

Daily News Update – October 1, 2023

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WrestleDream 2023 Preview

So here we have WrestleDream, which is a show designed to honor the passing of Antonio Inoki one year ago. Therefore it's another AEW show with New Japan guest stars, though New Japan is running a big show of its own on the same day so the visiting stars are limited. There is some good stuff on the card though and hopefully that's enough to carry it. Let's get to it.

Zero Hour: Nick Wayne vs. Luchasaurus

This is a side story from Darby Allin vs. Christian Cage as both have interfered in the other feud. It's a speed vs. power match and that is something that can work under almost any circumstances. AEW really seems interested in pushing Wayne every chance they can these days but at some point he is going to need to win something. I'm just not sure he gets to do it here.

I'll go with Luchasaurus to win here as he's coming off the TNT Title reign and isn't likely to lose to someone with so little experience on this level. I'm sure Wayne will get a bunch of stuff in and get to showcase himself again but that doesn't mean he's going to win. Hopefully Wayne gets to throw

everything he has at Luchasaurus, but he'll fall short in the end.

Zero Hour: Trios Titles: Acclaimed/Billy Gunn(c) vs. TMDK

This is the first New Japan match on the show and in this case it was built up as "whoever wins the title match on Rampage defends against TMDK tomorrow night". That's not exactly a thrilling story but it's a way to get the titles on the show. Thankfully in this case it's just on Zero Hour, meaning it won't extend the show with a match that has very little in the way of drama.

Of course the champions retain here, as a group of guest stars aren't going to be the ones to end the reign that is bringing the Acclaimed and the Gunns back to prominence. The (arguably) good thing about these titles is you can throw any three challenges out there and have a title match. That's more or less what they've done here, though at least it's a regular team from New Japan.

Zero Hour: Claudio Castagnoli vs. Josh Barnett

So this was added the night before the show as the result of a Castagnoli open challenge. Barnett has never wrestled for AEW before but does have experience in Japan so here we are. That makes for a tricky preview because there isn't any kind of a story going into the match, and Barnett being a complete stranger around here makes it even more complicated.

Since Barnett is not likely to stick around, I'll go with Castagnoli to win as there isn't much of a reason to do anything else. Castagnoli needs a big win coming off his loss to Eddie Kingston and while this won't be some kind of a game changer for him, it should be enough to give him a boost. I'm not sure why this match needed to be added, though more Castagnoli is often a good thing.

Zero Hour: Shane Taylor/Lee Moriarty/Diamante/Mercedes

Martinez vs. Satoshi Kojima/Keith Lee/Athena/Billie Starkz

This is another match added during the Collision because MORE MEANS GOOD. There are a few people with some history here but a good chunk of it has been in Ring Of Honor. Taylor seems to be one of the new flavors of the month for AEW and it makes sense that they would want to get him out there in front of people as often as possible. Throw in Lee and this could be a lot worse.

Give me Lee and company to win, as Moriarty being thrown half a mile by Lee would be a good way to get the show going. Other than that, there is always the chance of Athena beating Martinez or Diamante. Either way, there are going to be a bunch of people in this match and there is a good chance that a lot of them are not going to be able to get in that much ring time.

TBS Title: Kris Statlander(c) vs. Julia Hart

Statlander has been a mostly dominant champion in her still relatively short title reign, but Hart has caught fire in recent weeks and suddenly feels like she could be a major threat to the title. The good thing here is that you are seeing two mostly fresh women in the title scene, which is what AEW has been needing for a very long time now. In other words, there isn't a bad option for a winner here.

I think I'll actually take Hart to win the title, as it would be very deflating for her to lose after the big push that she has gotten in the last few weeks. Granted that might have been just to make her feel like a threat, but the House of Black needs to get something back after losing the Trios Titles, so this would be a nice fit to help get them on track. I'm not sure what is next for Statlander, but I'm thinking she should lose here.

Ricky Starks vs. Wheeler Yuta

This was thrown onto the card earlier in the week as Yuta doesn't like how Starks has been going after Bryan Danielson. Starks has been on a roll as of late without winning much of anything, which leaves him in a weird place. Granted that is kind of why you put someone like Yuta in this spot as he could go a long way with making Starks look like a bigger deal after his losses.

I'll go with Starks to win here, as there is little reason for Yuta to win. His role in the Blackpool Combat Club is to put up a good fight in defeat and that is what he'll be doing here. Starks is red hot and for someone who keeps losing so giving him a win here would be the right way to go. They'll have a good match, but at the end of the day, Starks needs this way more than Yuta.

Young Bucks vs. The Gunns vs. Lucha Bros vs. Orange Cassidy/Hook

For a future AEW Tag Team Title shot, which sounds a bit like a Money In The Bank deal. We'll start with getting rid of Cassidy and Hook, who are a fun team, but I can't imagine they actually get put into the title picture so soon. That leaves a few options, and I could picture any of the three getting the shot. It's nice to have options here, and unfortunately none of them really stand out.

While the Bucks would be the interesting way to go, I'll take the Gunns getting the win here. FTR vs. the Lucha Bros doesn't sound like it would be the most engaging match and the Bucks vs. FTR has been done so many times now. Go with FTR vs. the Gunns, which does have a history but hasn't been hammered into the ground. This is going to be the "everyone flies all over the place" match and it should be entertaining enough. Just don't do the Money In The Bank deal, please.

AEW Tag Team Titles: FTR(c) vs. Aussie Open

This one is a little more interesting as I could see the

titles changing hands. Aussie Open has come a long way and established themselves as one of the better teams in AEW at the moment. That means they can be put into this spot for a shot at the best team around without much trouble. The teams have even traded some promos to hype things up even more and so far, they've done their jobs.

With that being said, for the life of me I can't imagine FTR losing the belts. They can have good to great matches with just about any team and it would feel like a waste to take away that option, especially with them frequenting Collision. The Aussies will give them one heck of a run for their money, but FTR comes out on top of this by retaining the titles, and that's the right choice.

Chris Jericho/Kenny Omega/Kota Ibushi vs. Konosuke Takeshita/Sammy Guevara/Will Ospreay

This is the Don Callis Family match, which has seen two feuds combined into one for the sake of taking away some of Callis' television time. Ignoring that aspect though, we should be in for a heck of a match here, especially if Ibushi is able to wrestle more like his old self than the version we have seen in AEW so far. Everything else should work well and I'm wanting to see how this goes.

After dominating for a good while, this should be the match where Callis and company can drop a match to the conquering heroes. Guevara taking a fall from Omega or even Jericho won't ruin him as they can get set up for another singles showdown in the future. Either way, this has the potential to steal the show and if they can get to that higher level, it very well may be the best thing on the show.

Ring Of Honor World Title/New Japan Strong Openweight Title: Eddie Kingston(c) vs. Katsuyori Shibata

It's a double title match with Shibata's ROH Pure Title not on the line, meaning commentary has said that Shibata can become

a triple crown champion. At least Shibata is someone who has wrestled in Ring Of Honor more than once, as there is far too much of a tendency for random people to get title shots (like earlier in the show or example). Shibata is also someone Kingston is going to respect so there is a real chance he'll bring the work here.

As for a winner, much like the Trios Titles, there isn't much of a reason to believe the title is going to change hands, especially so soon after Kingston won the ROH title in the first place. Kingston needs to rack up some wins to make him feel like a bigger deal and this would be a nice addition. It should be a hard hitting match as well and that should take them far enough, but yeah Kingston retains.

Ring Of Honor Tag Team Titles: Maxwell Jacob Friedman(c) vs. Righteous

So this was supposed to be a tag match with Adam Cole included but he's basically destroyed his ankle, leaving us with a handicap match instead. That puts them in a tough spot and again I'm not sure where this is going to go. On one hand, MJF doesn't need to have the titles anymore if Cole is injured, but the titles changing hands would involve the Righteous beating the AEW World Champion.

As little sense as it might make, I'll go with MJF retaining, as I can't imagine either Vincent or Dutch pinning him or making him give up. There is always the chance of some kind of screwy finish and that is probably coming later, but it is still hard to fathom that anyone but the Kingdom is taking the titles from Cole and MJF. Or is it just MJF these days? Either way, the Righteous don't win here.

Hangman Page vs. Swerve Strickland

This is the match that has felt the most interesting throughout the build to the show and the contract signing this week kept that interest high. Both guys need a big win and

they have me wanting to see them fight, which is a great sign for one of them. Hopefully the loser isn't going to be hurt that badly but there is a good chance that this is going to continue beyond this match.

Give me Swerve here, as a Page win would seem to wrap things up between them with a tighter bow. As much as Page could use a win, he's had success before and is a much more accomplished star in AEW. Let Swerve get his win and move up the card a bit, as a win over a former World Champion is going to do a lot of good no matter what. Page should be fine, but either way, this match should rock.

Bryan Danielson vs. Zack Sabre Jr.

What we have here is the kind of match that sells itself on name value alone. The idea of Danielson vs. Sabre Jr. is going to get hardcore fans interested and there is a very real chance that they could live up to or even exceed their expectations. That might be a very hard task to pull off, but these are the kind of stars who might be able to pull that kind of a miracle off.

As has been a trend here, there isn't much of a reason for the star who is going to be going away after this show winning, so I'll take Danielson to win here. Yes he did it in a pay per view main event against a guest star this year and that should cover him for well over a year, but I can't imagine Sabre winning here. Danielson has things to do in AEW and downgrading him (as much as that can be done) with a loss to a one off guest star doesn't make sense.

TNT Title: Christian Cage(c) vs. Darby Allin

This is the rumored main event for the show and with Allin as the hometown boy in a 2/3 falls match, that is not the worst idea. These two had a rather nice match a month or so ago on Collision and if they do that again with more time and on a bigger stage, we should be in for a pretty solid main event.

That leaves a pair of questions though and I think I have the answer to at least one.

Of course I'll take Allin winning here, as otherwise it would run a real threat of killing Seattle for AEW. Allin winning is the perfect way to go and it would be a great moment to end things on. Then again, there is also the chance that we get an Edge debut here to do something with Cage, though hopefully that doesn't include giving him an assist to keep the title. Allin wins here, as he should.

Overall Thoughts

That's a lot of matches. Once I get to the end of the card, I've already forgot a good few of the matches involved as there are too many for the show's own good. Then again that is the case with almost every AEW show, which makes it all the more frustrating. The action will be rather good as it almost always is, but the way the show is presented is such a self imposed roadblock. It still feels like a B show, but now it feels like a rather bloated B show.

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Collision – September 30, 2023: They Needed A Show Like This One

Collision

Date: September 30, 2023

Location: Climate Pledge Arena, Seattle, Washington

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

It's the go home show for WrestleDream and that should make for a pretty big show. Collision has been in a weird place in recent months but maybe they can do better with some focus. The main event is another all star eight person tag, which might be their norm for go home shows. Let's get to it.

[Here is Dynamite if you need a recap.](#)

Big Bill, Aussie Open, Ricky Starks, Wheeler Yuta, Bryan Danielson and FTR are ready to fight.

Opening sequence.

Andrade El Idolo vs. Juice Robinson

The Gunns are here with Robinson. They go right at it to start but Andrade can't get the Figure Four. Robinson bails to the floor but Andrade throws him back inside for Three Amigos. A moonsault to the floor takes out all three villains but Robinson manages to send Andrade into the announcers' table. The Gunns get in some stomping behind the referee's back, allowing Robinson to hit a neckbreaker for two.

Robinson elbows him down again but Andrade is back up with some right hands in the corner. That earns him a drop onto the

buckle and a Cannonball as we take a break. Back with Andrade fighting out of a chinlock and dropping Robinson. The double moonsault hits raised knees but Andrade is fine enough to send him face first into the buckle.

For some reason the referee breaks up the running knees in the corner, allowing Robinson to hit the big left. A layout powerbomb gives Robinson two but Andrade hiptosses him hard into the corner. The running knees connect this time but the Gunns try to interfere again. This time they're caught immediately though and it's a double ejection. Andrade hits the spinning elbow for two and the hammerlock DDT finishes Robinson at 13:25.

Rating: B. The resurrection of Andrade has been one of the great things about Collision, as he has gone from just someone on the roster without much going on to having a string of pretty awesome matches around here. I'm not sure if he's just looking to get WWE's attention the second his contract is up, but he's been a gem around here.

Chris Jericho and Kenny Omega are excited to team together, even though they don't like each other. They'll have their backs tonight and tomorrow when they face the Don Callis Family.

We get more of the Toni Storm: Portrait Of A Star promo, with Storm insisting that she's good to talk right now. Storm says her peak is right now but she misses the old days where a pie in the ace was good enough (I'm not sure if that's a reference to why she left WWE but if it is...it's a weird one). She accuses the interviewer of coming on to her by holding her hand (which she grabbed) and asks if she's good enough for him.

The Kingdom vs. Best Friends

The fight starts before the bell with the threat of stereo piledrivers sending the Kingdom bailing to the floor. Trent

chops at Bennett to start and it's off to Chuck for a belly to back suplex. Taven comes in with a missile dropkick to Trent and everything breaks down, with Trent hitting a slingshot dive to Taven. Bennett avoids a charge though and sends Bennett into the barricade.

Trent is sent into a chair and we take a break. Back with Trent coming in to clean house until Taven gets in a shot to the back of the head. Just The Tip gets two on Trent as everything breaks down again. Trent hits a Death Valley Driver to sent Bennett into the steps and a Doomsday knee connects back inside. Rather than cover, we get the Big Hug, followed by the stereo piledrivers...for two on Bennett. With the referee distracted, Bennett punches them both low and a spike piledriver finishes Trent at 9:27.

Rating: C. And that's the AEW style for you, as dropping someone on his head on the steps, hitting a top rope knee on him and then giving him a piledriver in about a minute gets two. The Death Valley Driver could have been pulled out from the match and it would have only lost an 000, but that's just what happens in AEW. Granted the Best Friends losing makes things a bit better, but I really wish someone could get rid of those ridiculous kickouts after big sequences of moves.

Post math the Kingdom pulls out their suitcases because they're on their way back to Roderick Strong's bedside.

Don Callis and Prince Nana are found talking in the back. Callis walks away and Nana talks about digging deep into the universe and finding something unique. He implies a big payday if the Gates Of Agony beat Chris Jericho and Kenny Omega.

Julia Hart has a creepy vignette involving masks hanging from strings and promising to end Kris Statlander.

Julia Hart vs. Vertvixen

Hart forearm her down to start and chokes on the rope a bit.

A flipping elbow in the corner hits Vertvixen again but Hart misses a charge. Not that it matters as a kick to the chest and the moonsault finish Vertvixen at 2:45. Just a quick win before the title match tomorrow.

Post match Hart calls out Kris Statlander for right now so here she is. Then Hart backs off, leaving Statlander to say Hart's time is up at WrestleDream.

Claudio Castagnoli has issued a challenge for WrestleDream and Josh Barnett answered.

Chris Jericho/Kenny Omega vs. Gates Of Agony

Toa headbutts Jericho into the corner to start and Kaun nails him with a clothesline for two. A kick to the face gets Jericho out of trouble though and it's Omega...well not coming in actually as he rams Toa's head into the buckle from the apron a bunch of times. Then he comes in with a high crossbody and joins with Jericho for a double suplex (they look at each other in shock that they seem to work well together in a funny moment).

Prince Nana offers a distraction though and Toa knocks Omega into Jericho for a crash out to the floor. That leaves Kaun to suplex Omega for two, followed by a Backstabber into a running elbow in the corner. We take a break and come back with Omega managing a hurricanrana to Kaun, allowing the tag to Jericho. A top rope elbow puts Kaun down and the Lionsault connects. The Walls are broken up though and a gutbuster gives Kaun two on Jericho. Omega makes the save and now the Walls can make Kaun tap at 11:49.

Rating: B-. This was more of a cool moment than anything else, but Jericho and Omega do feel like something of a dream team. I could go for them being in the big match on their own without Kota Ibushi but at least we got to see them on their own once. Good match here, and it's not like the Gates have much of a status to lose.

Post match Omega and Jericho say this is about Don Callis. Omega has seen the light and it is going to take more than a vicious attack for him to turn his back on his friends. Ibushi takes that kind of an attack as an invitation. Jericho is ready for Sammy Guevara and quotes Judas to prove it. Vengeance is promised to wrap up a promo that went a bit long.

Video on the Righteous.

Video on Darby Allin vs. Christian Cage, with Allin suggesting that the match will be the main event of WrestleDream.

Righteous vs. Judas Icarus/Travis Williams

Williams gets beaten up to start so it's quickly off to Icarus. Dutch chops him down and adds one to Williams on the apron as well. Autumn Sunshine finishes Icarus at 1:52.

Post match Vincent tells Dutch to look at all the paper people in the crowd. They'll win the ROH Tag Team Titles at WrestleDream and leave the Devil on one hoof, like his partner. Dutch whips out a block of wood and they crush Icarus' ankles.

Video on Eddie Kingston vs. Katsuyori Shibata.

WrestleDream rundown.

TMDK is ready to win the Trios Titles but the Acclaimed and Billy Gunn interrupt. Shane Haste wants to do his own right and it's not so good.

Bryan Danielson/FTR/Wheeler Yuta vs. Aussie Open/Ricky Starks/Big Bill

Zack Sabre Jr. is on commentary. Starks bails from Yuta to start so Fletcher comes in instead. Yuta and Fletcher take turns working on the arms until Yuta scores with a dropkick. Harwood comes in and gets to face Davis for a bit of a power showdown. Everything breaks down and it's a big staredown on

the floor. Back with Harwood suplexing Fletcher and flipping over to Cash for the tag.

House is cleaned until Cash and Fletcher take turns escaping suplexes. It's back to Yuta for a top rope forearm, followed by a bridging German suplex for two on Fletcher. Yuta's elbows rock Starks but Bill offers a distraction to break them up. A big boot puts Yuta in more trouble and Starks drops an elbow for two. The seated abdominal stretch keeps Yuta down until he can hiptoss his way to freedom. The Aussies come in for a toss sitout powerbomb and we take another break.

Back again with Yuta and Starks down but Yuta makes it over for the tag back to Danielson. The strikes in the corner have Starks falling down rather quickly, but he's back up to miss a spear. Danielson scores with the suicide dive into a missile dropkick. Starks clotheslines his way out of trouble and the tornado DDT puts Danielson down. Bill comes in but the chokeslam is countered into the LeBell Lock.

Everything breaks down and the villains are left on their knees for a long series of YES Kicks. A missile dropkick into a top rope headbutt gets two on Bill but all of his partners make a save. The fight heads to the floor and Danielson is sent into the steps, leaving Bill to miss a charge into the post. The Sharpshooter is blocked and Starks spears Harwood for the pin at 19:39.

Rating: B. This is an idea that has worked forever in wrestling and it worked well here too. They tied a bunch of pay per view matches together into one here, with commentary even adding in another, and that makes for a very efficient use of time. It also lets you get some cool pairings you might not see very often and the action was still quite good. This was a smart idea and it wound up working very well.

Post match the big brawl is on until Zack Sabre Jr. stands up. He comes into the ring for the staredown with Danielson before

slapping him in the face. Danielson slaps him back and tries the LeBell Lock but Sabre Jr. bails to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Once we got past the opening matches, which had nothing to do with WrestleDream, this turned into a pretty by the book go home show. In this case, that's the best thing they could have done as they made me a bit more interested in a show that hadn't given me much reason to care coming in. WrestleDream should be good, but as usual, the build hasn't been much until the very last minute. Strong show here, and it's the one they needed.

Results

Andrade El Idolo b. Juice Robinson – Hammerlock DDT

The Kingdom b. Best Friends – Spike piledriver to Taylor

Julia Hart b. Vertfixen – Moonsault

Chris Jericho/Kenny Omega b. Gates Of Agony – Walls Of Jericho to Kaun

Righteous b. Judas Icarus/Travis Williams – Autumn Sunshine to Icarus

Ricky Starks/Big Bill/Aussie Open b. Wheeler Yuta/Bryan Danielson/FTR – Spear to Harwood

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NXT No Mercy 2023: Takeover Lite

No Mercy 2023

Date: September 30, 2023

Location: Mechanics Bank Arena, Bakersfield, California

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Booker T.

NXT is back on the road this week and the card is looking rather stacked. The two big matches this time around will see Becky Lynch defending the Women's Title against Tiffany Stratton in an Extreme Rules match, plus Ilja Dragunov challenging Carmelo Hayes for the NXT Title. That should be enough to make this work so let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Kelani Jordan vs. Blair Davenport

Davenport grabs a headlock to start but Jordan snaps off a hurricanrana into a dropkick. Back up and Davenport grabs a slam and we hit a reverse chinlock. A Boston crab sends Jordan over to the ropes but she's back up with the forearms to really wake up the crowd. Jordan grabs a springboard cutter for a double knockdown and an elbow puts Davenport down again. A sleeper has Davenport in more trouble but a ram into the corner breaks it up. Jordan's split legged moonsault hits raised knees, allowing Davenport to hit a middle rope double stomp to the back. Something close to a Falcon Arrow finishes for Davenport at 6:35.

Rating: C. This was a nice showcase for Jordan, but the only way she was going to pull this off was with Gigi Dolin interfering. Jordan is someone who has potential to go somewhere once she gets some experience and develops a bit but we're a long way from there. Davenport is still one of the

bigger villains in the division, but she needs to get into a bigger feud sooner or later.

Post match Gigi Dolin runs in to go after Davenport.

The opening video sees someone putting a No Mercy cartridge into an N64 and a modernized version of the game's intro. We get a character select screen (Complete with a dig diggity dig, dig diggity dog!) and most of the matches are selected and shown on the match screens ala the original game. This was AMAZING.

Bron Breaker vs. Baron Corbin

Breaker comes out with a dog head costume on for something that might have sounded better on paper. Corbin on the other hand comes out on a motorcycle. Breaker hits the big running flip dive to the floor and the brawl is on before the bell. They fight into the crowd with Corbin getting the better of things until Breaker knocks him back to ringside.

We pause for Breaker to beat up some cameramen, allowing Corbin to get in a few shots of his own. Corbin's backslash hits the announcers' table by mistake though and they finally go inside. The bell rings and Breaker hammers away as we have no commentary for some reason. Corbin hits a middle rope clothesline and some forearms on the mat as they're going with the slugout. Breaker powers him into the corner though and runs the corner for the super hurricanrana.

The gorilla press powerslam gets two but Corbin tells him to bring it and hammers away. The Recliner sends Corbin over to the ropes and he's back with Deep Six for two. They slug it out again until Breaker hits a hard clothesline. The fight heads outside again and Corbin sends him through the announcers' table to quite the positive response. Breaker pops back up with a spear and they head back inside...where Mr. Stone pops up for a distraction. That's enough for Corbin to grab the End of Days for the pin at 9:35.

Rating: B. That was certainly an odd way to go, as I wouldn't have bet on Breaker losing here. Then again I wouldn't have bet on Corbin being treated as a good guy pretty much ever in WWE. As for the match, this was about two big, strong people hitting each other really hard until one of them couldn't get up anymore. Granted it took some assistance for Corbin to put him away, but it was a heck of a fight.

Carmelo Hayes and Trick Williams want to leave with their own titles tonight.

North American Title: Dominik Mysterio vs. Trick Williams

Mysterio is defending and Dragon Lee is guest referee. A dropkick before the bell gives Mysterio a fast two so it's already time to yell at Lee. Williams follows him to the floor and throws him back inside as the fans want Mami. Back in and Mysterio kicks the rope for a low blow, followed by a dropkick to send Williams outside again. The chinlock doesn't last long back inside so Mysterio snaps Williams throat first across the top.

Williams fights up though and a double clothesline leaves them both down. Mysterio hits the 619 but a superkick hits Lee by mistake. A neckbreaker drops Williams as another referee runs in for the near fall. Back up and Mysterio hits the other referee as well, followed by a crossbody to take Williams outside. Williams gets posted but avoids the frog splash, setting up a knee to drive the belt into Mysterio's face. Lee counts the pin to give Williams the title at 9:40.

Rating: C+. This was one of those matches with all kinds of things going on, which will likely set up a rematch. What matters is giving Williams the big push as he has seemed to be ready for the chance. It's an interesting way to go and now we get to see what he can do with the chance. Good for them for trying something with someone new, though I'm surprised that Mysterio lost here instead of on Raw.

We look at the dinner to set up the four way Tag Team Title match.

Joe Gacy tells Ava that the Schism is done and now he has to find his own way.

Tag Team Titles: Tony D'Angelo/Stacks vs. Bronco Nima/Lucien Price vs. Creed Brothers vs. Humberto Carrillo/Angel Garza

D'Angelo and Stacks are defending and it's one fall to a finish. Scripts is here with Nima and Price, who come to the ring on a bicycle and tricycle. The champs have a bunch of the family here for the entrance and we're ready to go. They waste no time in going to the big brawl and commentary is already feeling sorry for the referee. Brutus hits the big dive to the floor to take some people out, only to get chopped back inside.

D'Angelo comes in and gets chopped by Garza and Carrillo but we pause as D'Angelo's knee gives out. It's off to Stacks for a running uppercut as D'Angelo is taken out. Stacks gets dropped by a high/low and a Gory Bomb/slingshot flipping cutter combination gives Carrillo two. Price comes in for a chinlock but Stacks fights up and gets over to Brutus for the tag. Brutus cleans house and ankle locks Garza as Julius suplexes everyone in sight.

Carrillo makes the save and we get the big staredown as D'Angelo comes back to the ring. The Creeds and the champs take the other four up top for a quadruple superplex and everyone is down again. Nima and Price are back up to clean house again and a power up powerslam gets two on D'Angelo. Garza and Carrillo are back in with some dropkicks but Brutus sends them to the floor for the springboard Brutus Ball. That leaves Price to get caught in Bada Boom Bada Bing to retain the titles at 12:05.

Rating: B-. This was fun as they had everyone get in there and go nuts at various times, with D'Angelo coming back in for the

big moment later on making a cool moment. You also had the Creeds getting to show just how awesome they can be and it was all over the place for about twelve minutes. It was a bit messy for the most part, but that's exactly how it should have gone.

We see the vignette from NXT of someone watching the Cincinnati Bengals and WCW, but he also watches various second generation wrestlers.

Carmelo Hayes is VERY proud of Trick Williams.

We recap Butch winning the Global Heritage Invitational to earn a Heritage Cup shot.

Heritage Cup: Butch vs. Noam Dar

Butch, with Tyler Bate, is challenging and Meta Four is here with Dar. Round one begins with the two of them going to the mat but neither can get much of an advantage. Back up and Dar doesn't seem overly confident, with Butch pulling him down by the arm to make it worse. Butch cranks on the fingers and arm until the round ends, but Dar gets in a cheap shot after the bell.

Round two begins with Dar going after the arm and firing off a kick to the chest. Butch isn't having that and scores with his own kicks in the corner. Another shot to the arm cuts Dar down again and Butch hits the ten forearms to the chest. The Meta Four offer a distraction though, allowing Oro Mensah to get in a cheap shot. Dar steals the pin and the fall at 2:30 of the round and 6:30 overall.

Round three begins with Dar hammering away but Butch backflips out of a German suplex attempt. Dar rolls to the floor so Butch moonsaults down onto him for the big crash. Back in and Dar kicks another moonsault out of the air but the Nova Roller misses. Butch hits the Bitter End for the pin to tie it up at 1:58 of the round and 9:10 overall.

Round four opens with Butch going after the arm and grabbing the cross armbreaker. That's reversed into a triangle choke but Butch stacks it up for two and the break. Dar gets in another shot of his own, only to get pulled into Butch's triangle choke. The clock runs out though and Dar survives without tapping.

Round five begins with both of them banged up but Butch unloads with chops to take over. The Bitter End is broken up and Dar hits him in the face for two. Butch catches him up top with a superplex and another near fall. Dar heads to the apron and grabs a brainbuster for a heck of a near fall and the fans get back into it. Butch snaps the finger as the round ends.

Round six (the final round) begins with Butch striking away but Mensah offers a distraction. The Nova Roller gives Dar two as Bate goes after the Meta Four. Butch hits a Tyler Driver 97 for two of his own but Dar pulls him into the kneebar. That's reversed into the Bitter End for another near fall so the cross armbreaker goes on. Cue Gallus to go after Bate, allowing Joe Coffey to come in and hit Butch with All The Best For The Belles. Dar retains at 2:34 of the round and 18:51 overall.

Rating: B-. The action was good but egads we just spent a month on a tournament to find Dar, who has been champion for the better part of ever, a new challenger and never mind, as Dar retains anyway. He's good at what he does but it's ok to let him drop the title for a bit. The action was high quality as you would expect, but it's really hard to stay interested in Dar's title reign continuing.

We recap Ilja Dragunov vs. Carmelo Hayes for the NXT Title. Hayes retained over Dragunov at the Great American Bash but Trick Williams used a chair. Now Hayes needs to know he can win on his own.

NXT Title: Ilja Dragunov vs. Carmelo Hayes

Hayes is defending and has a special entrance with banners falling, featuring the name of everyone he's beaten to retain the title. After the Big Match Intros, Dragunov sends him into the corner and strikes away to take over fast. Hayes gets in a few shots of his own but the springboard elbow misses. Instead Dragunov scores with the 61Line for the knockdown, setting up a backslash for two.

Dragunov grabs a front facelock to keep Hayes in trouble, with a knee to the head knocking him silly again. The strike off goes to Dragunov but Hayes sends him into the corner and unloads with chops. Hayes knocks him down again but can't follow up, meaning it's time for a breather. Back up and they trade more strikes until Hayes nails a step up enziguri to drop Dragunov again.

A springboard bulldog (originally a DDT but Hayes changed it in mid-air after realizing it wasn't going to work for a nice save) gives Hayes two but Dragunov is back up with some rolling German suplexes. The Constantine Special misses for Dragunov and Hayes grabs a spinning faceplant for two. Hayes unloads with stomps to the head until Dragunov slips out and hits a running knee.

Dragunov scores with a powerbomb and loads up Coast To Coast. Hayes tries to Codebreaker him out of the air but leaves it a bit short, allowing Dragunov to Death Valley Driver him into the corner. Now the Coast To Coast can connect for two and an H Bomb gets two more.

The middle rope H Bomb gives Dragunov another near fall and he's stunned off the kickout. Torpedo Moscow cut off with a superkick to give Hayes a breather and they head to the apron. Hayes cutters him to the floor for the big crash and they head back inside, where Dragunov knocks him out of the air. A super H Bomb gives Dragunov the pin and the title at 21:07.

Rating: A-. This one pretty much blew their first match away

and was two guys beating the fire out of each other. Dragunov is the more rugged brawler who dominated Hayes to start but Hayes eventually got into it with the speed and athleticism. It was a heck of a match, probably Hayes' best ever, but it was time for Dragunov to get the big win.

Respect is shown post match.

Video on the Women's Breakout Tournament.

We recap Tiffany Stratton challenging Becky Lynch for the Women's Title. Lynch took the title from her but Stratton kept attacking the new champ. As a result, it's Extreme Rules for the title.

Women's Title: Becky Lynch vs. Tiffany Stratton

Lynch is defending and this is Extreme Rules. We get a look back at Lynch's NXT career before she comes out with a shopping cart of weapons. They fight into the crowd (featuring a heck of a No Mercy sign modeled after the N64 game with modern stars) with Lynch getting the better of things until a forearm to the face slows her down. Lynch hits her with some kind of a necklace (from a fan) and Stratton is knocked back down the steps.

They get back to ringside where Stratton kendo sticks her down to take over. A basement dropkick gets two for Stratton so she grabs the toolbox. Stratton whips out a rather large wrench before switching to a hammer. Both of them miss a big swing and the hammer falls out to the floor. Stratton grabs a sidewalk slam for two but Lynch sends her into the corner. The Bexploder lets Lynch go up top for a missile dropkick and Stratton rolls outside. That's fine with Lynch, who puts her in the shopping cart for a ram into the steps.

Back in and Lynch pours out a bunch of Barbies, with Stratton being dropped onto them for two. Stratton is back up with one heck of a trashcan lid shot to the head, followed by a non-lid

shot to the ribs. A spinebuster onto the trashcan gives Stratton two but she takes a long time throwing in a bunch of chairs. Lynch fights back but gets powerbombed onto the steps. That doesn't seem to matter very much as Lynch fights up and grabs a table, only to get knocked down again.

Stratton manages to lose Lynch as she sets up the table though, allowing Lynch to spray her with a fire extinguisher. Lynch whips out a barbed wire baseball bat but drops it before she can, uh, kill her. Stratton manages a hurricanrana and a double handspring elbow sends Lynch through the barricade.

With Lynch on the table, Stratton hits a Swanton to...actually not break the table in a nasty looking landing. Another Swanton connects for two back inside so Lynch rolls outside, only to miss a moonsault. The Manhandle Slam on the floor plants Stratton for two and Lynch is rather shocked. Stratton Regal rolls her onto the chairs but misses the Prettiest Moonsault Ever. The Manhandle Slam onto the chairs retains Lynch's title at 20:20.

Rating: A-. Well that was awesome, as they beat the absolute fire out of each other. Stratton is so far beyond what she should be able to do at this level of experience and it's not like losing to Lynch is some career killer. Lynch might not be what she was before but she can still more than bring it on the big stage. Great match here and one of Lynch's best in a long time.

Lynch knows she was in a war.

Carmelo Hayes apologizes to Trick Williams for not getting to be double champs. Williams hugs him to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. Those last two matches more than carried the show and made it more than worth a look. The opener was good too and the rest of the matches were good enough. This felt like it was following the old Takeover formula and while it wasn't quite up to that level, the two main events were

both great and this was a heck of a show. NXT has absolutely found itself and if they can keep that going, Halloween Havoc and Deadline should both be rather awesome.

Results

Blair Davenport b. Kelani Jordan – Falcon Arrow

Baron Corbin b. Bron Breakker – End Of Days

Trick Williams b. Dominik Mysterio – Jumping knee into the title belt to the face

Tony D'Angelo/Stacks b. Bronco Nima/Lucien Price, Creed Brothers and Humberto Carrillo/Angel Garza – Bada Boom Bada Bing to Price

Noam Dar b. Butch 2-1

Ilja Dragunov b. Carmelo Hayes – Super H Bomb

Becky Lynch b. Tiffany Stratton – Manhandle Slam onto a pile of chairs

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Rampage – September 29, 2023: The Stuff In The Sandwich That You Can Pick Off

Rampage

Date: September 29, 2023

Location: 1stBank Center, Broomfield, Colorado

Commentators: Excalibur, Taz

It's the last Rampage before WrestleDream and I'm not sure how much of a difference that is going to make. Rampage can be all over the place when it comes to importance, but there is a good chance that the wrestling itself will be pretty high quality. That should make for an easy show so let's get to it.

[Here is Dynamite if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

Trios Titles: Billy Gunn/Acclaimed vs. Hardys/Brother Zay

Gunn and the Acclaimed are defending in ANOTHER open challenge. Zay and Owens starts things off with an exchange of armdrags until Zay grabs a headscissors (and thrusts his hips into the mat). Owens is right back with a kick to the ribs into the running Fameasser for quite the crash. Zay manages to send Owens to the floor so it's off to Jeff to beat up Caster. Matt and Billy come in for a SUCK IT vs. DELETE off until Gunn is sent into the corner over and over.

It's back to Jeff for the step up splash in the corner but everything breaks down. The champs clear out the Hardys and Scissor Me Timbers gets two on Zay. We take a break and come back with Caster hitting a dropkick on Zay, followed by a bit of a dance. Gunn comes back in to miss a Stinger Splash, leaving both he and Zay down. The double tag brings in Jeff

and Bowens, with the former grabbing a rollup.

The Whisper In The Wind hits the Acclaimed and it's the Twist of Fate into the Swanton to Gunn. A save is made and a bunch of charging shots in the corner put Matt down. The double tag brings in Bowens and Zay with Zay getting to kick people in the face. Zay hits a middle rope spinning Downward Spiral, followed by an Asai moonsault to Gunn. Back in and the assisted Iconoclasm finishes Zay to retain the titles at 10:36.

Rating: B-. These guys got going in the end and it turned into a rather high energy match. Gunn and the Acclaimed can move on to their title defense against a team from New Japan at WrestleDream while the Hardys can find another team to lose against in another title match. Zay stood out here a bit as well, as he got to show off some of his pretty impressive high flying. Good opener, even if it was another thrown out there title match.

Eddie Kingston is ready to defend the New Japan Strong Openweight Title against Rocky Romero tonight but Jeff Jarrett and company come in. Jay Lethal talks about how he can respect a double champ, but not when it means Kingston is the Ring Of Honor World Champion. That title means something and Kingston is unfit to hold the title. Kingston laughs and walks away.

On Saturday, Andrade El Idolo wants to know why Juice Robinson has a problems with him. See you Saturday at Collision.

New Japan Strong Openweight Title: Rocky Romero vs. Eddie Kingston

Kingston is defending. Feeling out process to start with Romero's headlock not getting him very far. Romero's shoulder doesn't get him anywhere either but he manages to knock Kingston outside. That's fine with Kingston, who hits a suplex on the floor as we take a break. Back with Kingston getting caught in the ropes so Romero can hit a middle rope dropkick

for two. Kingston is right back with the rapid fire chops in the corner but Romero slugs his way out. That's fine with Kingston, who hits a pair of spinning backfists into the Stretch Plum to retain at 8:58.

Rating: C+. As usual the match was fine, but it's another instance of a random wrestler getting a title shot. Between this and the open challenges, there are so many out of nowhere title matches and it takes away some of the impact. As for the match itself, there's only so much you can do with about nine minutes and a good chunk of it cut out of the middle. Completely fine action though and that's better than some options they had.

Post match respect is shown but Katsuyori Shibata comes out for the staredown.

Aussie Open is sick of hearing about how great FTR is. They've spent the last year working to get here for one more match with them, because it's time for FTR to feel pain.

Righteous vs. Gunnar/Caleb Crush

Dutch runs them over with a double clothesline to start and adds a swinging Boss Man Slam on Crush. Gunnar gets one of his own and Autumn Sunshine finishes Crush at 1:25.

Video on the history of Santana and Ortiz, who were a great team and then fell apart due to personal issues.

Video on Christian Cage vs. Darby Allin.

Nick Wayne won't be at ringside for Allin vs. Cage but he wants to face Luchasaurus at Zero Hour. He even has a skateboard for the sake of a receipt.

Here's what's coming on various shows.

Zack Sabre Jr. is ready to hurt Bryan Danielson and end his retirement tour a lot earlier than expected. He throws in a

little Final Countdown (humming version) for a bonus.

Ruby Soho vs. Hikaru Shida

For a Women's Title shot. Feeling out process to start with Shida taking her down. The right hands in the corner set up a spinning crossbody, followed by more right hands. There's a middle rope dropkick to knock Soho down again and we take a break. Back with the exchange of forearms going to Shida before they go outside. The fight goes up the ramp before they both have to run back to the ring to beat the count.

Soho gets two off a Saito suplex and it's time for the kendo stick. With that taken away, Soho tries the spray paint but the referee gets bumped while taking it away. Destination Unknown connects for no count so Shida sticks her in the head. The Katana connects and another referee runs down for two. Shida misses a top rope Meteora but blocks a top rope backplash with raised knees. The Falcon Arrow gets two, followed by another Katana to give Shida the pin at 12:01.

Rating: B-. Shida vs. Soho is something that is going to work no matter what they're doing and thankfully they didn't do a bunch of nonsense with the referee down. It wouldn't surprise me to see Shida get the title back as Saraya got her England win last month. At the same time, it would completely surprise me to see Soho win a match that matters, as it certainly hasn't been her thing yet.

Saraya comes out for the staredown to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This show's problem continues to be that it is sandwiched between Dynamite and Collision, which doesn't leave it with much purpose. You had two thrown out there title defenses, both of which will be followed by those same titles being on the line again two days later. That doesn't make for a thrilling show, which leaves the wrestling to carry everything. As usual, that worked well, as long as you don't expect a good bit of this show to be anything more than

advertisements for later events.

Results

Billy Gunn/Acclaimed b. Hardys/Brother Zay – Assisted Iconoclasm to Zay

Eddie Kingston b. Rocky Romero – Stretch Plum

Righteous b. Gunnar/Caleb Crush – Autumn Sunshine to Crush

Hikaru Shida b. Ruby Soho – Katana

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Three For One: New Title Match Officially Set For WWE Fastlane.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/three-one-new-title-match-officially-set-wwe-fastlane/>

WATCH: John Cena Finds A Partner To Help Fight The Bloodline At WWE Fastlane.

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NXT No Mercy 2023 Preview

NXT is back on the road as they head to California for No Mercy. This is the kind of thing that makes NXT feel like such a bigger deal as it is such a bigger stage than that little studio in Florida. The card happens to be stacked and it's one of the better looking NXT cards that I have seen in a good while. That has been the case before but they have some more work to do. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Blair Davenport vs. Kelani Jordan

This was announced after NXT went off the air this week so there isn't much of a build here. That being said, Davenport has been a monster heel in recent weeks and Jordan is someone who had been looking up to Dana Brooke before Brooke's release. In other words, there isn't much of a reason to believe this is going to be overly competitive, but there might be one reason to believe otherwise.

I'm going to go with what should be the obvious pick in Davenport, but I can't shake the feeling that Gigi Dolin will interfere to cost Davenport the win in a big embarrassment. Dolin vs. Davenport has been set up for a long time now and it would be interesting to see Dolin get one back on Davenport

after she attacked Dolin earlier this week. I'll go with Davenport here, but a Dolin inspired upset wouldn't shock me.

Bron Breaker vs. Baron Corbin

Sometimes you need to let two power guys beat the fire out of each other and that is what we are going to be seeing here. These two got the big go home segment to end this week's NXT as they literally went through a wall during their fight. Corbin can do rather well when he is given the chance and having a fired up Breaker could do just that. Breaker could use the win too and I think you know where this is going.

There is no reason to buy Corbin winning here so I'll take Breaker getting another big win over a stronger name. Breaker has been kind of floating for the last few weeks but having him beat Corbin up for a little while, survive some big moves and then win is a smart way to go. It might even be a fun match on the way there, but Breaker wins here, as there isn't much of a reason for anything else to happen.

Tag Team Titles: Tony D'Angelo/Stacks(c) vs. Lucien Price/Bronco Nima vs. Creed Brothers vs. Humberto Carrillo/Angel Garza

As is the case with most title matches, this was set up through a nice Italian dinner. The tag division has started a nice little rebuild, but at the end of the day, the Creed Brothers feel like they're that much better than anyone else. I'm not sure if that's going to be enough to get them to win the titles though, as it's hard to fathom the Creeds being in NXT that much longer.

For now, I'll take the champions retaining, though there is a case to be made for giving the titles to anyone but the Creeds. Carrillo and Garza are a more experienced team and need something to make them feel more special, while Price and Nima could get a heck of a rub by winning the titles so soon into their run. The good thing with a four way is that you

still have contenders coming out of the match as only one team gets beaten, and we'll say the champs get to do said beating here.

Heritage Cup: Noam Dar(c) vs. Butch

This is the result of a nearly month long tournament to crown a new #1 contender and that makes things interesting. It's kind of hard to imagine Butch coming up short after that long. The problem here could be having Tyler Bate in Butch's corner, which feels like a way to set up some kind of screwy finish. At the same time, it's hard to imagine it's hard to imagine having another main roster star winning an NXT title.

That being said, having a tournament go on that long with Butch winning, only to lose here and keep the title on Dar doesn't make a ton of sense. Dar has been either champion or right there next to it for months now and I don't see the need to keep it on him. Butch has been needing a win to get himself back up and I'll say he wins here, though I have quite the feeling that I'm wrong on this one.

North American Title: Dominik Mysterio(c) vs. Trick Williams

So this one is a bit more interesting as you have Williams replacing the suddenly released Mustafa Ali. Williams has felt like someone who is being groomed for the next big step up the ladder, with a Carmelo Hayes match feeling like it's on the horizon. That being said, it would be a big deal to take the title from Mysterio, who is quite the big deal in his own right on the main roster.

I can't imagine Mysterio losing here so we'll go with him retaining the title. Williams is someone who could become a big deal rather quickly but Mysterio losing the title so soon doesn't feel right. At the same time, Mysterio losing the title without Rhea Ripley being involved doesn't feel right. Mysterio retains here, likely with some interference to keep Williams looking strong.

Women's Title: Becky Lynch(c) vs. Tiffany Stratton

This is Extreme Rules and a rematch from earlier this month when Lynch took the title from Stratton. That makes things all the more interesting, as Lynch already has everything on Monday Night Raw and she isn't going to be the champion long term. At the same time though, I'm not sure I can imagine her losing the title here. Stratton feels like she is going to be a big star, but I'm not sure we're at that point yet.

I'm not feeling overly strong on this one, but I'll take Lynch to retain here. Stratton certainly has a lot of the tools needed to step up sooner than later, but beating Lynch is one heck of an upgrade. There's a chance that Stratton wins here, though I'll go with Lynch retaining after a better fight than the previous edition. Lynch goes over here, but after getting quite the test from Stratton.

NXT Title: Carmelo Hayes(c) vs. Ilja Dragunov

This is a rematch from Hayes beating Dragunov at the Great American Bash where Dragunov was sent into a chair. That makes the question whether or not Hayes can win on his own here, and we could be in for a heck of a fight. Dragunov knows how to bring up the emotion with some outstanding near falls and selling the pain he's going through, which should be the case again here. I'm just not sure how it's going to end and that's confusing.

I'll go with....geez I guess Hayes here, as it doesn't feel like he's ready to lose the title here, but dang it's hard to imagine Dragunov losing another big match. Hayes needs to win here to prove that he's the big star and he has Williams waiting on him sooner or later. That match doesn't necessarily need to be for the title, but for now we'll say the title stays with Hayes after a better match than their first showdown.

Overall Thoughts

The more I look at this card, the better it's looking. NXT has figured itself out in recent months and that has made it a good show to see again. Now they need to figure out how to make the big shows work, but the pieces are all there to have a successful night. I'm excited about this show and that's a nice feeling to have, though having it actually be a good show is what matters most.

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Smackdown – September 29, 2023: Make Me Want To Go To Fastlane. I Already Am, But Make Me Want To.

Smackdown

Date: September 29, 2023

Location: Golden 1 Center, Sacramento, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

We're just over a week away from Fastlane and John Cena is going to need some help dealing with the Bloodline. Cena was laid out to end last week's show and is currently heading into a handicap match next week. Other than that, it would be nice to get something else added to the card, as there are two matches set with eight days to go. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Here is the Bloodline to get things going. Paul Heyman, who insists that his name is NOT boo, says he gets to do something in person for a change. He acknowledges his Tribal Chief (naturally not here) and of course so does everyone here. Last week, the SECOND greatest of all time, John Cena, took one of the worst beatings he's taken in ten years. We see a clip (which Heyman calls the Bloodline's version of the Zapruder Film) from last week of Cena signing to face the Bloodline but his partner AJ Styles was taken out beforehand. Cena got beaten down by both of them to end the show, meaning Cena is in even more trouble.

Back in the arena, Heyman says that Cena is having transportation issues here and he's not here yet. Jimmy Uso accuses Cena of being scared to show up, with a threat to take Cena out if he makes it to the arena. Cue Karl Anderson to clear the ring and say he wants either of them right now. Heyman whispers something to Solo Sikoa, who tells Jimmy to handle this before Sikoa does it himself.

Karl Anderson vs. Jimmy Uso

Joined in progress with Anderson stomping away and snapping off the spinebuster for two. Jimmy comes back with a rake to the eyes and the superkick connects. The Superfly Splash finishes Anderson at 2:16 shown.

Post match Anderson goes after Uso again but Solo Sikoa Spikes him down. As the Bloodline leaves, Michin runs in and slaps Uso on her way to check on Anderson.

Santos Escobar says he's staying focused on Rey Mysterio and the US Title but he's very nervous. Tonight, Rey is in for the biggest fight of his life.

The Bloodline is livid backstage, with Paul Heyman calling Roman Reigns.

It's time for the Grayson Waller Effect, with Waller bringing out Bobby Lashley. Waller brings up Lashley not being happy with what the Street Profits have been doing lately, with Lashley saying he made a bad decision. Waller thinks he and Austin Theory would have been a better choice for such a team but Lashley is going to pass on that one. Cue the Street Profits, with Lashley telling them to prove it. The three of them go to leave so Waller calls out Austin Theory (who has a staredown with Lashley on the way to the ring).

Video on Dragon Lee, who is in the crowd.

Cameron Grimes vs. Austin Theory

No entrance for Grimes, which probably explains why I can barely remember he's on the roster most of the time. Grimes strikes away to start and hits a running basement dropkick for two. Theory knocks him down but Grimes is right back up with a kick to the head in the corner. The high crossbody gives Grimes two and a bridging German suplex gets the same. Grimes sends him outside but a Grayson Waller distraction lets Theory post him. Back in and the rolling dropkick sets up A Town Down for the pin on Grimes at 3:03.

Rating: C. This was about what you would have expected as Grimes has gone from a promising star to one of the resident jobbers to the stars. Theory and Waller are being built up into a thing and the wins help with that, but it would be nice

to see Grimes getting to do something. Or for Waller and Theory to have someone big to face.

Post match Theory goes over and shoves Dragon Lee.

Rey Mysterio is ready to bring it against Santos Escobar.

In the back, the Bloodline wrecks Ashante Thee Adonis as B Fab panics.

US Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Santos Escobar

Mysterio is defending and hugs Dragon Lee (as does Escobar). We get the Big Match Intros and Zelina Vega is here to cheer for both of them. Escobar takes him to the mat to start as they're in an early grappling exchange. Mysterio gets sent to the apron so Escobar kicks him in the head, setting up a slingshot dive to the floor.

We take a break and come back with Escobar hitting a dropkick to stagger Rey again. Rey is able to send him outside though and a dive connects, followed by a top rope seated senton back inside. Escobar gets in a shot of his own though as we see the Bloodline wrecking more people backstage. Rey loads up the 619 but Escobar cuts him off with a heck of a superkick.

That's enough to knock Rey outside and the big suicide dive drops him again. A moonsault off the barricade hits Mysterio again, followed by some running knees in the corner. Rey gets sat up top for a kick to the head, setting up the super hurricanrana. We take another break and come back with Escobar grabbing a Gory Stretch. With that broken up, Escobar misses a high crossbody but grabs a kneeling backbreaker for two.

Rey's hurricanrana is countered but Rey counters the counter into a sunset flip for two of his own. They go up top with Rey having to elbow his way out of a super Phantom Driver. A super anklescissors brings Escobar back down but the 619 is blocked again. Another attempt connects but Escobar avoids a frog

splash. The Phantom Driver is loaded up, only to have Rey reverse into a small package to retain at 20:21.

Rating: B. They kept this clean and let them do their thing rather well, which shouldn't be that much of a surprise. It would be a surprise if this doesn't lead to some kind of an issue between the two of them though, as that would seem to be in the cards somewhere. For now though, it continues to be rather impressive that Mysterio can still have quality matches at this stage in his career, as it's not something you often see.

Post match Rey holds out his hand but before Escobar can shake it, the Street Profits jump them from behind. Cue a rather happy looking Bobby Lashley. The rest of the LWO tries to come in for the save but they get taken out as well. Dragon Lee is held back from coming in and the beating continues.

Post break Escobar is livid at the Street Profits and Bobby Lashley. The challenge is on for a six man at Fastlane.

We hear about Jade Cargill's signing. That's a heck of a big starting point.

Video on Iyo Sky retaining the Women's Title over Asuka last week.

John Cena arrives and leaves his car in the middle of the parking lot, contract in hand.

We look at Elton Prince continuing his physical therapy, with raining in tags, eye poking and chair shots, only to almost get run over when he is left to fall through traffic. And yes, it ends with Pretty Deadly jumping into the air for a freeze frame. As it should.

The Brawling Brutes aren't happy.

Charlotte vs. Bayley

The rest of Damage CTRL is here with Bayley. Note that Charlotte has been standing in the ring through Cena's arrival, a commercial, and the Pretty Deadly and Brawling Brutes segments. Hold on again though as Charlotte asks what happened to Bayley. She was one of the Horsewomen but now she's just a stepping stone. After Charlotte wins here, she's challenging Iyo Sky for the title at Fastlane.

They send each other into the corner to start, with Charlotte hitting some chops. Bayley knocks her to the floor though and we take a break. Back with Charlotte hitting a fall away slam to send Bayley outside again. Another shot drops Bayley but she catches Charlotte on top. The Sasha Banks double knees in the corner for two, only to have Charlotte spear her down for the pin at 7:34.

Rating: C+. Well that certainly was a Charlotte match, as she got to look dominant over another star and then won clean out of nowhere. Bayley looked completely secondary to her here and that isn't how someone with her success should be presented. Charlotte is going to be pushed as a top star no matter what, but she doesn't have to crush everyone else.

Post match Damage CTRL surrounds the ring to go after Charlotte but Asuka runs in for the save. Asuka wants in on the Women's Title match at Fastlane.

Here is John Cena, complete with contract. Cena says he is here to compete and holds up the contract, which is what he wanted. Cena can run or he can fight, and what do you think he's going to do? Cue the Bloodline for the beatdown again with the announcers' table being loaded up. Cue LA Knight and yeah the roof comes off again. House is cleaned and Knight signs the contract to be Cena's partner to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. It wasn't a bad show, but this was mainly about waiting for Cena to show up and do anything. That ending segment was good, though it took a long time to get there and

that didn't help. Other than that, we got some stuff put together, or at least challenged, for Fastlane and a good match in the middle. Overall, not a great show, but it did enough to get by. They still need to do A LOT for Fastlane though and it's really annoying when WWE waits so late in the game to announce the card. Anyway, not terrible here, but the build to Fastlane continues to be a struggle.

Results

Jimmy Uso b. Karl Anderson – Superfly Splash

Austin Theory b. Cameron Grimes – A Town Down

Rey Mysterio b. Santos Escobar – Small package

Charlotte b. Bayley – Spear

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**Ring Of Honor – September 28,
2023: Wanted: Missing**

Champions

Ring Of Honor

Date: September 28, 2023

Location: Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Caprice Coleman

We're back to the weekly show and there have been a lot of changes around here. In addition to Eddie Kingston winning the World Title last week, there are also new Six Man Tag Team Champions to go with the new Tag Team Champions, who won the belts a month ago and haven't been on the show yet. Maybe that will change with the other new champions. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Josh Woods vs. Brayden Erving

Mark Sterling is here with Woods, who drives Erving into the corner to start and hammers away. Erving misses an enziguri and gets German suplexed. The Tilt-A-Woods (Anarchist suplex) finishes Erving at 1:15.

Prince Nana is excited about the Gates of Agony and Brian Cage in separate matches tonight because they're ready to be awesome again.

Scorpio Sky vs. Tony Nese

Mark Sterling is here with Tony Nese, because we need him in the first two matches of the show. Nese does his usual group training deal before we're ready to go. Sky cuts him off so Nese is right there to jump start the beating, only to get knocked to the floor. Back in and Nese bails to the floor again but gets tossed back inside this time. Sterling offers a distraction though and Nese manages a whip into the steps.

Nese ties him in the Tree of Woe for some crunches kicks to the ribs. The neck snap over the top rope and we're off to a bodyscissors. A belly to back suplex gets Sky out of trouble and a clothesline drops Nese as well. Sky hits Sky High for two but Nese kicks him in the head for two more. Back up and Nese grabs a suplex, followed by the TKO for the pin at 9:08.

Rating: B-. I'm still not sure why Sky keeps falling lower and lower. While the injuries are a problem, seeing him facing Nese on Ring Of Honor isn't the best sign for his career. There almost has to be a better use for him somewhere across AEW or ROH. He can clearly still go in the ring, but it needs to be in another ring.

Gravity vs. Lee Johnson

The wrestling doesn't go to either of them so we have an early standoff. Johnson has to flip out of a wristlock before Gravity runs him over with a shoulder. A flipping armdrag pulls Lee out of the corner but he drops Gravity without much effort. Johnson whips him into the corner, gets in some pushups, and grabs the chinlock.

Gravity fights up and sends him to the floor for a springboard dive, followed by a top rope armdrag for two back inside. A standing moonsault gets two more but Johnson is back with some superkicks. Gravity hits his own superkick though and the top rope splash finishes Johnson at 9:21.

Rating: C+. Gravity is another guy who seems like he could be something if given a chance and he's getting some pretty significant TV time. I'm not sure if he's ever going to move up to the next level, but he's doing well with getting out of Bandido's shadow. Granted it helps when Bandido isn't here, but Gravity is doing well either way.

The Outrunners aren't impressed with Action Andretti and Darius Martin.

Billie Starkz vs. Lady Frost

Athena is here with Starkz. Frost is sent to the floor to start where Athena offers a fast distraction, allowing Starkz to nail a dive. Athena yells at Starkz for a bit, allowing Frost to hit a cartwheel kick off the apron to put Starkz down. Back in and Frost stomps away in the corner before flipping over her back for a dropkick. Starkz is back up with a Death Valley Driver for two but Frost throws in another cartwheel into an Air Raid Crash. The moonsault connects for Frost but Athena offers a distraction to break it up. Said distraction lets Starkz hit something like a Neutralizer for the pin at 6:59.

Rating: C+. The more I see of Frost, the more impressive she becomes. She has a unique look and the athleticism to back it up. In short, she feels different and that helps her stand out a lot. If she was able to string some wins together, I could see her having a nice run somewhere. This was still all about Athena and Starkz though, as their big match is coming one day.

Post match Athena takes Frost outside for a ram into the barricade as Starkz begs Athena to stop. Starkz takes the title away before Athena can slam Frost into it, which doesn't sit well with Athena.

Allysin Kay is ready to face Mercedes Martinez because she wants to end her losing streak.

Outrunners vs. Darius Martin/Action Andretti

Andretti works on Magnum's arm to start before Martin comes in to do the same. It's off to Floyd, who gets headlocked rather quickly. Andretti takes both of them down at once and stereo dropkicks send the Outrunners outside. The stereo dives are broken up though and it's Floyd hammering away on Andretti back inside. Magnum drops a knee on Andretti but he breaks up Total Recall. The tag brings Martin back in to clean house as

everything breaks down. Floyd is sent outside and a double swinging slam finishes Magnum at 6:49.

Rating: C+. The Outrunners are the definition of goofy, harmless fun and I can always go for more of that. They aren't out here getting wins over big teams but rather losing every time and giving the fans a bit of a laugh. Martin and Andretti aren't going anywhere, but at least they're filling in a nice spot around here while they aren't.

Griff Garrison is interrupted by Maria Kanellis-Bennett and Cole Karter but says he believes the team can work. They agree to do it the right way.

Leyla Hirsch vs. Laynie Luck

Maria Kanellis-Bennett comes out to watch as Luck scores with some kicks to start. Hirsch shrugs those off though and snaps off a German suplex into the Fujiwara armbar for the tap at 1:12.

Post match Maria leaves and Hirsch says she wants Athena.

Mercedes Martinez, with Diamante, thinks Allysin Kay must be sick of losing.

Shane Taylor vs. Jimmy Jacobs

Lee Moriarty is here with Taylor and Jacobs is the hometown boy. Jacobs slugs away to start and it goes as well as you would expect. Taylor misses a charge and gets sent outside though, where Jacobs grabs a front facelock. That's broken up as well and Taylor crushes him in the corner.

The splash gives Taylor two and he slowly forearms Jacobs down over and over. Jacobs actually scores with a clothesline but Taylor's clothesline is a little bit better. Back up and Jacobs tries Sliced Bread but is easily reversed into Welcome To The Land to give Taylor the pin at 5:31.

Rating: C+. Jacobs is a name and Taylor beating him is better than a win over some nobody. It also helps when Jacobs was able to get in some offense of his own and turned it into a decent match. Taylor is still a monster though and ROH seems interested in turning him into a big deal, meaning a Jacobs win wasn't exactly in the cards.

Maria Kanellis-Bennett is interrupted by Leyla Hirsch, who wants more competitive matches. That hasn't happened, so Hirsch has gotten her Women's Title shot against Athena next week.

Dalton Castle/The Boys vs. Ren Jones/Trenton Tormenta/Xavier Walker

Castle takes Jones down without much effort to start before the Boys come in for a dropkick. Jones drives Brent into the corner though and it's Walker coming in to knock Brandon and Castle outside. Brent rolls over without much effort and Castle gets the tag to clean house. Everything breaks down and the Bang A Rang into a knee to the back (that's a weird bonus) finishes Tormenta at 3:38.

Rating: C. Nothing much to see here, save for Castle adding a mostly unnecessary move after his big finisher. Castle and the Boys have absolutely nothing to do at the moment as the Six Man Tag Team Titles don't mean much and for some reason Castle can't get a singles run. Not quite a squash here, but the Boys squashing someone wouldn't make sense anyway.

Griff Garrison/Cole Karter vs. The Infantry

Maria Kanellis-Bennett is here with Garrison and Karter. Garrison hiptosses Bravo to start and adds a boot to the face. Karter comes in and gets caught in the wrong corner, allowing Dean to come in for an elbow. The Infantry alternates on the beating until Karter hits a dropkick to take over on Bravo.

Garrison won't listen to Maria's orders to choke from the

floor, leaving Bravo to roll over for the tag to Dean. A high crossbody gets two on Karter with Garrison having to make the save. Boot Camp hits Karter but Maria distracts the referee. Trish Adora chases Maria off, leaving Karter to roll Dean up (with feet on the ropes) for the pin at 7:02.

Rating: C. I'm still not sure why this Maria/Carter/Garrison story is supposed to be interesting but it's falling pretty short. It feels like they have taken months to get very little accomplished and Karter/Garrison still aren't exactly gelling. Maria is capable of so much more but here she is because...I have no idea really.

Ethan Page says if he wins tonight, he's on a roll. Rohit Raju (Page's opponent tonight) comes in to say you can't spell Rohit without ROH, but Page promises a beating.

Mercedes Martinez vs. Allysin Kay

Diamante is here with Martinez. They fight to the floor rather quickly before Kay grabs a belly to back inside. Diamante breaks up a charge in the corner and Martinez gets in a cheap shot. After some posing inside, Martinez heads outside to beat Kay up on the floor. Kay manages a quick German suplex for a breather and a swinging neckbreaker takes Martinez down again. A missed charge sets up a Cheeky Nandos kick though and Diamante blasts Kay again. The fisherman's buster finishes for Martinez at 5:38.

Rating: C. I'm not sure why they needed to go outside the ring that many times in a five minute match but it happened over and over. Other than that, Martinez is someone who can look good against anyone and she did it again here against a talented Kay. Again though, if you just keep winning matches and don't move up the ladder into something more important, it doesn't matter that much.

Lexi Nair and Billie Starkz aren't happy with Athena's interference early, but Athena pops up to say it's time for

some more minion training. Starkz can watch her beat up Leyla Hirsch next week.

Iron Savages vs. Gates Of Agony

Jacked Jameson and Prince Nana are here too. Kaun dropkicks Bronson to start before it's off to Toa and Boulder for an exchange of clotheslines. Everything breaks down and Bronson's dive is blocked, setting up a drop onto the apron. Back in and Bronson gets caught in the wrong corner, with the Gates getting to take turns. An elbow drop misses though and it's Boulder coming in to clean house. Bronson hits a top rope elbow for two on Toa but Kaun shoves Boulder off the top. Nana steals Jameson's Jacked Juice, leaving Bronson to take Open The Gates for the pin at 6:44.

Rating: C+. Nothing but a hoss fight here and that is something that will work most of the time. The Gates dominated the Six Man Tag Team Title scene for so long that it makes sense for them to be a successful two man team in their own right. Then you have the Savages, who are as over the top as you can get and it's still entertaining, they aren't likely to be getting a big win in the near future. Still though, pretty fun fight here.

Rohit Raju vs. Ethan Page

Raju jumps him to start but Page gets in a running shoulder. A delayed running suplex plants Raju and the capture belly to back suplex puts him down again. The Ego's Edge is broken up though and Raju hits some running shots in the corner. A big boot cuts Raju right back off and it's the slingshot cutter to give Page the pin at 2:37.

Brian Cage vs. Metalik

Prince Nana is here with Cage. Metalik starts fast and sends him outside but a dive is pulled out of the air. Back in and Cage snaps off a kick to the head in the corner, followed by a

German suplex. There's a 619 to drop Metalik again but a missed charge sends Cage into the corner.

Metalik snaps off a springboard hurricanrana, followed by the reverse Sling Blade. A big rope walk dive to the floor hits Cage again and a Code Red gives Metalik two. The rope walk Swanton misses though and Cage grabs a sitout powerbomb for two. Cage Drill Claws him for the pin at 8:01.

Rating: B-. Pretty nice power vs. speed match here and as usual, the formula worked well. What matters is getting Cage back on track after the surprising title loss and it isn't like Metalik is going to be hurt by the loss. Cage has long since needed to get away from the Gates and if this is the start of that change, it is a good move for everyone involved.

Overall Rating: C. Within the last five weeks, Ring of Honor has crowned a new World Champion, Tag Team Champions and Six Man Tag Team Champions. None of them (or the TV/Pure Champions) were on this show, but I'm sure they'll be on the upcoming AEW shows. In other words, ROH continues to be nothing more than a plot device for AEW and that is not making this show (the longest episode they've had in over a month) any easier to watch.

As for this show, it was exactly what you should expect from ROH: a bunch of mediocre to ok matches with so much stuff taking place that very little gets to stand out because it's so bogged down by everything else. There was some minor storyline advancement, but as usual it takes either no time or the better part of forever to get anywhere. I'm running out of ways to make the same complaints every week but ROH keeps doing the same annoying things, making this show less and less interesting every single week.

Results

Josh Woods b. Brayden Erving – Tilt-A-Woods
Scorpio Sky b. Tony Nese – TKO

Gravity b. Lee Johnson – Top rope splash
Billie Starkz b. Lady Frost – Faceplant
Action Andretti/Darius Martin b. Outrunners – Double swinging
slam to Magnum
Leyla Hirsch b. Laynie Luck – Fujiwara armbar
Shane Taylor b. Jimmy Jacobs – Welcome To The Land
Dalton Castle/The Boys b. Ren Jones/Trenton Tormenta/Xavier
Walker – Knee to Tormenta's back
Griff Garrison/Cole Karter b. The Infantry – Rollup with feet
on the ropes to Dean
Mercedes Martinez b. Allysin Kay – Fisherman's buster
Gates Of Agony b. Iron Savages – Open The Gates to Bronson
Ethan Page b. Rohit Raju – Slingshot cutter
Brian Cage b. Metalik – Drill Claw

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