Lee goes after the arm to start.

An armdrag and a hurricanrana make the ribs even worse (makes sense) and Lee suicide dives him into the barricade to take us to a break. Back with a release German suplex making the ribs even worse. A brainbuster gets two on Fish and we hit an STF to stay on the ribs. You can't say Lee isn't wrestling a smart match. Back up and Lee dropkicks the knee, setting up la majistral for the pin at 9:22.

**Rating:** C. This was a squash as Fish never had any offense and got pinned clean. I get the rib injury thing but they couldn't do a countout here? Or even the rare referee stoppage? Or, I don't know, NOT DO THIS MATCH??? This really isn't doing anything for the reputation that Ring of Honor has of making its own wrestlers look bad against visiting wrestlers. But hey, CMLL looks good and that's what matters.

Matt Taven says the countdown is on for the end of the Bullet Club. Recap of the Six Man Tag Team Title tournament.

### Six Man Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Kingdom vs. Bullet Club

This is the return of the Kingdom, now comprised of Matt Taven, T.K. O'Ryan and Vinny Marseglia. The Club here is Adam Cole and the Young Bucks so at least they're bringing out the big names. It's a brawl to start and the Kingdom actually cleans house early on as we take an early break.

Back with the Club taking over and hitting triple dives. Vinny gets caught in a camel clutch while the Bucks run the ropes, only to have them stop and kiss Cole on the cheek. Things settle down with Vinny fighting off Nick before handing it off to Taven. The Jacksons come right back with Matt kicking the Kingdom down as we take another break. Back again with the Bucks still in control via a slingshot X

Factor on...whichever that one is as we're basically just supposed to know who the other members of the Kingdom are (it was Ryan in case it means that much to you).

We get the Taven vs. Cole showdown that no one was waiting on with Cole starting in on the leg. The Canadian Destroyer is botched so badly that it turns into a sunset flip, leaving the Bucks to fire off a bunch of superkicks. The second attempt at the Destroyer results in Cole landing on his back and Taven's head going into his ribs. A double Meltzer Driver is broken up and that means a double low blow. Vinny drops a Swanton Bomb on Nick for the pin at 13:56.

**Rating:** C-. Well that happened. I'm glad the Club won't be dominating all the titles in an NWO style angle but the Kingdom might be the least interesting stable this side of the Cabinet. Simple questions: who are T.K. and Vinny and why in the world should I care about them? The announcers said they knew who they were and the match was going from there. How does that help viewers at home? It doesn't help that the match was pretty lifeless with the Destroyers both looking horrible.

**Overall Rating:** D+. Let me get the important part out of the way: the wrestling here was fine. It wasn't great or memorable but it was certainly watchable. You had three matches and the action was acceptable. The Proving Ground match was easily the best and told a simple story, despite a questionable ending.

Unfortunately, that's about all the positives there are for this show. This episode was almost every major problem Ring of Honor has rolled into one. We had stories that have nothing to do with ROH, a champion losing clean to someone who is just here on a visit and a completely lifeless main event for titles that don't need to exist. This was an episode you didn't need to see as the only thing of note was a first round tournament match with two unknowns joining the weak link in a former midcard stable that isn't that interesting without Maria around. I need a story to invest in and this show didn't have one all night.

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# Ring of Honor TV – November 2, 2016: It's All The Rage In Japan

## Ring of Honor

Date: November 2, 2016

Location: Lowell Memorial Auditorium, Lowell, Massachusetts

Commentators: Steve Corino, Kevin Kelly

We're still in Lowell and things are slowly starting to get ready for Final Battle. Kyle O'Reilly is probably on his way through the Bullet Club to get to Adam Cole and that's likely going to include a tag match with Cole and Adam Page against ReDRagon, which has the potential to be a lot of fun. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of ReDRagon vs. the Adam's.

Opening sequence.

### Donovan Dijak vs. Danny Miles

The fans know this is going to hurt. Dijak kicks the handshake away and mauls Miles into the corner with forearms. The chokebreaker and back to back to back Feast Your Eyes wrap this up at 2:17.

Prince Nana says DiJak will never quit.

We look at the Motor City Machine Guns brawling with the Bullet Club after last week's show went off the air.

The Briscoes are ready for the Addiction.

#### Briscoe Brothers vs. Addiction

Actually hang on a second as the Addiction is in street clothes. Frankie says they're too banged up from Ladder War to compete here before going into the Briscoes' legacy here in ROH. When Kazarian thinks about legacies, he thinks about Christopher Daniels, who has given everything he has to Ring of Honor and it's Kazarian's privilege to stand beside him and fight the wars with him. The Addiction leaves as I wonder what has lit a fire under them with these promos lately. I'm not a big Daniels fan but I'd love to see these speeches go somewhere.

The Briscoes say they didn't lace their boots up for nothing so let's get the Young Bucks out here right now for a World Tag Team Title shot.

#### Adam Page/Adam Cole vs. Briscoe Brothers

The Adam's are here because the Bucks are still banged up. The Briscoes fight off an early ambush and it's Page vs. Mark to start, only to have Cole jump Mark from behind. It's Page sending Mark into the corner as the villains take over early on. The announcers use the stomping time to talk about Cole's long list of challengers, which is one of the better uses of such time that you're going to see.

We come back from a break with Mark having to fight off the double teaming with an enziguri to Cole. The hot tag brings in Jay (who is oddly booed) for a hard clot and neckbreaker on Page. Jay loads up the Jay Driller on the champ but takes a World Title shot to the head for the DQ at 7:30.

**Rating:** D+. This didn't have time to go anywhere but I'm digging Page getting a push. He showed he can go in the feud with Jay Briscoe and it's not like you can ever have too much talent. The

Briscoes are one of those teams who can be fine no matter how many times they lose and I'm sure they'll get another Tag Team Title feud soon enough.

ReDRagon makes the save despite Fish barely being able to move due to bad ribs.

Matt Taven says the Kingdom debuts next week.

Jay Lethal thinks he'll get the World Title back in London.

We recap the Six Man Tag Team Title tournament so far.

Caprice Coleman says the Cabinet is ready to win the belts.

### Six Man Tag Team Title Tournament Semifinals: The Cabinet vs. ACH/Jay White/Kushida

This is for a spot in the finals, despite the other half of the bracket not even starting yet. The Cabinet does their protest of the handshake but jump the good guys, meaning it's time to stomp on White. We come back from a way too early break with White still in trouble until he kicks Coleman and Titus off the apron.

It's off to ACH (now Super ACH apparently, which I actually kind of dig) and everything speeds up in a hurry. The announcers talk about how this is more traditional in Japan, which is as close of an admittance to "we're doing it because New Japan did" as you're going to get. The Hoverboard Lock sends Coleman to the ropes for a hilarious "GET HIM OFF ME!" in a high pitched voice.

Coleman's arm gets worked on with a variety of wristlocks. King low bridges ACH to the floor as everything breaks down again. We come back from another break with King suplexing ACH for two as Corino thinks he and Kelly can get Nigel McGuinness to come out of retirement and win the belts.

ACH sends Coleman and Titus together and brings in Kushida to clean house. Everything breaks down and Titus gets triple teamed until Coleman and King have to save a pin. The Sky Splitter gets two on White and Kushida kicks King and Titus to the floor. A Rock Bottom plants Coleman and the Midnight Star gives ACH the pin at 21:07.

**Rating:** B-. I really can't stand this tournament, though the Cabinet being eliminated helps a lot. They're really not hiding the fact that these titles exist because New Japan has them and that doesn't do much for me as a fan. You have three guys thrown together against a team with a stupid gimmick and if you win three matches in a row you get titles? These things just exist and I need more than that to care.

**Overall Rating:** C. This show was kind of all over the place with the tournament eating up a bunch of time, a quick squash and a long segment involving the Briscoes. It's certainly not a bad episode but it basically comes down to your stance on the tournament. If you like that, you'll like this show. If you've grown sick of all things New Japan like I have solely because of ROH, this probably isn't your favorite show.

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# Ring of Honor TV – October 26, 2016: That One Thing

## Ring of Honor

Date: October 26, 2016

Location: Lowell Memorial Auditorium, Lowell, Massachusetts

Commentators: Steve Corino, Kevin Kelly

We're getting closer to Final Battle and the big story continues to be Adam Cole vs. Kyle O'Reilly. The main event is also suddenly featuring Silas Young after a win in the Honor Rumble for a little twist. On top of that though we have the Bullet Club running roughshod over the company and more titles coming with the Six Man Tag Team Title tournament. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Tempura Boys vs. Colt Cabana/Dalton Castle

Castle and Cabana are the new #1 contenders for the Tag Team Titles and the Tempura Boys are a team from New Japan. Yohei (I'm going to butcher the spelling) and Cabana start things off but a blind tag brings in Castle for a chest thrust. The comedy begins and it's off to Sho, who is quickly beaten down as well. Yohei kicks Castle in the face but can't put him down, meaning it's back to Sho. This continues to go badly for the Japanese contingent as Cabana gets two off a rollup. Castle throws Sho with a suplex and the Bang A Rang wraps up Yohei at 6:20.

**Rating:** C-. This was just a glorified squash to set up the makeshift team before they get to lose to the Young Bucks. It's kind of amazing how fast ROH has gone from having a deep tag division to throwing together a team to give them a title shot but that happens in almost every promotion at one time or another.

Back from a break with the Briscoes, who almost got into it with Cabana and Castle after their match. Mark doesn't understand why they're not getting the next title shot after beating the champions and the #1 contenders. Not that it matters as they want the title shot at Final Battle.

We get back and forth promos from Adam Cole and Jay Lethal to hype up their title match in London.

Kyle O'Reilly is ready for his shot at Final Battle (with a December 2 date confirmed) against whoever wins. O'Reilly has REALLY improved his promos but he's still needing work.

### Jonathan Gresham vs. Kyle O'Reilly

Feeling out process to start as they fight over a wristlock, allowing the announcers to talk about all the different styles in the promotion. True actually and that's a good thing. They fight out to the floor and get back in with a show of good sportsmanship.

That's rather cute. Gresham goes after the bad shoulder though and that's not cool with Kyle (no reason for it to not be), who fires off some kicks. A twist of the arm takes us to a break.

Back with Kyle working on the leg until Jonathan kicks him in the shoulder. I hope they don't try to make him out to be the heel in this match as there's a difference between being evil and being smart. Kyle takes off his kneepad but opts for a standing choke, setting up the brainbuster for the pin at 8:50.

**Rating:** C. I liked the idea of both guys being friendly but the match didn't do much for me. Kyle isn't the most interesting guy in the world without Cole there to fight but this was short enough and to the point to make him look good. Having that as the main event of Final Battle is risky though and I'm not sold on them being able to pull it off just yet.

Adam Page runs in to go after O'Reilly but Bobby Fish makes the save. This brings out Adam Cole and some chair shots to the ribs have Fish in major trouble. I'm sure a tag match will result and perhaps a TV Title match for Page.

Video on BJ Whitmer/Steve Corino/Kevin Sullivan/Punisher Martinez.

Punishment Martinez/BJ Whitmer vs. Will Ferrara/Cheeseburger

This is the result of Ferrara issuing a challenge. Sullivan sits in on commentary to make this even worse. Martinez throws Ferrara around like a monster throws around a jobber before it's off to Whitmer, who is in all white like Mark Lewin. Cheeseburger comes in for some palm strikes and a tornado DDT as Kelly and Sullivan keep going on about the father being gone. Martinez hits something like a middle rope Superman punch to put Cheeseburger away at 4:03.

**Rating:** D. OH MY GOODNESS LET IT GO ALREADY. This story is reaching WWC levels of sticking with one story and I haven't cared in a long time. They're not even hiding the fact that these are the same characters that were around years ago and Sullivan going on about whatever nonsense he's talking this week isn't interesting no matter what he does.

Sullivan whispers something to Corino, who runs down to the ring to get in Martinez and Whitmer's faces. Post break, Corino was nearly taken over by the golden spike but shook it off. So is he going to turn one day? That's what we're stuck waiting on now?

Video on Ladder War.

### Motor City Machine Guns vs. Los Ingobernables de Japon

The Guns are heavily banged up from Ladder War. Evil/Tetsuya Naito here with Evil starting against Sabin. The Japanese contingent tries some double teaming but is quickly taken outside for a double dive from the Guns. Back in and Shelley kicks Evil in the chest (keeping it simple is often a good idea) but Naito is right back in and sends Alex into the barricade. Things settle down with Naito taking over on Alex as Kevin Kelly compares Naito to Kevin Steen (Owens).

Corino: "Is that a bad thing?"

We take a break and come back with Shelley DDTing Naito, setting up the hot tag off to Sabin. Both Guns hit double high crossbodies as things speed way up. Evil gets in a clotheslines so Naito can roll Sabin up for two, followed by an STO to drop Shelley. The announcers ignore this match to talk about Kevin Sullivan as Naito destroys Sabin with Destino for the pin at 11:24.

**Rating:** C+. Kevin Sullivan commentary aside, I've seen far worse. I know I'm often annoyed at the New Japan guys winning most of the time but it makes sense when the Guns are so banged up from Ladder War. If Naito and Evil go after the ROH Tag Team Titles out of this then I'll be fine but odds are it goes nowhere, as is the case so often around here.

**Overall Rating:** C-. The Kevin Sullivan story is killing what could be an otherwise good show. However, the much bigger problem is the lack of a top story. Cole and the World Title is fine but I really don't think it's enough to carry the biggest show of the year. The shows are good enough for a one off week of wrestling TV but they need more of a card for Final Battle.

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