

# Battle Of The Belts IV: Not Since April

## Battle Of The Belts IV

Date: October 7, 2022

Location: Entertainment And Sports Arena, Washington DC

Commentators: Jim Ross, Excalibur, William Regal, Chris Jericho

We're back to another of these things and that does not offer the most inspiration. The series does not seem to be a priority for AEW but the action tends to be rather good. This is also a live show so maybe things can be picked up a little bit from its usual status, which would be appreciated. Let's get to it.

### All-Atlantic Title: Trent Beretta vs. Pac

Pac is defending and is still in the ring after wrestling in the 20+ minute Rampage main event. Trent has Chuck Taylor in his corner and wins an early slugout for a bit of a surprise. A running clothesline puts Pac on the floor and there's the dive to take him out for a bonus. Back in and Trent hammers on the ropes, setting up a dropkick to take it outside again. A spear on the floor drops Pac for two back inside but he kicks Trent outside this time.

The table is set up but Trent fights back and loads Pac onto the table. That takes too long to launch though and Pac gets out, only to have Trent get back up top. The superplex brings him down though and we take a break. Back with Trent hitting a stomp out of the corner and grabbing the half and half suplex. The tornado DDT plants Pac hard for two and a piledriver is good for the same.

With Pac's neck banged up, Trent takes him to the ramp, where Pac grabs a brainbuster through a table on the floor for the

really big crash. JR isn't sure why the doctor isn't there and...well yeah fair question actually. Back in and the Black Arrow hits raised knees, meaning a small package can give Trent two.

A half and half superplex gives Trent two more but Pac pulls him into the Brutalizer. The rope is reached and Pac is starting to look spent. With nothing else working, Pac grabs the ring bell hammer again, with Trent picking him up. Pac channels his inner Randy Savage from Boston 1986 to Trent's Tito Santana and knocks him silly for the pin at 15:20.

**Rating:** B. It wasn't quite a classic but they did the right thing by having Pac wrestle twice, as it is hard to buy the idea of Trent being a real threat against him. They had a physical match and Trent got to show off a bit with no one else around for a change. This felt like a fight over a title and that's the point of the show so they had the right idea.

Chris Jericho and the Jericho Appreciation Society promise to teach Bryan Danielson a lesson next week.

Claudio Castagnoli wants the winner of Danielson vs. Jericho for the Ring Of Honor World Title.

TBS Title: Willow Nightingale vs. Jade Cargill

Cargill, with the Baddies, is defending and powers Nightingale into the corner. They go head to head until Nightingale dropkicks her into the corner. Nightingale sends her outside and dives through the ropes, only to hit the Baddies. Jade is fine enough to run Nightingale over though and we take a break. Back with Jade doing pushups but Nightingale runs her over with a clothesline out of the corner. The Cannonball in the corner sets up a middle rope dropkick for two. The doctor bomb is broken up and Jaded retains the title at 7:31.

**Rating:** C. Believe it or not, yes another challenger was built up in one match and then beaten by Jade without much trouble.

This is the third time that Jade has pinned Nightingale and it still wasn't that interesting. Jade needs a serious challenger and as fun as Nightingale is, she isn't a threat to the title. Find someone to go after her title already because this is beyond repetitive.

Post match Vickie Guerrero comes out for a distraction and Nyla Rose sneaks in to steal the title.

Ethan Page and Stokely Hathaway yell at Matt Hardy about contract tampering. Good grief. Yes Tony, we know that there were stories about contract tampering from WWE. YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE AN ANGLE OUT OF EVERYTHING!

Hook rips up the Trustbusters' envelope.

Here's what's coming on various shows.

Toni Storm and Hikaru Shida are ready for Britt Baker are ready for Britt Baker and Jamie Hayter.

Ring Of Honor Tag Team Titles: Gates of Agony vs. FTR

The Gates, with Prince Nana, are challenging and in case you don't remember them, it's probably because they have had two matches as a team ever, with the most recent being about three months ago. The Gunn Club is in the crowd to make fun of FTR. Harwood and Kaun fight over a lockup to start before Kaun clotheslines him for daring to try a hiptoss. A swinging neckbreaker gets Harwood out of trouble so it's off to Wheeler to fire off his own chops.

Kaun gets Wheeler into the corner as well though and it's Toa coming in for a slam. The nerve hold goes on before Toa sits on his chest for daring to try a sunset flip. Toa's belly to belly gets two and Wheeler is sent outside for a whip into the barricade. Back with Wheeler being driven into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs.

Wheeler flips out of a suplex though and dives between Kaun's

legs for the hot tag to Harwood. Everything breaks down and Toa catches Harwood's middle rope crossbody. Wheeler middle rope dropkicks both of them though and everyone goes down. The double hanging DDT drops Toa and a spike piledriver gets two with Kaun making the save. The Big Rig hits Toa but Nana offers a distraction. Not that it matters as Harwood backslides Kaun to retain at 13:24.

**Rating:** B-. So this was the latest FTR match against a team that has nothing to do with AEW, despite them being an AEW tag team. In case you're wondering, FTR has not had a tag match against an AEW team since April 6 (Young Bucks), with everything since then being six man tags or against teams from outside the company. This was another match where FTR is in no danger of losing against a team that means nothing around here, which is all they do anymore.

Post match the beatdown is on again and Brian Cage runs in to held the Gates. Wardlow and then Samoa Joe run in for the save and the good guys clear the ring to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Battle Of The Belts continues its undefeated streak of having decent to good wrestling and feeling like absolutely nothing that happened here mattered in the slightest. They are reaching the point of being beneath the revival of Saturday Night's Main Event and that is not a place you want to be. The fact that there has been one title change (plus one vacant title won) out of eleven title defenses in the history of this show has something to do with it, but if these shows have to exist, please come up with a way to make them matter, because these things feel like a big waste of time.

### Results

Pac b. Trent Beretta – Ring bell hammer to the head

Jade Cargill b. Willow Nightingale – Jaded

FTR b. Gates Of Agony – Backslide to Kaun

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# Dynamite – October 5, 2022: In Search Of A Story

## Dynamite

Date: October 5, 2022

Location: Entertainment And Sports Center, Washington DC

Commentators: Excalibur, Tony Schiavone, Taz

It's the third anniversary of Dynamite and you know that means we are going to be seeing something special. In this case we have a big tag match main event as Chris Jericho and Sammy Guevara are facing Bryan Danielson and Daniel Garcia. As a bonus, the show is an extra fifteen minutes long tonight so let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

## Wheeler Yuta vs. Maxwell Jacob Friedman

William Regal is on commentary and doesn't think much of MJF, even if the fans seem to like him. Wheeler sends him into the corner to start and we hit the Fargo Strut for some old school flare. A dropkick just annoys MJF so he takes Yuta down and grabs a chinlock. Back up and MJF grabs a tilt-a-whirl faceplant as we take a break.

Back with Yuta whipping him hard into the corner and grabbing a small package for two. Yuta grabs some rolling German suplex for two but his hurricanrana is countered into a powerbomb onto a knee. They go to a pinfall reversal sequence for several near falls each and then do it again for a bonus.

Back up and a double clothesline puts them down, which is good for a standing ovation. MJF takes him up top for a super Tombstone but gets countered into a super hurricanrana. Yuta goes up for a splash but MJF rolls away and flips him off. That's fine with Yuta, who hits a heck of a dive into the splash for two anyway. Yuta tries the Seatbelt but gets pulled into the Salt Of The Earth for the tap at 15:00.

**Rating:** B. They got time, they had a good story and it worked well as a result. MJF might not be the flashiest star in the ring but he knows how to put together a solid match. There was no way that Yuta was going to win here but the fact that he was wrestling instead of talking was a smart way to go.

Post match Yuta offers MJF the handshake and MJF considers it, only to have Lee Moriarty jump Yuta from behind. Cue Stokely Hathaway with the Dynamite Diamond, which MJF reluctantly puts on. That's enough for William Regal, who gets up from commentary and LOADS UP THE BRASS KNUCKLES. MJF and company leave, albeit with MJF glaring at Regal. The knuckles got quite the reaction.

Video on Chris Jericho/Sammy Guevara vs. Bryan Danielson/Daniel Garcia.

The Jericho Appreciation Society isn't happy with Garcia and punishment is promised.

### Darby Allin vs. Jay Lethal

Feeling out process to start with Lethal sending Allin out to the floor. Allin is right back in for the springboard high angle armdrag into a standoff. Lethal gets smart by going after the knee but gets caught in a Scorpion Death Drop for a double knockdown. We take a break and come back with Lethal staying on the knee, including a super dragon screw legwhip.

Lethal slaps on the Figure Four as you might have expected, but Allin makes the rope, as you might have expected. The leg is fine enough for two off a Code Red so here are Sonjay Dutt and Satnam Singh. Lethal wants them to go back, setting off a pinfall reversal sequence until Allin grabs the Last Supper for the pin at 10:15.

**Rating:** B-. Another good one here as Lethal continues to be able to have a nice match with anyone. That is why he is put in these spots over and over, with Allin getting a win over a name who still matters. This was the kind of television match that is always going to work and that was the case again here.

Post match Lethal shakes Allin's hand, much to Singh and Dutt's annoyance.

Video on Brian Cage and the Embassy.

### TNT Title: Wardlow vs. Brian Cage

Cage, with Prince Nana, is challenging. They fight into the corner to start with Cage hitting a running clothesline but not being able to drop him. A hurricanrana sends Wardlow into the ropes but he catches a 619. Wardlow plants him with a World's Strongest Slam but the Powerbomb Symphony is countered as we take a break.

Back with Wardlow fighting out of the corner and hitting a

Whisper in the Wind of all things. A series of suplexes rock Cage but he catches Wardlow on top with a kick to the head. The apron superplex gets two on Wardlow, who is fine enough to come back with a spinebuster. Not to be outdone, Cage hits an F5 but tries his own powerbomb. Wardlow headbutts him a few times and hits the four movement Powerbomb Symphony to retain the title at 10:03.

**Rating:** B-. Sometimes you need two big strong men hitting each other for a good while until one of them can't stand up any longer. That is exactly what we got here and Wardlow felt like his old self for a change. I'm still not sure why we need the Wardlow/Samoa Joe thing when this is the kind of stuff that he can do on his own. As for Cage...well he had potential but it's pretty clearly over for him no matter what.

Post match the Gates of Agony come in for the beatdown on Wardlow but Samoa Joe runs in for the save. Cage is back up but FTR comes in for the real save.

Britt Baker says Saraya isn't cleared to wrestle so this is still her house.

Toni Storm/Athena/Willow Nightingale vs. Penelope Ford/Serena Deeb/Jamie Hayter

Saraya is here to cancel out Rebel and Britt Baker. Willow and Hayter start things off but it's off to Athena vs. Ford instead. Athena hits a basement dropkick but Ford is back up with a handspring elbow back in the corner. Deeb comes in and gets dropped by a springboard spinning crossbody. It's off to Storm to run Deeb down down and pound away with the forearms to the back. Deeb gets sent into the corner for some running charges, including Storm's running hip attack. Deeb is right back up and takes out Storm's leg as we take a break.

We come back with Storm fighting out of a chinlock and forearming away at Deeb. Everything breaks down and Deeb leglocks Storm as she suplexes Athena, with Hayter doing the



same thing to Nightingale. Back up and Storm gets over for the tag off to Nightingale for a spinebuster on Hayter. Rebel loads up a crutch shot but Saraya makes the save. We hit the parade of secondary finishers until Ford gets a quick two on Nightingale. Ford's handspring elbow is broken up and a doctor bomb gives Nightingale the pin on Ford at 9:29.

**Rating:** C+. There were two good parts here, as we had the women getting some more time, plus Nightingale actually getting a win. They didn't get too insane here either and that made for another nice TV match. Nightingale could be on her way to something in the future if they give her a chance, and based on this maybe they are doing so.

Post match we get the big staredown, with Saraya getting in a fight with Baker. A low superkick from Saraya drops Rebel. So I guess she can wrestle again.

Rush and Jose the Assistant aren't pleased with Private Party.

Here are the Acclaimed and Billy Gunn, because it's National Scissoring Day. The champs talk about their success and say AEW now stands for ACCLAIMED EVERY WEDNESDAY. Bowens talks about how scissoring is something that makes you friends and partners. The fans want a real team rather than two people thrown together like Keith Lee and Swerve Strickland (dubbed Sneaky Swerve).

Billy talks about how this is a special day and he has a present from city hall: some GIANT GOLD SCISSORS! Billy: "No running with scissors please." Bowens wants to see some scissoring before Caster talks about his dad winning a Super Bowl for the local NFL team. That Super Bowl ring is his prized possession and now he is proud of his son becoming a champion too. For now though, we are in a city that represents the divide in America. However, everyone loves the Acclaimed and scissoring goes beyond left and right and red and blue.

We load up the three way scissoring to unite America but

Swerve Strickland cuts them off. Swerve wants the titles back and doesn't like Billy Gunn, even pulling out a rock, which beats scissors. The challenge is on for Billy vs. Swerve next week....and here is Mark Sterling of all people. He wants in on the scissoring and gets beaten down in a bit of a bizarre cameo. Billy accepts Swerve's challenge for next week and three way scissoring ensues. This was long, ridiculous, over the top, and an absolute blast.

Dark Order is ready to win the Trios Titles on Rampage.

Madison Rayne praises Skye Blue when Tay Melo and Anna Jay to come in and mock them. A sports entertainers vs. wrestlers challenge is on.

#### Hangman Page vs. Rush

Jose the Assistant is here with Rush. Page gets shoved around to start but Rush has to bail from the threat of a Buckshot Lariat. They head outside with Rush whipping away with a camera cord and sending Page into the barricade. We take a break and come back with Page hitting a slingshot dive onto Rush before they get back inside. Rush stands on Page's shoulders in the corner but gets taken down for two. Page has had it with him and gets in a hard clothesline. The Buckshot Lariat finishes Rush at 9:05.

**Rating:** C+. Well Page wasn't going to lose less than two weeks away from his World Title shot so Rush putting him over was the right way to go. They had a hard hitting match here until Page knocked him silly, which is how this should have gone. Page needs to get back to the serious and they started it well here, though I don't know if they have time to do enough before Cincinnati.

Post match Private Party comes out but Jon Moxley comes through the crowd to say he has been waiting for this for three years. Moxley is ready for his match in his hometown at the arena he used to smoke and drink in. After he walks from

his house to the arena, he is ready to beat Page and prove that he is the man around here. Moxley goes to leave but Page is ready to do this right now. Moxley calls him a sweet kid and says Page says stuff that gets him in trouble. He has thirteen days, so watch your d\*\*\* mouth.

Willow Nightingale wants to be TBS Champion so Jade Cargill and the Baddies come in. Nightingale can be #39, but she thinks she can be the 1 in 38-1.

### Luchasaurus vs. Fuego del Sol

A chokeslam and something like a reverse AA finishes Fuego at 23 seconds.

Post match Jungle Boy comes in with a chair to knock Luchasaurus outside. He and Luchasaurus were best friends but Luchasaurus chose Christian instead. Now Jungle Boy is going to break him piece by piece. Luchasaurus can pick the time and the place so Christian picks next week in Toronto.

Here's what's coming on various shows.

Pac is ready for Trent Beretta.

### Bryan Danielson/Daniel Garcia vs. Chris Jericho/Sammy Guevara

Jericho and Garcia start things off to start, with Jericho armdragging him down. Garcia gets him to the mat and has a seat on Jericho's back but a cheap shot from Guevara lets the villains take over. It's off to Danielson to clean house and send Jericho outside for the suicide dive as we take a break.

Back with Guevara hitting a super Spanish Fly for two on Danielson and then posing with Jericho. Stereo crossbodies put Jericho and Danielson down though and it's a double tag to Garcia and Jericho. Guevara gets dropped hard so we get the staredown into the hockey fight right hands. Garcia gets the better of things and kicks Jericho in the chest, setting up the Dragontamer.

Guevara makes the save but the Lionsault hits Garcia's raised knees. Guevara tries to come in off the top but dives into a Crossface. Danielson grabs one on Jericho at the same time before they switch to stereo hammer and anvil elbows. Guevara comes back in and cleans house but Garcia counters the GTH into a piledriver. Jericho breaks it up so Danielson knees him from the apron.

A clothesline drops Guevara and Jericho drops Danielson onto a table. With that not being enough to break it, Jericho suplexes him through the table. Guevara's shooting star hits raised knees though and now the Dragontamer...is broken up with a Jericho belt shot. That's enough for Guevara to steal the pin at 14:23.

**Rating:** B. It was a good match with a bit of a screwy finish so it didn't exactly come off well. This didn't feel like the major main event of the AEW anniversary show, at least somewhat due to it mainly being about Ring Of Honor. Garcia vs. Jericho continues to be built up, though I'm still not sure how interesting that is really going to be.

**Overall Rating:** B+. This was a stacked show with a bunch of very good matches, though nothing broke through to that top level. What matters here that they are setting up a major title match in Cincinnati before we can move on to the Full Gear build. The problem is that it might not be that interesting, despite being put together well enough. Solid action and storytelling, but they need a big story around here and that doesn't seem to be anywhere in sight.

### Results

Maxwell Jacob Friedman b. Wheeler Yuta – Salt Of The Earth

Jay Lethal b. Darby Allin – Last Supper

Wardlow b. Brian Cage – Powerbomb Symphony

Willow Nightingale/Athena/Toni Storm b. Jamie Hayter/Penelope Ford/Serena Deeb – Doctor bomb to Ford

Hangman Page b. Rush – Buckshot lariat

Luchasaurus b. Fuego del Sol – Reverse flipping fireman's carry slam

Sammy Guevara/Chris Jericho b. Bryan Danielson/Daniel Garcia – Belt shot to Garcia

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# Rampage – July 8, 2022: The Rampage Sandwich

## Rampage

Date: July 8, 2022

Location: Blue Cross Arena, Rochester, New York

Commentators: Excalibur, Taz, Jim Ross

We're in for a pretty stacked show this week with Konosuke Takeshita vs. Eddie Kingston and some Ring Of Honor stars, including World Champion Jonathan Gresham, getting their TV time. Throw in Orange Cassidy vs. Tony Nese for Swerve

Strickland's AEW contract, because reasons, and let's get to it.

[Here is Dynamite if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

### Konosuke Takeshita vs. Eddie Kingston

They shove each other around to start and then head to the mat, with neither being able to go anywhere. Excalibur lets us know that we just saw a replay of Jumbo Tsuruta vs. Mitsuharu Misawa, because AEW really likes tributes. Kingston takes him down and cranks on both arms, with Takeshita reversing into a double crank of his own.

That reversal is reversed into another reversal before the rope gets Takeshita out of trouble. The head into the corner with Kingston firing off the machine gun chops (minus some of the machine gun speed). Takeshita hits some better forearms but gets headbutted down hard. More slugging out keeps Takeshita in trouble until a heck of a Blue Thunder Bomb gives him two.

We take a break and come back with the slugout on the apron, as Takeshita hits a German suplex to drop Kingston hard. Kingston is fine enough to hit a t-bone suplex on the floor and they both have to beat the count back in. One heck of a clothesline gives Kingston one and a Liger Bomb gives him two.

Back up and Takeshita hits him in the face and grabs a brainbuster for two of his own. They slug it out from their knees and then their feet, where Kingston has to avoid the jumping knee. Kingston nails the spinning backfist, gets hit with the jumping knee, and then hits another spinning backfist for the pin on Takeshita at 12:03.

**Rating:** B. This was the kind of hard hitting and fun match that you would have expected. What mattered here was about

seeing them slug it out and see who was going to be the last man standing. The opening was a copy of a Japanese sequence and the ending certainly felt like another one, so this was quite the fight from beginning to end.

Athena and Kris Statlander want the TNT Title.

Video on Hook.

### Gates of Agony vs. Lee Moriarty/Jonathan Gresham

Caprice Coleman is on commentary and Tully Blanchard is here with the Gates (Toa/Kaun). Moriarty gets kneed in the ribs to start and the beating is on, setting up a heck of a chop from Kaun. The choking is on in the corner with Toa taking Moriarty down, setting up Kaun's slingshot hilo. Toa hits a Samoan drop for two and we take a break. Back with Moriarty fighting out of trouble but Gresham won't accept the tag and walks away, because we have a heel turn. Gresham hugs Blanchard in the aisle as Moriarty gets caught in a fireman's carry gutbuster for the pin at 7:28.

**Rating:** C. This was about the turn and nothing more, though it should also set up Moriarty as the next challenge for the Ring Of Honor World Title, possibly at Death Before Dishonor. That should be a great technical off, though I could have gone for more of Gresham as a hero. If nothing else though, this should give us a heck of a star making performance once someone takes Gresham's title.

Eddie Kingston is happy with his match with Konosuke Takeshita and loves young competitors like that. That sends him to Chris Jericho, who made Kingston a liar by not bleeding. Now he wants a barbed wire match with Jericho for what Jericho did to Ruby Soho.

### Kayla Sparks/Christina Marie vs. Serena Deeb/Mercedes Martinez

Deeb runs them over to start and takes Marie into the corner

for the running clothesline. The throat first catapult into the bottom rope has Marie down again but Deeb stops to yell at Martinez. That's enough for a tag from Martinez, who hits Marie with a sliding knee. Marie is dropped ribs first across the top rope and it's back to Deeb for the Serenity Lock and the win at 2:24. To the point here with pure dominance.

Post match Deeb takes Martinez down and puts her in the Serenity Lock.

Jonathan Gresham is tired of being on the sidelines but Tully Blanchard got him back in. Blanchard is looking forward to next week's title match.

Danhausen, still Orange Cassidy's lawyer, objects to Mark Sterling trying to get Cassidy to sign the petition to get rid of Swerve Strickland. Cassidy: "Yeah I don't care."

Lee Moriarty, with Matt Sydal, is ready to win the Ring Of Honor World Title next week.

Here's what's coming on various shows.

### Orange Cassidy vs. Tony Nese

For Swerve Strickland's future, despite Strickland having nothing to do with this match. Cassidy loads up the hands in the pockets but rolls away from a charging Nese. A shoulder takes Nese down and Cassidy puts his hands in his pockets, allowing him to avoid back to back Nese legdrops. There's a dropkick to send Nese outside, with Cassidy nipping up without taking his hands out of his pockets.

Back in and Cassidy snapmares him down, setting up a thumbs up before the crucifix gets two. Nese is right back with a fireman's carry gutbuster for two (showing that his knees are not as good as Kaun's from the tag match) to send Cassidy outside, where Sterling gets in some cheap shots.

We take a break and come back with Cassidy fighting out of a



bodyscissors but getting elbowed in the face. Cassidy can't hit his tornado DDT so Nese northern lights suplexes him for two instead. Nese puts him up top but gets knocked down, meaning Sterling needs to offer a distraction. That draw Danhausen up for a save but Nese baseball slides him into the barricade. Cassidy grabs the Stundog Millionaire and a Michinoku Driver for a close two. Now the tornado DDT can plant Nese and Cassidy does it again for a bonus.

The top rope DDT gets two so Sterling gets on the apron. The lazy kicks have Sterling screaming, followed by Nese getting up for a pumphandle driver and his own near fall. Nese's running Nese hits buckle so Sterling gets in with the clipboard but Danhausen is back in to steal it and hit Sterling low. Nese gets cursed and the Orange Punch gives Cassidy the pin at 15:00.

**Rating:** B-. The match was certainly fun and this is the kind of story where Cassidy and Danhausen work very well. It wasn't a serious story, with Swerve Strickland not even being involved in a funny bit, which is where these two schnooks belong. I chuckled enough times in here to make it work and while it might have been a bit longer than it needed to be, this was a rather entertaining main event.

Posing ensues to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. The main event and opener are more than good enough to make the show work, even if the stuff in the middle was just ok. What mattered here was having a mixture of a hard hitting opener, storyline advancing matches in the middle and a fun main event. I liked the show rather well and the variety made it work well. Good show this week.

### Results

Eddie Kingston b. Konosuke Takeshita – Spinning backfist

Gates Of Agony b. Lee Moriarty/Jonathan Gresham – Fireman's carry gutbuster to Moriarty

Serena Deeb/Mercedes Martinez b. Kayla Sparks/Christina Marie  
– Serenity Lock to Marie  
Orange Cassidy b. Tony Nese – Orange Punch

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# Supercard Of Honor XV: They Can Do No Wrong

## Supercard Of Honor XV

Date: April 1, 2022

Location: Curtis Culwell Center, Garland, Texas

Commentators: Caprice Coleman, Ian Riccaboni

Now this is a big one as we have the first new Ring of Honor show in about three and a half months. The catch this time though is that the company has been purchased by AEW President Tony Khan, which means there is likely to be a bigger AEW presence on this show. Most of the card hasn't been announced, but we are getting the Briscoes vs. FTR, which should be pretty good. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about what it means to be a champion and looks at Bandido vs. Jonathan Gresham. That's the most important (singles) match on the card.

Commentary runs down the card.

### Zero Hour: Colt Cabana vs. Blake Christian

The bigger Cabana backs him into the corner to start and counts his own four count to save the referee some work. They trade some wristlocks before Cabana cranks on both arms at the same time. Christian takes him down and gets two off a standing splash. Cabana sends him outside and blocks a wristdrag off the apron, sending Christian crashing down onto the floor.

Back in and Cabana listens to the crowd a bit too much, allowing Christian to send him into the corner. Cabana is fine enough to send him face first into the buckle, only to get caught with a handspring enziguri. Another enziguri sends Cabana outside, followed by a 450 for two back inside. Christian tries to take it up top but gets caught in the Chicago Skyline of all things for the pin at 8:03.

**Rating:** C. Cabana is a great choice for a spot like this as he isn't going to do anything too ridiculous and is mainly there as a way to warm up the fans. He has been around Ring of Honor for so long that he is almost an institution in the place and the fans are going to react to him no matter what he does. Nice, safe match here and that's all it needed to be.

Respect is shown after the match.

### Zero Hour: AQA vs. Miranda Alize

AQA works on the arm to start and grabs a headlock takeover. La majistral gives AQA two and the armbar goes on. Alize finally fights up with some running knees in the corner, setting up a butterfly suplex for two. They fight over a

suplex until a DDT gets two on Alize, leaving them both down.

Back up and a running dropkick into an ax handle drop Alize, setting up a Sling Blade for two. Alize pulls her off the top though and a ripcord cutter gets two, setting up a quickly broken Crossface. Some kicks to the head rock Alize though and a shooting star press gives AQA the pin at 8:16.

**Rating:** C-. The women's division hasn't exactly improved that much and this was another pretty weak example. No matter how you look at it, Ring of Honor's women's division has often been a problem and running two women out there in a cold match, when Alize was never a big star in the first place, isn't going to help things. There is a way to make the division work, but they need something other than "I want the title" over and over.

#### Zero Hour: Shinobi Shadow Squad vs. Gates of Agony

It's Eli Isom/Cheeseburger (no longer The World Famous CB) for the Squad here. The Gates are Jasper Kaun/Toa Liona, as introduced by Tully Blanchard as his new clients. Isom gets planted by Liona to start but Cheeseburger gets in a superkick. Everything breaks down and the Gates clean house, setting up a fireman's carry gutbuster to Isom. Kaun throws in an elevated Samoan Spike for the pin at 2:27. Almost total dominance.

Post match, Blanchard promises to introduce his new singles star tonight.

#### Zero Hour: Joe Hendry vs. Dalton Castle

Hendry continues to look great and Castle still has the Baby Chicks. The fans are happy to have Castle back, as they should be. They fight over some grappling to start until Hendry snaps off a headlock takeover. Back up and Hendry runs him over with a shoulder, sending Castle outside for some fanning from the Chicks. A lap around the ring lets Castle sneak back in to

single leg Hendry, setting up a DDT. Hendry isn't having that and powers Castle over the top for a crash/breather.

Back in and Hendry hits a hard clothesline for two but Castle catches him with a running boot to the face. Hendry cuts off a charge with a tilt-a-whirl slam and the cobra clutch goes on. Castle gets sent outside but he manages a hurricanrana on the floor to take over. Back in and a suplex drops Hendry for two but he's back with a spinebuster for the same. Hendry hits a fireman's carry drop, only to get punched in the face, setting up the Bang A Rang to give Castle the pin at 9:46.

**Rating:** C+. Castle is one of the most charismatic wrestlers around today and it is nice to see him back in the ring anywhere. He can mix up the weird nature with the amateur skills and it works out well most of the time. On the other hand, Hendry has transformed himself from a goof to a guy who looks great and can do some good things in the ring. I liked this one and it would be nice to see both of them getting back in the ring sooner rather than later.

No opening video for the proper show.

### Swerve Strickland vs. Alex Zayne

They start fast with neither being able to get very far until Zayne hits a running headscissors to send Swerve into the ropes. That doesn't matter as Swerve lands on his feet anyway so Zayne takes him down and hits a quick backplash for two. Back up and Zayne sits him on the top to try a running hurricanrana, only to get caught in a swinging cutter onto the top rope.

A middle rope elbow to the back gives Swerve two and we hit the chinlock. Zayne fights up and hammers away before blocking the rolling Flatliner. Swerve can't hit the JML Driver but can grab a half crab to crank on the leg. The rope is grabbed so they wind up on the apron, where Zayne snaps off a poisonrana to the floor in a huge crash. Back in and Zayne hits some

shooting star knees to the back for two but Strickland grabs a German suplex. The rolling Flatliner connects and the Swerve Stomp gets...two, in a nice false finish. With nothing else working, Swerve kicks him in the leg and hits the JML Driver for the pin at 11:41.

**Rating:** C+. Having Strickland on any given show is a good thing and that was the case here. He is going to get a reaction no matter what he does and the fact that he was in there against someone who can do the flips and the dives like Zayne made it better. This was a good choice for the opener proper and Strickland looked like a star (shocking I know).

We run down the card.

### Ninja Mack vs. ???

Mack is a rather short masked man who can do a lot of flips. The mystery opponent is Tully Blanchard's newest signing and that would be...Brian Cage. Mack flips at Cage to start but gets caught in the air and dropped onto the apron. The Drill Claw doesn't work so Cage fires off the corner clotheslines instead. Mack manages a kick to the head but gets LAUNCHED with a release German suplex. Some kicks to the head stagger Cage but he's back with the swinging release Rock Bottom. The Drill Claw finishes for Cage at 2:48. Mostly a squash, as it should be.

We recap Jay Lethal vs. Lee Moriarty. Lethal likes what Moriarty can do but asks if Moriarty is ready for this kind of competition.

### Jay Lethal vs. Lee Moriarty

Matt Sydal, on crutches, is here with Moriarty. Feeling out process to start with Lethal getting the better of a battle of wristlocks. Back up and Moriarty grabs a rollup, sending a frustrated Lethal into the corner. The Lethal Injection is countered into another rollup and Lethal doesn't like this.

Moriarty gets the better of an exchange of forearms so Lethal armdrags him into the basement dropkick for two of his own. The fans aren't sure who they prefer as Moriarty shrugs off some forearms and springboard armdrags Lethal down. That's too much for Lethal, who grabs a shinbreaker into a dragon screw legwhip to start in on the knee. Lethal sends him outside for a pair of suicide dives but Moriarty switches places before the third.

Moriarty's dive is slowed by the knee though and Lethal is back in for some kicks to the leg. A superplex attempt is broken up as Moriarty goes for the wrist. Moriarty's dive off the top misses though and the Lethal Combination gets two. Lethal hits the superkick into a cutter but Hail To The King is countered into la majistral for two more. More rollups get two each before Moriarty has to go to the ropes to avoid the Figure Four. The referee has to fix the ring skirt so Lethal hits him low and grabs the Lethal Injection for the pin at 14:52.

**Rating:** B. This was a rather good technical off until the end when they went with the storyline for Lethal instead. You can tell that they're going with the AEW stuff here as this tied into everything that they have been doing on Dynamite and Rampage in recent weeks. Moriarty isn't ready to beat Lethal in AEW or Ring of Honor, but they let him have time here and frustrate the star, which is a great sign for his future.

Lethal doesn't look happy with himself but then goes full heel by attacking the injured Sydal. Sonjay Dutt comes out of wherever he has been to talk Lethal, his best friend, to the back.

Mercedes Martinez and Willow Nightingale are ready to fight for the Interim Women's World Title, because just stripping Deonna Purrazzo of the title apparently wasn't an option.

Interim Women's Title: Willow Nightingale vs. Mercedes

## Martinez

For the vacant title. Willow tries to go technical to start but gets hit in the face for her efforts. A rollup gives Martinez two but Willow blocks the third rolling butterfly suplex. Willow's grappling still doesn't work so Martinez grabs a double arm dragon sleeper (that's a new one), followed by a big boot for two more.

Martinez's fisherman's buster is blocked and it's time to kick each other from the mat. Back up and a running clothesline drops Martinez to give Willow a needed breather but Martinez grabs the Air Raid Crash...for two. That's a bit of a surprise. An Angle Slam gives Willow two of her own and the Pounce rocks Martinez again. Willow takes the straps down and hits the Cannonball for another near fall.

The Vader bomb is loaded up but Martinez reverses into a Razor's Edge Dominator for the next two. Martinez tries a belly to back but gets knocked into the Tree Of Woe, with Willow forearming away. Willow's moonsault connects (with a weird looking landing) for two but Martinez pulls her into a surfboard with a dragon sleeper (geez) for the tap and the title at 12:34.

**Rating:** C-. This felt like a styles clash as Martinez is the old classic power brawler while Nightingale is much more about the modern style and being the bigger woman who can move. They traded some good looking stuff here and Nightingale still feels like a prospect, but this didn't exactly click.

We recap FTR vs. the Briscoes for the Tag Team Titles. FTR talks about how this is the match that people have been talking about, because we get to see two of the best teams of all time facing off. The feud started when FTR showed up at Final Battle back in December after the Briscoes won the titles but they haven't had an actual match yet.

Tag Team Titles: FTR vs. Briscoes



The Briscoes are defending (and FTR's AAA Tag Team Titles aren't on the line) and the HOLY S\*\*\* chants are on before they even shake hands...which doesn't happen. Well now it's serious. Cash Wheeler and Mark start things off and the staredown is on as the fans are split (you can feel it with this one). Even the lockup gets a big pop and the fans think Mark's headlock to the mat is awesome.

A fireman's carry into an armbar puts Mark in a bit of trouble but he reverses into a front facelock as the technical off ensues (fans: "TAG TEAM WRESTLING!"). Dax Harwood and Jay come in and immediately go nose to nose, setting up the aggressive lockup. Harwood takes him down with a headlock but gets reversed into a headscissors without much effort. That's escaped as well and Harwood spits in Jay's face to make this a lot more serious.

A running hurricanrana and a kick to the head rock Harwood and a clothesline puts him on the floor. Harwood tries to throw in a chair but Jay catches it to show off. Wheeler comes back in and gets elbowed in the face, allowing Mark to come in for some shots in the corner. An uppercut drops Mark though and it's back to Harwood for some clubberin (well you knew that was coming). The chop off goes to Mark, with Harwood realizing that he is in over his head and punching Mark in the face.

It's back to Jay to take Wheeler into the corner though and the Briscoes clear the ring. That sets up Jey's big flip dive and Mark adds the Bang Bang Elbow. The brawl is on outside, with FTR getting creative and catapulting Jay face first into the bottom of a table. Back in and Harwood pounds on Jay's bloody head so hard that he hurts his own hand. The chinlock goes on (I think they've earned it) for a bit before Harwood hits the top rope superplex for a big bounce.

The fans aren't sure who to cheer for here but seem pleased as Jay rolls under a right hand and brings Mark back in. House is cleaned and an Iconoclasm gets two on Harwood. Redneck Boogie

gets the same on Wheeler as the fans are somehow getting more into this. Harwood catches Jay in a slingshot powerbomb so Wheeler can add a top rope splash for two. Mark is back in to break up the Big Rig and the Briscoes hit one of their own for two on Harwood.

Jay hits Wheeler with a Death Valley Driver on the floor before suplexing Harwood over the top and out to the floor in a BIG crash. The medics come out to check on Harwood but everyone gets back inside (fans: "FIGHT FOREVER!"). We get the big forearm off in the middle until Wheeler is sent outside.

Mark goes up for a huge corkscrew dive to take him out again, leaving Harwood to slug it out with Jay. The hangman neckbreaker sets up the Froggy Bow for two and everyone is spent. The Doomsday Device is loaded up but Wheeler makes the save and sends Jay outside, leaving Mark to walk into the Big Rig for the pin and the titles at 27:24.

**Rating:** A+. If that isn't the match of the year, I'm not sure what has beaten it to date. This had the atmosphere coming in and the fans were ready for it from before the bell. Then the match actually got started and things actually got even better. It was an instant classic with both teams blowing the doors off and leaving it all in the ring until one of them won clean.

Just seeing a match like this end without some kind of shenanigans is worth a boost and that was the case here. You've heard all of the accolades already and this was worth every one of them. It takes something special to have all the hype in the world and then completely exceed it but they managed to make it happen here. Check this out, as the Briscoes are great but FTR can do no wrong right now.

FTR looks spent after the match but get up to accept the titles. There is no handshake, because teams hug after something like that. The fans chant for the Briscoes as FTR

leaves but here are the Young Bucks to superkick the Briscoes. FTR runs back in for the save and want the Bucks now, but they'll have to wait until Dynamite.

#### TV Title: Rhett Titus vs. Minoru Suzuki

Suzuki is challenging and is in search of his first American title. Titus gets knocked down almost at the bell but manages a single leg takedown. An armbar into a half crab sends Suzuki over to the ropes, where Suzuki ties the arm over said rope. A trip to the floor goes badly for Titus, as Suzuki brings him back inside for a Fujiwara armbar.

Make that a chinlock, as Titus is getting overwhelmed here. Titus fights up and manages some running boots to the face, setting up a Saito suplex for two. The big dropkick connects for another near fall and Suzuki is mad. He knocks Titus down without much trouble and the Gotch style piledriver makes Suzuki champion at 5:52.

**Rating:** C-. This was little more than a squash win for Suzuki as he shrugged off everything Titus threw at him and took the title in short order. Odds are this was out there for the sake of giving the fans something shorter and easier to digest than the previous war. Suzuki is going to be over by definition so putting him in this spot was going to work no matter what, even if the match wasn't that great.

We recap Wheeler Yuta challenging Josh Woods for the Pure Wrestling Title. Woods won the title at Final Battle and has defended it since, while Yuta is looking to prove himself for the first time.

#### Pure Wrestling Title: Wheeler Yuta vs. Josh Woods

Woods is defending under Pure Rules. Yuta grabs a very fast rollup for two and they trade armdrags for a standoff. An armbar sends Yuta straight to the ropes for his first (of three) breaks but he slips out of an abdominal stretch attempt

on his own. Yuta wins a grapple off on the mat and grabs a headlock before switching to a headscissors. That's broken up and Woods starts stretching Yuta's legs before a wristlock sends Yuta over for his second break.

Back up and Yuta hits a dropkick before tying up Woods' legs for a change. A bridge into an Indian Deathlock sends Woods to the ropes for a change. Now it's Woods going after Yuta's arm and bending it back, complete with some finger cranking. They lock hands and forearm it out with Woods getting the better of things for a near fall. Yuta grabs a DDT but can't cover, meaning it's time for the forearm exchange.

This time it's Yuta getting the better of things and hitting a top rope forearm to send Woods outside. A big dive takes him out on the floor as well but it's Woods back in with a running knee. The TKO is blocked so Woods settles for a swinging suplex into the corner. That's good for a near fall, with Yuta using his final rope break. Yuta reverses a Tombstone attempt and ties Woods' legs up for a cradle and the title at 12:43.

**Rating:** B-. The Pure Wrestling division was one of the best things about the final days of Ring of Honor and it was still working here. Sometimes you need something rules based just to reset things a bit and it was nice to see again. That being said, you can absolutely see the new guard coming in to become the new Ring of Honor roster. I get why that is a sad thing for Ring of Honor, but it's not like the company has anything else going on at the moment (literally in this case).

Here's what's coming on Dynamite, which is bizarre to see here.

We recap Bandido vs. Jonathan Gresham for the undisputed Ring of Honor World Title. Bandido was the champion but couldn't be at Final Battle, leaving Gresham to beat Jay Lethal for the Classic Title. Since Bandido is still champion, it's time for the big unification match. That's how the card should go, but

they have their work cut out for them after that Tag Team Title match.

### Ring Of Honor World Title: Bandido vs. Jonathan Gresham

Both are champions coming in, but Bandido being dressed as Zorro makes him cooler. Granted having Chavo Guerrero in his corner might even that out but dang I love myself some Zorro. This actually doesn't get any Big Match Intros, but it does get a handshake. They stare at each other to start before we get the big lockup. The fans chant for EDDIE, which isn't even a surprise at this point.

Neither gets anywhere so they go with a test of strength, with neither getting very far. Bandido takes him down but can't send Gresham into the corner. Instead Gresham pops up and hits an armdrag out of an electric chair, giving us another staredown. Bandido gets a bit more intense with a knee into a dropkick and the posing is on. Gresham is fine enough to send Bandido to the apron for a dropkick to the back and it's time for a breather on the floor.

Back in and Gresham works on an armbar before a crossface sends Bandido to the ropes. Bandido is right back with the surfboard but Gresham slips out and grabs the crossface again. With Bandido getting too close to the ropes, Gresham switches to an ankle lock to change things up a bit. Make that the Octopus but Bandido makes the rope again.

A corkscrew high crossbody drops Gresham again, so Bandido picks him up for a vertical suplex...for a completely ridiculous SIXTY THREE SECONDS. That's one of the most impressive things I've seen in a long time but it's only good for (a delayed, as Bandido was spent) two. Gresham is back up with a running clothesline into a bridging German suplex for two more. A straitjacket German suplex gets two more and it's time for some hammer fists.

The crossface goes on for the third time before Gresham

switches to the second Octopus. That's broken up as well so Bandido is sent outside, with Gresham loading up a dive. Chavo breaks that up with a shove to Bandido and the crash leaves Gresham laying. Back in and Bandido grabs a suplex for two, followed by a Shining Wizard for the same. Some more rollups give Gresham some near falls of his own and they're both down for a bit.

They slowly forearm it out until the referee gets knocked down (good grief I'm getting tired of this), allowing Chavo to get in a belt shot...but Bandido doesn't want it that way and tells the referee to eject Chavo. Ok that's a cool one. Chavo yells a lot as he leaves, with Gresham grabbing la majistral for two. Bandido snaps off the pop up cutter for two of his own so it's time for the 21 Plex.

That's reversed into la majistral into a bridging cover for a VERY near fall so Bandido sends him outside. The big running flip dive sets up the X Knee and the 21 Plex gets a VERY close two. Gresham shrugs off a superkick and hits a springboard moonsault to send Bandido outside, followed by an immediate suicide dive. Back in and Gresham slingshots into a rollup, spun around into an armtrap bridge for the pin and the titles at 24:46.

**Rating:** A-. The Tag Team Title match is going to get all of the attention but this was a heck of a match too as it started slowly but then built into a classic by the end. These guys were hitting a very high level on the near falls and Gresham finally took the belts in the end with a wrestling move. Bandido is going to be a star when he gets to AEW (you know it's coming one day) and Gresham won't be far behind. Great main event here as they meshed very well together.

Post match Gresham says his mission was to make Ring of Honor pure and he has accomplished his goals. Hold on though as here is Jay Lethal to interrupt (Coleman: "Is this Kanye West or something?") and challenge Gresham for the titles. Gresham

says Lethal's current actions have shown that he has changed, but Lethal says no one would know who Gresham was without him.

Sonjay Dutt comes in to cool things off but quickly turns on Gresham for the double teaming. Lee Moriarty comes in for the failed save attempt...and that means nothing because it's SAMOA JOE making his big return to chase off the villains. Joe poses with Moriarty and Gresham as we are told that Joe will be on Dynamite to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** A-. Any show like this is going to be an instant classic with three awesome matches like Lethal vs. Moriarty and the two big title matches and that's really all you need here. There was some other good stuff on here (and some not so great stuff) but the one two punch carried this one all the way and it's absolutely worth going out of your way to see.

Now at the same time, this isn't going to be a show that a lot of old school Ring of Honor fans like. You could see the BIG shift over to the AEW developmental setup here with very few wrestlers from Ring of Honor of old moving looking great here. It shows the new direction of the company and while it might not be the best for the old school Ring of Honor people, this is certainly better than having no Ring of Honor at all. It's a very good show here and worth seeing, though this is the first step into a brand new world for the promotion.

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