

Ring of Honor – January 31, 2018: And Border to Border

Ring of Honor

Date: January 31, 2018

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Colt Cabana

Ring of Honor is on a roll right now and that's not something I get to say all that often. The wrestling has been good and the storytelling has been better, especially around the top of the card. There are several places they could go at the moment and that makes for some entertaining television. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of So Cal Uncensored attacking the Bullet Club last week, thanks to a distraction at the hands of Shane Taylor.

Opening sequence.

Punishment Martinez vs. Dobbs

Yes Dobbs. Martinez knocks him into the corner to start as we hear about Martinez's accomplishments last year. Cabana: "And Dobbs is here too." For some reason Dobbs hits him in the face and tries a dropkick, earning himself a glare from Martinez. The spinning kick to the face seems to have a bit better effect and the South of Heaven chokeslam ends Dobbs at 1:49. The squash it should have been.

Post match here's Dalton Castle to suplex Punishment down. Martinez pops up but walks away instead. Castle looked like a star here and that's what he should have done.

Coast to Coast is ready to put their career on the line.

War Machine vs. Coast to Coast

If Coast to Coast loses, they have to split up, though this weekend's NXT show kind of gives away the ending. Caprice Coleman is on commentary. Ali dives onto War Machine during the entrances and a double dropkick puts Hanson down. Rowe is thrown onto Hanson but War Machine pops up without much damage done. Ali is taken into the corner so the beating can begin, including Hanson slamming Rowe onto Ali for good measure.

Ali finally avoids a charge and makes the hot tag to LSG so things

can speed way up. A 450 gets two on Rowe and LSG manages a suplex on Hanson in a rather shocking power display. Ali's spinning layout Rock Bottom drops Rowe but Hanson is back up with a handspring elbow as we take a break.

Back with Hanson slamming LSG into a backbreaker, followed by a gutwrench backbreaker from Rowe. A powerbomb into a frog splash gets two more on LSG and Rowe isn't sure what to do. LSG rolls over to bring Ali in with the hot tag, which is rather nice of him considering War Machine has been in the ring at the same time for a long while now. Hanson charges into a boot, followed by a side kick to put him on the floor.

A Stroke/Downward Spiral combination plants Rowe for one and it's the pop up powerslam to crush Ali. Somehow that's only two as well and Rowe is TICKED at the kickout. Coast to Coast puts Rowe in the corner for some splashes and Rowe is actually in trouble. The Coast to Coast double Van Terminator gets two on Rowe but Hanson is back in. Fallout gets two on Ali as the kickouts are getting ridiculous now. They load up Fallout again but Ali reverses into a rollup to pin Rowe (ignore the shoulder off the mat) for the pin at 13:28.

Rating: B-. I dug the story here but they went one move too far with the kickouts to the point where it stopped keeping my interest. Coast to Coast is a nice high flying team and this win should help them (especially with War Machine on their way out), but of course they need to do this more often. A better finisher might help too. Say do the dropkick with someone in the middle of the ring, assuming they can get the timing right.

We recap Brian Milonas joining forces with Beer City Bruiser to go after the Tag Team Titles.

Bruiser calls Milonas a diamond in the haystack and a needle in the rough.

Here's Bully Ray for a chat. Final Battle was his final battle and he's retired. After he lost, his entire career flashed before his eyes. As the fans give him a standing ovation, Ray holds up his boots and says he was born in New York City, but as a wrestler, he was born in Philadelphia. He talks about being born in this building in 1995 and knew that this was the city, the building and the ring to leave his boots in.

Ray says it was his honor and sits them in the ring as the locker

room comes out and the fans chant THANK YOU BUBBA. Jay Lethal gets in the ring and talks about how he wasn't sure what to think when Ray came here. There are some rumors about Ray out there and some of them are really not that good.

Then Lethal saw Ray at every show, opening up the learning tree for everyone from the top of the card to the guys just starting out. Ray came here because he wanted to and that's what Ring of Honor is all about. Lethal calls him a legend and says the door is always open if he wants to come back. A big hug wraps up a very nice segment as Ray gets a strong sendoff despite not being around Ring of Honor for very long. Nice job indeed.

We recap the start of the Women's Title tournament. At some point they actually need to have the tournament and stop just talking about it. We see a bunch of names competing in the tournament but no brackets are revealed. Four Stardom women will be competing and the matches start airing in two weeks.

So Cal Uncensored vs. Cody/Marty Scurll/Adam Page

Marty Scull is on commentary. Sky and Scurll start things off with Scorpio getting in a double stomp to the back on a leapfrog in a nice touch. Scurll stomps on the fingers though and it's off to Daniels vs. Cody, the latter of whom only after some coaxing from Daniels. Cody's tiger bomb is countered into a hurricanrana as Taven makes Harry Potter references. Page and Kazarian come in to continue their rather violent rivalry with Page Cactus Clotheslining him out to the floor.

Everyone brawls at ringside until Cody can hit a dive over the top to take them down. Back in and the Club loads up a clothesline train in the corner, though Scurll keeps charging into boots. Cody and Adam finally pick him up and ram the boots into Daniels' face to send us to a break. Back with a bloody Cody snapping off a powerslam on Kazarian and the hot tag bringing in Page to clean house.

Page takes Daniels outside for a suicide dive and a bunch of whips into the barricade. Everything breaks down again and they head outside for the bit series of dives, even with Page's top rope moonsault hitting the barricade. He's fine enough for the slingshot lariat but Kazarian catches him in a Backstabber. Sky's jumping knee to the head is good for the pin on Page at 10:50.

Rating: C+. Nice fun brawl here to continue the issues between the

groups...whatever those may be. I'm not entirely sure why So Cal Uncensored wants to destroy the Bullet Club but that's not the worst sounding idea I've ever heard of. Daniels and company are a good act and if it helps push Sky, so be it.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a good show in a different way as the wrestling was solid enough but the real highlight was the Bully Ray segment. They treated him like a star, which isn't the kind of sendoff he's going to get in WWE. He deserves this kind of treatment though and a smaller company like Ring of Honor is where it fits best. Nice show here with the wrestling working and moving stories forward.

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Ring of Honor TV – December 20, 2017: Now This Could Work

Ring of Honor

Date: December 20, 2017

Location: RP Funding Center, Lakeland, Florida

Commentators: Colt Cabana, Ian Riccaboni

We're past Final Battle but we won't be getting to the fallout from

that for at least a few weeks. It's hard to say what we might be getting tonight but there's a good chance that we might be having a Best Of show or a bunch of matches taped from other shows. This could range anywhere from a waste of time to something entertaining so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Addiction vs. Coast to Coast

They start fast with Daniels taking a double flipping faceplant as the announcers discuss Final Battle without actually mentioning any specifics in a nice touch. We settle down to Kazarian chopping Ali in the corner until it's off to Daniels for some face raking of his own. Back from a break with more of the same, including Kazarian's slingshot legdrop, followed by Daniels' springboard moonsault.

Ali fights out of the corner and Angle Slams Daniels, finally allowing the hot tag off to LSG. A double front flip clothesline takes Addiction down and a springboard spinning forearm nails Daniels. Ali's Downward Spiral plants him again but Kazarian breaks up Coast to Coast's Coast to Coast. Daniels' Backstabber into the Unprettier takes Ali down, only to have LSG springboard back in with a clothesline. The Best Meltzer Ever finishes LSG at 9:38.

Rating: C+. I like Coast to Coast but would it kill them to A, limiting the Meltzer stuff to one team and B, having a tag match that doesn't turn into a wild brawl after a few minutes of actual tagging? That was how this stuff went in ECW and it was annoying there too. This is supposed to be the wrestling company and for some reason they can never go even a good chunk of a tag match without this stuff going haywire. It would be nice for a change.

Post match LSG says he's tired of losing because they haven't won a single major match in a year. Ali says they're done if they lose their next match. LSG agrees.

Shane Taylor vs. Eli Isom

The massive Taylor shoves him around to start and hits one of the loudest chops I've heard in years. One heck of a clothesline sets up a right hand to knock Isom cold for the referee stoppage at 2:45. Now that's how you get Taylor over as a killer. I always love the guy who is knocked out with his eyes open, unable to move but basically in shock from the impact. It's a great visual.

The Young Bucks have brought their best friend for a six man tag. Marty Scurll comes in but they're talking about Kenny Omega.

It's time for Coleman's Pulpit with special guest Brandi Rhodes. She plugs being on the cast of WAGS: Atlanta and Coleman compares her to Sapphire. Brandi is ready for the Women's Title tournament, even though she hasn't won any matches yet. She used to be a figure skater so she knows about competition. As usual, nothing worth seeing here. Well save for Brandi, who continues to be stunning.

The Elite vs. Best Friends/Rocky Romero

Now you know Omega is getting a superstar pop here. Matt and Romero get things started with Rocky not being able to hit Sliced Bread. It's off to Omega vs. Chuckie with Kenny asking for silence during the handshake. Barretta jumps Omega from behind though, thankfully just definitely making the Elite the faces for once. The One Winged Angel is broken up and everything breaks down in a hurry. Elite cleans house (well duh) and it's a triple dive so we can hit the pose.

Back from a break with the Bucks actually in trouble, including the Two Dog Night into a big hug. Matt gets in a springboard spinning cutter to drop Romero and the hot tag brings in Nick to clean house. A Swanton hits knees though and Barretta gets in a running knee. The Dude Buster is broken up and the hot tag brings in Omega for another big reaction. Back to back Snap Dragons have the bad guys (I think?) in trouble but a tornado DDT cuts Omega off.

The V Trigger is broken up but we hit the Superkick Party. Rocky superplexes Nick though and Barretta German superplexes Matt onto him in a moonsault. Barretta's snap piledriver gets two on Omega and we take a second break. Back again with Omega hitting the V Trigger but Barretta piledrives him onto the apron. Nick German suplexes Barretta onto the apron, only to get caught with Sliced Bread onto the pile at ringside.

Back in and Romero cleans house with running shots in the corner, followed by a kick to Nick's face. Omega misses a V Trigger and gets caught with something like a running reverse cutter. The Bucks are back up to clean house and Romero is caught in a Sharpshooter/Crossface combo (The Cease and Desist. It's funny because it makes fun of WWE you see.).

Nick is thrown into them for a break though and it's time for a

triple slugout. Triple superkicks stagger the Friends but triple jumping knees into triple cradle piledrivers get two on the Elite. A super Dudebuster gets two on Nick but Omega breaks up a double Sliced Bread. Matt and Omega load up Tombstones with Nick dropkicking down onto the two of them. A One Winged Meltzer into the Cease and Desist (with a horrible Crossface) ends Romero at 20:53.

Rating: B+. If you can ignore all the pre-planned stuff, this was a heck of a fight with everyone moving at a very fast pace the whole way. They were beating the heck out of each other, but there's one much more important thing: the Elite wrestled as faces, which takes away one of their biggest issues. It gets very tiresome watching the group wrestle as faces but being presented as heels, especially when they wrestle a face style. Let them do what feels natural and see how much better it works.

Overall Rating: B. The main event is almost half of the show so there's only so much you can criticize around here. This is the kind of stand alone episode that is always going to work and there's nothing wrong with that. We can get to the fresh stuff later on and as long as you have a big attraction like Omega or something big in general, things will be fine.

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Ring of Honor TV – November 29, 2017: I Don't Like the Bullet Club

Ring of Honor

Date: November 29, 2017

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Colt Cabana

We've got three shows left before Final Battle and for the first time in longer than I can remember, I'm digging the heck out of ROH. They're putting on good matches and telling interesting stories, which is a lot more than you can say about most wrestling shows these days. Let's get to it.

The Bullet Club is in the back and ready for the eight man tag main event. They're ready to face the spot monkeys and Flip Gordon will never flip again.

Opening sequence.

Jonathan Gresham vs. Silas Young

The winner is the final entrant in the four way TV Title match so TV Champion Kenny King is on commentary. Gresham gets sent into the corner to start but Gresham goes after the arm to slow things down a bit. A Beer City Bruiser distraction doesn't get Young very far so Gresham sends him outside without much effort.

Back in and we hit a crisscross until Young grabs a sunset flip for two. Gresham ties his legs together to...I guess mildly annoy Young. Back up and Gresham pulls Young up by one leg and it's time for a comedy spot. After nearly thirty seconds of waiting, Gresham pushes him back and scores with a dropkick. Back with Gresham slugging away with some really bad looking punches. A suplex puts Young down and a good looking high crossbody gives Gresham two.

The octopus hold goes on but Bruiser throws in a keg for a distraction, allowing him to sneak in and break things up. In other news: ROH referees are really stupid. Bruiser grabs the leg but this time Gresham takes him down with a suicide dive. Another distraction allows Young to avoid a second high crossbody, allowing Young to hit

Misery for the pin at 11:19.

Rating: C-. The Bruiser stuff got really annoying with three different interferences. I can go for Young being in the title match but he needs something a little better than the Bruiser cheats and then Misery. Young is a good promo and a passable worker but more importantly he's more interesting than Gresham, who is a technical guy with no personality.

The Kingdom is ready for their Tag Team Title match next week.

We look at the end of last week's show with Mark Briscoe turning heel and helping to beat down Bully Ray.

War Machine comes out for a match but the Addiction jumps them in the aisle. The brawl is on with War Machine throwing the Addiction into the barricade, including a hard shot that takes down a plant.

It's time for Coleman's Pulpit with his first returning guest: Kenny King. Kenny is ready to be a fighting champion and doesn't want to hear Coleman's speech about reality. Coleman thinks King is being played for a fool because he's just a pawn. He's being pimped out, which King doesn't care for. Somehow this gets Coleman a TV Title shot in Florida, which seemed to be Coleman's idea.

We look back at Bullet Club beating down Dalton Castle from last week.

Flip Gordon/Scorpio Sky/Coast to Coast vs. Bullet Club

It's the Bucks/Adam Page/Marty Scurll here. Jay Lethal is on commentary and Cody comes out for a bonus. Before we get going, Cody says Gordon's dreams of beating the Bullet Club is the same as Castle winning the title: a pipe dream. Scurll takes LSG down by the wrist to start and it's time for an early wrestling sequence. You don't do that to a British guy though as he pops up with a bird pose, only to have Cody come up on the apron for the same. That earns him an ejection though and it's off to Matt vs. Sky.

Neither can hit much of anything until Scorpio nails a dropkick. Nick comes in and of course the fans are mostly behind the Club. It's off to Gordon, who refuses a series of handshake offers. Flip makes the mistake of doing his dancing handstand, allowing Nick to dropkick him in the ribs. Back up and Gordon keeps nipping up to avoid superkicks and because this is a Bucks match, Nick keeps trying the same stupid move over and over. A standoff takes us to a

break and we come back with Gordon still refusing a handshake.

Matt comes in and grabs him by the hand though, allowing Scurll to break the fingers. Naturally, the partners just STAND AND WATCH ALL THIS, including the triple superkicks. The fans think this is awesome because they'll cheer anything the Bucks do. Coast to Coast gets sent outside and it's time for a bunch of dives, as you might expect. Gordon nails an even bigger dive and comes back in to face Nick...who promptly pokes him in the eye to take over. Sky gets sent into the corner and it's time for a Bullet Club train of clotheslines.

Back from another break with Flip having to bail out of a 450 and getting superkicked down. Flip grabs a reverse Regal Roll but backflips into the chickenwing. Sky makes the save and grabs a dragon sleeper, only to have the superkick party begin. Ali and Matt slug it out on the apron until LSG hits his partner by mistake. A belly to back suplex onto the apron drops Ali, leaving Flip all alone in the ring. He tries his own dive, and, say it with me, lands on a bunch of superkicks.

More Bang For Your Buck doesn't work and Gordon springboards into a mostly missed dive to the floor. Nick is caught in the Tree of Woe for a double Coast to Coast but Gordon's 450 only gets two. Scurll does the chickenwing dance but gets kicked in the head. A blind tag brings in Ali...which doesn't matter as it's ANOTHER string of superkicks as the Bucks cut off another comeback. Matt superkicks Scurll by mistake but Page comes back in for a Rite of Passage/Tombstone/Indytaker combo to Gordon and Sky for the double pin at 20:07.

Rating: B-. Well that was maddening. This match was designed to push Gordon as a young up and comer but all I saw here was the Bullet Club superkicking everyone in sight and hitting a big team move for the win. As usual, the problem with the Club's matches is the same: they're never made to look like they're in any kind of danger. Every time the good guys got something going here, it was a bunch of superkicks to cut them off again. Sure there were some exciting moments here and there but I should buy the idea that the underdog faces have a chance. That wasn't the case here and it got old in a hurry.

Overall Rating: C+. This show was much more about the in-ring work

instead of the storytelling but you can tell they're especially working hard around this time. You also would have expected something from Lethal vs. Scurll here but that was barely discussed in the slightest. It's still a good show, though it wasn't exactly the same formula they've been using, or the one they should have been using for that matter.

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Ring of Honor TV – October 4, 2017: Bad Business As Usual

Ring of Honor

Date: October 4, 2017

Location: Center Stage, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, BJ Whitmer

It's World Title week here as Frankie Kazarian is getting a shot at Cody after winning last week's Honor Rumble. That's quite the turnaround but you can't expect them to give him the shot on a pay per view as a spot like that is reserved for people from real promotions like New Japan. Let's get to it.

We recap last week's Honor Rumble with the Addiction cheating to give Kazarian the win.

War Machine vs. Coast to Coast vs. Tempura Boyz

One fall to a finish and War Machine's IWGP Tag Team Titles aren't on the line. There are no tags either so this is going to be a heck of a mess. War Machine cleans house to start and Rowe throws both Boyz at the same time just because he can. Hanson throws Rowe at LSG and it's pure dominance to start.

Coast to Coast gets their faces punched in on the floor but the Boyz are up with double dives to the floor as we take a break. Back with War Machine down for a bit, only to come back in with Rowe slamming Sho onto Yo. The monsters are sent outside though and it's Yo hitting a cutter on LSG. Rowe is back in though and a knee to the head sends Yo outside. Most of the participants wind up on the floor so LSG hits a flip dive, only to have Hanson hit a flip dive onto EVERYONE, leaving Sho to take a clothesline/German suplex combination.

Ali dives in for the save and it's Yo getting put into the Tree of Woe but War Machine breaks up the Coast to Coast. The Boyz grab a spike piledriver for two on Rowe, who pops up and powerbombs both Boyz at the same time. A pop up powerslam plants Yo and a series of backbreakers sets up a top rope splash from Hanson for the pin at 11:24.

Rating: B. Everyone was working here and my general indifference to the Boyz was made up for by the awesomeness that is War Machine. They're just big monsters who can do cool moves and that's really all you need most of the time. Really solid match here as Coast to Coast continues to impress as well.

Post match, War Machine complains about Ring of Honor treating them badly and not giving them a title shot in over a year. They were supposed to have a shot at the Young Bucks but another team was added to the match to keep War Machine from getting a fair shot. They're tired of playing nice and you won't like this version. This didn't sound like a heel turn but more like them just being aggressive.

Video on Flip Gordon.

Corey Hollis vs. Flip Gordon

Flip, uh, flips out of a wristlock to start and nips up off a shoulder block. The handstand walk gets Flip out of trouble and a dive to the floor takes Hollis out. A flip dive misses though and Gordon gets dropped ribs first onto the top. Back from a break with Hollis working on an armbar. Gordon fights up and hits a flip Sling Blade followed by a running shooting star press for two more. Hollis catches him in the corner again but Flip is right back up with a springboard kick to the face. A springboard 450 (with the knees landing on Hollis' chest) gives Flip the pin at 9:30.

Rating: D. Gordon is a one note character and there's really nothing wrong with that. He's not hiding what he's doing out there and that's kind of refreshing. Unfortunately he's also really sloppy with that ending looking terrible. Reign him in a bit and have him do things a bit more slowly and accurately instead of throwing in everything he can and he'll look a lot better in a hurry.

Kazarian says he wants to win the title to tick off the fans and ROH.

Long video recapping the Women of Honor. I'm going to put this as politely as I can: no one cares. Like really, no one cares. There are great women's divisions around the world but Ring of Honor's is just not on that list. It never gets any kind of attention and the handful of specials they've had aren't enough to make me care about a four or five woman division. If ROH cared about them like they said they did, these people would be on the regular shows and not stuck on YouTube.

Kelly Klein says she's ready to beat anyone put in front of her.

ROH World Title: Frankie Kazarian vs. Cody

Cody is defending and wins the early feeling out process. A release gordbuster drops Kazarian and it's back to the standoff. Cody trips him down again and we hit the Figure Four but Kazarian is right next to the ropes. They're certainly not wasting time early on. A dragon screw legwhip over the middle rope looks to set up a dive to the floor but Kazarian is back up with a slingshot hurricanrana.

Back in and Cody gets backdropped to the apron, setting up a kick to the head to drop him again. Kazarian scores with a spinning springboard Fameasser and we take a break. Back with Cody armdragging him off the top for a heck of a crash to put both guys down. The Beautiful Disaster connects but Kazarian grabs the

slingshot cutter for another near fall. Cody is right back with a snap powerslam (well to be fair Goldust and Randy Orton both use it) and a YES Lock of all things. I'm not sold on Bryan coming back to ROH but they're teasing the heck out of it.

Cue Daniels for a distraction but Marty Scurll comes out to even things up. Not that it matters as Scurll gets posted, allowing Kazarian to miss a belt shot. Now it's a ref bump because ROH loves to overbook. Daniels gets in the belt shot to set up the Unprettier for a VERY close two.

Marty is back up to shove Kazarian off the top though and Daniels is thrown inside. Somehow the now conscious referee doesn't think any of this is a DQ, including Daniels taking Cody down. Scurll superkicks Daniels to take him out, leaving Cody to grab Cross Rhodes to retain at 11:43.

Rating: C-. This match wasn't even twelve minutes and had two people interfering, a belt shot and a ref bump. There's no reason whatsoever that a match should do so much nonsense, nor should it need to. They were having a perfectly good match until the screwiness started up and then it was a completely different everything. If you just have to do something like that, do ONE THING and nothing more. Why is that so hard to understand?

Overall Rating: C. I've seen worse shows but it felt like they were cramming in as much stuff as they could into a single show. I believe this is the last episode of the taping cycle, meaning there's almost no way of knowing what we'll be seeing next week. Maybe we can even talk about the pay per view for a change. It would be nice to actually be caught up for once.

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Ring of Honor TV – August 23, 2017: Boys(z) Club

Ring of Honor

Date: August 23, 2017

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

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, BJ Whitmer

Tonight is all about the Six Man Tag Team Titles as yet ANOTHER team has been thrown together for the sake of giving the champions some challengers. In this case it's Dalton Castle and the Boys defending against Colt Cabana and the Tempura Boyz. And yes, it's all because both bigger names have partners called Boys(z). Let's get to it.

Dalton Castle says taking the titles from him when he's flanked by the Boys is like trying to boil a chicken so he's not worried.

Opening sequence.

Coast to Coast vs. Best Friends

Caprice Coleman jumps in on commentary and for some reason we keep looking at the commentary booth instead of the ring. Chuckie (Chuckie T, of the Best friends with partner Berreta) and LSG start things off with some flips going nowhere. It's off to Ali vs. Berreta with some chops dropping Ali, who comes right back with chops of his own.

They head to the corner for a tag to LSG, who the announcers don't realize was in the match already. Chuckie tags himself in before Berreta takes LSG down with a dragon suplex. That's good for a big hug and we take a break. Back with LSG cleaning house and getting two on Chuckie off a faceplant. Berreta comes in for the save but Ali is right there to block a tornado DDT out of the corner.

Instead it's a swinging Rock Bottom for two on Berreta, who bails outside for a breather. Back to back dives, including a corkscrew version from LSG, has the Best Friends reeling as Coleman is begging for them to go for a cover. Ali gets two off a frog splash but LSG's

450 hits knees. Berreta's running knee knocks LSG silly and it's the piledriver into a cradle piledriver to put him away at 11:51.

Rating: C+. I liked this one more than I was expecting to, even if it just became a big spot fest near the end. The Best Friends are a popular enough team to eventually become a threat to the Bucks. Coast to Coast is getting better too and looks like they're one of the better young teams who could mean something down the line. Or get split up for no apparent reason.

Jay Lethal talks about how rough it was to be put in the hospital for the first time in his career when Silas Young comes up. The brawl is on with Jay getting the better of it until the Beer City Bruiser comes up for a distraction, allowing Young to hit him in the back with a chair. Post break, Lethal demands any kind of a match against Young and/or Bruiser.

Matt Taven vs. Jay Briscoe

Jay tries to jump him at the bell but actually loses a slugout. Vinny Marseglia busts out an ax to distract Jay (well that could do it) so Jay grabs a chair to even things out. Since that could cause a bad case of death, they head back inside with Jay splashing Taven in the corner and adding a big boot for good measure.

Taven slips out of...something and knees Jay in the face. That's enough time to check himself out in the camera though and we take a break. Back with Raven bailing out on a frog splash and getting caught with a Death Valley Driver. Taven's Disaster Kick sets up a Lionsault which hits raised knees, followed by Briscoe's hard lariat for two.

Jay slugs him in the jaw but a Blue Thunder Bomb gives Taven two more. The Climax (1%er) is broken up so Jay kicks him outside for a suicide dive. Cue Marseglia to interfere but Briscoe cuts him off with a neckbreaker. Now TK O'Ryan gets pulled in as well but he takes off his cast and knocks Jay cold for the DQ at 11:42.

Rating: C. Oh joy, the Kingdom is back. It helps to shore up the Six Man Tag Team Titles but on the other hand, it helps to shore up the Six Man Tag Team Titles. The team does nothing for me but I'll take them as a trio over random singles matches. Briscoe is still in a weird place as he seems to be teasing a heel turn a lot of the time and then he does a straight face match like this. I mean, it's hard to be a heel when you're down 3-1 and one guy has an ax.

Post match the Kingdom covers Jay with chairs and then crushes him with more chairs. Bully Ray and Mark Briscoe are nowhere to be seen.

Cody is ready to face anyone for the ROH World Title.

Six Man Tag Team Titles: Colt Cabana/Tempura Boyz vs. Dalton Castle/The Boys

Dalton and the Boys are defending. Colt and Dalton start things off and it's time for some dancing, followed by the champs being sent to the floor for Colt's own strut. That's a bit too much comedy for me so we take a break. Back with the Boys bent over backwards to make themselves into a table. Dalton cleans house and then has a seat on them, allowing some much needed fanning up.

Back in and Dalton shakes his knees but Colt tags Sho in instead of having a dance off. It's off to the Boys....with one getting on the others shoulders. Sho does it to Yo and we've got a game of chicken. Thankfully Colt breaks it up to take over as this match is giving me a headache. Sho grabs a Fujiwara armbar but it's Twin Magic for the save. Colt tries to make another switch but Sho does the same thing as this is what a championship match has turned into.

We take a second break and come back with the Boyz fanning Colt, allowing more Twin Magic to get one of the Boys out of trouble. The hot tag brings in Castle for some suplexes, including catching a diving Cabana. The Boys dive onto the Boyz and it's Castle with the peacock strut. A double missile dropkick sets up another German suplex for two but the Boyz come in and take over without too much effort. The Boys pull the Boyz together though and a Bang a Rang ends Colt to retain the titles at 13:44.

Rating: D-. I can't stand this kind of stuff as they're just doing lame comedy and it's for some of the most worthless titles in wrestling. The fact that this whole thing is all about "hey, I've got my own boys now" tells you all you need to know about it. Castle is far too talented and far too charismatic to be stuck in something like this. The Six Man Tag Team Titles need to die already, even if it ticks off Papa New Japan.

Post match Castle says Cabana has been an inspiration for a long time. Colt hasn't made it easy to like him though as Cabana hasn't accepted that Castle is just better. Now that it's three straight wins for Castle, can he have Colt's respect? Cabana shakes his hand

to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. That main event killed what was an otherwise solid show. I'm probably not the audience for that kind of match but it just didn't work for me. What also doesn't work for me are these stand alone shows with nothing major in the way of storytelling. This is all about filling in time until we can get back to talking about the pay per view that was barely talked about in advance. Such is life in Ring of Honor, though it's still rather annoying.

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Ring of Honor TV – July 12, 2017: Best in the Month at Least

Ring of Honor

Date: July 12, 2017

Location: Lowell Memorial Auditorium, Lowell, Massachusetts

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Colt Cabana

Unless I'm missing it, there isn't exactly anything huge set up for this show. Part of the problem with Ring of Honor is how little anything sticks out and that's really being showcased here. So many

shows feel like they stand alone instead of leading anywhere else, which isn't the most interesting thing in the world. Let's get to it.

Cody reminds us that he and Christopher Daniels brawled last week. Next week though, we have the rematch from Best in the World.

This is from Lowell, which would be after Best in the World. So did we see stuff from these tapings mixed with the Chicago tapings? It wouldn't be the first time but it's a bit confusing.

Opening sequence.

Dalton Castle/The Boys vs. Flip Gordon/Coast to Coast

Non-title. Castle freaks Flip out a bit with the chest thrust before stopping for some exercise. Everything breaks down for a big brawl and the announcers actually try to tell the Boys apart. The Boys both hit dives but Castle walks across the ring instead of diving, as Cabana knew would be the case.

Gordon kicks the Boys outside again, only to have Boy #2 cut him off with a hurricanrana. Now it's Coast to Coast with their own dives until everyone but Gordon is on the floor, setting up a run up the corner into a springboard 450 to put everyone down. Back from a break with Boy #1 getting stomped in the corner and kicked in the head to give LSG (Leo St. Giovanni) two.

Gordon gets the same off a standing moonsault, followed by a Stroke/Flatliner combo. For no logical reason, Gordon and Coast to Coast yell at the crowd, allowing the Boys to switch places. The hot tag brings in Castle to clean house and catch Gordon in a German suplex. Everything breaks down and something like an F5 gets two on #1. LSG dives onto all three champs but gets suplexes for his efforts back inside. Bang a Rang puts LSG away at 11:18.

Rating: B-. This was a lot better than I was expecting with both teams looking great. The Boys have greatly improved and are actual wrestlers instead of just people who are there to fill in spots. Fun match here with the flips making sense and Castle being miles ahead of everyone else, which is exactly what he should have been.

We look back at Beer City Bruiser and Silas Young injuring Jay Lethal's ribs.

Young is at the hospital Lethal spent the night at and promises that the war is far from over.

Ultimo Guerrero vs. Matt Taven

Feeling out process to start with Guerrero being sent into the corner and thankfully the announcers explain why these two started feuding in the first place. During the entrances they mentioned that it started in Mexico and they dropped the whole thing. Guerrero takes him to the mat but stops to yell at the Kingdom.

That means nothing as Taven gets clotheslined down for two but avoids a baseball slide. The Kingdom offers a distraction so Taven can take over but TK O'Ryan's chop has no effect. Guerrero knocks Taven into the crowd and there's a running dive for good measure. Back from a break with Guerrero down and Taven doing that smile of his.

Not that it matters as Guerrero comes right back with the slingshot Bronco Buster. A second attempt is countered into a Sharpshooter which doesn't last all that long. Guerrero is right back up with a super gordbuster for two, only to have his reverse superplex broken up. Taven's frog splash gets two but he grabs the referee and gets in a low blow. The Climax (arm trap bulldog driver) gives Taven the pin at 13:03.

Rating: C+. I still don't care about the Kingdom or any of its members and I'm not wild on bringing in these legends and telling us to care about them because they're famous elsewhere (which Guerrero certainly is). That being said, they did have a good match here and that's what helps quite a bit, but not having Taven around would help even more.

The Young Bucks and Adam Page blame Bully Ray and the Briscoes for losing the Six Man Tag Team Titles before they had a chance to win them.

Silas Young says it's been fifteen days without an accident but

Lethal will never be safe no matter what. Did we really need to do this twice in one show?

Motor City Machine Guns vs. War Machine

Hanson and Sabin start things up with Chris' modified Octopus Hold having as minimal effect as possible. Sabin gets thrown away and we have an early standoff. A double tag allows Rowe to Superman Punch Shelley as everything breaks down in a hurry. War Machine takes over and we take an early break. Back with Shelley in trouble in the corner as War Machine seems to be the de facto heels.

Hanson slams Rowe onto Shelley for two but Alex pops up and brings in Sabin as everything breaks down again. The Guns take over with the rapid fire offense, including double dives called Crossing the Streams. Back in and Rowe gets choked in the corner and more precision offense. Shelley misses a charge though and it's back to Hanson for the running clotheslines in the corner.

Back from another break with Rowe throwing Hanson onto both Guns. A springboard clothesline into a German suplex gets two on Sabin but Fallout is broken up. Hanson suplexes both Guns down without much effort but an assisted standing Sliced Bread takes him down. Skull and Bones is broken up but Hanson misses a suicide dive and it's time for the Guns to fire off the kicks. Sabin dives through Shelley's legs to take Hanson down again and it's Made in Detroit (powerbomb/Sliced Bread #2 combo) to put Rowe away at 14:13.

Rating: B. That's the best Guns match I've seen in a long time as it felt like they were having a match instead of just doing all of their choreographed looking spots. War Machine is great as the power team which you don't get around here too often. Good match here and that's the kind of thing you can always go for.

Overall Rating: B. That's one of the best episodes they've put together in a long time, despite me having issues caring about almost anyone on the show. They put on solid matches with the lower half of the roster and that makes for a pretty easy hour of wrestling to sit through.

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Ring of Honor TV – March 15, 2017: Tournament Are NOT Always Awesome

Ring of Honor

Date: March 15, 2017

Location: Stage AE, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentator: Ian Riccabani

The 15th Anniversary Show has come and gone and...it's not clear when we'll hear about it on TV. Unfortunately that's the way this place works and there's really not a lot that can be done about it. It's hard to say what we'll get on this show, aside from the Top Prospect Tournament of course. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Alex Shelley is the first guest commentator.

Young Bucks vs. Coast to Coast

Non-title. So we're not even up to Manhattan Mayhem on this one?

Sweet goodness they take their sweet time around here. Nick and St. Giovanni get things going with a fight over a wristlock, only to have Nick drop down for a SUCK IT. Some rapid fire kicks have Coast to Coast on the floor, setting up the double dives but Ali pulls them to the floor. Of course the fans eat things up because they want to be cheering cool heels despite being smart fans. Leon hits a Downward Spiral on Matt and we take a break.

Back with Nick hitting a springboard SUCK IT crossbody on Leon. Coast to Coast (the double springboard dropkick to the Tree of Woe) gets two on Nick but that means a superkick. Nick starts firing off more kicks, plus a running Sliced Bread #2. Ali gets superkicked in the back of the leg and the springboard 450 is good for the pin at 7:04.

Rating: C-. This was a decent rub for Coast to Coast though as usual, the ROH fans continue to be some of the most irritating in the world. Then again the Bucks are a big part of that problem for reasons I've covered far too many times already. This could have been much worse though and Coast to Coast got a rub, which is more than you can expect most of the time.

Post match Leon takes a Twist of Fate and a Swanton Bomb.

We look at Lio Rush teasing joining the Rebellion before costing them a match last week.

Rush says he's sick of the Rebellion and they don't know what they're dealing with. Cue Kenny King to say this is serious and a challenge is set for next week.

Brutal Bob Evans joins Ian and Alex.

Top Prospect Tournament First Round: Curt Stallion vs. Preston Quinn

Stallion looks like Andrew Everett. Quinn has been wrestling for 23 years and has a Jim Cornette knockoff in his corner. Curt has to shake the manager's hand and gets punched in his head as a result. Some forearms set up a double stomp for two on Quinn but the manager (Andy Vineberg) trips him up.

A sitdown brainbuster (exactly what it sounds like) gets two on Curt, followed by Abyss' Shock Treatment. Something like White Noise onto the knee (Okada does it) is good for two on Quinn but he grabs a good looking piledriver. Stallion avoids a middle rope elbow though and catches Quinn with a running headbutt for the pin at

7:09.

Rating: D. This tournament needs to end REALLY soon because no one has impressed me even in the slightest and someone is going to get a contract and a title shot out of this mess. The wrestling has been nothing of note and the characters have been even worse. You might want to make sure you have the talent to pull something like this off because it's been a real problem in recent weeks.

Here's Cody to ask where Jay Lethal has been. One fan says he's seen him and Cody calls the fan a liar. Ever since Final Battle, Lethal has disappeared like the coward he really is. That's not what Cody wants to talk about tonight though because he'd rather talk about Adam Page. Cue Page with his noose around his neck so Cody talks about bullrope matches with a cowbell included. The DUSTY chant starts up and Cody says the rope is going to become a Texas bullrope. The official challenge is laid out for Supercard of Honor. Jay Briscoe is ready for his rematch with Jay White next week.

Jonathon Gresham vs. Dalton Castle

Gresham's first name is spelled differently on his video graphic and his name graphic. Jonathon sits on the mat to avoid an Irish whip and grabs a rope to block an O'Connor roll. Some arm work doesn't do much on Castle so he holds up a fist to say bring it. A nice technical exchange ends with Castle's chest thrust, followed by a running knee in the corner.

Gresham grabs both arms for a freaky rollup and a springboard hurricanrana to the floor. A running knee from the apron sets up a chest thrust from Gresham and the gimmick infringement doesn't set well with Castle. Neither does Jonathan diving off the top so Dalton catches him in the Bang-a-Rang for the pin at 4:41.

Rating: C. This was fine and a good way to warm Castle up for his World Title match at Supercard of Honor. Castle is an interesting choice for that spot as I don't think anyone believes he's going to win the title but he'll certainly get a great reaction when he's out there. Gresham is still a solid hand but he's not going anywhere.

Marty Scurll is ready for his TV Title defense at Supercard of Honor.

Mark Briscoe joins commentary.

War Machine vs. BJ Whitmer/Punishment Martinez

No DQ. War Machine jumps them from behind during the entrance and the fight starts in a hurry at ringside. Rowe takes Martinez inside for a Superman Punch, followed by another one on Whitmer for good measure. Running charges crush Martinez and Whitmer before BJ and Hanson head back inside. BJ pelts a chair at Hanson's head to take over and we take a break.

Back with Rowe hitting running clotheslines to both opponents, followed by a hard knee to Martinez's face for no cover. Instead BJ grabs a great looking release German suplex to send Rowe flying. Rowe and Whitmer trade running forearms until Whitmer's exploder suplex gets two. Hanson comes back in with a pop up powerslam for two and it's time for a table. Whitmer has to escape Fallout and all three head to the floor for Martinez's Taker Dive for a BIG pop. Back in again and Hanson takes a bit too long loading up something on top, allowing Punishment to chokeslam him through the table for the pin at 10:25.

Rating: C+. This worked well enough and Martinez continues to be one of the more entertaining people to watch on the whole roster. Just let him be something like the Undertaker and put on a bunch of flashy performances. I'm sure that's not the idea though because we can have the boring Top Prospect Tournament matches instead.

Post match Martinez chokeslams Whitmer to break up the team, which doesn't seem to be anything interesting to the announcers.

Overall Rating: C-. I've seen worse shows from ROH and oddly enough almost all of them seem to take place right after a pay per view. These are more or less filler shows and that doesn't make for the most interesting stuff in the world. At least we had a fun main event and Martinez leaving the worthless BJ. Watchable show here but nothing you need to see.

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Ring of Honor TV – February 1, 2017: What I Want From ROH

Ring of Honor

Date: February 1, 2017

Location: Center Stage Theater, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentator: Kevin Kelly

I'm not sure what to expect from this show other than probably the other semifinal match in the Decade of Excellence Tournament. We're getting closer to the 15th Anniversary Show and that means we need to start putting together a card already. This could be anything and that means it could be fun. Let's get to it.

We open with Adam Cole bragging about winning the World Title for an unprecedented third time. Not much to see here other than "Cole is awesome."

You might be more familiar with Center Stage as WCW Saturday Night's home.

Tempura Boyz vs. Coast to Coast vs. Cheeseburger/Will Ferrara

Coast to Coast is Leon St. Giovanni and Shahim Ali. The Tempura Boyz (Yo and Cho) send Coast to Coast outside to start but get kicked in the face for their efforts. Leon gets back in and fires off some elbows to the face so here are the Boyz again to clean house for the first time. Cheeseburger dives on a bunch of people and Cho does the same for an even bigger crash.

This time it's Leon hitting a big corkscrew dive but here are the Young Bucks to watch (and take all the attention of course) as we take a break. Back with Ferrara taking a Shatter Machine to give Yo two and the Bucks on commentary to talk about the Hardys. The Bucks

decide that the winners of this match are the new #1 contenders as Coast to Coast starts taking over. Stereo Coast to Coast dropkicks get two on Ferrara but a quick package piledriver puts Ali away at 7:24.

Rating: C. Just your standard indy style three way with no particular rhyme or reason to anything but that's how it works around here. The Boyz aren't all that interesting so that's why they won and therefore get the title shot. At least the match meant something for a change, which is more than you can say about a lot of ROH matches. The double dropkick wasn't bad but other than that it was a bunch of flip dives by people I had issues telling apart.

Post match the Bucks announce the title match and superkick the Boyz. This brings out Adam Cole for his first comments as champion. That means STORYTIME with Cole calling himself a legend and a history maker. Cole laughs off the idea of having various challengers, such as Dalton Castle, who is just a gimmick. Then there's Bobby Fish and Cole might as well get rid of the other half of ReDRagon. Finally, he's beaten Jay Briscoe and Jay Lethal so he can just do it again. For some reason Cole left off Christopher Daniels, which suggests that he's winning the tournament.

Video on Juice Robinson.

TV Title: Marty Scurll vs. Juice Robinson

Robinson is challenging and Alex Shelley is on commentary. Scurll mocks Robinson like a bird for some reason and it's already off to the left arm work. A shoulder goes nowhere so Marty slaps him in the face and does the bird a bit more. Scurll cranks on the arm some more and we take a break.

Back with Robinson hitting a top rope headbutt and a heck of a clothesline for two. I'm not much on Robinson but he certainly does hit hard. A good powerbomb gets two more but Juice grabs a superplex, followed by a superkick, to send Juice outside. Marty whips him hard into the barricade and gets two off a piledriver. That means it's time to snap a finger and the crossface chickenwing makes Robinson tap at 10:34.

Rating: B-. Much better than I was expecting here as Robinson certainly has some fight in him. Marty is a good choice for a champion but I'd like to hear some more from him instead of just watching him do chickenwings every match. He's still good (at being

evil that is) and it's hardly too late to make him work.

Post match Marty issues an open challenge for a title shot. Cue Chris Sabin, Jonathan Gresham, Donovan Dijak, Jay White and Lio Rush to answer for a nice change of pace. If there's an open challenge like that, you would think more than one person would answer. Why doesn't that happen more often? After a break, all of the challengers (plus Alex Shelley) agree to a six way match for the title shot next week.

Jay Lethal and Jay Briscoe are ready to fight in the tournament.

Decade of Excellence Tournament Semifinals: Jay Lethal vs. Jay Briscoe

Frankie Kazarian is on commentary this time as I think we've got a running theme. They lock up to start but nothing of note happens until Cole comes out to watch. That means an early break and we come back with the slow pace picking up a bit as Briscoe grabs a hurricanrana. They seem to hit head, setting up an early Jay Driller for two. Lethal bails to the floor which means one heck of a suicide dive.

Back in and a hard clothesline gets two more as this is all Briscoe so far. Briscoe slowly hammers away as Cole rips on the fans at the upcoming Texas house shows. Back with Lethal getting two off a Lethal Combination and shoving Briscoe off the top to set up Hail to the King. That doesn't quite work so let's hit a Figure Four instead (Cole: "I INVENTED THAT MOVE!"). After the rope grab, Lethal misses the Injection and gets his head clotheslined off for the pin at 13:28.

Rating: B-. These two have some awesome chemistry but the time issues hurt things a lot here. Briscoe vs. Daniels will be a solid match though that promo earlier really suggests that they've spoiled the ending. I could go for Daniels getting a shot at the title and beating Briscoe would make him seem feel like more of a main event player.

Cole says he'll be facing Briscoe for the title, again overlooking Daniels.

Overall Rating: B. That's one of the best TV shows they've had in a good while, which says a lot considering there's a lot on here that feels like it really doesn't matter. I'm looking forward to seeing

where they go with the Anniversary Show, which is a lot more than I can say for several of the most recent pay per views. Good stuff this week, which sounds rather strange to say around here.

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