

On This Day: May 12, 2012 – ROH Border Wars 2012: I Remember Why I Don't Watch ROH

Border Wars 2012

Date: May 12, 2012

Location: Ted Reeve Arena, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

The things I do for this series. This is a show that was considered a big deal for ROH at the time and unfortunately for me, it has Davey Richards defending the world title. I don't know much about ROH from this period due to being bored out of my mind by their product. The main event is the aforementioned title defense against Kevin Steen, who has been terrorizing ROH for months now. Let's get to it.

We open with Nigel McGuinness and Kevin Kelly in the ring to introduce the show. Nigel, a former world champion, talks about what a big deal it is to win the title. Tonight is Kevin Steen's only shot at immortality. Kelly talks about some of the other matches and throws us to a video on Rhyno, who apparently is a mercenary working for Truth Martini.

Eddie Edwards vs. Rhyno

Before the match, Truth Martini says that Rhyno is a hired mercenary and the newest member of the House of Truth. We got that from the video we just saw. He's here to clear the path to the world title for Michael Elgin and Roderick Strong by Goring everyone in his way. The fans are of course split because what would an ROH crowd be without annoying chants from the start of the show?

Edwards starts with a wristlock followed by an armdrag into an armbar as we seem to be in for a long match here. Rhyno powers him into the corner and pounds away before running Edwards over with a shoulder block. Edwards fights out of the corner with some chops and a rana to put Rhyno down, followed by a baseball slide to send Rhyno into the barricade. The cameraman goes down somewhere in there and Eddie is a bit stunned. Rhyno hits a HARD shoulder to the ribs in the corner and Edwards is in big trouble.

McGuinness starts talking about fast moving sperm and thankfully Kevin ignores him. Eddie comes back with a quick enziguri, only to be picked up and thrown over the top and out to the floor with a loud THUD. Back in and Rhyno stays on the ribs in a smart move. The audio keeps slipping in and out. Off to a bearhug by Rhyno as at least he's using psychology here. Rhyno loads up another gorilla press but Edwards escapes out and hooks a quick German suplex to put both guys down.

Eddie fires off some chops and superkicks the leg, followed by something close to a Shining Wizard for a close two. The fans are split again because this is REAL WRESTLING, where you cheer for the heels. Edwards avoids a charge to send Rhyno to the floor before hitting an Asai Moonsault, hurting his ribs again in the process. Back in and Edwards hits a missile dropkick for two but walks into a belly to belly suplex. The Gore is blocked with a dropkick and Truth Martini gets up on the apron. He holds up the Book of Truth (foreign object) in the corner but Rhyno has to stop before hitting it, allowing Edwards to roll him up for the pin.

Rating: C+. Nice basic match here with Edwards selling the ribs....sometimes. He more or less stopped doing anything with them after they got back inside the ring but at least before that things were going well. Rhyno was his usual self here with nothing out of character for him at all. Then again, that's probably a good thing for a guy like him. Edwards is still rather uninteresting though.

Post match Rhyno grabs Martini but Truth holds up cash. Rhyno takes the money and teases turning on Martini anyway but walks out.

Another glitch: Kelly seems to throw it to a video on the next match but instead we see the end of the previous match.

Apparently the Young Bucks interfered in a TJ Perkins vs. Mike Mondo match and cost Perkins the win. The All Night Express ran in for the save and we've got a six man.

Young Bucks/Mike Mondo vs. All Night Express/TJ Perkins

The Bucks are Nick and Matt Jackson and the Express is Rhett Titus and Kenny King, who as of this writing is TNA X-Division Champion. It's a melee to start of course until we get down to TJ vs. Mike. Mondo is sent to the floor so here's I think Nick, only to be caught in a headscissors. These guys are moving around so fast that I can't keep track of them. King hits a running dropkick on I think Matt for two. Back to Mondo who gets suplexed down by King for no count.

A spinebuster puts Mondo down and King pounds away for a two count. Off to Titus for a running boot to the ribs as Mondo is in trouble early on. Perkins and King get some quick tags for some shots on Mondo but Mike FINALLY pops King in the ribs. Matt comes in and is immediately caught in an armbar before it's off to Titus again. A running Fameasser puts Matt down and the Express seems to botch a drop toehold into a dropkick double team.

Nick trips up Rhett from the floor and the Bucks double team Titus into a whip into the barricade by Mondo. The Bucks take over on Titus with various double teaming offense, including a top rope dive onto Titus' back. The heels load up a triple dropkick to a seated Titus. Nick hits, Mondo mostly misses, and Matt never jumped. Mondo hooks a rolling backslide of all things for several near falls and makes a blind tag to Nick, allowing him to break up a backslide by Titus.

Back to Matt who gets caught in a tilt-a-whirl snake eyes from Titus but Mondo breaks up a hot tag attempt to King. Nick and Mike collide in the corner and Matt gets backdropped, allowing for the real hot tag to Kenny. I feel like I'm calling a Spirit Squad match with all these names. King does very little of note and it's off to Perkins with a top rope cross body to take out both Bucks. A powerbomb gets two on Nick but Mondo drives Titus face first into the mat.

Perkins flips around a lot and kicks Matt in the head, but Matt basically no sells it so the Bucks can hit a double superkick on King. Everyone is down now until Mondo breaks up a springboard attempt by King. Matt powerbombs Rhett into a kick to the head from Nick, allowing Mondo to headscissor Rhett into a top rope splash by Matt for two.

Nick tries a suicide dive which the camera totally misses. Instead he hits a big spinning dive to the floor to take out people we couldn't make out because of the bad lighting. Rhett clotheslines Matt down, allowing the Express to hit a powerbomb/Blockbuster combo, followed by a 450 from Perkins for the pin.

Rating: C. This was your standard six man spot fest which wasn't all that great. At the end of the day, this same idea has been done WAY better over the years with way more interesting people. The Bucks just aren't that interesting and never have shown me any reason to care about them at all. Nothing much to see here.

Jay Lethal talks about Tommaso Ciampa stalking him in Fort Lauderdale and costing him a match.

Ciampa says he'll beat Lethal.

Jay Lethal vs. Tommaso Ciampa

Ciampa is part of the Embassy, a heel stable. He jumps Lethal to start

but gets pulled out to the floor for a brawl before the bell. Lethal pounds away on Ciampa but Tommaso comes back with a hard chop to send him against the railing. Ciampa lowers his knee pad and charges at Jay, only to slam his own knee into the barricade. He shakes the pain off though and sends Lethal into the barricade a few times but the fans chant for Kevin Steen for no apparent reason. This is all still before the bell.

Lethal comes back with a catapult to launch Ciampa face first into the entrance to shift control again. Jay finally heads inside with Ciampa down on the floor but one of the Embassy guys breaks up a suicide dive bid. The distraction lets Ciampa get in a quick to Lethal's head for a two, a few seconds after the bell finally rings. Tommaso chokes away on the apron before putting on a very modified dragon sleeper.

Ciampa pounds away in the corner including going after Lethal's eye for a bit. This is slowing way down and it's not exactly entertaining stuff at this point. Apparently Ciampa is undefeated for like two years coming into this. Jay gets in a shot to the head and they slug it out very slowly. You really shouldn't be at a last man standing slugout just four minutes into a match.

Lethal takes over and Ciampa is in trouble. Again just four minutes into the match, which is too little for being so tired. Yeah they brawled, so maybe it was ten minutes in total to make them that exhausted. As usual, I don't care for the psychology in Ring of Honor. Lethal has to beat up the other Embassy guys, allowing for Ciampa to hit a lariat for two. Jay counters a sunset flip into a rollup for two of his own before being caught by a HARD knee to the head for a near fall.

Another knee to the head in the corner puts Lethal down and there goes the knee pad for several more knees to the head. Lethal counters a powerbomb into an Alabama Slam into the corner but again has to deal with the Embassy leader. A small package gets two for Ciampa (I think) and now Lethal is getting fired up. He goes off on Ciampa and hits a handspring into the ropes into a cutter, apparently called Lethal Injection, for

two.

Yet another Embassy guy (these are just guys in suits and not important enough to identify properly) interferes but Lethal slugs him down and gets two off a top rope elbow. Ciampa tells Lethal to come at him, so Jay hooks him in a Rock Bottom position and drives him down onto Lethal's knee in ten straight backbreakers followed by a downward spiral for Ciampa's first loss.

Rating: C-. Well that happened. Seriously that's the entirety of my thoughts on the match. Lethal has never been a guy I've cared about at all and Ciampa didn't show me anything of note here. The ending was just stupid with Ciampa telling him to come for him and Lethal just doing the same move over and over again before getting the win. Also the guys being spent just a few minutes into it still doesn't work for me at all.

Post match Ciampa screams a lot and storms out.

We recap Mike Bennett vs. Lance Storm. A now bald Storm saw potential in Bennett but doesn't like his lack of respect. The audio here is designed to make Storm sound like he's repeating himself which is really annoying. Bennett beat him back in April so this is the rematch.

Mike Bennett vs. Lance Storm

Bennett has his old trainer named Brutal Bob Evans with him but no Maria, as in Maria from WWE who is absolutely gorgeous. The fans immediately chant for her and I can't say I blame them at all. They shove each other around to start with Lance being pushed into the corner which goes nowhere. Both guys trade strikes with Storm hitting a European uppercut to send Bennett into the corner and down to the mat.

Storm fires off some shoulders into the corner and a running version to the ribs gets two. Off to an abdominal stretch which is the most logical

move for him at this point. Bennett quickly reverses and sends Storm to the apron and then into the buckle, sending Storm to the floor. Mike throws Storm into the announce table and then the barricade and we head back inside. The fans chant obscenities at Bennett because they can't handle their countryman getting beaten up. Sore losers.

After sending Storm into the corner it's off to a bow and arrow hold by Bennett to give the guys a breather. Storm flips out of the hold into a kick to Bennett's face but gets caught in a backdrop to put him right back down. Back to the reverse chinlock with a knee in Storm's back as Bennett keeps things slow. Lance fights back and they slug it out with both guys seemingly spent again after only a few minutes. In a rather impressive display of athleticism, Storm jumps from the mat and up to the top for a back elbow to the face, getting two.

The superkick is blocked and Storm walks into a spinebuster for a close two. Bennett tries a fireman's carry but Storm slips down to the apron. A springboard clothesline misses though and Mike spears him down for two. Storm tries something out of a fireman's carry but Bennett comes back with a sit out Rock Bottom called the Box Office Smash for two.

A dragon screw leg whip puts Storm down and flips off the fans (Storm mentioned that metaphorically in his pre-match promo) before putting on Storm's own Canadian Maple Leaf half crab. Storm reverses into one of his own but Evans pulls Bennett to the floor. Storm hits a big dive to take Mike out before going back inside. With Evans distracting the referee, Mike gets a chair, only to have Storm blast him in the back with it and superkick Bennett down for the pin.

Rating: C+. This is probably the match of the night so far, but that ending brings it down for me. Storm using the chair is completely against what he's been talking about leading up to the match and it goes against his style in general. Now, superkick the chair into Bennett's face would have been fine, but it doesn't feel right for Storm to just use the chair on his own like that.

Storm says he doesn't know how many more of these he has in him, but if he does it again he's doing it here in Toronto. The fans tell him he's still got it and he says he uses it because of fans like the ones here. Storm gives a shout out to his wife who is in the crowd in a nice moment.

Video on Davey Richards vs. Kevin Steen. The idea is that Richards is unbeatable while Steen is insane and wants to hold the company hostage by winning the world title. Steen went on a path of destruction, leading up to his title match here tonight. Kevin begged Davey for a match but Cornette, the ROH boss, said no. Davey eventually begged Cornette for the match until it was set, which is a great heel move.

Finlay says he's coming for Roderick Strong and the TV Title.

Video on the tag title match. We must be in intermission. The Briscos and Wrestling's Greatest Tag Team have been feuding for awhile and tonight it's a fight without honor, which I guess means a street fight. Jay Brisco got crotched against the post three times after the match ended.

Another video on Richards vs. Steen, from the night Davey won the title.

The announcers talk about the remaining four matches.

Adam Cole vs. Michael Elgin

No real story here. They're just both young breakout stars and are having a match because of it. Elgin is part of the House of Truth and a big power guy. A quick hiptoss sends the smaller Cole flying as McGuinness talks about what it means to be in a big match like this. Cole fires off those ROH forearm strikes that seemingly everyone in the company uses, only to be shoved out of the corner with ease. Instead he comes out of the corner with a middle rope dropkick to send Elgin down.

A quick rana puts Elgin down to the floor but Elgin catches Cole's

suicide dive and slams him onto the floor. Back in and Elgin fires off some hard chops followed by some slow stomps down in the corner. Cole comes back with a quick jawbreaker and sends Elgin chest first into the corner. Elgin blocks a German and blasts Cole in the head, followed by an Alabama Slam for two. Off to a bow and arrow hold by Elgin as Martini comes over and talks trash on commentary.

Back up and a quick rollup gets two for Adam but Michael blasts him right in the head to take him back down. They trade forearms as is the ROH custom until Elgin gets caught in a tornado DDT. A top rope splash gets two for Cole but Elgin breaks up another German suplex attempt. Instead it's Elgin powering Cole up for a big rolling German (Rolling Chaos Theory) for two. A hard shot to Elgin's head gets two for Adam and there are some quick kicks to the head. Elgin comes back with WICKED clothesline to put Cole on the floor.

Both guys are spent now so Elgin can't follow up on the downed Cole. He finally goes after Adam but gets caught by a jumping enziguri to stagger the monster. As Adam gets on the apron, Elgin gets on the middle rope and lifts Cole off the apron and up into a falcon arrow (sitout suplex) down onto the mat. People RAVED when Antonio Cesaro did that in May of 2013.

Off to a crossface by Elgin but Adam rolls out, only to be forearmed into the head. Adam pops back up and hits a quick backbreaker for two before going up top. He dives off with a cross body and is caught into a buckle bomb, followed by a helicopter bomb (love that move) for the pin by Elgin.

Rating: B-. This worked pretty well, but again I cannot stand those forearms. They've been used in almost every match now and they don't come off as unique or intense at all. Also, the same problem that plagued Eddie Edwards is true here for Cole: there's nothing to him. He's a guy in trunks that had a decent match and nothing more. Elgin at least has his power to make him stand out a bit.

Martini brags about Elgin winning post match. He tells Elgin that his night is over and to go to the back. Martini stays in the ring to brag about how great it is to be him, only to be superkicked by Cole.

Fit Finlay wants to know how deep Roderick Strong can dig inside himself, because he's going to have to go real deep to keep his TV Title. Simple yet effective.

TV Title: Fit Finlay vs. Roderick Strong

Strong is defending if that wasn't clear. There's no time limit here for some reason. Finlay takes him into the corner to start but no one gets anywhere. More feeling out commences with no one doing much for the first minute or so. A headlock takes Roderick down as we're firmly in first gear here. Finlay works over the leg as the crowd is rather quiet here. Strong bails to the floor as there isn't much to talk about at the moment.

Back in and Strong takes him to the ropes by the arm, only to have Finlay smack him in the chest and put on another leg lock. Off to a chinlock by Finlay as the announcers talk about Finlay's history in wrestling. They roll to the floor to exchange chops until Strong pokes him in the eye to take over. Finlay knocks him back to the floor for more chopping but Roderick takes over with chops of his own. The announcers will not stop bragging about how awesome Finlay was in his day.

They head back inside for a squeeze of Finlay's ribs. A dropkick gets two for Strong and he fires off some shoulders into the ribs in the corner. Finlay is thrown back to the floor for more pounding on the ribs before we head inside again. Strong argues with a fan before stomping on the ribs even more. Finlay comes back with some chops out of the corner and pounds away with very basic stomps. Strong snaps off a belly to back suplex for two and is starting to get frustrated.

He loads up the Strong Hold (Boston Crab) and Finlay is in trouble in the

middle of the ring. Finlay pretty easily powers out of it and they throw forearms at each other. These are totally different from the other matches because they're on their knees here. Finlay takes over and hits his fireman's carry roll followed by the Celtic Cross, which Sheamus uses as White Noise. Finlay goes up top, only to be knocked right back to the floor. Back in and a double knee gutbuster gets two on Finlay. Strong is like screw this and kicks Finlay in the face for the pin to retain.

Rating: C. Again, Strong is just a guy in trunks with a name I likely won't remember, even though I've seen a good bit of his work before. None of these guys are anything memorable and from what I can tell, other than the two main matches there aren't many stories going on either. Finlay put Strong over well here which is exactly why he was brought in. I'm not sure I get how you can claim that a win over a guy who was awesome twenty years ago, but it was fine for what it was.

Wrestling Greatest Tag Team (Shelton Benjamin and Charlie Haas) didn't like being beaten up by the Briscos. Earlier tonight we saw these two beat up the Briscos so tonight it's a wild brawl for the Briscos' tag belts.

The Briscos, the biggest hicks you'll ever see, say they'll cross the border and cross the line against Haas and Benjamin tonight.

Tag Titles: Wrestling's Greatest Tag Team vs. Brisco Brothers

The Briscos are Mark and Jay and have no relation to Jack and Jerry Briscoe. This is fight without honor, meaning it's a street fight. It's also unsanctioned, although it can somehow be for the promotion's tag titles. There's no Mark Brisco to start so apparently Jay is going to try to do this on his own. Actually, cue Mark in hockey gear with some stick shots to the back of Haas' head. The brawl is on as the referee has to get rid of those stupid streamers.

Mark hits Haas in the throat with the hockey stick and the Briscos clean

house. With the challengers on the floor and the announcer doing the intros, Mark dives on both guys as the brawl really gets going. Back in and the Briscos double team Benjamin as this has been one sided so far. Charlie pulls Shelton to the floor, only to be caught by a double baseball slide from the champions.

Shelton has a chair thrown onto his back as it's kind of hard to keep track of the insanity. Back in and Haas gets an exploder suplex for two on Jay before choking him with his shirt. Haas charges at him, only to be caught in a downward spiral right into a chair wedged between the ropes. Shelton comes back in (there aren't any tags in this) and blasts Jay down, only to have Mark save him from a chair shot. We go back to the floor where Jay catapults Charlie face first into the post as the champions continue to dominate.

Haas is busted open as Mark hits a running swanton off the apron onto Benjamin. An attempt at a second one misses (kind of?) but Mark brings in a wheel from a wheelchair. Jay pounds on Charlie in the ring as Mark goes up, only to be flipped off the top and through a table at ringside. A jawbreaker hits Jay but he comes back with a Death Valley Driver on Shelton. Jay goes up but gets distracted by Haas, allowing Shelton to run up the corner and suplex him down.

Shelton hits a spinebuster off the top for two on Jay as the challengers take over for the first time. Mark tries to come back in with the hockey stick but gets knocked back into the barricade. Charlie and Shelton try to crotch Jay on the post again but Mark makes the save. Mark starts cleaning house and flips Charlie off the top followed by a top rope elbow for two. Jay sends Benjamin to the floor as the fans want tables. Naturally ask and you will receive, as Jay sets one up on the floor.

Jay and Shelton brawl on the apron with Jay loading up something on his hand, only to have Shelton load up a German off the apron. Jay holds on to avoid a nasty case of death, only to hook an electric chair drop to send Jay through the table. Back in the ring Charlie sprays something on

a rag and chokes Mark out with it for the pin and titles. It appeared to be ether or something like that.

Rating: B-. This was a pretty solid brawl and pretty easily the match of the night to this point. It's not a great match or anything like that and the ending came out of nowhere, but it goes along with the no honor thing. This doesn't come off like a match ending a feud, but then again this isn't the biggest show of the year or anything so it's understandable. Good match but that's about it.

The announcers rant about how the new champions showed no honor in a fight without honor.

We preview the main event which we've already covered in detail so far. The production values continue to suck here as the video is drowning out the commentary being done over it.

ROH World Title: Kevin Steen vs. Davey Richards

Steen is challenging and a Canadian, making him the massive favorite. Richards is a rather short guy while Steen is heavy but not exactly fat. Jimmy Jacobs is with Steen while Richards is alone due to a death in the family of Kyle O'Reilly. Steve Corino, who has been an opponent of Steen for months, is on commentary. Not that we can hear him but he's there. Steen talks trash to start as the fans chant NEXT WORLD CHAMP. He immediately tries his package piledriver, which is kind of like a Pedigree but he hooks the legs and lifts Davey up into a piledriver instead of dropping Richards face first. It's easily countered though as this isn't WWE, meaning the finishers actually mean something.

They go to the forearms with Steen being the huge crowd favorite. Richards clotheslines him out to the floor and hits a nice suicide dive to take Steen down again. They head back inside but a distraction by Jacobs allows Steen to DDT Richards as he comes back inside. Steen takes it right back to the floor and sends Davey into the barricade a few

times. Richards gets crotched against the post as the referee is considering throwing this out.

Steen takes him back to the apron but gets caught in a t-bone suplex onto the apron. Once that gets two inside, Richards starts firing off the kicks. You knew he couldn't resist them much longer than that. Now it's off to a modified version of Konnan's Tequila Sunrise, which is a kneeling half crab with Steen's arm trapped at the same time. Now it's off to a freaky Figure Four variation with Steen on his face and Richards on his back. More kicks by the champion cause the fans to chant that this is the same stuff he's always used.

An enziguri knocks Steen out to the floor but he pulls Richards down with him so he can powerbomb Davey onto the apron. It works so well that Steen does it again before throwing Davey back inside. A cannonball roll into the corner gets two for Steen but he's holding his leg. It slows Steen down as he goes up top, allowing Richards to crotch him. Steen bites Richards to the mat and tries a Swanton, only to land on knees. A hard lariat gets two for Richards and he's getting frustrated. The fans telling Richards that he can't beat Steen isn't helping his self esteem either.

Steen comes back with a superkick (the most popular move in ROH) and a clothesline to put both guys down again. Back up and it's time for more forearms with Richards taking over, only to be caught in a kind of a Death Valley Driver for two. The Package Piledriver is escaped again so Steen rakes the eyes. Richards goes back to the knee but gets caught in a powerbomb and the Sharpshooter. Davey gets to a rope pretty quickly and dropkicks the bad knee out from under Kevin.

There's a dragon screw leg whip and Davey wraps the bad leg up in the ropes for a double stomp to the chest. Another double stomp gets two and it's off to the ankle lock, which is the move that Richards uses to prove that he's a WRESTLER and not a glorified kickboxer. Steen kicks him off but gets caught in a DR Driver (basically a Pedigree Driver) for two.

Davey fires off some rapid fire kicks to the head, meaning like 20 of them. They trade HARD shots to the head before Steen snaps off an F5 for two.

A moonsault connects with Davey but it hurts Kevin's knee and he can't immediately cover. The delayed cover gets two but Richards is able to escape the package piledriver when the knee gives out again. A hard kick to Steen's head gets two for the champion and there's another big one. Steen sits up and catches another spin kick in an ankle lock on Richards. Davey immediately turns it over and puts on an ankle lock of his own with a grapevine.

Kevin twists and turns enough to be able to turn it into a Sharpshooter of all things but Richards counters into the ankle lock again. Steen crawls over to the corner and pulls the buckle off as Davey pulls him back. Richards screws himself over though as Steen rolls out of the hold, sending Richards face first into the buckle. The package piledriver hits and Steen is the champion.

Rating: B. This was pretty good although it was clear that Steen was going out with the belt from the minute the bell rang. It's definitely the best match of the night, although I can't stand all the kicks to the head. Richards throws them WAY too hard and in a post Benoit world, we just do not need that kind of thing in wrestling or anywhere. I still can't stand Richards but this was pretty solid stuff.

Post match ROH owner Carey Silkin can't bring himself to hand Steen the belt. Corino and Jacobs get in the ring and hug Steen in an alleged big shock. If we could have heard Corino talk earlier, it might have been shocking but since I have no idea what he said, this means very little.

Overall Rating: C+. Well, that happened. Those are almost my entire thoughts on this show: it happened. Nothing on here made me want to watch any more ROH from this era or going forward and none of the wrestling blew me away. I still have the same issues I've always had with it: the

same spots in all the matches (forearms etc), the VERY generic characters (someone explain to me what exactly is different between Strong, Cole and Edwards. They're the same guys in different attire. Oh and Strong is taller.), and the lack of stories other than in the main event.

The show certainly isn't bad, but it does absolutely nothing for me as a fan. The production looks like an OVW TV episode, which isn't terrible but when this is supposed to be the third biggest company in the country, I expect to see more than I get from a minor league company that reaches maybe three million people. It's ROH at the end of the day, which means some people are fanatical about it, but I really don't get the mass appeal here.

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