

Ring of Honor TV – March 1, 2017: Back on the Rails

Ring of Honor

Date: March 1, 2017

Location: Stage AE, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentator: Ian Riccabani

We're getting very close to the Fifteenth Anniversary Show and now we have a main event set in stone with Christopher Daniels getting his shot at ROH World Champion Adam Cole. Other than that we have the start of the Top Prospect Tournament, which is always a guaranteed look into the future but that could be either a big hit or a big miss. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick speech from Daniels about his tournament win.

Opening sequence.

Here's Daniels to welcome Pittsburgh to Ring of Honor. From the day he stepped foot in this company as a long haired babyface named Christopher Daniels ("Well, I don't know about fresh faced or long haired but I was there!"). He knew it was his destiny to be the ROH World Champion and he has his chance on March 10 in Las Vegas.

Cue Adam Cole and it's STORYTIME BABY! Cole says he'll beat Fish in New York City (causing Fish to crack up on commentary) but Daniels looks like he wants a fight with Bullet Club right now. Adam Page runs through the crowd to jump Daniels but Kazarian runs out for the save. Fish: "Take your time Frankie!" Make your own Teddy Long joke.

Adam Page/Adam Cole vs. Addiction

Kazarian and Page head to the floor as Fish accuses Kazarian of hanging his partner out to dry. Daniels doesn't seem to mind as he hits a good looking suicide dive to take out the Adams. A hurricanrana over the ropes doesn't quite work though and Cole superkicks Daniels into a commercial.

Back with Cole taking too much time posing and charging into an

elbow. The STO is enough for the tag off to Kazarian and a Backstabber plants Cole. House is quickly cleaned and the champ dives into a cutter for two more. Cole and Daniels slug it out in the ring with Daniels planting him off an STO. Daniels loads up the BME but lands on a raised boot, allowing Cole to grab a rollup for the clean pin at 7:43.

Rating: C+. This was more entertaining than I was expecting and that's always fun. Addiction was a good heel team but I'm digging them even better as faces. The match wasn't long enough to mean much and I'm somewhat intrigued about the idea of Daniels losing instead of doing the cliched "pin the champ before the title match" bit. If nothing else, Fish was really entertaining on commentary and makes me think he has a prayer in New York, which I'd never buy otherwise. Kazarian yells at Daniels post match.

Fish cuts a quick promo about how Cole is playing checkers against a chess master. I know that's the common line but how would a chess player beat a checkers play? I've never gotten how that line is supposed to make sense (yes I get what they're going for).

Kazarian yells at Daniels again in the back.

Bob Evans replaces Fish on commentary, which is likely going to be a theme tonight.

Top Prospect Tournament First Round: John Skyler vs. Sean Carr

Skyler has made a few NXT appearances and calls himself the Southern Savior. Carr is always being asked why he's not on TV and now he gets the chance. Feeling out process to start as I'm trying to find a reason to care about either of these guys. Skyler wins a slugout and takes him to the mat for a backsplash. It's off to a chinlock for a bit as Evans talks about how important the ROH seminars really are.

Carr comes back with a superkick (he's probably getting a job based on that alone) and a second sends Skyler to the floor. A suicide dive knocks John into the barricade. They head to the apron for a kick to the face that was so far from making contact that they had

to cut the camera angle. Skyler spears him on the apron (looked cool) but gets caught in a middle rope Codebreaker for two. Back up and Skyler takes him to the middle rope for a super Regal Roll and the pin at 6:12.

Rating: C. Yeah I still don't know who either of these guys are (Skyler was never much in NXT) and I have next to no reason to care about any of them. That's always the problem with this tournament and it doesn't seem to be getting any better with this edition. The match was fine but nothing exceptional, which makes for a rather uninteresting match when I have no reason to care because there's no story.

The Kingdom thinks they'll keep the titles forever and haven't forgotten about Dalton Castle and the Boys. These titles continue to be the most worthless belts I've ever seen, including the Never Six Man Titles.

Tempura Boyz vs. Motor City Machine Guns

And never mind because the Guns have been attacked. No match.

We run down the Manhattan Mayhem card with Bobby Fish and Adam Cole giving some simple promos to set up their match. Cole has gotten much, much better on the mic.

Dalton Castle and the Boys are getting a Six Man Tag Team Title shot. They lost to the champs and the Rebellion but THEY'RE GETTING A TITLE SHOT??? I know I'd normally say they should have built a division before they have champions but New Japan did it first so it must be ok.

TV Title: Donovan Dijak vs. Marty Scurll

Marty is defending after Dijak won a big elimination match a few weeks back. The Code of Honor as Scurll throws a kick instead. Dijak knocks him outside instead and nails a suicide dive followed by a great looking springboard elbow for a near fall. Scurll knees his way out of a suplex attempt and we take a break.

Back with Scurll chopping away on the floor and Dijak getting kicked in the head for his efforts. Marty loads up a running kick so Dijak

moonsaults off the apron to escape. That's just scary athleticism. Scurll doesn't really care as he kicks Dijak in the head for a near fall. Dijak is tired of getting kicked in the head (can't say I blame him) as he picks Scurll up for a suplex but just tosses him with ease.

The chokebreaker is broken up as we see Lio Rush (#1 contender) watching on the stage. A sitout spinebuster gets two on the champ and it's off to another break. Back again with Scurll elbowing his way out of another chokebreaker and kicking Dijak in the head. A piledriver gets two and Dijak is getting all fired up. Feast Your Eyes is only good for two and Scurll breaks the fingers to take over again. The crossface chickenwing and another broken finger (that sound never gets old) make Dijak tap at 13:39.

Rating: B+. This was all about the evil technician vs. the athletic freak but the fact that Dijak had already announced his exit from the promotion didn't do it any favors. Scurll is getting better and better in this role as he just feels like a villain no matter how you look at him. I could go for more Dijak though as he's just scary with the athleticism.

Rush comes to the ring and gets kicked in the head but the Rebellion comes out to chase Scurll off. The banged up Machine Guns and Jay White come out for another save and it's a staredown to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Good show here which ROH has been needing for a few weeks now. The wrestling was better but more importantly than that it felt like they were actually getting ready for a big show. Fish is a good choice for the Manhattan challenger but the money seems to be in having Daniels make a run at the belt. Finally, I'm still not much of a Riccabani fan but I'd gladly take him as a neutral commentator over someone trying to play a character.

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NXT – May 11, 2016: This Is How They Do It

NXT

Date: May 11, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

Finn Balor is back tonight and it's already time for him to go after his NXT Title again. Balor lost the belt a few weeks back at a house show to new champion Samoa Joe, meaning Finn's target should be obvious. Other than that it's time to really hit the gas on building towards the next Takeover which is scheduled for about a month from now. Let's get to it.

We open with a video on Finn Balor, talking about how the title is his obsession before the loss to Joe. I believe this aired last week as well. Balor may have lost the title but it's time to embrace the demon inside.

Here's Finn to open things up. After a THANK YOU FINN chant, Balor thanks the fans and talks about how the matches with Joe could have gone either way but he won the first two. Before he can talk about what happened in the third match, Elias Samson comes out to sing about Balor's masquerade being exposed. Samson says Finn is nothing without the title so Balor kicks him in the head to put Elias

outside. The guitar goes flying but thankfully Samson makes the save. Jeff Jarrett is somewhere groaning at the guitar not being destroyed.

Last week, Eric Young called himself a world class maniac who is so glad to finally be here in NXT.

Balor wants Samson tonight.

American Alpha vs. Corey Hollis/John Skyler

Non-title. Chad takes Skyler to the mat to start and we get the Kurt Angle themed chant. Hollis comes in and gets headlocked down as well before we hit the seated armbar. It's off to Jordan who easily throws Hollis into the air for a face first crash onto the mat. A double hiptoss puts Hollis down and there's a double dropkick for Skyler as this is completely one sided so far.

Hollis finally realizes that he can cheat and the jobbers take over on Gable for the first time. Skyler drops a knee for two and we hit the chinlock. That works for all of five seconds before it's off to Jordan as house is cleaned. Cue the Revival on the ramp for a distraction but Grand Amplitude puts Hollis away at 5:10.

Rating: C-. This was a nearly complete squash and that's all it needed to be. Alpha is so far ahead of everyone else right now that it wouldn't make sense to have them do anything but squash other teams. Revival vs. Alpha II should be a really solid brawl though and it would help to have something like No DQ involved. A regular match would be fine too though.

Shinsuke Nakamura is asked what he thinks about Alex Riley's rage. Nakamura starts shaking, like he has rage you see.

Alex Riley vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Riley had been calling himself the white lion down in NXT, at least until he got released a few weeks after this. Riley goes right after him to start like he's a guy about to be released going after one of the top stars in the promotion. Nakamura misses a knee though and Riley hammers away, earning himself a string of knees and forearms to the ribs and face. The running knee in the corner sets up the

inverted exploder suplex, followed by Kinshasa to put Riley away at 2:38.

Austin Aries is in William Regal's office to say he wants to prove he's the best. Blake and Murphy come in to talk about being disrespected. Aries: "You don't even have the decency to bring Alexa Bliss with you?" Bliss comes in and yelling ensues so Regal makes Blake/Murphy vs. Aries/a partner of his choice next week. Aries pulls out his phone and implies he knows someone.

Alexa Bliss vs. Rachel Ellering

That would be Paul's daughter. Bliss starts on the arm by bouncing it off the mat and working on an armbar. A forearm gets two on Rachel and it's back to the armbar. The comeback goes nowhere as Bliss does the psycho eyes choke to set up the Sparkle Splash for the pin at 3:52.

Rating: D. They're doing a good job of setting up Bliss as the midcard heel though I can't imagine her ever being a real threat to someone like Asuka. Ellering was really just there and didn't show anything outside of being competent in the ring. Then again that's been the case several times before, but she's a long way behind Tessa Blanchard in terms of potential.

Bayley says she's getting ready for her rematch when Nia Jax interrupts. She learned from the loss to Bayley but it's clear that Bayley has learned nothing from losing the title. A challenge for a rematch is issued and Bayley says she can choke Nia out again. This was a really awkward, and likely WAY too scripted, exchange.

Bayley vs. Nia is official for next week.

Finn Balor vs. Elias Samson

Just regular Finn here and his shoulder is taped up. Feeling out process to start until Balor knocks him to the floor and takes us to a break. Back with Balor holding an armbar and the fans saying it NEEDS MORE COWBELL. Samson fires off some forearms but Balor just blasts him in the face a few times. Some running chops in the corner put Samson on the floor for a baseball slide. The Sling Blade sets

up 1916 for the pin on Samson at 7:47.

Rating: C-. This was fine and did exactly what it was supposed to do. In theory this sets up another Balor vs. Joe match but I'm really not needing to see them fight for a third time out of four total major matchups. This is also where Samson is a good player. He's not going to be a top heel anytime soon but those songs are enough to get the fans hating him every week and then he can take a beating and make someone else look good. That's an important role to have and Samson is as good of an option as they have for it at the moment.

Balor says he wants his rematch for the title because it belongs to him. Now he's possessed like a demon stalking his prey so here's Samoa Joe to interrupt. Before it can get physical, Regal comes out to make Balor vs. Joe III for Takeover on June 8. That's really rare for NXT as they almost never have feuds go on this long. Joe yells a lot so Balor dives over the top to take him out.

Overall Rating: C+. They're finally starting to set up some stuff for the next Takeover, which is a good thing even though I'm not wild on the main event they're going with. However, this was a step up over last week's show and they're setting up some stuff for the future, which is where NXT shines best. Aries' partner could be interesting and you don't know what they might pull off for that.

Results

American Alpha b. Corey Hollis/John Skyler – Grand Amplitude to Hollis

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Alex Riley – Kinshasa

Alexa Bliss b. Rachel Ellering – Sparkle Splash

Finn Balor b. Elias Samson – 1916

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