

Ring of Honor – Final Battle 2006 – Best ROH Match I’ve Ever Seen

Final Battle 2006

Date: December 23, 2006

Location: Manhattan Center, New York City, New York

Commentators: Lenny Leonard, Dave Prazak

To say I don’t know much about ROH would be an understatement. I know it’s the biggest indy company out there and that’s about it. This is the second show of theirs that I’ve done so I’m at least trying. This is one of their bigger shows of the year and the name comes from that it’s the last show of the year. This is also three and a half hours long so it’s going to be a long night. I’ll do what I can as far as knowing names, but I make no promises about having a clue as to what’s going on. Let’s get to it.

We see Homicide and Danielson walking into the arena. That’s the main event.

And Santa Claus is here. Ok then with an elf. The fans recognize him apparently. There’s another elf in his bag. They throw out t-shirts until some guys come in and beat the heck out of them with chairs and some nice double team stuff. Ah they’re the Briscoes. I knew they looked familiar. They want the Kings of Wrestling, more commonly known as Chris Hero and Claudio Castagnoli. Ah apparently those were ROH students. That’s what I was betting on.

Jimmy Jacobs talks about being a stranger in this city. He talks about wanting to hurt Colt Cabana and BJ Whitmer. He loved this chick named Lacey (not that Lacey. This one has talent) and Colt slept with her and BJ messed her face up. He’s teaming with Brent Albright later against those two. This

would lead into the Age of the Fall about 9 months later which is what got me to somewhat follow ROH.

The fans are chanting OLE so I'm betting on a luchador. And I'm right.

El Generico vs. Jimmy Rave vs. Davey Richards vs. Christopher Daniels

To say the fans don't like Rave is an understatement. It's nice to hear some good solid insults unlike a WWE show. A DIE JIMMY DIE chant starts up. Ok then. Richards is a big deal now and allegedly is the future of the company. He comes out to Runnin With The Devil so I can't complain. This is a four corner survival match which I'm guessing means elimination rules? Daniels is a tag champion here.

The fans like fallen angels apparently. Maybe this is the Daniels I always hear about being awesome. There's a fairly hot chick with him named Allison Danger so I can't complain. His entrance takes a LONG time. She's a girl scout and the fans want cookies. That's creative at least. We're nearly fifteen minutes in and we just now hear the announcers. Richards and Generico start.

This is two outside and two inside. We stall for a LONG time to start, namely due to Generico continuously shouting OLE! We'll be getting a year in review kind of thing also which is a major plus for me. We hear about Rave having a heel hook that got Nigel McGuinness (Desmond Wolfe) to tap out.

Richards is confused by Generico. Hey I'm thinking like Richards! Daniels' partner is Matt Sydal, more commonly known as Evan Bourne. Danger is the sister of Steve Corino. Dang. Scratch the elimination part as it's first pinfall wins. That kind of makes no sense but whatever. Rave vs. Daniels now. Daniels wins. Like, wins a lot. Not the match, just the fight. Wow I worded that one badly didn't I?

I never liked Rave in TNA and I think I'm seeing why again here. Danger gets the fans to cheer. That's what a manager is supposed to do partially so she's doing her job. Richards is fun to watch if nothing else. A German on Generico gets two. Best Moonsault Ever is broken up.

They're doing a good job of keeping it at about three people in there which is nice instead of the usual two pairings these devolve into. Rave is being smart and just letting these three fight. I'm not entirely sure why the crowd is this into it though. It's not that great. Generico hits his brainbuster on the turnbuckle on Richards, but Rave made a tag when they were in the corner.

He slips in and gets his heel hook for the submission. Pay no attention to the total lack of tagging for the five minutes before this. He gets on the mic and complains about respect but Nigel McGuinness comes out and slaps him.

Rating: B-. This was ok but it wasn't anything great. It just came off as being all over the place and lost its structure about 10 minutes in. It's not bad or anything, but it's just not that good. Having the heel win the opener is a bit of a head scratcher too but that's fine I suppose. Just nothing to make me that into the show.

Adam Pearce vs. Ricky Reyes

Pearce is the current NWA World Champion but that hadn't happened yet. Pearce is kind of a throwback to old heels but the doesn't have a lot of the talent to do so. He dedicates the night to Jim Cornette for no apparent reason.

He guarantees Homicide doesn't leave with the world title. Both of these guys have seconds here, one of which is named Shane Hangadorn and the other of which is named Julius Smokes. Pearce apparently looks like Repo Man. This is impromptu even though both came down in their ring attire and they had graphics ready for their names. Sure why not.

Apparently if Homicide loses here he quits. Hagadorn throws something to Pearce and he blasts Reyes with it for the pin. Short and pretty uninteresting. Smokes gets beaten up too.

Rating: D+. Not much here at all but to be fair it was fairly short so I can't complain much. I've never thought much of Pearce and this Smokes guy is getting very annoying very quickly. I'm not sure what the point of this was but it didn't work that well.

Jimmy Jacobs/Brent Albright vs. BJ Whitmer/Colt Cabana

Cabana's music is catchy if nothing else. It's a brawl immediately as we're told Albright is a gun for hire. Well that explains why he's in there. We get a series of 2-1s until we get to...more 2-1s. I don't think there are faces and heels here or anything as they might be all faces. Not sure though. I think Whitmer and Cabana are the default heels but I'm not sure.

We almost get a table spot but Albright makes the save. Whitmer does a cool thing as he suplexes both himself and Jacobs to the floor. It's better than it sounds. We haven't had anything resembling a coherent match as it's all just a big mess so far. Not bad though. Finally we get Whitmer vs. Jacobs who used to be tag partners. They used to be tag champions if that means anything.

Albright hooks a crossface minus the arm trap on Whitmer while looks good. Jacobs is completely obsessed with Lacey but she doesn't care for him romantically. Welcome to my world kid. Cabana hasn't been in the match legally yet and we're a good ways into it. Cabana just comes in after that and hits a sweet moonsault.

He's actually dominating with a move called the Butt Butt. It's like a headbutt but with the...you get the idea. Yeah it's odd. Actually Goldust used to do that. It breaks down into a total mess until Albright just goes off on everyone and

powerbombs Whitmer through the table at ringside. Cabana gets destroyed by rolling Germans so Jacobs can hit a senton off the top for the pin.

Rating: B-. Again not bad and while it's better than the opener, it's still nothing great. To be fair though there hasn't been much build up to these matches although I'd bet on the main events to be pretty well put together. This wasn't terrible but it certainly wasn't great either. Decent enough match though.

Ad for ROH's website where they have WWE and TNA DVDs. Ok then.

Kings of Wrestling vs. Briscoe Brothers

The Kings are Chris Hero and Claudio Castagnoli in case you weren't sure. They're actually the tag champions there again now which is a bit surprising. For awhile they had the ROH, CZW and CHIKARA tag belts at the same time. There was a CZW vs. ROH story for a good part of 2006 which is how Hero got to ROH permanently.

He has his new agent, Larry Sweeney, with him. Claudio might be going to WWE. He talks about signing a contract and was written out of storylines, but he didn't go for some reason. They're heels here but the fans love them. The Briscoes though are the most popular team ever in ROH so there we are. And we have no commentary. Ok then. One of the Briscoes hits a huge dive onto the Kings.

Ah there's the commentary. Alright Jay has the tattoo on his back. Got it. The Briscoes are kind of like a bigger and more intense Hardys, just they're less interesting. It's dueling chants time. In a nice move Castagnoli hits a European Uppercut to the back of Jay. Claudio had been the abandoner of the company back in the CZW war in case you care. Both of the Kings are really tall.

I always have issues filling in time when a face is getting beaten down by nothing that impressive. Hero makes a nice save to stop the hot tag. Nice one. Hero hooks a WEIRD hold where he hooks the arms of Jay behind his own back and lifts them up with his feet. FREAKING OW! Mark finally comes in off the hot tag and of course he tidies up a bit. He didn't do enough to classify that as cleaning.

Claudio hits a top rope European Uppercut and a Riccola Bomb (Arm Trap Sitout Powerbomb) for two. You know I wonder what would happen if you tagged one of your opponents. Would it be legal? Hard to say. Ok not really but stupid stuff like this pops into my head at times. Sweeney has been WORTHLESS here. I forgot he was there. That's never a good sign.

A Doomsday Rana (Use your imaginations) and a Frog Splash get two on Claudio. I would have expected that to be the finish actually. In an insane looking move, Claudio has a Briscoe hanging both ways around his neck and spins them around into a half powerbomb half electric chair. Just awesome looking as far as a power display goes.

That of only gets two. Everybody busts out finishers and all four are down. GREAT sequence. Claudio kicks out at two as everyone is more or less dead. We're closing in on twenty minutes here so I can't blame them. With Sweeney on the apron, Claudio accidentally blasts Hero in the head with a briefcase and a Shooting Star/Guillotine Legdrop combination ends it. Dang I wish the ending had been cleaner.

Rating: B+. Fun match here as these guys just beat the heck out of each other. The one thing though is that ending. After that much they had to use a weapon shot for it? I'm not into that. Also Sweeney was more or less forgotten until the very end which is rather irritating to me for some reason. Still though, very fun match.

Post match, Claudio thanks the fans for the cheers but says

he's not going to WWE. He says just and see what the Kings of Wrestling have in store for the coming year. Sweeney then gets on the mic and says no because Claudio broke up the team and it's over. Ok then.

With Claudio alone in the ring, here's Samoa Joe. Joe is, in a word, huge in ROH. This is the Joe that stormed into TNA and took the place over. How did they mess him up again? Joe tells him to get out of his ring. For fear of being eaten by Joe, Claudio agrees. Joe makes a challenge to Pro Wrestling Noah and in particular Misawa.

He says bring on anyone from London or Japan but on February 16, there's going to be a fight in New York. Nigel McGuinness comes out and accepts the challenge. And here's Jimmy Rave to beat up McGuinness. Joe slaps him around and we're going to get Rave vs. Nigel later on.

It's intermission time so Adam Pearce and Shane Hagadorn harass Gary Michael Capetta who looks to be about 90. They must have edited most of intermission as we're already back.

Jimmy Rave vs. Nigel McGuinness

Well that didn't take long to sanction and sign did it? It's weird seeing Wolfe with spiked hair. He's ridiculously popular though, just like in TNA so of course he can't be pushed right? They shake left hands for some odd reason. That's different. This isn't much but to be fair they have a feud going so this works.

I still don't get the appeal of Rave though. Nigel does an insane submission hold where he locks Rave's arm around his leg and traps the other arm behind Nigel's back and bends backwards which looked like it was going to rip it off. The crowd goes oooooo at that. Nigel is apparently a big deal here. Nigel takes his head off with a clothesline but it gets two. Oh I'm sorry: it was a lariat.

Tower of London hits and Nigel isn't sure what to do. Rave hits a Pedigree for one. Rave counters a Hulking Up Nigel into a Crippler Crossface. As impressive as Rave has been, I still just don't care about him. Nigel hits a Tower of London (Diamond Cutter) onto the apron, which would be about the same as the mat wouldn't it? It gets two either way so it doesn't really matter.

And then after getting destroyed for about five minutes, Rave gets the heel hook and Nigel taps despite never having his leg worked on at all. I HATE moves like that. If that's the case, why in the world would he wait almost fifteen minutes before going for it? At least with a strike like Sweet Chin Music it's a knockout move.

This is just a submission which makes a part of the body hurt. Why go for the Crossface earlier? That makes NO SENSE. It's completely anti-psychology and that's just irritating. Plus it's Jimmy Rave so it's even more annoying. Rave wants a world title shot.

Rating: B-. Totally annoying ending aside, this was a pretty solid match I guess. There were a ton of near falls but you could see the ending coming a mile away with about three minutes to go. Nigel looks dominant but let's push Rave because...well just because! Didn't like the ending at all but the rest was good.

Danielson is getting ready.

Matt Sydal/Shingo/CIMA vs. Delirious/Austin Aries/Roderick Strong

Sydal is more commonly known as Evan Bourne as I mentioned above. Shingo is from Dragon Gate and CIMA might be as well. His name is pronounced Shima so this could lead to some misspellings. Also, I'm not capitalizing his name again. It's the same thing despite what some would have you believe. Delirious is...yeah.

Aries is the only two time ROH World Champion so he's something special here. Strong is a guy with something like 16 ways to hit a backbreaker. This is under Dragon Gate Rules which aren't explained. Strong, Aries and Sydal were in a team called Generation Next together.

Apparently you don't have to tag to switch off but you have to be on offense. Ok that makes sense. Delirious goes into a trance and goes insane once the bell rings. He's definitely interesting if nothing else. He's great in the ring if nothing else. He starts with Sydal who I'll likely call Bourne at least once. This is your usual insane Japanese match and apparently the fans like Cima.

There isn't much to talk about here other than it's just general insanity the whole time. This is what you call a spotfest with some mild wrestling involved. It's not bad or anything, but it's not comparable to traditional matches. It's weird seeing Sydal being considered a serious competitor rather than a spot monkey or jobber.

The fans like both teams. Aries is getting beaten down pretty fiercely. I think the team with the Japanese guys and Sydal are the heels even though Daniels, Sydal's partner, was ridiculously popular. Fisherman's suplex gets two on Aries. Strong gets the tag and comes in and he and Delirious clean house.

Cima is getting his head handed to him. With everyone brawling on the floor, Sydal goes up top and the crowd just rises to their feet. Great visual there. Delirious hits Shadows Over Hell (Splash to the back of a guy not on the mat) is followed by a 450 from Aries. This is totally insane. Cobra Stretch, Delirious' submission, is broken up. Cima hits a package piledriver on Delirious for the pin.

Rating: B. This falls into that gray arena of entertaining but bad as far as flow or anything like that goes. Then again

that's kind of the point of the Dragon Gate promotion. This was supposed to be completely insane and it more or less was. It was fun though so I can't complain much at all.

Everybody helps everybody up in a nice moment. Not everything has to be some epic storyline.

Homicide is ready.

Jack Evans returns in 2007.

ROH World Title: Homicide vs. Bryan Danielson

We have 54 minutes left in this tape. Let's see if these two are as good as they're said to be. We're in Homicide's hometown so he's WAY over. It's a good thing his first name isn't commonly known. It might be hard to take a guy named Nelson seriously as a street thug. Danielson's Final Countdown intro is cool too so I'll give him that. He certainly has his fans too.

I've heard great things about both guys in this company so show me what you've got. We get the big match intros which are always fun. Danielson is heel here because he more or less has to be. We stall forever as the fans chant ring the bell. Danielson flips him off instead of shaking his hand like the Code of Honor stipulates. Here we go. About forty six and a half minutes to go in the tape at the bell so we've got a LOT of time here.

Some guy shows up to do commentary but his name is incomprehensible. We get a long feeling out sequence and Homicide takes off his bandana. Homicide has apparently had some shady decisions in title matches and if he doesn't win here he's gone, more or less saying he wins. At least I think so as he came to TNA around this time.

Smokes, the guy that got hurt earlier, isn't here due to Pearce and Hagadorn. Homicide has a bad shoulder apparently

thanks to Danielson last night. Danielson has tights like Regal used to wear. We have a lot of quick holds as they try to gain control. Apparently Danielson has a bad shoulder too.

No one really has an advantage for more than a few seconds here so we're really still feeling each other out here. Apparently in a previous title match Homicide was getting hit in the head a lot and the referee stopped it which he disagreed with. The surfboard continues to look completely insane every time I see it.

This is wrestler vs. brawler here which is always an interesting dynamic. We get a slingshot suplex as Danielson is in control at this point. Scratch that as Homicide takes over. We hit the floor and Danielson is in trouble. We get the I HAVE TIL FIVE thing which I don't think I've ever seen before. Three Amigos takes over for Homicide as Eddie had been dead just over a year at this point.

And at about 11 minutes in, Pearce and Hagadorn run in for the DQ. Are you kidding me? Danielson leaves with the belt as Homicide's Crew makes the save. The crowd LOSES IT over this as even the commentators are saying YOU HAVE TO BE KIDDING ME. Apparently they are as the referee says no way it ends that way and let's keep going!

Here we go again as we're back at it. Oh and the running in heels hit a spike shoulderbreaker on Homicide's bad shoulder so it's hurt now. I don't get the point of the run in at all here. At least it happened I guess you would say early on in the match rather than later so that's good. It's his right arm if you're curious.

Smokes is at ringside now. Oh joy. Danielson is in control now as you would expect him to be. Danielson goes for a flying headbutt and gets caught in a Diamond Cutter (Yes I know it's properly called an Ace Crusher. If you want to argue which name is more famous I'd love to hear it) Also, assuming the

headbutt was launched when Homicide was on the mat, dang he got up fast.

Homicide speeds things up and dives into the second row through the ropes in a cool looking spot. Now Danielson's shoulder is hurt. This has been a very back and forth match. Danielson gets caught in an armbar but gets to the ropes for the escape. I love that jumping European Uppercut off the top. A crossface chickenwing goes on but more ropes are grabbed.

They trade strikes and hit the floor. Homicide slides back in and hits the ropes so he can...slide back out. Sure why not. Danielson hits a dive into the first few rows that looked great. Can we get rid of that Smokes idiot? He's getting on my nerves. Danielson starts the series of elbows to the head like he did in the previous match but it doesn't work.

There's the crossface chickenwing and the body scissors in the middle of the ring. In a cool spot, the arm comes down a third time but as the referee goes for the bell, Homicide grabs his leg. And Smokes of course has to pour water on Homicide. Seriously, can someone shoot this guy?

Danielson doesn't let go on the five count so Homicide just gets up. Uh, why didn't he DO THAT EARLIER? Danielson gets Cattle Mutilation. One thing I want to know: where in the world did he come up with that name? Did he throw that on one day and was thinking about what would happen if he did it to a cow?

He hooks it three times but Homicide won't tap. He throws in more elbows to the head but he stays in it. Homicide gets the Cop Killer (Vertebreaker for you WCW fans) for a LONG two but Danielson grabs the ropes. Homicide pulls a Randy Savage and goes for the ring bell which leads nowhere.

And then Danielson gets a low blow and small package for two and then Homicide hits a lariat for the pin. Seriously, that might have been the most out of nowhere ending ever. The ring

mostly fills up for a celebration. Now can we please kill Julius Smokes?

Rating: A. This was indeed a great match and well worth seeing. There were some moments I didn't like, but they were few and far between. Homicide winning was pretty clear but it came off well. They built up to a great match and I liked what I saw. Danielson is still overrated, but this was very good stuff. Homicide just doesn't feel like a world champion to me, but I was impressed. Solid match and worth seeing.

Danielson hands him the belt and Homicide makes his acceptance speech. The remaining eleven minutes are him celebrating and highlights of the year which mean nothing to me since I don't know who these people are.

Overall Rating: A-. Again I liked this show a lot. There's one bad match and the rest is all at least good with the main event being great. This was a great show to close things out with for the year and it came off great with a big time title win. This is a great look at the company as you have a title match, a big angle, a lot of high flying, some good mat work and submission stuff in front of a white hot albeit small crowd. This was a great show and well worth checking out.