

# Ring of Honor TV – June 22, 2016: Go Home New Japan

## Ring of Honor

Date: June 22, 2016

Location: Ted Reeve Arena, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Kevin Kelly

It's the go home show for Best in the World and my guess is that means it's time to talk about the Bullet Club instead of anything related to the upcoming pay per view. I mean, I really don't think that the last several months focusing on New Japan has been fair to them so we better dedicate another hour to them. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

## Dalton Castle vs. Gedo

The announcers use the entrances to run down Friday's pay per view card. Feeling out process to start with Silas spinning out of an Irish whip, meaning it's time for Young to bend back in a manner that freaks Gedo out in a funny bit. Gedo is sent outside where the Boys fan him down, earning themselves a poke to the eyes. We take a break and come back with Gedo hammering away but running into a forearm to the face. A facebuster has Castle in trouble but the Boys offer a distraction, allowing Castle to hit the Bang A Rang for the pin at 10:55.

**Rating:** C-. Believe it or not this actually has some meaning as Castle is challenging for the TV Title at the pay per view. I mean it's not like they actually build the thing up or anything like that, but why build it up when you can remind us that Gedo is part of the Chaos stable, which means a grand total of nothing over here?

We recap BJ Whitmer vs. Steve Corino, or at least the most recent aspects of it. They bring up the idea of Corino being run out of the promotion but Mr. Wrestling III appearing in his place. Whitmer then drew Corino back by stalking Corino's family (shown here for the first time) to

finally set up the Fight Without Honor on Friday.

Adam Cole doesn't care who wins on Friday because he's going to be the next champ.

We look at Jay Lethal becoming undisputed champion at last year's Best in the World, followed by Jay Briscoe having Jay Lethal pinned at a show back in April.

#### Will Ferrara vs. Tomohiro Ishii

They slug it out to start with Ferrara not getting very far on the bigger Ishii. A shoulder actually staggers Ishii and a dropkick puts him down. A neckbreaker gets two for Ferrara but Ishii slams him down for some two counts of his own. Ferrara comes right back with a running elbow in the corner and a Samoan drop for two. Will goes one step too far though as he tries a suplex, earning himself a beating in the corner. A running clothesline gets two for Ishii so Ferrara slaps him in the face. That means the brainbuster puts Will away at 4:06.

**Rating:** C. Not a bad power match here, especially when you keep in mind how small Ferrara is. Unfortunately it doesn't mean anything other than a way to make Ishii look good, because that's what the world was waiting for. I know I keep harping on this but there's a pay per view in two days and we're spending TV time on a nothing match that advances no story. That's just bad planning and focusing on the wrong issues.

The Briscoes are ready for the main event.

Here's Steve Corino for some thoughts on his Fight Without Honor against BJ Whitmer. Corino is an evil man and it sounds as sweet as a slogan on a t-shirt. Years ago he took barbed wire to Terry Funk's flesh and convinced people to turn on their best friends but it was always about him. A few years ago he fell in love with a woman and tried to change himself but it's just his nature to be evil.

Whitmer has accused him of wearing a mask and BJ was right. However, the mask was this suit, these glasses and under this dyed hair because it made people believe he was who people wanted him to be. At the end of the

day, he's an evil man and BJ Whitmer will be out of Ring of Honor after Best in the World because Corino is taking the trash out.

Jay Lethal likes the idea of facing the Bullet Club on equal footing because something they never try.

Roderick Strong is ready to stand up for Ring of Honor against the Bullet Club.

### Bullet Club vs. Briscoe Brothers/Roderick Strong/Jay Lethal

It's Kenny Omega/Guerillas of Destiny/Matt Jackson for the Club in a somewhat weird combination. Matt and Mark start things off with Matt sliding under the crazy man but getting stopped by the threat of redneck kung fu, which earns him a jumping kick to the face. Strong comes in and knocks Matt down with an elbow to the face, meaning it's off to Lethal vs. Omega for a BIG reaction from the crowd.

That goes nowhere though as Omega tags in Tonga Loa, who gets in a shot from behind to take over on Lethal. Now of course Omega is willing to come in and stomp away in the corner, only to have Mark take him into the ROH corner for a beatdown. Everything breaks down for a bit (of course) and it's time for the multiple dives but Omega pulls Lethal to the floor and sends him into the barricade. Strong kicks Omega in the face though and we take a break.

Back with Omega trying to fight out of the corner but getting planted ribs first onto the mat. The tag brings Matt in anyway and it's time for the superkicks because those are so hard to predict. The fifth superkick puts Roderick down for two and it's off to Tama Tonga vs. Mark. Tonga's suplex doesn't work and it's time for more kung fu. A Roll of the Dice drops Mark and it's another double tag to bring in Lethal and Omega for a slugout.

The Lethal Injection is countered but Matt starts superkicking his partners by mistake. The One Winged Angel and Lethal Combination are both countered so it's Jay Briscoe vs. whoever he can punch at the moment. Everything breaks down and the double superkick hits Lethal but the second attempt is broken up. The Jay Driller plants Loa for the pin at

15:12.

**Rating:** C+. It was nice to have them get together before their matches on Friday but as usual the Bullet Club had to be involved as well. Unfortunately that dominated the match and the pay per view matches weren't exactly touched on because there was no time for something silly like that.

Dalton Castle and Bobby Fish trade promos about Castle earning his title shot but that not being enough to make him the champion.

Roderick Strong says Mark Briscoe may have been around here longer but he's still going to be second best.

The Addiction is ready to prove that they're the best in the world and not just the best in the busi-a-ness.

Both Jay's are ready to go and prove that they're the best in the world. Briscoe hopes Lethal has enjoyed all the good food he's eaten in the last year because after Best in the World it's back to Ramen noodles. This was really good, especially with the editing going back and forth like it did.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This was a watchable show on its own but a pretty lame go home show for a pay per view. That last little bit helped but a lot of it felt like they had forgotten they needed to plug this show. Hopefully the New Japan people are gone for a long while after this because they're really dragging things down. It's one thing to have the Bullet Club around but the people like Ishii, Gedo and Kushida are just taking up TV time from the ROH regulars and that's not a good thing.

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# Ring of Honor TV – June 15, 2016: More Japan

## Ring of Honor

Date: June 15, 2016

Location: Ted Reeve Arena, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Kevin Kelly, Mark Briscoe

We're less than two weeks away from Best in the World and we're getting ready for the showdown between Jay Lethal and Jay Briscoe for the ROH World Title. However there's also the issue of the Bullet Club's Adam Cole circling around the title as well, which almost has to be the next hurdle for whichever Jay comes out with the belt. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Moose vs. Tetsuya Naito

Naito's IWGP Heavyweight Title isn't on the line and he has a taped up knee coming in. Moose powers him into the corner to start and teases a right hand before just slapping Naito on the chest. Naito's right hands have no effect so Moose dropkicks him down with ease. Another dropkick puts Naito on the floor and it's easy to see why Moose is rumored to possibly go to NXT.

Naito slides back in and teases a dive but stops to pose instead. I can go for a cocky heel who knows how to deal with a monster like this. The second dive actually works as Mark talks about wanting to fight Roderick Strong at Best in the World. Moose misses the spear as we take a break.

Back with Moose doing his jab sequence but getting taken to the top for a hurricanrana. Since it's just a hurricanrana though, Moose pops up and

BLASTS him with a discus lariat for two. Moose keeps up the power with a suplex into the corner. A quick Koji Clutch slows Moose down and his delayed vertical suplex is countered into a snap DDT. Naito steps away from a dive ala Samoa Joe (love that spot) and a backflip into a reverse DDT gives Naito the pin at 10:16.

**Rating:** C+. It's kind of weird to see the smaller guy as the heel and still have him be so dominant like this. Moose is someone who has kind of hit a wall as he has all the potential in the world but he needs to get a big win or have a story other than "he's fighting people way better than him" because losing over and over doesn't really do him much good, no matter how competitive he is.

The All Night Express want to make wrestling great again and get rid of all the superkicks. Now this I can get behind.

#### Jushin Thunder Liger/Cheeseburger vs. All Night Express

The Express attack at the handshake as the announcers try to figure out what makes Liger and Cheeseburger's palm strikes so awesome. Speaking of the palm strike, Liger uses it to clean house before Cheeseburger's dive is pulled out of the air. Instead Liger baseball slides into Cheeseburger's back to put the Express down again. King drapes Cheeseburger over the ropes to take over as we take a break.

Back with Titus driving a knee into Cheeseburger's face before King plants him with a spinebuster for two. We hit the chinlockery for a bit before Cheeseburger kicks King away and makes the hot tag off to Liger. Titus takes too long going up and gets superplexed down for two with King making the save. Liger saves King from a powerbomb/springboard clothesline combo but gets sent to the floor, leaving King to hit the Royal Flush (F5 with King landing on his face instead of his back) for the pin at 8:45.

**Rating:** C. It was nice of them to let one of the Ring of Honor teams to actually get a win instead of having to be beholden to the New Japan guys. Liger and Cheeseburger aren't exactly interesting but I'm sure it gives the fans a thrill to see Liger in there after being in the ring for over thirty years. It's not a bad match here but the New Japan vs. ROH

idea has really gotten old.

Next week: ROH vs. Bullet Club.

Roderick Strong comes out to yell at Nigel about having to team with Mark in next week's match against the Bullet Club. Mark doesn't take kindly to this but no violence ensues.

The Bullet Club thinks Adam Cole should be in the main event at Best in the World and takes over the production stuff to let Cole talk about how awesome he is.

The announcers try to talk about the Best in the World card until Silas Young comes out to interrupt. Silas doesn't like the idea of ACH playing video games in his locker room. ACH believes he's a superhero from some Japanese cartoon but Young is ready to give him a hard fall back to reality at Best in the World. Young goes after a plant but security drags him away so ACH can run out and dive on him.

Kyle O'Reilly wants a rematch against Kushida after losing to him last year in the finals of the Beast of the Super Juniors. It's been 367 days in the making and the match starts now.

#### Kyle O'Reilly vs. Kushida

So yeah, the ROH main event is a rematch from the finals of a New Japan tournament from last year. Kushida's IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title isn't on the line. Feeling out process to start until Kyle takes it to the mat. That's fine with Kushida who can't get a Hoverboard Lock but Kyle can't get a cross armbreaker either. Back up and Kushida kicks him in the leg and then gets in one on the arm before stomping on the triceps. Kyle comes back with strikes of his own before going after Kushida's leg. A knee bar has Kushida bailing to the ropes so Kyle knees him in the head as we take a break.

Back with Kyle getting in an ankle lock but Kushida flips away for the escape. Kyle takes him to the floor to work on the knee out there but dives into a cross armbreaker almost underneath the ring. Back in and they slug it out with Kushida knocking Kyle's mouthpiece out. Kushida

sends him into the ropes but gets caught in a guillotine, only to have Kushida reverse into the Hoverboard Lock. That's reversed into a rollup for the pin at 11:50.

**Rating:** C+. So Kyle just pinned Kushida clean in the middle of the ring. Is this going to lead to a title shot? Say in Ring of Honor? I haven't heard about anything yet, but I have a feeling that if it happens, we'll see it in New Japan. That's where they lose me on this promotion vs. promotion stuff: I shouldn't have to go buy some other promotion's shows or follow their stories to see where this stuff is going.

If you want them to feud in ROH then have them feud in ROH. If you want them to feud in New Japan then have them feud in New Japan. Either of those are fine, as are the occasional crossovers. The problem is these companies are basically running a full time crossover with a shared roster. If I want to know what half of this stuff is about, I have to watch New Japan as well. The problem is I'm not watching this show to see New Japan because the show is called Ring of Honor. I get that this is a special, but this same idea has been going for four months now. At what point does it stop being a special and become the norm?

**Overall Rating:** C. It's another Ring of Honor vs. New Japan show and it seems that it's what we're going to get next week as well. "But KB! It's War of the Worlds!" Yeah and it's coming after Global Wars which came after Honor Rising which came after a bunch of regular shows with the New Japan guys around. Like I said earlier: this is now the norm instead of something special. Other than Young vs. ACH and a few mentions of Lethal vs. Briscoe, this was a stand alone show despite the pay per view airing in nine days. This keeps happening and it's really getting old.

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# Ring of Honor TV – June 1, 2016: Well Of Course It Is

## Ring of Honor

Date: June 1, 2016

Location: Ted Reeve Arena, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

Could this finally be the week? Could this finally be the week that we do something other than just recap stuff or show matches from Japan? It would be nice to finally get somewhere with this stuff as it's been going on four months since we saw a Ring of Honor show without the Japanese contingent. Let's get to it.

We open with a clip from the end of Global Wars with Adam Cole joining the Bullet Club and laying waste to various people.

The main event tonight: three New Japan guys vs. the Bullet Club. Of course it is. Well to be fair one of those New Japan guys is Michael Elgin but still, close enough.

## Lio Rush vs. ACH

In case one of them isn't enough. ACH and partner Matt Sydal amicably split up at a recent house show. Silas Young sits in on commentary because he's sick of people like ACH playing video games in the back before the show. A dropkick puts Lio down to start as Silas rips on the two of them for trying to be fake wrestlers. Rush sends him to the floor for a flip dive but gets kicked in the head back inside. A snap German suplex gets two on Rush and he runs into a superkick. ACH gets a brainbuster and the Midnight Star pins Rush at 4:10.

**Rating:** C. Yeah I know it was high flying and exciting but I'm really not a fan of this style. If nothing else you have two guys who wrestle a very similar style, which still makes me wonder why they even hired Rush in the first place. This was better than most ACH matches though so maybe it was Sydal holding them back.

Young comes in and lays both guys out post match.

Clip of the Addiction cheating to beat War Machine for the Tag Team Titles at a recent show.

Here's the Addiction for a chat. Daniels talks about how much better the world feels right now because everything is just a little bit better now that they've got the Tag Team Titles back. He says no one else is worthy of them and since they've never been beaten in a Ring of Honor ring (Kelly: "SAY WHAT?").....and here are the Motor City Machine Guns to interrupt.

Sabin thinks that since they're already losing their battle with male pattern baldness, how about they lose those titles to the Guns tonight too? Roppongi Vice comes out as well with Trent saying they're the young and cool tag team while the Addiction is getting old. That's too much for Daniels so he says let's do a triple threat right now and if either team can beat them, they get a title shot at Best in the World.

#### Roppongi Vice vs. Motor City Machine Guns vs. Addiction

Non-title. Sabin and Romero start things off while the Addiction chills on the floor, only to have the champs come in for some cheap shots. Romero clotheslines Kazarian and Daniels down before it's off to Trent for some dancing on the apron before coming in to rake his boot over Kazarian's eyes. The Guns come in and beat on Daniels for a bit with their fast paced (well high speed paced at least) but Kazarian takes Shelley down and we go to a break.

Back with the Addiction still in control on Shelley with a stomping in the corner. Not that it matters as Shelley gets over for the tag to Sabin a few seconds later as things speed up again. Everything breaks down with Trent suplexing Kazarian and kneeling Daniels in the face for two. Strong

Zero is broken up and Daniels plants Trent with a Rock Bottom and the BME. That cover is broken up as well as the Guns get in one of their quick sequences capped off by a basement dropkick to Daniels, followed by Skull and Bones for the pin on Daniels at 9:28.

**Rating:** C+. The right team won here and I like it a lot better than having the champs lose a clean tag match to any team to set up the title match. Vice didn't serve much of a purpose but it was nice to see them there to make this match different from the eventual title match.

Roderick Strong is going to prove how good he is to Jay Briscoe this Sunday in Columbus, Ohio. Strong is still not great on promos but he's WAY better than he was just a few months ago.

The Bullet Club brags about throwing 51 superkicks at the end of Global Wars and says we're just living in their world.

Nigel announces BJ Whitmer vs. Steve Corino in a Fight Without Honor for Best in the World after Whitmer has stalked Corino's family.

We see Adam Page joining the Bullet Club and helping beat down a bunch of wrestlers at a recent show with the highlight being a Rite of Passage (over the back piledriver) onto a table (as in the table didn't break) to Jay Briscoe. I get the NWO vibe but the group is getting WAY too big, just like the NWO back in the day.

#### Elite vs. Hiroshi Tanahashi/Michael Elgin/Yoshi Tatsu

Kelly almost laughs off the idea of there being groups within the Bullet Club. Matt Taven is on commentary for no apparent reason. The match begins after a break (thankfully without the bell ringing before the break) with the non-Bullet Club guys (I have no idea who the faces are in this as the Club gets ridiculous pops every time) telling them to suck it. The Club is sent to the floor and it's Elgin flipping over the top to take them down.

The Bucks get double suplexed and Omega gets caught in the air, only to slip into a dragon suplex on Elgin. Tanahashi comes in to clean house but a double superkick breaks up the Cloverleaf. A triple dive takes the New

Japan crew down and Tanahashi takes a triple kick to the head. Nick comes in for a bunch of cartwheels as Taven rips on how stupid this concept is, along with how easy it is to make fans cheer them.

Back with Tanahashi ducking a superkick and sending the Bucks into each other for the hot tag off to Elgin. Both Bucks get German suplexed at the same time but Taven accurately points out that they combine to weigh as much as one average wrestler. The Falcon Arrow from the apron gets two on Matt with Omega making the save. Everything breaks down and it's Tatsu getting the tag as house is cleaned. With the referee looking away, Nick sprays Tatsu in the face and it's a triple superkick for two. Omega adds the One Winged Angel for the pin at 10:02.

**Rating:** B-. It's a fine enough main event if you can handle another Bullet Club match. Elgin continues to be an amazing strong man with seemingly limitless strength and that's all he needs to be at this point. Tatsu being the Bullet Club Hunter over them injuring him a long time ago makes sense but he could use some wins over them. That can't happen though because BULLET CLUB IS AMAZING.

**Overall Rating:** C+. What am I even supposed to say here? It's very clear that Ring of Honor is all about the Bullet Club now and I can't imagine Best in the World doesn't end with the screwing up the main event. It's nice to have some regular stuff going again but Ring of Honor becomes New Japan Jr. more and more every single week.

On top of that though, it's really annoying to have the Bullet Club running around like heels but getting the biggest face reactions on the show. For all intents and purposes, they're the top faces on the show despite being heels and that gets old in a hurry. Unfortunately they're going to be here for a very long time because they make a fortune and the fact that they're so upside down with psychology and absorbing half the roster just like the NWO. That group turned out fine though, right?

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# Ring of Honor TV – April 13, 2016: If You Build It, The Fans Will Stay Through The Taping

## Ring of Honor

Date: April 13, 2016

Location: Sam's Town Hotel and Gambling Hall, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Mr. Wrestling 3

It's a very big show this week with the Tag Team Titles on the line, a major star from New Japan making an appearance and a Fight Without Honor for the first time ever on ROH TV. I know these staggered shows get annoying but they've actually got a big card here and that's a rare sight on an hour long TV show. Let's get to it.

## Tag Team Titles: War Machine vs. Roppongi Vice

Vice (Trent Barreta and Rocky Romero) is challenging and knocks Hansen and Rowe off the apron before the bell. Rowe says ring the bell but gets beaten down in the corner to start. A standing moonsault doesn't have much effect though and it's Hansen back in for rights and lefts of his own. Romero is kicked out to the floor as Wrestling 3 tells stories of "joysting" (not jousting but joysting), whatever that is.

We take a break and come back with Hansen taking Rowe's shotgun knees by mistake, followed by Romero kicking Rowe in the face. A quick Superman punch puts Romero down but Trent dropkicks both champs down to save his partner in a nice spot. Two double knees to the face drops Hansen but War Machine gets tired of these pests and lifts them up for powerbombs, only to slam the challengers into each other. That's a new one. The Path of Resistance is broken up though as Romero hurricanranas Hansen down. A flip dive is countered into an apron bomb though and Fallout puts Romero away at 9:56.

**Rating:** C+. This was fine despite me not being a big fan of Barreta and Romero. There wasn't much of a surprise here as they had been setting up the Briscoes challenging for the titles over the last few weeks but at least we had something other than a squash to get us there. Nice little match here.

Prince Nana brings out Donovan Dijak, in a Jay Lethal shirt, for something to say. Let's get right to it with the envelopes: you're not going to find out because you don't need to know. Nana talks about how Dijak is enlightened while Donovan talks about being tired of spending the last year guarding Jay Lethal. This brings out Lethal for a brawl that security has to break up.

Dalton Castle says his goal is different again tonight because this time he wants to hurt Silas Young.

#### ACH vs. Kenny Omega

Omega, whose Intercontinental Title isn't on the line here, is the head of the Bullet Club in New Japan and he has some awesome entrance music. Kenny is called the Cleaner so of course he comes out with a broom, along with the Young Bucks. As expected, the fans are almost entirely behind Omega.

Feeling out process to start with ACH doing all his flips as the announcers explain the latest issues in New Japan. An elbow to the head drops Omega and a dropkick puts him out on the floor. Naturally the numbers become an issue though as Omega distracts the referee, allowing a superkick to put ACH down. In a funny bit, Matt throws out a banana peel

to offer an explanation.

We take a break (and get a promo from Adam Cole about how he created the Kingdom, meaning Matt Taven has no right to reform the team) and come back with ACH holding Omega in a headlock, only to be countered into what looked like a one man More Bang For Your Buck. That goes nowhere and ACH gets up a boot in the corner, followed by another kick to the face to put Omega on the floor.

The Jordan dive takes out the Bucks and Omega to a nice reaction as it's not all Omega fans for a bit of a surprise. Back in and a top rope double stomp to the back gets two on Kenny and a brainbuster is good for the same. A 450 misses though and Omega gets in a hard knee to the ribs to take over. ACH comes back again and gets in a Stunner, giving us a Rock style sell job. The Midnight Star misses though and the One Winged Angel (electric chair into a forward piledriver) puts ACH away at 13:31.

**Rating:** B. I'm not a fan of ACH but this was pretty easily his best Ring of Honor match to date. I've heard a lot of great things about Omega over the last few months and he was definitely entertaining here but not quite as great as he's been made out to be. I can go for ACH far more easily if he's acting like a wrestler instead of a guy doing scripted out flips.

### Dalton Castle vs. Silas Young

Fight Without Honor, basically meaning street fight. Castle has the Boys with him but they go to the back before he hits the ring. That's the right idea for something like this. The fans are behind Castle as he clotheslines Silas to the floor while the streamers are still all over the ring. A suicide dive takes Young out again but Castle misses a running knee on the apron and gets shoved out to the floor. This hasn't gotten violent yet but you can feel a different vibe.

Back up and Castle chops the post by mistake to give Young his first target. Castle tries another chop but fakes Young out and sends him into the barricade for a smart move. We take a break and come back with Young setting up a table on the floor to go with the ladder already in the ring. Neither of those are good enough for him though as he powerbombs Castle onto two open chairs instead.

A slingshot elbow gets two on Dalton and it's time for some simple choking. For some reason Young lets him loose though and tries his slingshot moonsault but only hits ladder. They slug it out from their knees and then their feet with Castle getting the better of it until Young grabs a cutter for two. Misery gets the same so it's time for a trashcan lid and some yelling on the mic.

Silas wishes the Boys were out here to see this beating so here they come, only to have one of them jump on Young's back. That ticks Castle off all over again but he misses a running knee to send him outside. The Boys take a suicide dive to protect Dalton, who slides into the ring for a hurricanrana to send Young onto the floor again.

Back in and the Bang A Rang is countered so Dalton throws him over the top and down through the table for a YOU JUST KILLED HIM chant. Somehow that only gets two, followed by Silas hitting him low for the same. Not that it matters as the Bang A Rang onto the chairs gives Dalton the pin at 16:42.

**Rating:** B. This would have been a lot better if it had happened back in say.....December. It was a good brawl and a very strong win for Castle but this story went on WAY too long to have the impact they were going for. I still like the feud and it's a good blowoff match this could have been so much more if they had done it a long time ago.

**Overall Rating:** A-. A one hour show having two strong matches is about as easy of a layup as you're going to get. This was the first time in a long time that a show felt like something big and a lot of that is due to how much time they spent building up Young vs. Castle. No they didn't have amazing promos that made me want to see it, but just saying "it's in three weeks" made me want to see where the match was going. You don't get that in most promotions and it was a really nice change of pace which wound up working. Well done ROH, which isn't something I've been able to say lately.

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# Ring of Honor TV – April 6, 2016: We Get The Concept

## Ring of Honor

Date: April 6, 2015

Location: Sam's Town Hotel and Gambling Hall, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Mr. Wrestling III, Kevin Kelly

We're still in Las Vegas and it's time to have another show that airs after a big show with no mention of the big show's results. In this case it's Supercard of Honor from Wrestlemania weekend but we're doing the TV that deals with the fallout from the 14<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show. It would be nice if they could find a way to work this out but I don't see it coming anytime soon. Let's get to it.

Instead of the regular opening sequence, we get a look at Donovan Dijak laying out Jay Lethal and injuring Truth Martini a few weeks back.

Lethal goes on a rant about how Dijak has injured his best friend after it was all Martini's idea to bring him into the House of Truth in the first place. Now Dijak has the ROH World Champion coming for him and that's not going to be pleasant.

Opening sequence.

Kazuchika Okada/Gedo vs. ReDRagon

Okada is IWGP Champion coming in. The Japanese guys want nothing to do with a pre-match handshake so it's a bit testy as we get things going. Gedo cranks on Fish's head to start before getting two off a rollup. That's countered into a legbar as the fans chant for the New Japan guys.

Fish wants Okada and even lays down in the ring, offering him a chance to come in. Okada does come in but it's also off to O'Reilly as the announcers talk about Kyle's ear injury. An early sunset flip attempt is countered into a cross armbreaker until Gedo comes in to break it up with a right hand to the bad ear. The Japanese guys start in on the ear and we take a break.

Back with Kyle striking away at Okada and diving over for the hot tag to Fish. Everything breaks down and Okada hits his over the shoulder backbreaker on Fish but the Rainmaker is countered into a Samoan drop. Gedo breaks up the hot tag and superkicks Bobby for two as everything breaks down again. Okada gets sent to the floor and it's Gedo getting double teamed with rapid fire forearms, followed by Chasing the Dragon for the pin at 12:24.

**Rating:** C. The match was fun but it's nice to see the New Japan guys get beaten for a change. I know they're a special attraction but far too often it seems there's no reason to watch the match because it's a guaranteed win. ReDRagon needs better opponents though because they're at the point of having nothing left to do in tag action.

We look back at the Briscoes picking up the Tag Team Titles last week, much to War Machine's annoyance.

The Briscoes say War Machine can't call themselves the best of all time because they've never beaten Dem Boys. That sounds like a challenge to me and it should be one heck of a fight.

#### Adam Cole vs. Kushida

Kushida's IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title isn't on the line. Cole shoves him around to start and for once the ROH guy seems to be the crowd favorite. Kushida doesn't take kindly to this and rides Cole on the mat to some nice applause. A Fujiwara armbar sends Cole scrambling to the

ropes. Adam gets in a few shots from the apron though and we take a break. Back with Kushida hitting an atomic drop and some seated dropkicks to the head to get the fans back on his side.

A front flip kick sends Cole out to the floor but the moonsault hits knees back inside. Cole gets two off a hard running Shining Wizard, only to have to get out of the Hoverboard lock with a small package. Kushida tries more kicks so Cole stomps on his hand, only to get kicked in the arm. There's another Hoverboard lock but Cole puts him on his shoulders for two and forcing the break. Back up and Cole superkicks him in the back of the head, setting up the suplex into the backbreaker for the pin on Kushida at 11:05.

**Rating:** C+. This is the kind of match that I'm not wild on: exchanging moves and then doing the finish. There's no real connection between these teams and there's no real reason to see the two of them fighting. It's certainly not bad or anything but I'm going to forget I saw it in a few minutes because it had no impact on anything whatsoever.

Dalton Castle is ready for his Fight Without Honor with Silas Young. He might even fill Young's pants with brine shrimp and throw him in a blender.

We look back at the Motor City Machine Guns reforming at the 14<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show.

#### Addiction vs. The Machine Guns

Yeah no Motor City now. Sabin and Daniels get things going but Kazarian gets in a cheap shot thirty seconds in like a heel should. As you might expect, the Guns clean house and send us to an early break. Back with Shelley coming in off the top to work on Kazarian's arm, setting up the quick takedown and rapid fire basement dropkick.

The double dive sends the Addiction into the barricade, followed by a high cross body from Shelley for two on Kazarian. Daniels gets in a shot to the back though and Addiction finally takes over. Kazarian and Daniels take turns on Shelley, including a double clothesline, allowing Daniels to put his foot on the chest for two. We take another break and come back

with Shelley giving Kazarian a Stunner while DDTing Daniels at the same time.

That's still not enough for the hot tag as Daniels pulls Sabin off the apron, only to have Shelley send Daniels head first between Kazarian's legs. We finally get the hot tag to Sabin as everything breaks down. Kazarian gets kicked in the face but Daniels sends Shelley outside, setting up a big dive to take Alex out. Shelley slides back in almost immediately and starts the double team strikes on Daniels, followed by Skull and Bones for the pin at 12:21.

**Rating:** C. I was a big fan of the Guns back in the day but given how many fast paced teams there are now and the fact that Sabin is nothing compared to what he used to be (And somehow a former TNA World Champion. I still don't get that one.), there's really nothing left for them to do, making this a fairly worthless reunion. The match was fine but still not my style for the most part.

Post match the Addiction beats the Guns down, only to have Kushida and Matt Sydal run in for the save. The Young Bucks come in to superkick the two of them down, triggering another brawl to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. I'm really getting tired of these tag brawls to end the shows. We get it: the tag division is really competitive. Now either do something with them or stop having the same story over and over. There's almost no reason for most of them to be fighting other than "the tag division is competitive" and that's not going to work for months at a time.

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# Ring of Honor – March 30, 2016: The Dead Zone

## Ring of Honor

Date: March 30, 2015

Location: Sam's Town Hotel and Gambling Hall, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Mr. Wrestling III, Kevin Kelly

We're still in Las Vegas with the cool blue curtains and a World Title defense with Hirooki Goto from New Japan challenging ROH World Champion Jay Lethal. It's not like Lethal has anything else going on right now so having him defend against someone from outside the company isn't the worst idea. Let's get to it.

## Roderick Strong vs. Adam Page vs. Moose vs. Matt Sydal

This is a Four Corner Survival match which actually means one fall to a finish. Strong and Sydal get things going with a nice running of the ropes before Roderick gets in his first backbreaker for two. Page tags himself in to go after Strong but Sydal tags himself in as well, only to get sent to the floor. That's as good as a tag so it's Moose coming in to slam Strong for two with Page making the save.

Moose and Sydal go to the floor with Matt getting powerbombed onto the apron, followed by Page diving on Strong as we take a break. Back with Page dropkicking Strong into the corner until Sydal drops both Page and Strong at the same time. A standing moonsault gets two on Adam, followed by Moose slugging it out with Strong.

Moose dropkicks Sydal and Page off the corner so everyone starts focusing on Moose to give themselves an opening. Page throws Sydal with a release

dragon suplex but here's BJ Whitmer to trip Page up, allowing Sydal to knee him in the face. The shooting star press crushes Page but Strong comes back in with a knee to both faces and the pin on Page at 11:53.

**Rating:** C. The match was certainly energetic but I'm not a fan of these wild messes with no real story (save for maybe Moose being dominant) and action all over the place. There's a way to do these things but they have a bad tendency to turn into borderline trainwrecks like this one. It certainly wasn't bad but it just came and went with no real impact.

Here's Adam Cole with something to say. After some production guy says "I hope it's story time. I really like it.", it's story time with Adam Cole. Adam says that despite this perceived downward spiral, he's still the best wrestler in the world and the future World Champion. There is no one in that locker room who can stand up to him and Kyle O'Reilly shouldn't even be in the same ring as him. Cole may be without his Kingdom but he'll be winning that title back soon.

This brings out Matt Taven on a crutch to promise titles both in American and Japan. Well actually he'll be winning them on his own because Cole hasn't won any gold in a long time. After Cole got hurt, it was Taven who was keeping Cole relevant and he's tired of carrying Adam. The Kingdom will be rebuilt in Taven's image and that's it for Cole.

Dalton Castle isn't a fan of rules (like dress codes because he's a clothing optional man) so he loves the idea of a Fight Without Honor against Silas Young in two weeks.

### Cheeseburger vs. Foxx Vinyer

Foxx pounds the much smaller man down to start and some strikes to the chest don't have much effect for Cheeseburger. Instead a powerslam gets two on Cheeseburger but he pops back up with a knee to the head. The palm strike is loaded up but here's the All Night Express to pull Foxx out for the DQ at 1:32 for no apparent reason.

The Express isn't here to attack Cheeseburger because they like him. They see the heart inside him and know that he's tough enough to go through tables and be bent over ladders, even though the fans don't care about

him. Yeah no matter how badly he's been beaten up, the people aren't going to care.

The Express reads some mean Tweets from fans before ripping on the other teams for being too small (the Young Bucks), smelly farmers (the Briscoes) and big bald guys (War Machine). The fans chant for Cheeseburger, who reads the catchphrase on the back of the Express' shirt and gets beaten down. Wrestling III: "HE'S JUST A BURGER!!!" War Machine and the Briscoes come out for the save but the Briscoes pick up the belts. The champs aren't happy with that and it's a big staredown.

The House of Truth is ready for the main event.

#### ROH World Title: Hirooki Goto vs. Jay Lethal

Goto is challenging after beating Dalton Castle at Supercard of Honor. Lethal's graphic still shows him with the TV Title. Jay kicks him in the ribs at the handshake but Goto easily pounds him down into the corner. With the champ in trouble, Taeler Hendrix offers a distraction to break up the top rope hurricanrana. Jay is right on him with a suicide dive and we get a Trutharooni in celebration.

Lethal hits a chinlock back inside and we take a break. Back with Goto making his comeback and blocking the Lethal Injection. A Saito suplex gets two on the champ and an AA into a backbreaker gets the same. Martini offers another distraction though and it's the Lethal Injection to retain the title at 10:17.

**Rating:** C. This is the kind of match that doesn't do much for me as there's no real story other than Goto won a match at a show a few weeks back. There's no connection or animosity between these two and with about seven minutes of airtime, there's only so much they can actually do. It's a perfectly watchable match but I need something else to care about or a lot higher quality.

Post match Donovan Dijak comes in to go after Lethal and easily wins the slugout. The Book of Truth to the back has no effect so Dijak kicks Martini's head off to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. I really wasn't feeling this one as it's a collection of midcard stuff or short term angles that don't seem to have much importance. The show went by fast enough and wasn't exactly bad but nothing felt big here, save for maybe the big angle at the end. Then again I can't imagine they'll put the title on Donovan Dijak, even though I'm a fan of the guy. This wasn't a horrible show but it's completely skippable.

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## Ring of Honor TV – March 2, 2016: How To Clone An ACH

### Ring of Honor

Date: March 2, 2016

Location: Nashville Municipal Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee

Attendance: 675

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Mr. Wrestling III

We're officially in one of those weird periods where the pay per view has passed but we're still not done with the old taping cycle so this will be a lot of stuff that has nothing to do with the Anniversary Show or its fallout. We do however had a big match with Silas Young/Beer City Bruiser



vs. Dalton Castle's Boys. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Silas Young/Beer City Bruiser vs. The Boys

The Boys are Brent and Brandon (named a few weeks back but not mentioned here). Before the match, Dalton Castle sneaks in from behind and gets in a few cheap shots on Young and Bruiser but the Boys stand back and let them regroup on the floor. Great, so now they're mad. Castle is escorted out and we get down to a regular match. Before the action starts, Young rips on the Boys for failing every task he gave them. There is no fairy tale ending tonight though and Young is so confident he and Bruiser will win that he'll put his career on the line in this match.

We get a second bell so I'm not sure if the match just started or if we're two minutes in. Bruiser starts with we'll say Brent as the announcers preview the show and ignore the match. Brent can't do a thing with Bruiser so it's off to Brandon for a double clothesline. That goes nowhere either so it's a double Eat Defeat to stagger the big man. Bruiser smacks Brent down and we take a break. Back with Brent flipping out of a rollup and bulldogging Young down. The hot tag brings in Brandon and everything breaks down with Bruiser getting DDT'ed for two.

Young catches Brandon in the DDT into the bottom buckle but Bruiser's top rope splash is countered with...well it was supposed to be a cutter but looked more like a jumping uppercut. Either way it only gets two, followed by Brent flipping off Brandon's shoulders to take both guys down at once. Brandon follows with a big moonsault and a faceplant gets two on Young. Not that it matters as the Bruiser comes back in and crushes both Boys in the corner with a Cannonball, giving Silas the pin at 8:30.

**Rating:** C+. It's the power vs. speed dynamic working again, as if there was any doubt it was going to. The Boys looked like any given jobber team coming into this but they wound up being a surprisingly decent high flying team. I'm not sure how long they can have the Boys as valets when it's clear they can wrestle well enough but the Castle character has evolved well so far so hopefully the trend continues.

Dalton tries to run in post match but gets taken out as well.

Adam Cole is ready for Matt Sydal tonight.

#### Top Prospect Tournament Semi-Finals: Brian Fury vs. Action Ortiz

Ortiz takes him down to start and runs the smaller (though still good sized) Fury over, knocking him out to the floor. A big flip dive over the top crushes Fury (or at least his shoulder as Ortiz didn't make perfect contact) for two back inside. Brian dropkicks the knee out and Ortiz is in trouble for a bit, only to come back with some right hands to the jaw. Another right hand drops Fury but he raises his boot on the way down for an "accidental" low blow. A sitout Sky High gives Fury the pin to advance at 4:05.

**Rating:** D+. Fury, who reminds me of Test (in a good way), was the better option here as Ortiz is really just an update on Bam Bam Bigelow. This whole tournament is kind of hard to get a handle on as the characters are being built from the ground up, which is a very tricky move to pull off. The match wasn't the best in the world either as Ortiz was yet another big guy who can fly while Fury is a fairly generic guy with some decent power. Fury isn't much but I liked him a lot better than Ortiz.

Fury doesn't care who is in the finals with him because he hasn't shown us anything yet.

#### Top Prospect Tournament Semi-Finals: Lio Rush vs. Punisher Martinez

Martinez has impressed me more than anyone else in this tournament and definitely has a presence about him. Lio slugs away to start and has to escape from the sitout chokeslam. Punisher misses a running big boot and they head outside with Lio getting in a running kick to the chest to drop Martinez for the first time. A springboard is quickly countered as Lio gets caught in a jawbreaker and the beating is on.

Lio rolls back out to the floor, only to have Punisher dive over the top for a great looking plancha. It would have looked even better if it had come close but at least it was a great dive. The apron Last Ride is escaped but Rush jumps up to the apron for a springboard into a tornado

DDT (because everyone gets to use the tornado DDT) onto the floor. Back in and Punisher shrugs it off (granted it wasn't much of a DDT) to set up a super chokeslam, but Lio counters into something resembling a C4 (landing on his own head in the process) for the pin at 6:04.

**Rating:** C. So much for Punisher getting to show off. I mean, we have ACH Jr. and that's what matters around here. For the life of me I do not get the appeal of Rush while Martinez is a monster with a great look. Hopefully he gets hired by someone soon because I had a good time watching him. There's a future for him either on his own or as a bodyguard and it should be awesome.

During the pin, you can see A LOT of empty seats opposite the camera. That's a rare slip up from ROH.

Rush (who sounds like a Briscoe) is ready for the finals.

#### Matt Sydal vs. Adam Cole

Feeling out process to start as they have a lot of time to spend here. Cole takes him into the corner but Sydal trips him up and grabs an Indian Deathlock with a chinlock. The bridging forces Sydal to break the hold after a few seconds though and Cole takes over with a jawbreaker. Sydal gets shoved off the top for a big crash onto the apron and it's time for Cole to take over. We hit the chinlock for a bit before taking an early break.

Back with Cole walking into an enziguri, followed by a standing moonsault for two. Sydal tries to fly around too much though and dives into Cole's arms, allowing Adam to slam him into the apron and take over again. A Shining Wizard gets two on Matt but he hurricanranas Cole off the ropes to break up a Canadian Destroyer. Cole shrugs that off as well and grabs the Figure Four but it's countered as fast as any other Figure Four. Back up again and Cole scores with two straight superkicks so Sydal takes him down with a reverse hurricanrana. The Shooting Star puts Cole away at 12:30.

**Rating:** B-. The match was fun and they're setting up Sydal for his big house show title match, though I would have liked it to be against

someone a little less important than Cole. It was entertaining though and a very ROH style match which isn't exactly my thing most of the time but at least Cole looked awesome. Sydal as a house show challenger is fine enough but there are too many people who wrestle that style on the roster at the moment.

**Overall Rating:** C+. The wrestling helped make up for the mostly non-existent storyline advancement. That's the thing you have to get used to in Ring of Honor though and I can't really say I'm surprised. These stand alone shows are very hit or miss most of the time so this could have been a lot worse and the mostly decent wrestling helped get them through the hour.

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# Ring of Honor TV – February 24, 2016: Behold The Power Of New Japan

## Ring of Honor

Date: February 24, 2016

Location: Nashville Municipal Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee

Attendance: 675

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

We're getting closer to the finals of the Top Prospect Tournament and hopefully we'll get some build on the World Title feud this week. However, it's also the start of a new taping cycle which means that this is the last week that will be taking place before the Anniversary Show airs on Friday. Therefore, the next few shows will be stand alone so enjoy the continuity while it lasts. Let's get to it.

There's a new set and the production values have gone way up.

TV Title: Roderick Strong vs. Jonathan Gresham

Strong is defending. Before the match, Veda Scott comes out to offer Gresham a lot of money in exchange for giving his shot to Cedric Alexander and then leaving Ring of Honor forever. The request is quickly denied and that's all for that story at the moment. Gresham takes the champ down by the arm to start but has to flip out of the Stronghold to give us a standoff. They trade chops (because of course) with Strong getting the better of it because Gresham is no Sting.

Gresham heads to the apron for a flip in, only to land on Strong's knee for a backbreaker. We take a break and come back with Strong chopping even more and dropkicking Gresham out of the air. A running boot in the corner misses and Jonathan bends Strong's fingers to break up a backbreaker. Gresham loads up what looks like the same thing Pentagon Jr. uses to break arms in Lucha Underground but goes after the fingers again.

It's off to some more standard arm work with an armdrag and Octopus Stretch followed by....an ankle lock. Yes an ankle lock after working on the fingers and the arm because people like Gresham think that makes you look smart and/or cool. Thankfully he's back to the arm a few seconds later (making the ankle lock stuff look even dumber), only to have Strong knee him in the head to retain at 8:45.

**Rating:** C-. The match was watchable if you can ignore the ankle lock nonsense in the middle. Gresham is fine but he's another wrestler who has no real character and is just out there doing moves. That's going to get

you over in a place like Ring of Honor but when half the roster fits that description, it's really starting to get lost in the shuffle. On top of that, none of this matters because New Japan wrestler Tomohiro Ishii won the title because HAHA NEW JAPAN ROCKS, basically throwing the whole story out and resetting things less than a week before a pay per view.

Post match Bobby Fish comes out to steal the title, triggering a brawl.

#### Bob Evans/Tim Hughes vs. War Machine

Non-title. Rowe and Hughes get things going and Tim is thrown into the corner for an early tag to Evans. Bob's amateur wrestling attempts go just as badly and it's back to Hughes. The champs keep having fun with an exploder suplex and it's off to Hanson. Rowe cartwheels away from Evans and a reverse powerbomb followed by Hanson's top rope splash is good for the pin on Bob at 2:56. Total squash.

Post match the All Night Express comes out with weapons to say time is running out on the title reign. All the other teams look at War Machine and see tattooed power. Kenny King looks at them and sees some bearded thugs. They aren't here to fight tonight because they have plans for War Machine on Friday.

Silas Young is out of patience for the Boys and can't wait to crush them next week.

The Young Bucks say wrestling is very dirty so they need to bring in the Cleaner Kenny Omega. This Friday will be the world's biggest superkick party.

We look back at Adam Page attacking BJ Whitmer last week.

#### BJ Whitmer vs. Chase Brown

Brown is named Cauliflower and he brings some out with him. Whitmer knocks him into the corner to start and there's the exploder suplex for the pin on Brown at 56 seconds.

Whitmer gives him another exploder but here's Steve Corino before Whitmer can say anything else. Instead, BJ wants Adam Page out here so Page

sneaks in through the crowd with a clothesline and right hands until we take a break.

Dalton Castle has the Boys ready for next week.

Here's Adam Cole for some Story Time. He's finally getting his shot at the World Title at the Anniversary Show and you're going to see Jay Lethal and Kyle O'Reilly trying to keep up with him. Adam promises that Kyle is never getting near the World Title and Lethal has never met anything like him. This brings out the House of Truth with Lethal talking about how Kyle has never been a champion so let's leave the kid out of this.

On Friday in Las Vegas, Lethal is going to prove that the house always wins. As Nigel groans about needing security again, here comes Kyle O'Reilly to interrupt. They don't even bother talking again and the fight is on. Cole lays Lethal out but walks into Kyle's brainbuster. O'Reilly picks up the belt to a VERY quiet reaction as security arrives.

#### ACH/Alex Shelley vs. Briscoe Brothers

Mark and Jay have ODB with them for an unnecessary cameo. Christopher Daniels is on commentary. ACH and Mark get things going with a lockup until ACH nails a dropkick on both Briscoes. Mark comes back with a running clothesline before Jay comes in for some uppercuts and headbutts. It's off to Shelley who sends Mark to the floor and a top rope ax handle puts Jay down.

We take another break and come back with Alex forearming Jay, allowing the tag off to ACH. Everything breaks down and the Briscoes are in trouble with ACH mostly hitting the Jordan onto Jay. Back in and a jumping cutter gets two on Mark with Jay making the save and cleaning house. Mark kicks Alex in the face but gets kicked in the corner. Daniels gets on the apron for a distraction and ACH misses the Midnight Star, allowing the Doomsday Device to put ACH away at 8:35.

**Rating:** D+. You knew the ending here as there was no way they were going to job the Briscoes before the match with Tanahashi and Elgin on Friday. On top of that, the Shelley and Pals vs. KRD feud is somehow still

chasing its own tail and won't end no matter how dull and uninteresting of a story it is. This was your usual "this team is on a roll" match and a lame ending to a very weak show.

Post match Kazarian and Sabin come in for the beatdown until security breaks it up.

An add for the Anniversary Show (read as NEW JAPAN IS AWESOME) takes us out.

**Overall Rating:** D. The more of these go home shows I see, the less interest I have in the ensuing pay per views. If there's one thing Ring of Honor needs to do, it's find a better way to build up their big shows. I really don't know what the top match is on Friday (yes I know the World Title match is going on last) because the TV Title has been built up the best, Whitmer vs. Page is associated with the most personal feud, Tanahashi is treated as a bigger star than anyone in Ring of Honor and the World Title is the World Title but it's lucky to get a mention every week.

This show didn't do much for me either as you had a decent opener, two squashes, a talking segment which drew crickets and the average main event. I'm really not sure how this is supposed to make me want to buy a pay per view but I guess the powers of New Japan and its start showing up are supposed to be enough. Not a good go home show here and the pay per view is really not doing much for me either.

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# Ring of Honor TV – February 4, 2016: There's Something Fishy Around Here

## Ring of Honor

Date: February 3, 2016

Location: Cabarrus Arena and Events Center, Concord, North Carolina

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Mr. Wrestling 3

We're rapidly approaching the 14<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show but we're a few weeks back in the syndication run. The big story coming out of last week was Michael Elgin offering to bring in Hiroshi Tanahashi to team with him against the Briscoes in a dream match, though I'm not sure how many people were dreaming of it. Let's get to it.

### TV Title: Roderick Strong vs. Masada

Strong is defending and Masada is a death match guy. They go to the mat to start with Masada grabbing a knee bar to send the champ bailing into the ropes. Back up and they chop it out to take it outside with Masada taking over. That actually doesn't last long as Masada sends him back inside for a knee to the face and a backbreaker onto the apron as we take a break.

Back with Masada chopping away but Strong slips out (or might have been dropped) of a powerbomb. Instead Masada grabs a Death Valley Driver for two but Strong starts cranking things up with another running knee and a belly to back for two of his own. Masada pulls out some weapon but gets it knocked away, meaning he has to settle for a powerbomb instead. That means it's time for some bamboo but Strong is a wrestler so he hits his third knee to the head to retain at 8:16.

**Rating:** D+. Masada had some better moments in there than I was expecting

but Strong was getting repetitive in there with the knees to the head. Like, throw a dropkick or something dude. I really don't see why Strong had to turn heel in the first place as he's lost some of his steam since the turn and isn't as entertaining as he was before.

Post match here's Bobby Fish to say he better move to another planet if Strong wants to be the best wrestler in the world. Apparently Roddy vs. the World is about Strong defending the title against anyone not named Bobby Fish. Strong thinks Bobby is having issues dealing with his age catching up with him but Bobby offers to go to war whenever the champ wants.

We look back at Elgin's challenge to the Briscoes from last week.

#### Top Prospect Tournament First Round: Colby Corino vs. Punisher Martinez

Martinez is a good sized guy who towers over Corino. Colby tries some quick strikes and gets his head taken off with a clothesline. Some hard throws send Colby into the corner and an over the shoulder backbreaker gets two. A Liger Kick staggers Punisher and a middle rope Diamond Cutter gets two on the big man and a flip dive to the floor drops Martinez again. The fans are getting behind Corino here but Punisher gives him a Last Ride onto the apron for a SICK crash. Back in and a sitout chokeslam advances Punisher at 3:28.

**Rating:** C. Martinez looked good here and could have a future in this place. Colby is a good choice for a ragdoll and ROH is the kind of place that could go somewhere as size doesn't mean as much around here. Nothing to see here but that Last Ride bump looked great and made up for some of the other stuff.

Post match BJ Whitmer gets in the ring to tell Colby that he did well but now it's time for Steve Corino to take off that mask. Steve Corino is the man who spent Christmas with his new family while Colby was with Whitmer over the holidays. Wrestling 3 denies it again so Whitmer grabs Colby by the throat and yells at him for calling his father on Christmas. Colby is forgiven for that, but not for the sins of his father, meaning it's time for another beating. Whitmer throws Colby in front of Wrestling 3 and tells the masked man that he's proven what BJ has been saying.

We look back at the announcement of the #1 contenders match from last week.

Nigel McGuinness has replaced Mr. Wrestling 3 on commentary as the masked man helped Colby to the back.

### ReDRagon vs. Adam Cole/Jay Lethal

Adam won't come in for the pre-match handshake so it's Lethal vs. Kyle to get things going. Cole actually offers to tag in but tags right back out after a quick circle of the ring. We get a standoff until Lethal grabs a headlock, only to get countered into a cross armbreaker. Lethal is too close to the ropes but it's off to Fish to keep the champ in trouble. The announcers talk about the incoming New Japan guys as Kyle stays on the arm.

Cole finally comes in to face Fish but freaks out when Kyle is about to be tagged in. Lethal gets Fish to the floor and whips him into the barricade before the tag can bring in O'Reilly though, allowing the heels to take over. We take a break and come back with Lethal dropkicking Fish in the back of the head to set up some posing. Cole comes in and eats a clothesline, allowing the tag off to Kyle as things speed up again.

It's back to Lethal who gets caught in another cross armbreaker as everything breaks down. Cole and Fish go to the floor so it's time for Lethal and O'Reilly to trade their forearms, because that's how you fight in ROH. Chasing the Dragon is broken up and the Lethal Combination sets up a Shining Wizard on Kyle for two. We take another break and come back with Lethal dropping a top rope elbow on Fish but getting caught in a dragon screw legwhip.

We finally get the showdown of Cole vs. O'Reilly, meaning it's time to grab each other by the head and fire off forearms. Kyle, who can barely stand up, no sells a German Suplex and keeps hammering away, though he's nice enough to sell a superkick. Lethal comes back in and kicks Kyle in the head but gives Cole the Lethal Injection by mistake. Chasing the Dragon puts Adam away at 16:55.

**Rating:** B. Nice long tag match here with the right ending as I can't

stand it when a makeshift team who doesn't even like each other beats one of the best teams the company has ever seen. I'm still not wild on ReDRagon as singles guys but they're a very entertaining tag team who work well together.

**Overall Rating:** C+. The main event more than carried this show, as is almost always the case with the tag division. The rest of the show worked more than well enough though with Corino vs. Whitmer shaping up quite well, even though I'm not sure how strong of a match it's eventually going to be. I'm liking this show far better than I was expecting to and it's really found its niche in recent months.

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# Ring of Honor TV – January 27, 2016: Prospects Jumping Into Japanese Lawsuits About Burgers

Ring of Honor

Date: January 27, 2016

Location: Cabarrus Arena and Events Center, Concord, North Carolina

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Mr. Wrestling 3

It's a new taping cycle as we're out of Philadelphia and now moving towards the Anniversary Show pay per view. However, we've got something interesting for tonight as well with the start of the Top Prospect Tournament. This is an annual competition for newcomers (not necessarily rookies) and has led to the rises of names like Mike Bennett, Matt Taven and Donovan Dijak. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

#### Top Prospect Tournament First Round: Brian Fury vs. Shaheem Ali

Fury is a seventeen year veteran and trained Sasha Banks. Ali shrugs off some headlocks to start as Kelly recaps both guys' injury histories. A wristlock doesn't get Ali anywhere so he knees Fury in the head and gets two off a basement dropkick. Back up and Fury rolls him into the corner (because in today's wrestling, it's all about doing something to send someone into the corner), followed by a belly to back for two.

Ali comes back with a gutwrench sitout powerbomb for two of his own before taking Fury outside for a t-bone suplex on the floor. Back in and Fury grabs the referee's foot for a distraction to bring Ali's head off the top, setting up a Pop Up Sitout Powerbomb for the pin on Ali at 5:55.

**Rating:** C. You can see the problem with the tournament from here: there's no reason for these people to be fighting and I have almost no idea who any of them are. It might be cool if someone stands out over the rest but this was two guys doing moves to each other for a few minutes before one of them got a pin. I need more than that to care about a match and especially a tournament.

Here are Veda Scott and Cedric Alexander to brag about their victory in their lawsuit against Ring of Honor. Jonathan Gresham got lucky to beat Alexander, who deserves shots at the best talent in the world. That means an open challenge.

#### Cedric Alexander vs. Cheeseburger

Cheeseburger goes right for him to start and actually gets two off a

quick rollup. Alexander's fireman's carry is broken up and a victory roll gets another near fall. A springboard knee to the head drops Cedric but the running palm strike is countered into the Lumbar Check for the easy pin on Cheeseburger at 1:42.

Post match Cedric keeps beating on Cheeseburger until Jonathan Gresham comes out for the save. Veda sets up an impromptu match, which she can just do.

#### Cedric Alexander vs. Jonathan Gresham

Gresham follows the Cheeseburger plan by trying an early rollup, sending Cedric out to the floor. Back in and Cedric quickly bails again as this is barely a match. Cedric comes in again but walks into an Octopus Hold, drawing in Veda for the DQ at 1:45.

Alexander beats up Gresham after the match until referees make the save.

Here's the House of Truth to find out who Jay Lethal will be defending against at the Anniversary Show. Nigel McGuinness is in the ring and talks about how many big wins Lethal has had in recent months, including AJ Styles and Michael Elgin. That brings him to the next challenger, which makes Nigel thinking of Kyle O'Reilly. That's fine with Lethal because he's beaten Kyle already but Nigel wasn't finished. Kyle is indeed great, but he was defeated by Adam Cole at Final Battle, which makes Cole the new #1 contender.

This brings out Cole who says it's Story Time. He knows his battles with Kyle are over and that means O'Reilly will never be challenging for the World Title again. Lethal may have some great victories as champion but Cole isn't on that list. Cole promises to win the title in Las Vegas but Nigel isn't done. It's true that Cole is the #1 contender, but Kyle isn't done with Cole yet. Unless Adam is scared, there's no reason to not make this a triple threat match.

Cue Kyle who is thankful for the title shot at the end of February, but what about the time between now and then? He wants a piece of both guys in Charlotte (the show is in Concord but close enough) so Nigel makes it ReDRagon vs. Jay Lethal/Adam Cole for some point in the near future.

We recap Silas Young vs. Dalton Castle and the saga over the Boys.

Silas talks about teaching the Boys to be like men for three months, but then along comes Dalton Castle to manipulate them into changing back. The Boys have one more chance to become men and that's it for them.

### Jay Briscoe vs. Michael Elgin

Mark Briscoe is out for commentary but here's Moose to interrupt. If the World Title can be a three way, why can't this match be one too? They do at least mention that Nigel signed off on the change.

### Jay Briscoe vs. Michael Elgin vs. Moose

Briscoe Cactus Clotheslines Moose out to the floor so Elgin follows them out with a flip dive. Moose is left on the floor as Elgin puts Jay up in a delayed vertical. Elgin doesn't even drop him when Moose kicks him in the ribs so Moose waits until Jay is down before bicycle kicking Elgin in the jaw. Moose and Jay slug it out until Briscoe kicks him in the face for two as we take a break.

Back with Elgin apron superplexing Briscoe until Moose breaks it up. That's not cool with Elgin so he turns Moose's superplex attempt into a slingshot Tower of Power to put everyone down. Elgin slips off Moose's shoulders and lifts him up into a powerbomb for two as Jay makes the save. Briscoe gets two on Elgin off a Death Valley Driver, only to have Moose spear Briscoe down. That leaves Elgin and Moose to clothesline each other until Elgin clotheslines Jay instead. Elgin goes after Moose though, allowing Jay to backslide Michael for the pin at 9:37.

**Rating:** C+. Nice hard hitting match here though it was really just three alternating singles matches with the occasional big spot thrown in. Still though, that's all you need a lot of the time as everyone was beating on everyone with bigger and bigger shots. Moose really didn't need to be there but at least it protects Elgin a bit.

Post match Elgin says Mark was out here backing up his brother mentally, so why not make it a tag match at the Anniversary Show with Elgin teaming up with Hiroshi Tanahashi? That's quite the jump to get to the match but

the Briscoes agree to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. I liked the show but the Cedric Alexander stuff in the middle really didn't do anything for me, much like that whole story. I'm still not sure where it's supposed to go but beating Cheeseburger didn't make me care about Alexander. It's still an entertaining show though and goes by quickly, which is all you can ask for.

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