

Ring of Honor – August 5, 2015: Taped Shows Can Work

Ring of Honor

Date: August 5, 2015

Location: Terminal 5, New York City, New York

Commentators: King Corino, Kevin Kelly

These marathon TV tapings are starting to become an issue as they're still in the same venue, even after a pay per view elsewhere and as we're coming up on the next pay per view where the cycle starts all over again. Last week's show really didn't work for me but maybe things can pick up again in another stand alone show. Let's get to it.

Roderick Strong is in the back and talks about proving himself against Jay Lethal at Death Before Dishonor in their hour long draw. They went toe to toe for sixty minutes but Lethal couldn't beat him. Nighel McGuinness needs to understand that Lethal's next defense is a rematch with Strong. What Strong needs to understand is that he needs a mouthpiece because he just can't talk.

Opening sequence.

War Machine vs. Young Bucks

Oh joy, another match of hearing SUPERKICK over and over. It's a brawl to start with Hanson and Rowe destroying the Bucks with ease. An old Harris Twins H Bomb drops Nick and Rowe launches him over the top and onto his partner. The Bucks' stereo apron moonsaults are easily caught in midair and War Machine throws them into each other for a cool crash.

Superkicks (what else?) break up a chokeslam off the apron but Hanson shrugs off the Bucks' flippy splashes and takes them down with a double clothesline. That earns him a double superkick to the floor and Nick follows with a flip dive, only to come up lame. Back from a break with Hanson throwing Matt Jackson back inside as Nick is still down on the floor. War Machine has Matt two on one but here's AJ Styles to check on

his Bullet Club teammate.

This also presents another problem with the taping schedule as Styles is still announced as the IWGP Heavyweight Champion but he lost the belt over a month ago. Matt's rollup is countered with a wicked clothesline from Hanson, but he's able to roll away when Rowe tries to powerbomb Hanson onto him. Cue Styles onto the apron as the new partner to help clean house, only to clothesline the referee down by mistake. It's superkick time with Nick Jackson running in, totally fine of course, to help out. The Styles Clash puts Rowe away at 14:12.

Rating: C. So the Young Bucks. I'm still not sure what I think of them as the idea of being cool heels is played out but well done, but at the same time, I really don't like the huge wink at the camera and breaking of the fourth wall as they're as close to flat out saying "yeah we're faces but saying we're cool heels and cheating to make the whole face/heel dynamic worthless." I really can't stand that kind of character but it's something you have to deal with in Ring of Honor and other similar companies as they have to try to be smarter than the fans who want "real" wrestling.

Adam Cole knows where he is in Ring of Honor after his surgery. As far as he can tell, his handshake with Kyle O'Reilly a few weeks back didn't cause any problems in the Kingdom, because he and Kyle have been friends for years. Tonight's match is about respect.

Cedric Alexander vs. The Romantic Touch

Touch is a masked man and an over the top, stereotypical, uh, romantic, I believe played by Rhett Titus. Alexander dropkicks him in the corner during the entrances as Cedric's former partner Caprice Coleman is on commentary, taking issue with Cedric's recent heel turn. A big right hand drops Touch but he sends Cedric to the floor for a flip dive and pelvic thrusting. Veda Scott grabs Touch's leg though, allowing Alexander to kick the middle rope for some crotching. A belly to back suplex into a backbreaker (Lumbar Check) puts Touch away at 2:45.

Post match Veda says Cedric should be tired of waiting on his time to come. She would never lie to him and Alexander knows what she needs to

him: to rip off the Touch's mask and expose him as Rhett Titus. This brings Coleman to the ring for the save but here's Moose for the real save as Cedric runs off.

Jay Lethal and Truth Martini admit that Strong took Lethal to the limit at Death Before Dishonor but now he's going back to the end of the line.

Kyle O'Reilly vs. Adam Cole

These two used to be partners in a team called Future Shock and Christopher Daniels is on commentary. They wrestle around to start and tease a superkick, because that's the one move you always get in Ring of Honor. Kyle grabs a headlock on the mat (fans: "HEADLOCK CITY!") and takes Adam over with another one for good measure as we take a break. Back with Kyle headlocking Adam down a third time.

Cole flips to the apron but Kyle grabs him by the head and drags him back inside. Adam's belly to back suplex still can't break the headlock so Cole bails to the floor. That earns him another headlock with Kyle DIVING off the apron to grab the hold again. Well at least they're trying something different. Cole goes after Daniels for no apparent reason, drawing Daniels in for the no contest at 8:24.

Rating: D+. The headlock thing was an idea and was actually getting entertaining by the end but then they cut the match short to set up the post match stuff. That's fine in this case as they were talking about respect so not really going after each other makes sense. These two probably could have a good match with time and an ending but they got cut off here.

Kazarian comes down to help Daniels but Kyle gets back in and Future Shock clears the ring. Cole says they're tired of this nonsense from the Addiction, so why not settle it right now?

Addiction vs. Future Shock

Non-title. Cole grabs a neckbreaker on Kazarian to start before backdropping Daniels (in street clothes). It's off to Kyle for some chops and kicks to the chest as Future Shock is already rolling with their

tandem offense. We take a break and come back with Daniels begging off from Kyle and getting hit in the face for his efforts. Addiction finally takes over and gets to double team for a change with Kazarian suplexing O'Reilly down for no cover.

A running flip neckbreaker drops Kyle again as we're into an old school tag formula here, which is probably why I'm enjoying this as much as I am. Kyle manages to crotch Daniels, allowing the hot(ish) tag to Cole. A Shining Wizard gets two on Daniels and it's time for a Figure Four but Kazarian makes the save with a springboard legdrop. For those days when a regular legdrop just doesn't do it you see. Addiction's powerbomb/neckbreaker combo puts Kyle down but Cole rolls Daniels up for the surprise pin at 8:37.

Rating: C+. I liked the ending here as the wrestlers beat the cocky team when the cocky team started showboating a bit too much. Cole as a face has potential but I'm hoping they keep ReDragon together for a bit longer as I don't see O'Reilly as a solo act. I'm sure this sets up a title shot, which likely sets up Cole's split from the Kingdom. Nice little match here.

Chris Sabin and Bobby Fish run in to keep up the brawling with ReDragon and Cole cleaning house. The Kingdom comes out to stare down the three of them as the show ends.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a better stand alone show than last week as the stories felt like they were advanced better, with the promos from Strong and Lethal making a big difference. Sure they were just basic speeches but it made you feel like you were watching something a bit more important. The matches were all decent at worst and the talking worked well. Good enough show here as we get close to some fresh shows soon enough.

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Ring of Honor – June 17, 2015: I'm Starting To Get It

Ring of Honor

Date: June 17, 2015

Location: Ted Reeve Arena, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Attendance: 1,500

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, King Corino

It's week three of Global Wars and this show will feature the debuts of some major New Japan stars. The big story continues to be the battle of the Jays as Lethal and Briscoe get ready for their showdown at Best in the World 2015. There's only one more week after this before we get to something fresh so let's get to it.

We open with.....the opening sequence. Makes sense.

Decade vs. War Machine

War Machine is Hanson/Ray Rowe, a pair of monsters who look like vikings with foot long beards. Decade is BJ Whitmer/Adam Page here. The fans tell Whitmer to shut up but he reminds them that the microphone is a lot louder than they are. Whitmer doesn't think King Corino learned his lesson a few weeks back, so Colby Corino, who remember is 18 years old and might weigh 180lbs, is his replacement.

Rowe starts with Page, who immediately tags in Colby. Corino gets right in Rowe's face and slaps him, setting up a tag to Hanson. Rowe tags out

and a big side slam plants Colby down. Back to Rowe for a nice backbreaker into a gutbuster into a powerbomb on Colby. Rowe throws Colby over to Page but Page won't tag. A belly to back suplex/guillotine legdrop finally ends Corino at 2:12. This was an angle instead of a match and I'm starting to get into this, even though I'm not entirely familiar with Corino vs. the Decade's backstory.

Here's Cedric Alexander, who has been on a losing streak lately after being billed as a breakout star last year. He has to start getting some wins, and he wants to start with the undefeated Moose. Here's his chance.

Moose vs. Cedric Alexander

Moose has Stokely Hathaway and the very lovely Veda Scott. Cedric's dropkick has little effect as the huge Moose slams him down but misses a splash. They head outside with Cedric escaping a slam and sending Moose into the post. Back in and Moose hits a nice dropkick of his own to put Alexander on the floor and us on a break. We come back with Cedric hitting a big dive to the floor, followed by a nice springboard tornado DDT for two.

That's not cool with Moose who takes his head off with a hard clothesline, followed by some hard chops. Cedric comes right back with a bunch of dropkicks in the corner but Moose spears him down. Both guys are in trouble and Veda slips Moose a wrench. He isn't interested in using it, so Cedric takes it away and blasts Moose in the head for the pin, giving Moose his first loss at 9:05.

Rating: D+. The match was back and forth but what in the world are they thinking with the booking? Moose is less than a week away from a #1 contenders three way on pay per view and you give him his first loss on the go home show? This is a very bad choice in booking and they really need to think these things out. I do not get this, but I'm assuming it leads to Veda leaving Moose.

Matt Sydal/ACH vs. Tetsuya Naito/Hiroshi Tanahashi

Sydal is formerly known as Evan Bourne, ACH is a high flier and Tanahashi is basically the John Cena of Japan. The Japanese guys won't shake hands

to start, in theory making them heels here, even though an ROH crowd isn't going to boo a star like Tanahashi. Sydal and Tanahashi trade go behinds to start until Matt takes him down for a standing moonsault. A double tag brings in Naito and ACH with the fans being split. They take their time to start until Naito slugs him down in the corner to take over.

ACH avoids a clothesline and does some unnecessary flips before dropkicking Naito in the face. Tanahashi knees ACH in the back and throws him into the barricade as we take a break. Back with Tanahashi missing a middle rope swanton but still preventing a hot tag. We hit the chinlock from Naito as I'm struggling to find things to say here. There's no real story here other than company vs. company and the announcers aren't giving me any information about any of the four guys.

Naito sends him into the corner for a basement dropkick. ACH finally counters a hurricanrana and makes the hot tag to Sydal, who comes in to clean house. In a nice counter, Sydal loads up the standing moonsault but Tanahashi is waiting on him with a German suplex. ACH fires off a bunch of kicks to Tanahashi and a clothesline for two. A German suplex from ACH gets the same and he mocks Tanahashi's air guitar. Tanahashi puts on his Texas cloverleaf but Naito tagged himself in. Granted the referee didn't seem to notice, leaving ACH to have to grab a rope.

The New Japan guys break up Sydal's Asai moonsault but ACH hits a big dive to take both of them down. Back in and ACH hits a kind of springboard downward spiral to Tanahashi, followed by Sydal's shooting star for two. Now it's ACH going up top for a 450 but Tanahashi seemingly got the knees up. A sling blade sets up the High Fly Flow (frog splash) to give Hiroshi the pin at 11:12.

Rating: C+. Fun match but it got a bit messy near the end. I still don't get why they're trying to make all the Japanese guys heels when they're naturally faces for the most part, especially with fans like the ROH crowd. Still though, good enough match here and it got the crowd going like it was supposed to.

It's time for the contract signing, as run by ROH match maker Nigel

McGuinness. TV Champion Jay Lethal is up first with World Champion Jay Briscoe following him up. Briscoe is flanked by his brother Mark and for a pair of rednecks, I'm really not feeling shirts with Twitter handles on the front. Both guys sign up and McGuinness talks about how this is the biggest match in ROH history.

Lethal would love to flip the table and beat Briscoe down right now, but he'd rather have Briscoe at his best. Notice that Lethal repeats the date of the show instead of just saying "at Best in the World". Briscoe promises to beat Lethal so bad that Lethal has to become Black Machismo again and those are fighting words. The belts are held up for a big jawing session to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. I'm looking forward to getting through this Global Wars stuff as it's really taking away from the ongoing stories. Instead of a bunch of Ring of Honor stuff, we're getting a meaningless series of matches which don't make either promotion look better than the other. They did a good go home build to the title vs. title match though, which I liked a lot better than anything else on the series so far. Good episode, but I'm looking forward to the first regular ROH show.

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