

Wrestle Kingdom XVI Night Two: They've Still Got It

Wrestle Kingdom XVI Night Two

Date: January 5, 2022

Location: Tokyo Dome, Tokyo, Japan

Attendance: 6,379

Commentators: Chris Charlton, Kevin Kelly

It's the second of three nights of this show and this one feels like the biggest. Last night's main event saw Kazuchika Okada win the IWGP World Title again, which leaves him ready for his first defense against Will Ospreay. The second biggest match on the card is Kenta defending the United States Title against Hiroshi Tanahashi in a No DQ match, which could be a heck of a fight. Let's get to it.

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

Pre-Show: Togi Makabe/Yuji Nagata/Tomoaki Honma vs. Bullet Club

That would be Bad Luck Fale, Gedo and Jado for the Club. The Club jumps them to start but Jado and Gedo are knocked to the floor to start. Fale is fine enough to run Honma over though and the good guys are in trouble early. Honma is sent outside and Makabe gets taken into the corner with Jado standing on his chest.

Gedo and Fale take Jado's place but Makabe fights up and brings Nagata in to strike away on Fale. Jado breaks up a Crossface on Fale and it's Honma coming coming in. Everything breaks down and Fale is clotheslined out to the floor. That leaves Honma to headbutt Jado down, setting up a middle rope headbutt for the pin. Kelly: "Heavens be praised, Honma has won a match!"

Rating: C. This worked out well enough as it was all about warming the fans up and the good guys beating the evil villains is as smart of an idea as there is. Honma seems to be a bit of a cult hero so give him a pin to pop the crowd early on. Perfectly watchable six man here and that's all they were shooting for.

Pre-Show: Master Wato/Tenkoji vs. Suzuki-Gun

It's El Desperado/Yoshinobu Kantemaru/Taka Michinoku for Suzuki-Gun. It's a brawl before the bell again until we settle down to Wato kicking away at Desperado. Wato stomps away in the corner and Tenzan tags himself in and has to back Wato off from the beating. Tenzan headbutts away but Kantemaru gets in a cheap shot from the apron to take him down. The brawl heads outside for a bit with Suzuki-Gun taking over again. Back in and Tenzan manages a mountain bomb but Taka is right there to cut him off.

As tends to be the case, one more shot is enough to get Tenzan over for the tag to Kojima, meaning we get the very rapid fire chops in the corner. A DDT hits Taka and the Koji Cutter drops Kantemaru and it's a double tag to bring in Wato and Desperado. Wato strikes away but gets caught in a spinebuster, setting up kind of a gutwrench blue thunder bomb. That's broken up as well and Desperado walks into the Tenkoji Cutter (3D). Everything breaks down again and it's Wato grabbing something like a reverse Rings of Saturn to make Desperado tap at 9:24.

Rating: C+. They packed a lot into this one and it made for a good match as a result. Wato making Desperado tap should give him a future Junior Heavyweight Title match so they are even going somewhere with the result. The other four did well too, but this was about Wato and they did what they needed to do.

Pre-Show: Los Ingobernables de Japon vs. Suzuki-Gun

That would be Shingo Takagi/Bushi/Hiromu Takahashi vs.

Taichi/Zack Sabre Jr./Douki. Bushi armdrags Douki to start so it's off to Takahashi, who wants Sabre. Takahashi has to slip out of a backbreaker and runs Sabre over, only to get pulled into a kneebar. A bridging leglock has Tanahashi in more trouble and it's Douki coming back in for a double stomp. Various choking and stomping ensue but Takahashi manages a dragon screw legwhip.

The dragon screw legwhip and it's Takagi coming in to clean house. Sabre tries a guillotine but gets suplexed down in a hurry. Taichi comes in for an exchange of clotheslines but Douki manages to low bridge Takagi to the floor. Everything breaks down and Douki dives off the top to take them out. Back in and Takagi hits a sliding lariat on Douki, followed by a Gory Bomb on Sabre. Takahashi comes back in to beat on Douki, setting up Last of the Dragon to give Takagi the pin at 10:28.

Rating: C+. Nice job here of giving Takagi a quick win to get him back on track after losing the World Title to Okada last night. This was a rather action packed match as they flew around the ring and kept things moving. That being said, Los Ingobernables are a good bit deeper than Suzuki-Gun so this wasn't exactly in doubt.

The opening video runs down the card.

IWGP Junior Heavyweight Tag Team Titles: Mega Coaches vs. Bullet Club's Cutest Tag Team vs. Flying Tigers

The Tigers (Robbie Eagles/Tiger Mask) are defending against Ryusuke Taguchi/Rocky Romero (Coaches) and Taiji Ishimori/El Phantasma (Bullet Club). Before the bell, Phantasma jumps Tiger though and we're starting 2 vs. 2 vs. 1. The Coaches get to clean house and Romero catapults Phantasma into the back of Taguchi's tights. Eagles is back in to take out the Coaches but the Club takes over on Eagles with an assisted back rake.

Phantasma uses his loaded boot to take over until Eagles is

back up with a dive. The Coaches hit dives of their own but it's Tiger butterfly superplexing Phantasm. Back to back tilt-a-whirl backbreakers drop the Coaches as everything stays broken down. The Coaches hit a double hip attack on Eagles but the Club is back in with double knees to Romero's chest.

A top rope knee sets up the UFO on Tiger and a Thunder Kiss 86 gives Ishimori two. Eagles sends Phantasm's kick into Ishimori's face though and it's time for the other teams to go after Phantasm. It's time to unload the boot though, which contains a piece of metal. As a result, the Club is eliminated and we're down to a regular tag match. An exchange of rollups gets two each and Tiger dives onto Taguchi on the floor. That leaves Eagles to tie Romero up with a leglock for the tap to retain the titles at 12:09.

Rating: B-. This was pure chaos throughout but they did pay off what seemed to be a long running story with the loaded boot. There was nothing resembling a tag match here and that's what they were trying to do. It can get a little complicated and hard to follow, but some good commentary kept it simple enough to understand for the most part. It's also nice to see these titles retained, as they seem to change hands most of the time at this show.

Tam Nakano/Saya Kamitani vs. Mayu Iwatani/Starlight Kid

This is a Stardom (women's promotion) exhibition tag. Each one is from a different faction and they drew straws to determine the participants. Kid headscissors Kamitani down to start and snaps off a basement dropkick to make it worse. Iwatani comes in for a double 619 into a double standing moonsault, meaning it's time to kick Kamitani in the back. Kamitani comes back with a spinwheel kick but Nakano can't add a German suplex.

Iwatani kicks Nakano in the head for a breather and there's a Sling Blade to take her down again. The double tag brings

in Kamitani and Kid as everything breaks down. Iwatani dives onto Nakano and Kamitani, setting up Kid's twisting top rope splash back inside. Kid climbs onto Iwatani's shoulders (already on the middle rope) for a high crossbody onto Kamitani for two, with Nakano making the save.

That's fine with Kid, who grabs a Texas Cloverleaf on Kamitani to make it worse. Nakano breaks that up as well and hits a big dive off the top to the floor. Back in and Kamitani's bridging northern lights suplex gets two on Kid with Iwatani making the save this time. Kid and Kamitani trade rollups for two each but Iwatani is back in with a superkick. Nakano tiger suplexes Iwatani and it's Kamitani hitting a sitout fisherman's buster to knock Kid silly. A Phoenix splash is enough to give Kamitani the pin at 9:16.

Rating: B. This was a straight sprint as they didn't waste time doing anything but getting in as much as they could. What made it work was that most everything looked crisp and they were flying through the whole match. I've heard almost nothing but good things about Stardom and it is pretty awesome to see them getting a showcase match on the biggest card in Japan. Heck of a match here and very fun.

King of Pro Wrestling Provisional Title: Cima vs. Minoru Suzuki vs. Toru Yano vs. Chase Owens

This is a weird title, as it isn't so much about winning the title here, but rather holding it at the end of the year. These four were the final four in a battle royal yesterday to set this up. The other three jump Yano to start, because he has won the trophy two years running. With Yano and Owens sent outside, Suzuki and Cima strike it out until Suzuki is sent to the floor as well.

Cima hits a big dive onto all three of them and everyone heads back inside. Yano takes off a buckle pad as Owens hits Suzuki in the face. Owens immediately apologized and gets beaten up again, leaving Cima to put Yano in an Indian

deathlock. Suzuki beats Cima up, which cranks on Yano's leg over and over. That's broken up so Suzuki grabs his sleeper on Owens, with Yano hitting a double low blow to break it up. Suzuki isn't having this so he kicks Yano in the face and hits the piledriver for the pin at 6:09.

Rating: C. They didn't waste time here either and it was a fast/to the point match. Suzuki shouldn't have had any trouble with Yano or Owens so once he got the chance, he ran through Yano for the win. That being said, this is just the start of the year's story, but Suzuki hurting people for trying to go after his title could be rather entertaining.

Post match, Suzuki beats up Yano some more and pulls out some handcuffs. In Yano fashion, he manages to handcuff Suzuki to the rope instead and runs off.

Never Openweight Six Man Tag Team Titles: House of Torture vs. Chaos

That would be Evil/Yujiro Takahashi/Sho, who are defending, vs. Hirooki Goto/Yoshi-Hashi/Yoh. It's a brawl on the floor before the bell until Goto spinwheel kicks and bulldogs Evil. Sho and Yoh come back in to continue their rivalry, with Yoh dropkicking him outside and hitting a dive. The Torture corner's turnbuckle pad is ripped off as Sho knees Goto in the ribs back inside.

Takahashi comes in but can't hit a suplex, instead getting clotheslined down by Goto. Hashi gets the tag to pick up the pace and a running dropkick to the back gets two on Takahashi. A kick to the head rocks Hashi but he's back up with a running clothesline. It's back to Yoh vs. Sho for the strike off but Torture catches Yoh in the corner for the series of running shots to the face.

Sho grabs a wrench Yoh can get choked behind the referee's back until Goto and Hashi make the save. A superkick sets up the fireman's carry backbreaker on Sho, with Yoh hitting

his own superkick. Takahashi offers a distraction though and it's a low blow from Evil into a wrench shot from Sho for the pin at 9:39.

Rating: C. I was getting into it but then the lame ending brought it right back down. I can understand not wanting to see Yoh pin Sho on back to back nights but they didn't have anything other than a low blow into a weapon shot? Evil's match yesterday felt rather out of place and that was the same here, though at least this came after a good enough match.

The teams yell at each other post match and odds are we'll be seeing a rematch.

Here are a bunch of Pro Wrestling Noah stars, led by Keiji Mutoh (better known as Great Muta) to say that they are ready to face New Japan on Saturday. Cue Shingo Takagi and company to say he knew Noah would say something offensive and it is time to show who is better when they face off. Noah issues the challenge but Takagai and company being down about 20-3 is enough to make New Japan think twice. Noah promises to win and that's it.

New Japan is back on AXS TV on March 3.

Here are some upcoming shows.

Intermission.

Sanada vs. Great-O-Khan

Los Ingobernables de Japon vs. United Empire. Feeling out process to start with neither getting very far early on. They fight over some armbars until Sanada dropkicks him to the floor. Khan is ready for the dive and takes him out, setting up a half nelson Skull Crushing Finale. A release gordbuster drops Sanada for two but the Mongolian chop is blocked. Sanada armdrags him down and hits a backbreaker to send Khan outside for some pleasant applause.

Back in and Sanada can't get the Paradise Lock as Khan

kicks him right back to the floor. Khan shouts down at Sanada, who stands there as Khan dives on him (with commentary pointing out that there was no reason to believe he would actually jump, meaning Sanada thought he had nothing to fear).and then a rollup gets two back inside. The Sheep Killer (I think? It's something like an abdominal stretch.) has Sanada in trouble but he fights out hand tries an O'Connor roll.

That's broken up as well and the Sheep Killer goes on again, but this time Sanada reverses into a tiger suplex for two. Sanada's top rope splash hits raised knees and they slug it out with Khan getting the better of things. A kick to the face staggers Khan, but he knocks Sanada silly with a straight right hand for two of his own. Khan hits a middle rope moonsault and tries a claw, only to get reversed into a European Clutch for the pin at 13:22.

Rating: B-. This was the first singles match of the night and it was nice to see things change pace like they did here. The idea seemed to be that Sanada needed to prove he could win here and he took Khan down in the process. Khan's improvement over the last year is still close to remarkable, as he was dreadful last time and put in a pretty good match here.

Tetsuya Naito vs. Jeff Cobb

More Los Ingobernables de Japon vs. United Empire and this should be good. Cobb lost to Naito on a quick rollup recently and now it is time for revenge. Said revenge starts fast with Cobb unloading on him in the corner to start. Naito gets a boot up in the corner though and dropkicks the knee out to slow Cobb down. Another dropkick to the knee takes Cobb outside and the tease of the Tranquilo pose lets Naito kick him in the face again.

This time Naito follows him outside so Cobb grabs a suplex and drives Naito into the post over and over. Naito takes

his time getting inside again, allowing Cobb to drive some knees into his back. There's a gorilla press toss before Cobb puts him on his shoulder for some rams into the corner. Back up and Naito slugs away with forearms to no avail but a running boot to the face manages to drop Cobb.

Naito goes after the knee with a running dropkick, followed by a basement version in the corner. A version of the Indian Deathlock goes on but Cobb is in the rope before too long. Cobb blocks a shinbreaker and hits an overhead belly to belly, followed by a belly to belly (minus his usual running start) for two.

Tour of the Islands is broken up and Naito hits a DDT for a breather. It's time to go back to the knee but Destino is countered again. Naito kicks him in the knee to send him into the corner and it's time to go up. The super hurricanrana is countered into a superbomb but the knee gives out again. Naito slaps on a leglock but Cobb pounds his way to freedom. A German suplex drops Naito, only to have Cobb pop up with a hard clothesline. Tour of the Islands is broken up again and Naito hits a scoop brainbuster. Destino is enough to finish Cobb at 15:36.

Rating: B. These guys beat each other up and it was a much more definitive win than a rollup. Naito picks Cobb's knee apart and took away a lot of his power, which made him closer to a mortal. This felt like a big win for Naito, who seems ready to move back up to the main event. He's always good for a solid match and Cobb is still a heck of a monster, with this being the best match on the show so far. Or at least the best singles match so far.

IWGP United States Title: Hiroshi Tanahashi vs. Kenta

Kenta is defending and it's No DQ. Tanahashi is all about honor and Kenta is all about the title, but Kenta has pushed Tanahashi too far. That could make Tanahashi extra dangerous. Before the bell, Kenta grabs some kendo sticks

and throws one to Tanahashi so we start fast. The battle of the sticks goes to Kenta and a belt shot makes it worse. More stick shots rock Tanahashi and it's time to bring in a bunch of weapons.

Various shots to the head and back have Tanahashi in more trouble as this is one sided to start. A short ladder is put in the corner but Tanahashi dropkicks Kenta's knee, sending the champ face first into a trashcan. Tanahashi puts the trashcan over Kenta's head and beats on it with a chair, meaning it's time for a guitar. A good shot to the head puts a hole through the guitar (which doesn't seem to be gimmicked) and let's bring in a table for a bonus.

Tanahashi dragon screw legwhips Kenta down but a briefcase shot gives Kenta a much needed breather. They both go up top with Tanahashi palm striking his way out of trouble. Let's throw in several more chairs and it's a Sling Blade to drive Kenta into said chairs. The High Fly Flow only hits chairs though and Tanahashi is down again. Kenta buries him underneath the chairs in the corner for a running dropkick to crush him again.

Go To Sleep is loaded up but Tanahashi reverses into Twist and Shout onto the chairs. With nothing else working, the table is thrown inside and is decorated with a nice Kenta holding a chair. Tanahashi takes too long going up top though and gets chaired down, setting up a super Falcon Arrow to send Tanahashi mostly through said table.

Another table is thrown in and Kenta finds a big ladder (that thing is huge) for a bonus. Kenta sets up the ladder (and has to screw in the support) and puts Tanahashi on the table. That takes way too long though, as Tanahashi gets up and knocks Kenta down in a SCARY crash. The High Fly Flow through the bloody Kenta gives Tanahashi the pin and the title at 22:16.

Rating: B+. This took some time to get going, but the

violence worked because it stood out. New Japan doesn't seem to do this kind of thing very often and it felt like a physical fight as a result. Tanahashi beats Kenta at his own game because he is the better man and as a result, it was a great way to blow off their feud. That being said, Kenta was very banged up in this match, suffering a dislocated hip, a broke nose, nerve damage in his finger and the lacerations, meaning he's going to be gone for a little while.

Tanahashi is tended to but walks off on his own.

IWGP World Heavyweight Title: Will Ospreay vs. Kazuchika Okada

Okada is defending but Ospreay has his own belt, as he was stripped of the title due to an injury. They stare at each other for a good while to start before some grappling goes nowhere. Okada takes him down by the leg before switching to an early headlock. Back up and Okada scores with a big boot into a backdrop to keep Ospreay in trouble. A neckbreaker sets up another chinlock as Okada is going after various parts. Ospreay fights up and scores with a Phenomenal Forearm to send Okada outside.

There's no big dive though, as Ospreay instead opts to go outside and hit Okada in the face. Back in and some chops rock put Okada down, setting up a suplex to bang up Okada's back as well. The cravate keeps Okada in trouble but he's right back with a flapjack (Ospreay: "Oh s***!") for a breather. A DDT and neckbreaker give Okada two each but Ospreay lifts him out to the apron.

That's fine with Okada, who hits a running dropkick to knock Ospreay out to the floor. Okada whips him into the barricade but Ospreay superkicks him out of the air, sending Okada's knee into the concrete. Ospreay climbs the lighting rig (as he did at a previous Wrestle Kingdom) and moonsaults down onto Okada for the big crash. Back in and a

top rope forearm to the back of the head gives Ospreay two and the confidence is starting to roll. Okada is sent outside and Ospreay tries the Sasuke Special, only to get caught in a tombstone on the floor.

Back in and Okada hits a missile dropkick for two, setting up the Money Clip. Okada lets that go and hits a top rope elbow but Ospreay kicks him in the face. Ospreay's standing shooting star press hits knees but Ospreay is back up with a Liger Bomb for two. With Okada draped over the top rope, it's a shooting star to the back for two more. There's the Oscutter for two more but the Hidden Blade misses. Ospreay doesn't seem to mind and hits his own tombstone.

Since he didn't watch last night, Ospreay tries the Rainmaker on Okada, who reverses into his own Stormbreaker (Ospreay's finisher) for two. Back up and Okada hits his dropkick but the Rainmaker is countered into a C4 for a double knockdown. A super Oscutter gets two on Okada but Stormbreaker is countered into a spinning tombstone.

Okada hits a discus lariat into the Rainmaker for two but Ospreay is back up with his own Rainmaker. They slug it out from their knees and Okada hits another Rainmaker, but he tries again and gets reversed into the Hidden Blade for two. Stormbreaker is countered so Ospreay knees him in the face but another Hidden Blade is countered with a dropkick. The Landslide sets up the Rainmaker to retain Okada's title at 32:53.

Rating: A-. It's a really good match and felt like a Wrestle Kingdom main event, but it did have some of the same problems that almost always pop up in an Okada match. The kickouts got ridiculous here as it was at least three tombstones and about 73 Rainmakers to finally put Ospreay away. That being said, these two beat the fire out of each other and it was nice to see them finally have a definitive champion after all the months of screwiness (which wasn't

the company's fault). Great match, but it could have had some finishers trimmed out.

Post match Okada says he respects Ospreay but now there is no doubt about who is the real World Champion. Cue Tetsuya Naito to praise Okada's victories but he needs to be the next challenger. Okada thinks that's a good idea and Naito leaves. Okada thanks the fans for coming out and giving the wrestlers their strength. He wants to wrestle and promises to keep making it rain.

Commentary has their big recap to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This was better than the first night and it felt like a Wrestle Kingdom worthy show. The two main events are the best parts of the night, as tends to be the case, but there are also some awesome matches earlier on the card to make it that much better. You could tell that everyone was working hard and wanted to make this the biggest night of the year. I had a rather good time with it and that's the right feeling to have after a show this big.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net for all of your wrestling headline needs.](http://Wrestlingrumors.net)

Wrestle Kingdom XVI Night One: The Old Japanese Try

Wrestle Kingdom XVI Night One

Date: January 4, 2022

Location: Tokyo Dome, Tokyo, Japan

Attendance: 12,047

Commentators: Chris Charlton, Kevin Kelly

It's back to Japan for the first time in about a year, though the company does feel a good bit colder this time around. The pandemic and a slew of injuries have battered New Japan, but this show's reputation is more than enough to warrant a look. The main event of this first night is Kazuchika Okada challenging Shingo Takagi for the IWGP World Title, with the winner facing Will Ospreay tomorrow night. Let's get to it.

Note that I do not regularly follow New Japan so I won't know much in the way of storylines or recent character development. Please bear with me if I miss something that commentary does not explain.

Pre-Show: New Japan Ranbo

This is a 19 man Royal Rumble and over the top/pinfall/submission eliminations with one minute intervals. The final four advancing to a four way on night two for the Provisional King Of Pro Wrestling 2022 Trophy. Chase Owens is in at #1 and Aaron Henare is in at #2 The rather muscular Henare fires off knees in the corner to start but gets sent into the buckle for a breather. Kosei Fujita (a Young Lion) is in at #3 and goes after Owens, who cuts him off with a backbreaker.

Henare runs Owens over and it's Yuto Nakashima (another Young Lion) in at #4. The four pair off and it's Ryohei Oiwa (third Young Lion in a row) in at #5 with a suplex to

Owens. The Young Lions get beaten down near the apron though and it's Master Wato in at #6. Wato strikes away at Henare and Owens until Hiroyoshi Tenzan is in at #7. His entrance takes so long that all he can do is hit some headbutts before Minoru Suzuki is in at #8. That takes a VERY long time so we can get to the big part of his music but Suzuki makes up for the time by eliminating all three Young Lions (by submission of course) in a hurry.

Satoshi Kojima is in at #9 and it's Kojima and Tenzan double teaming Suzuki. Taka Michinoku is in at #10 and walks right into a Tenkoji Cutter (3D). Cima is in at #11 for his first New Japan appearance since 2009 as Taka is pinned. Tomoa Honma is in at #12 as Wato and Cima fight. Wato is tossed so Honma beats up Cima instead as Douki is in at #13. Everyone brawls and it's Yuji Nagata coming in at #14 for a slugout with Suzuki.

Yoshinobu Kanemaru is in at #15 as there is no time between these entrances. Kanemaru has a bottle of whiskey as he comes to the ring slowly again, where he spits said whiskey in Tenzan's eyes for the rollup pin. Togi Makabe is in at #16 and we get the always odd muted music due to copyright issues. Nagata belly to back suplexes Kojima and a bunch of people pile on for the pin.

Bad Luck Fale is in at #17 and gets jumped by a bunch of people. That doesn't seem to matter as he tosses Douki, Honma and Nagata in a hurry. Sixty eight year old Tatsumi Fujinami is in at #18 for a dragon screw legwhip on Fale. That lets Makabe clothesline Fale out as the field keeps thinning. Toru Yano, the 2021 KOPW Champion, is in at #19 to complete the field, giving us Owens, Minoru Suzuki, Cima, Makabe, Fujinami and Yano. Fujinami Figure Fours Makabe as Yano low bridges Henare out. Makabe and Fujinami get covered for the double pin and it's Owens, Suzuki, Cima and Yano winning at 27:01.

Rating: C. It's hard to grade something like this as it isn't about having a quality match but rather flying through the entrances to get people into the ring. I do like the idea of the final four doing something as there is only so much to win from a lower card/legends Royal Rumble. This was the usually entertaining warmup and it did everything it was supposed to do.

It's New Japan's 50th anniversary so we see a highlight package on Antonio Inoki, who welcomes us to the show.

Opening video, featuring the card rundown (in order, as usual).

Yoh vs. Sho

They were friends and partners for a long time until Sho (now part of the pretty awesomely named House Of Torture stable) turned on him. Yoh knocks him outside to start and hits the big flip dive for a bonus. They go up the ramp, where Yoh can't toss him off onto the floor. Sho slams him down instead and beats up someone standing near the ramp. Yoh crawls back to ringside, where Sho teases a dive but opts for a whip into the barricade instead.

Back in and Yoh shrugs off a beating in the corner and grabs a dragon screw legwhip. A bunch of forearms rock Sho again and Yoh stomps away at the chest. Sho gets up so Yoh dropkicks him back down, bugging Sho's eyes out as a result. With nothing else working, Sho pulls the referee in the way for a distraction so he can spear Yoh down. Now it's Sho hitting his own stomps, setting up a powerbomb and crossarm piledriver for two.

What sounds like Shock Arrow is countered into a Calf Crusher (or close enough) and Sho is in trouble. Cue Sho's manager Dick Togo for a distraction though and Sho's tap is missed. Yoh gets caught in a triangle choke but keeps his arm up, allowing him to kind of dance over to the ropes. Togo throws in a wrench, but Yoh sends Sho into him,

setting up the bridging cradle to finish Sho at 12:33.

Rating: C+. Nice choice for an opener here as they have a rather detailed history and Yoh gets to overcome the odds/cheating to win. I can't imagine this is the end of their feud but at least Yoh gets the big win. They didn't do anything groundbreaking here but sometimes you need a story that is easy to understand and covers all of the bases, which is what they did here.

Post match Sho and Togo go after him again but Yoh clears them out without much effort.

Bullet Club vs. Hiroshi Tanahashi/Mega Coaches

It's Kenta/Taiji Ishimori/El Phantasma for the Club and the Mega Coaches are Ryusuke Taguchi/Rocky Romero. This is mainly a preview for Tanahashi vs. Kenta, who are facing off for Kenta's US Title tomorrow, though the other four are involved in a triple threat Junior Heavyweight Tag Team Title match tomorrow as well. Romero and Phantasma start things off, with the latter cartwheeling out of a hurricanrana attempt.

A middle rope hurricanrana takes Phantasma down though and it's off to Taguchi vs. Ishimori. Taguchi sends him into the corner and it's the Coaches alternating running shots in the corner to Phantasma and Ishimori. Kenta comes in and is sent into the back of Taguchi's tights (it's his thing) so his partners tie Taguchi in the Tree of Woe for a painful double stomp.

We settle down to Phantasma doing about ten springboards into a back rake, allowing Ishimori to come in for a rake to the eyes. Taguchi gets out of the way in a hurry though and the hot tag brings in Tanahashi to clean house. A dragon screw legwhip takes Kenta down but the referee gets knocked outside.

Kenta hits a DDT on Tanahashi and since there is no

referee, the kendo stick comes in to keep Tanahashi in trouble. The Coaches come back in for the save though and the dives take out Phantasma and Ishimori. Tanahashi grabs the kendo stick and unloads on Kenta, earning himself the DQ from the revived referee at 8:40.

Rating: C. Pretty run of the mill tag match here, which was little more than a way to set things up for tomorrow. That's a perfectly fine way to go, as the match did its job well, with some good enough action. Tanahashi snapping is cool to see, and should make the No DQ title match that much better. Not a great match, but it did what it needed to do.

United Empire vs. Los Ingobernables de Japon

That would be Will Ospreay/Great-O-Khan/Jeff Cobb vs. Tetsuya Naito/Sanada/Bushi. It's also a double preview, as tomorrow we have Khan vs. Sanada and Naito vs. Cobb. Ospreay also has his REAL World Title, as he never lost the title but was stripped due to an injury. Cobb mocks Naito with the Tranquilo pose during his entrance for a nice little mind game.

The Empire jumps them before the bell and we start fast, as probably fits for the villains. Cobb drives Naito hard into the corner and everyone is on the floor in a hurry. They get back inside with Khan kneeling and chopping Naito down for two. Ospreay comes back in, sends Naito into the corner, and hands it back to Cobb (because he is smart enough to not waste energy before his World Title match tomorrow). Naito manages to get a breather from Cobb and Los Ingobernables come in for a series of dropkicks.

Sanada Paradise Locks Khan, who manages to send Sanada outside. Khan can't bring himself to dive though, instead settling for a head and arm choke back inside. That's broken up and Sanada manages a springboard missile dropkick, allowing the tag off to Bushi. Khan runs him over

as well so it's back to Ospreay for a Phenomenal Forearm. Everything breaks down and it's Sanada vs. Khan again, with neither being able to hit a finisher. Ospreay can't Stormbreaker Bushi but he can powerbomb him for two. The Hidden Blade is enough to finish Bushi at 9:29.

Rating: C+. This was a more interesting match and it felt like the people were a bit more invested this time. What amazes me the most is Khan, who was in one of the weaker matches at last year's show but has completely turned things around. He was an effective looking monster here and a good part of the match. Ospreay did look to be a few steps ahead of everyone else here and once he stayed in, the match didn't last long. Logical match here and they had some energy so well done.

A lot of glaring ensues post match and the Empire seems to promise to win tomorrow.

Ren Narita vs. Katsuyori Shibata

Shibata is a rather hard hitter who has been out of action since 2018 after an injury seemed to force him into retirement. He wrestled a special rules match back in October but this is his first regular match. Well regular enough, as strikes are prohibited and it is catch as catch can rules. Narita is a surprise opponent and one of Shibata's students. Before the bell, Shibata challenges Narita to make this regular rules and it's game on.

They go with the grapple off to start with neither being able to get very far. Commentary talks about Karl Gotch being such a huge influence on wrestling in Japan. They fight over a headlock until Shibata misses the PK. Instead it's a Figure Four to put Narita in trouble until a rope is grabbed. Narita is up with a bunch of stomping in the corner and the referee gets shoved down.

Shibata is fine enough to hit an STO and some hard forearms in the corner. There's the running basement dropkick in the

corner but Narita counters an armbar into something like a Texas Cloverleaf. That's broken up as well and Shibata strikes him out to the floor. Back in and Shibata grabs a belly to back suplex into a clothesline, followed by some rapid fire kicks. A sleeper sets up the PK to finish Narita at 11:48.

Rating: C. I'm not quite sure what to make of this one, as it was mostly a squash for Shibata but that isn't the point here. This was about Shibata getting to come back on the big stage after his career was over for a few years. It's a feel good moment and having him face his student was a great idea. The point here isn't the match, but rather that the match was able to take place and that is impressive given the layoff.

On March 3, New Japan is back on AXS TV.

Strong Spirits is on February 28.

Intermission.

Never Openweight Title: Evil vs. Tomohiro Ishii

Ishii is defending and Evil has Dick Togo with him. Evil jumps Ishii on the floor and sends him into the post (with the bell ringing as they make contact). It's already time for some chairs and the duel is on. A Togo distraction lets Evil send him into the barricade as this is the hardcore section of the show.

They actually get inside with Ishii being sent hard into the corner as Kelly complains about Togo's interference. Some mocking kicks to the head wake Ishii up and he blasts Evil with a clothesline. The belly to back suplex drops Evil and a heck of a running clothesline out of the corner does it again. A superplex is loaded up and, despite his bad back, Ishii gets him over for another near fall.

Togo offers a distraction though and the referee gets bumped. That's enough for Togo and Yujiro Takahashi to come

in and go after Ishii...who clears them off in a hurry. Cue Sho but Yoh comes out to break that up. Another referee comes in and Ishii hits an enziguri into another clothesline. Yoh cuts off Togo from bringing in the title but the distraction lets Yujiro hit Ishii low. A belt shot and Everything Is Evil gives Evil the title at 12:09.

Rating: D+. This felt out of place, as it was all the interference and the weapons not feeling like they belong on this show. Ishii was his usual self, though you can tell he is getting older and doesn't move as well as he did before. Evil seems to be getting a lot bigger though and more built around the weapons and the violence. This really didn't work and was easily the weakest thing on the show so far.

Tag Team Titles: Chaos vs. Dangerous Tekkers

Hirooki Goto/Yoshi-Hashi are challenging for Chaos after winning the World Tag League. The Tekkers (Zack Sabre Jr./Taichi) have Miho Abe with them. We get a long staredown before the bell until Sabre and Hashi start things off. That doesn't work for Chaos though so Goto comes in for a double shoulder and a bunch of pounding on the back. Everything breaks down in a hurry and all four go outside.

The Tekkers take over and it's Sabre coming back inside for a headscissors on Hashi. Taichi chokes away and Sabre adds a cravate hold, only to have Hashi elbow his way to freedom. Goto comes in for a running shoulder in the corner but Sabre calmly pulls him into an Octopus hold, because Sabre is smooth enough to do just that. Everyone comes in and it's a four way knockdown to give them a breather. The Tekkers are up first with stereo holds, but Goto makes the ropes and Taichi just lets go of Hashi.

Taichi TAKES OFF HIS PANTS, with the distraction allowing Goto to roll Sabre up for two. The European Clutch gives

Sabre the same but Sabre is sent outside. Hashi and Taichi slug it out until Hashi gets caught with a belly to back suplex for two. Back up and Hashi hits a superkick, only to charge into a kick to the face of his own. Hashi kicks Sabre down and it's a superkick into the fireman's carry backbreaker to knock Taichi silly.

A powerbomb/GTR combination connects for two with Sabre having to make the save. Sabre and Goto go outside, leaving Taichi to roll Hashi up for two. Another powerbomb/GTR combination hits Sabre but this time it's Taichi taking both of them down for a breather. Goto is back up with another GTR to Taichi, followed by an assisted powerbomb swung into a neckbreaker to give Hashi the pin and the titles at 15:29.

Rating: B-. This felt more like a fight while still being a tag match and that worked well. What was interesting here was the champs didn't exactly feel like they were in control at all near the end, making Hashi and Goto seem rather dominant. It was a good match and the best thing on the show so far, which is a bit of a lower bar to clear than I would have expected.

Respect is shown post match.

IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title: El Desperado vs. Hiromu Takahashi

Takahashi is challenging after winning the Best of the Super Juniors. Commentary puts over the idea that Desperado is defending but has to beat Takahashi to really stake his claim as a great champion. These two also have a long history together, including a recent time limit draw. They go straight to the slugout to start before chopping it out to keep up the theme. With that not working, it's an exchange of running forearms with neither really getting the better of things again.

Takahashi tries a triangle choke but gets powerbombed away

in a hurry. Desperado sends him outside for a dive, only to get caught in a sunset bomb. Back in and the slug it out from their knees with Takahashi knocking him into the corner. Desperado is back with a spinebuster and something like an abdominal stretch lifted into a powerbomb for two. Takahashi grabs a pop up sitout powerbomb though and they're both down for a bit.

A belly to belly into the corner drops Desperado again and the Dynamite Plunger gives Takahashi two. Takahashi grabs a fireman's carry but Desperado slips out, sending them into a chain of escapes and reversals. Another Time Bomb attempt is countered into a Stretch Muffler, with Desperado going for the arms as well.

That's broken up as well so Takahashi is back up with a hard clothesline. A superkick nails Desperado but he is right back with a sunset driver for two. Desperado cuts him off with a right hand though and a double underhook facebuster gets two more. Takahashi gets dropped by a right hand and two more double underhook facebusters finish for Desperado (with the Undertaker pin) at 16:17.

Rating: B+. That's the really good match the show has been needing and it was a heck of a fight. They set up the idea that Desperado didn't just need to win but to flat out defeat Takahashi and that's how it felt in the end. It felt like a major match and potentially an official changing of the guard, which is what commentary said Desperado needed. Awesome match here and the first that really felt worthy of being a major showdown on this show.

IWGP World Heavyweight Title: Kazuchika Okada vs. Shingo Takagi

Okada is challenging and I love that role call of champions deal, even if this title only has a few months of history. This comes after Okada won the G1 Climax, meaning he gets to carry around a belt signifying the title match instead

of the briefcase, which is a bit confusing until commentary explains it (like they're supposed to do). Feeling out process to start (Kelly: "Wrestling start to this championship match.") with neither being able to get very far.

Okada takes him up against the rope and grabs a headlock, which is broken just as quickly. An exchange of shoulders sets up Okada's neckbreaker, followed by a chinlock. Back up and Takagi manages to backdrop him to the floor for a breather. Okada tries a DDT on the floor but gets suplexed for his efforts to bang up his back. They go back inside where a belly to back suplex and a bodyscissors stay on Okada's back some more. Okada fights up and gets in a knockdown of his own, followed by a flapjack and a DDT.

A dropkick knocks Takagi off the top and out to the floor (that really is one of the best dropkicks ever) and there's a big boot to send Takagi over the barricade. The running crossbody over said barricade drops Takagi again and we hit the Money Clip (modified cobra clutch) back inside. That's broken up and Takagi manages a quick DDT for a breather. Something like a Gory Bomb (named after wrapping paper, because it's putting a bow on victories) plants Okada but he counters a clothesline into another Money Clip.

That's broken up and Takagi blasts him with a lariat of his own for a double knockdown. Back up and Takagi strikes the Rainmaker poser to make Okada snap, meaning it's time to trade shots. A hard clothesline drops Okada and they head outside. Okada can't Tombstone him on the ramp but Takagi can hit a Death Valley Driver on said ramp. They both beat the count back in, where Takagi hits a superplex to damage the back even more. Made In Japan is countered and Okada hits a dropkick but the Rainmaker is countered into Made In Japan for two.

Takagi's running clothesline gets two more but Last of the

Dragon is countered into the Rainmaker for another double knockdown. They slug it out from their knees and keep it going on their feet with Takagi getting the better of things. Takagi takes him up top, where Okada counters...something into a super DDT. The Rainmaker is countered again, this time into a hard lariat on Okada. The Tombstone is countered again so Okada settles for the dropkick into the Rainmaker for the pin and the title at 35:52.

Rating: A-. That was a very sudden ending to a pretty awesome match. This was about two guys trying to survive with the Rainmaker being the big difference maker. Takagi gave this everything he had and came as close as you could get without the Last of the Dragon connecting. It felt like a heavyweight battle and Okada winning is never a bad thing. Main event quality match here and that's not a surprise.

Post match Okada shows respect to the title, the crowd and Takagi but here is Will Ospreay to interrupt. Ospreay says Okada's gear looks cheap but congratulates him on a hard fought match. He didn't break a sweat in his match so he'll see Okada tomorrow. Okada says goodbye fake champ and an annoyed Ospreay leaves.

With that out of the way, Okada thanks Takagi and wishes the crowd a happy new year. The IWGP Title was a great championship but now it is time for the new belt. However, the original title deserves some applause and Okada promises to lead the company to more great matches. Next year, let's have a full house.

Commentary recaps the night and previews tomorrow's show.

Overall Rating: B. This wasn't quite up to the top levels of the show, but that's a pretty lofty goal on any given night. What we got instead was a rather good show, capped off by a pair of awesome matches. The rest of the show was

hit or miss, with the Evil vs. Ishii match being rather lame. The last two matches are worth seeing and the rest you might want to pick and choose, but it's certainly a good show and worth a look, even with the scaled back crowd.

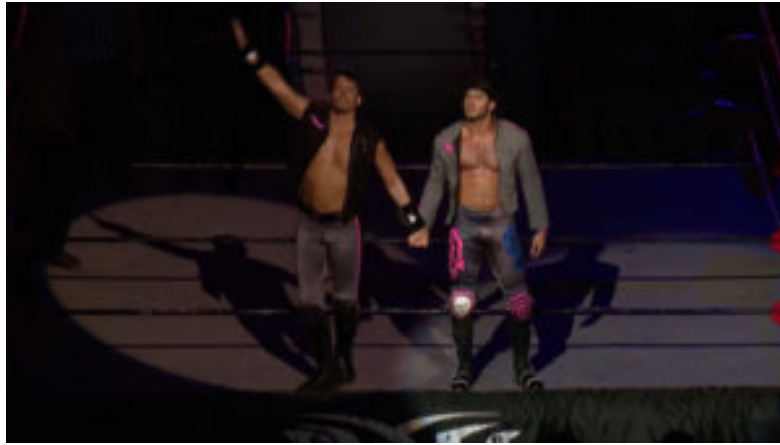
Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net for all of your wrestling headline needs.](http://Wrestlingrumors.net)

Ring of Honor TV – October 17, 2018: The Return To The Land Of Flips And Dives



IMG Credit: Ring Of Honor Wrestling

Ring of Honor

Date: October 17, 2018

Location: Orleans Arena, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, BJ Whitmer, Caprice Coleman

We're FINALLY after the previous month's pay per view and that means it's time to do something fresh. Of course around here that doesn't mean much as Glory By Honor, as in the next major show, has already taken place. I really can't even mock them for this anymore as it's still such a problem. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a recap of the ending of Death Before Dishonor, where Jay Lethal successfully defended the World Title against Will Ospreay but the Kingdom came in and beat him down. Matt Taven, now with a haircut, has his own World Title.

Opening sequence.

Here's the Kingdom to take over the ring. They're about to do something that should have been done a long time ago. The Kingdom has been silenced for far too long and the referee has to hold the title while the ring announcer reads off Taven's resume. The last line says Taven is the ROH World Champion, which requires some coercing to be announced. No one comes out, but at least Lethal has a new challenger.

Video on Jeff Cobb showing up and then wrecking TV Champion Punishment Martinez. That could be a heck of a fight.

Chase Owens vs. Kenny King

Owens is Bullet Club and King is the hometown boy. They go to the

arm holds to start until neither can kick the other in the face. King goes after the arm again but gets sent to the apron and dropkicked to the floor. Back from a break with Owens hitting a running neckbreaker for a delayed two until King slugs his way back into it.

The spinning leg lariat has Owens on the floor for the spinning corkscrew dive. A high crossbody gives King two and we hit a quickly broken chinlock. Owens loads up a swinging neckbreaker but twists it back into a faceplant for two of his own. The package piledriver is broken up and King bounces off the ropes but his knee buckles. Since Owens is dumb enough to fall for this, King small packages him for the pin at 9:43.

Rating: D+. You would think King would start getting better at putting a match together over time but that's still not the case. It's just spot after spot and then the finish with nothing connecting the sections together. The match wasn't horrible or anything but Owens is just kind of there and King needs someone to help him along.

Coast To Coast is ready to win the Tag Team Titles next week.

Back to Death Before Dishonor, where Colt Cabana joined Bully Ray and Silas Young to beat down Colt Cabana and Flip Gordon.

Flip Gordon vs. Shane Taylor

Hang on though as Flip grabs a mic. Gordon will fight him tonight but first, he needs to call out Bully Ray. At Death Before Dishonor, Ray had to cheat before the tag team tables match but Gordon put him through a table anyway. Ray couldn't handle that though and had to screw him over. So what does Ray want next? TLC? A Las Vegas street fight?

Here's Ray to ask if he's bothering Flip. Ray: "Are you upset that I keep kicking you in the balls?" As Ray talks, Taylor grabs a chair and here's Silas Young for a low blow. The beatdown is on and no one comes out to help Gordon, despite Ray begging for someone to do so. Ian seems more interested than anyone else.

The Briscoes aren't worried about Coast to Coast.

Jay Lethal is proud about Ring of Honor selling out Madison Square Garden and he'd love to come in defending the title.

The Kingdom leaves the arena.

We recap the show to fill time.

Next week: Coast to Coast vs. Briscoes, Cobb vs. Martinez for the TV Title and Marty Scurll vs. Chris Sabin.

Addiction vs. Best Friends vs. Los Ingobernables de Japon vs. Young Bucks

One fall to a finish and it's Evil and Sanada for LIJ. Since there's no bell after the break, I'm not sure if this is joined in progress or everyone just being really rude. It's a huge brawl to start (I mean...duh) with the Bucks taking over (I repeat my duh) until Chuck sends them together. The lawn dart cutter sends Matt to the floor but LIJ breaks up the big hug. It's Addiction's turn to clean house with a clothesline to the back of Evil's head and a double stomp, followed by a pair of moonsaults to Sanada.

We hit the string of dives with Nick hitting the big springboard version. Barretta loads up one of his own but stops for a hug, followed by the stereo flip dives from the Friends. We head back in....FOR THE OPENING BELL, three and a half minutes after the fighting started. Ian: "WHAT???" Sanada ties Daniels and Kazarian up to start (for the second time) and it's a double dropkick for two on Daniels. Evil gets two off a side slam and we hit the chinlock to send us to a break.

Back with Daniels faceplanting Evil but the Friends, now in sunglasses, pull Kazarian off the apron. As Ian points out how dumb that was, Daniels fights back and makes the hot tag to Nick for the house cleaning. The Friends come in as well and get flipped around but it's too early for More Bang For Your Buck. Kazarian's slingshot cutter hits Trent but Sanada is ready for him with a hanging swinging neckbreaker.

Trent comes back in with a tornado DDT but Evil uses the referee for a Magic Killer. Angel's Wings drops Matt and the Awful Waffle gets two so Chuckie actually makes a tag. How nice of him. The Dude Buster hits Matt but Nick Swantons in for the save. Nick superkicks almost everyone until Matt turns it into double superkicks to everyone else. A dive onto a bunch of people sets up the Meltzer Driver for the pin on Trent at 7:50.

Rating: C+. Well what we got was good and being realistic, you might as well add in the pre-match stuff as part of the match itself. This was all about flying all over the place with very little story

involved and there's nothing wrong with that whatsoever. We got a fun match out of the eight guys and there's nothing wrong with that. Entertaining match with the fans way into it.

Overall Rating: C. It might not be a great show but it's so nice to have something that ACTUALLY MATTERS. The Taven stuff is going to depend on your opinion of the guy and while I'm still not a fan, he's definitely better than he was just a few months ago. The main event was entertaining as well and the show was far easier to sit through than some of the dumb stuff they've done in recent weeks. Now just end the Bully Ray As The Super Heel story and we'll be fine.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the paperback edition of KB's Complete 2003 Smackdown Reviews (also available as an e-book) from Amazon. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2018/09/07/new-book-kbs-complete-smackdown-2003-reviews/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

NJPW Dominion 6-9: It's Worth The Wait



IMG Credit: New Japan Pro Wrestling

Dominion 6:9

Date: June 9, 2011

Location: Osaka-Jo Hall, Osaka, Japan

Commentators: Don Callis, Kevin Kelly

So this was a big request and therefore I'm powerless to do anything about it. The main event is yet another Kenny Omega vs. Kazuchika Okada match (maybe the stars are just counting how many matches they've had) though this time it's 2/3 falls and no time limit. Thankfully there hasn't been the crazy hype about the match to drive me crazy yet so I might like it a lot more. Let's get to it.

We open with a highlight video running down tonight's card, albeit in Japanese so it might be a recipe for fruit pies.

IWGP Junior Heavyweight Tag Team Titles: Roppongi 3K vs. El Desperado/Yoshinobu Kanemaru

El Desperado/Yoshinobu Kanemaru are defending and are part of Suzuki-gun. Sho and Yoh flip dive onto the champs before the bell and it's Kanemaru taking a sliding dropkick to the head for two to start. The announcers explain a bit more of the idea here, talking about how Roppongi used to be Young Lions and the older guys, like the champs, still see them as weaklings. That's more of a story than most WWE matches give you.

Yoh gets sent into the barricade and has to dive back in at

nineteen. Back in and we settle down a lot with Kanemaru ripping at the face and bringing Desperado back in. A dragon screw leg whip gets Yoh out of trouble and there's the diving tag to Sho. The champs get speared down and some rolling German suplexes get two on Desperado.

Back up and the champs start double teaming until Yoh comes in for a save. A sliding DDT/Dominator combination (3K) gets two on Desperado and a Backstabber into a dropkick has him in even more trouble.

Desperado takes some mist to the face and Sho adds Project Ciampa for two more. The ref gets bumped though and Kanemaru adds a whiskey bottle shot to set up the rollup pin to retain the titles at 9:29.

Rating: C. Completely fine opener here and a good way to make Suzuki-Gun look like a bunch of cheating jerks. Sho and Yoh are so much more entertaining than they were back in Ring of Honor and they make for a snappy little team. This was a fun match and thankfully it didn't overstay its welcome, which can be a problem in opening matches.

Juice Robinson/David Finlay vs. Yoshi Hashi/Jay White

Taguchi Japan vs. Chaos and Finlay has a Groot jacket. White jumps Robinson at the bell, meaning we have to rush to the zoom in shot that always starts the matches (I kind of like it for some reason). Robinson is right back up and Finlay comes in for a double bulldog as they're certainly off to a fast start. Takahashi comes in for a suplex before handing it right back to White for a backbreaker. A cravate doesn't keep Finlay down for very long and it's off to Juice for the snap jabs.

White is loaded into the corner for a Cannonball but Takahashi tries to break things up. That doesn't go so well for him as Robinson ties him in the Tree of Woe and now the Cannonball can hit both of them at the same time. A double flapjack plants White but Robinson accidentally punches Finlay, allowing White to grab a Blade Runner to plant Finlay. Not that it matters as Robinson comes back in for Pulp Friction (jumping Unprettier) for the pin on White at 7:28.

Rating: C. Another perfectly fine match that didn't get a ton of

time. The ending has to set up Robinson vs. White for the US Title, probably in San Francisco in July, and there's nothing wrong with that. Robinson has grown by leaps and bounds in New Japan and I could go for seeing him get a lot closer to win the title.

Robinson holds up the US Title to hammer the point home.

Tomohiro Ishii/Toru Yano vs. Minoru Suzuki/Zack Sabre Jr

Chaos vs. Suzuki-gun and I don't quite see Yano matching up well with Sabre. Suzuki and Sabre's British Tag Team Titles aren't on the line and they have Taka Michinoku in their corner. He even throws in some custom introductions, which I again can't understand. Suzuki and Ishii start things off and they go straight for the shots to the head. Neither can hit their finisher so it's Sabre coming in and taking Ishii down in knots. Ishii gets up and goes with the power to take over, allowing the tag off to Yano.

This doesn't go well either as Yano gets his arms cranked in short order. Suzuki comes in and stays on the arm with Sabre coming back in to work on the leg at the same time. An atomic drop gets Yano out of trouble and it's off to Ishii for the hard chops in the corner. The sleeper doesn't work on Ishii and it's time for the big forearm exchange.

That means a double knockdown so Yano goes after the turnbuckle. Thankfully Sabre is right there to bend the arm around the ropes, making Yano scream again. Yano gets the other buckle pad off and Sabre misses a charge. The low blow is reversed into a double armbars and Yano gives up at 8:42.

Rating: D+. I get what Yano's deal is and I've been tired of it for a long time. I know he's had more success, but he comes off as the New Japan Santino with the same bits and the same jokes time after time. Ishii vs. Suzuki was fun, as always, and they were smart to keep this short.

Post match Ishii goes after Suzuki again and after a few chair shots each, they slug it out on the floor with the Young Lions coming in for the save.

Never Openweight Title: Michael Elgin vs. Taichi vs. Hirooki Goto

Goto is defending and Taichi, who seems to be a singer, has a good looking woman with him. Elgin is absolutely jacked and looking bigger than I've ever seen him. There's no contact in the first minute as Taichi bails to the floor so the other two can go at it. Goto and Elgin lock up so Taichi comes back in for a rollup on the champ. That's enough to send Taichi back to the floor and it's Elgin with an enziguri to Goto.

Taichi comes back in to help kick Elgin down and gets suplexed onto Elgin for good measure. Elgin sends the two of them into each other and starts rolling the suplexes to take over for the first time. With the other two on the floor, Elgin hits a bit running flip dive because of course he can do that. Back in and Taichi gets two off a clothesline but walks into the fireman's carry backbreaker which I still can't spell.

Elgin gets belly to back superplexed but pops back up for a Tower of Doom with Taichi getting the worst of it. That sends Taichi to the floor, leaving Elgin and Goto to hit each other very hard. An electric chair suplex gives Elgin two on the champ but he misses an enziguri. Another fireman's carry backbreaker sets up the GTR for two on Elgin but Taichi throws the woman inside. The distraction lets Taichi get two off a superkick, only to have Elgin buckle bomb both of them. The Elgin Bomb on Taichi is good for the pin and the title at 13:44.

Rating: C+. Elgin, while having some serious issues at the moment, is still fun to watch and looks more than intimidating enough to pull off something like this. Of course none of that matters as he wouldn't even hold the title for two weeks, but at least we got a good performance to get the title on him in the first place. I can't imagine he'll be a big deal in the states for a good while so this is as good as it's likely to get for him.

IWGP Tag Team Titles: Young Bucks vs. Los Ingobernables de Japon

Evil and Sanada are defending and it's Nick and Sanada running the ropes to start. A headscissors drops Sanada and it's time for Nick

to strike a pose. Stereo basement dropkicks have Sanada in trouble so Evil comes in, only to take half of a double dropkick. Back in and a side slam drops Matt as everything breaks down. There's a whip into the barricade to keep Matt's back in trouble, followed by a standing moonsault to give Sanada two.

Evil is smart enough to knock Nick off the apron but Nick is right back up for a kick to the head. The hot tag is on a few seconds later but Nick kicks the post by mistake. It's fine enough to hold Evil, only to have Matt superkick his brother by mistake. Naturally the Bucks aren't going to sell for more than about five seconds so they're up top for a Tower of Doom with Sanada getting the worst of it.

The Meltzer Driver is broken up but Nick is fine enough to come in with a missile dropkick to save his brother from a dragon sleeper. Another Meltzer Driver attempt fails as Nick's leg gives out and a Magic Killer gets two on Matt. Sanada starts cleaning house with dropkicks and there's another dragon sleeper on Matt, with Nick making another save. The Bucks start in with superkicks and More Bang For Your Buck to Sanada gives them the titles at 14:53.

Rating: B+. It never ceases to amaze me how much better the Bucks' matches are in New Japan than they are in Ring of Honor. Over in ROH it's a bunch of superkicks at the end and then the Meltzer Driver with very few instances of them really ever being in trouble. Here they start fast, take a beating, sell the heck out of injuries, and grit their way to a win in an exciting finish. That's actually entertaining and good, which isn't something I would say more than once or twice in ROH. Do more of that and my complaints will be at a minimum.

Post match the Bucks hire Callis for All In.

Bullet Club vs. Hiroshi Tanahashi/Jushin Thunder Liger/Rey Mysterio Jr.

Well you know that face team is getting a pop. It's Cody, Hangman Page and Marty Scurll for the Club here. Rey is in tights, which I haven't seen him wear in many, many years. He also has some rap song

so it's not all great. Liger and Scurll, who have been having issues of late, are about to start, but Rey and Page come in with no contact. Actually make that Tanahashi vs. Page, with the first contact coming a minute and a half in.

Takahashi headlocks him down and gives us some air guitar so it's off to Cody after the strenuous grappling. Cody and Tanahashi exchange pushups before Rey and Scurll come in. That means we actually get something, including a sunset flip for two on Marty. Liger comes in and Scurll panics, partially due to a surfboard to make Marty scream. Marty does the same thing to take over and it's Cody coming in to punch Liger in the mask.

The Club starts in on Liger's leg and you know a villain and a guy named Hangman aren't going to have issues with that. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker (onto the good knee) gets Liger out of trouble and it's back to Rey so things can speed up. The moonsault into a tornado DDT plants Scurll but Page makes a blind tag to break up the 619. Everything breaks down and the teams trade cheap shots from the apron.

Tanahashi and Page knock each other down so it's Cody coming in to face Liger. The palm strike gives Liger two and it's Page breaking up another 619 to Marty. I hope Scurll gets him a fruit basket. That's fine with Rey, who hits a 619 to Scurll and Page at the same time. Ok maybe the fruit can be a little bruised. Mysterio and Tanahashi hit dives to the floor but the brainbuster is countered into Cross Rhodes for the pin on Liger at 11:36.

Rating: C+. Mysterio looked awesome here, easily the best I've seen him in a long time (maybe it's the tights). There's nothing wrong with the legends taking a loss here as the Bullet Club is the hottest thing in the world at the moment. Cody pinning Liger should be a nice little boost for him, though I'm not sure if Cody has anything going on around here other than feuding with Kenny Omega without feuding with Omega.

The heroes get a big sendoff.

IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title: Hiromu Takahashi vs. Will Ospreay

Takahashi is challenging after winning the Best of the Super Juniors tournament. Ospreay already has a banged up neck after his injuries from about two months ago. They go straight at it with right hands and Ospreay charges into a belly to belly into the corner less than twenty seconds in. A sunset bomb to the floor is broken up so they fight to the ramp with Ospreay getting a running start for a big flip dive. The floor padding is pulled back but Ospreay can't hit Stormbreaker (a double underhook twisted into a neckbreaker), meaning it's time to head back inside.

Ospreay is fine enough for a running corner dropkick and he cranks back on both of Takahashi's arms at once. How Zack Sabre Jr. of him. Takahashi bails to the floor, only to come back in and have his arm cranked a little more. After a double armbar is broken, Takahashi sends him outside for a hard dropkick from the apron to take over. A pop up powerbomb gives Takahashi two and some hard chops draw some swearing from Ospreay. The champ is back up with a 619 to the standing face and a springboard clothesline, apparently called Pip Pip Cheerio. That's just great.

The Space Flying Tiger Drop (wacky Japanese move names are so much fun) puts Takahashi down again but the Oscutter is countered into a German suplex for a sweet reversal. They slug it out for a few seconds before cranking the pace WAY up. A pair of reverse hurricanranas look to set up the Stormbreaker but Takahashi reverses into a Code Red for no cover. That's enough to send them to the apron, which is where Ospreay hurt himself in the first place. Instead of something stupid, it's an apron superplex (in a power display you wouldn't expect from Ospreay) before he drapes Takahashi over the top.

That means a shooting star press to the back (the Burning Star), because Ospreay does some insane flips. A corkscrew shooting star press (Neville's Red Arrow) gets two and Stormbreaker is countered for a third time. This time it's into a middle rope Canadian Destroyer, followed by a triangle choke as he's really banging on that neck. Ospreay can't powerbomb his way out of it so he lifts Takahashi up again and just drops him on his head for the break

instead.

Another Oscutter is broken up as Takahashi shoves him off the ropes and hits a sunset bomb. Back in and a fireman's carry into a spinning slam (kind of like Chris Sabin's old Cradle Shock but called the Dynamite Plunger) gets two more and they're both spent. The Time Bomb is escaped so Ospreay kicks him in the face. Stormbreaker is countered AGAIN into another triangle before Takahashi switches to a butterfly piledriver (geez). A Death Valley Driver into the corner sets up the Time Bomb for the pin on Ospreay and the title at 20:22.

Rating: A-. Well that was awesome. Takahashi played the neck perfectly and in the end it was one big move after another to finally put the champ away. He's rather good, and the lack of that stupid Daryl thing made it even better. Ospreay is great of course and those flip are often incredible, especially for someone that much bigger than most cruiserweights. Awesome match, with a great story throughout, especially with how many times they changed the pace so drastically.

Takahashi rolls around on the mat with the title, laughing hysterically.

We recap Tetsuya Naito vs. Chris Jericho. Chris attacked him back in January but hasn't wrestled since. Then Naito won the Intercontinental Title, only to be attacked by a masked Jericho. The title match is set, which could be a heck of a fight, especially with Jericho being so aggressive in Japan.

IWGP Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. Tetsuya Naito

Naito is defending while Jericho is in some weird face paint and lipstick, plus leather pants. Kind of a Clockwork Orange look actually and that's not working for me. Jericho jumps him on the floor before Naito can even get the white suit off. A kick to the back and a suplex on the floor have Naito in even more trouble as we're still waiting on the opening bell. Jericho even powerbombs him through the table (great break) and Naito is rocked.

With Naito more or less dead, Jericho steals a camera and films himself flipping people off. A DDT onto (not through) a table makes it even worse but Jericho stops to sign an autograph on a format sheet. Jericho throws him inside and says to ring the f***** bell so he can cover for one.

The fans chant for Naito and get flipped off, followed by a butterfly backbreaker and the Lionsault for two. Some hard whips into the corner keep Naito down and the Walls go on, sending Naito straight to the rope. Naito gets in a hard slap and tackles Jericho down, finally allowing him to take off the vest. A neckbreaker on the apron and another from the apron to the floor has Jericho in trouble. It's time to choke with the pants, followed by a few rams into the barricade.

Naito blasts him in the head with the broken table and piledrives him onto the same table from the DDT....which still doesn't break. Sweet goodness that's a heck of a table. Back in and Naito, with his bloody eye, gets his super hurricanrana countered into the Walls. That's escaped as well and Naito gets two off a DDT. The Walls go on for the third time but the fans drive him to the ropes for yet another break.

A German suplex and Destino get two with Jericho grabbing the rope. Now Naito is bleeding from the ear as well so Jericho slaps him upside the head. Naito's flying forearm is countered into a Codebreaker for a near fall. The Lionsault hits knees and a pumphandle into a reverse suplex (that's a new one) drops Jericho on his head. Back up and Jericho shoves the referee, kicks Naito low, and hits the Codebreaker for the pin at 17:18.

Rating: B+. This was similar to the Omega vs. Jericho match with Jericho playing the smoke and mirrors to a high level and presenting it as more of a fight than a match. Naito is a top guy in New Japan and will likely get a boost out of losing, as dropping a title to Jericho is hardly the worst thing in the world. If nothing else, Jericho losing the title to someone else is going to give them a heck of a rub. Really entertaining match here though and that's all

you would have expected from Jericho.

Post match Jericho hammers away at the bad eye and nails Naito with a belt shot. Jericho pulls off his belt to whip Naito, drawing in Evil for the save.

We recap the main event, which is the final blowoff to Kenny Omega vs. Kazuchika Okada, who come into this 1-1-1. Okada has held the title for nearly two years and has pretty much every record in the history of the belt. They wrestled to an hour draw here last year and now it's time for a no time limit 2/3 falls match.

IWGP World Heavyweight Title: Kenny Omega vs. Kazuchika Okada

Okada is defending and it's no time limit, 2/3 falls. Kota Ibushi and Gedo are the respective seconds. Feeling out process to start, which is exactly how something like this should be starting. A fight over arm control gives us a standoff so Omega takes him to the mat for a quickly broken hammerlock. Okada has some slightly better luck with a leg crank but Omega is next to the rope. They both tease right hands in the corner and things speed up in a hurry with both finishers missing to send both of them outside.

A hard whip into the barricade has Omega in trouble and there's a running boot to the face, only to have Omega hit the first (of probably about 75) V Trigger of the match. That's only good for two back inside so Omega starts kicking at the back, which Okada invites without much of a grimace. A backbreaker sets up a one arm camel clutch but Okada gets in a flapjack for a breather. Okada's DDT gets two and we hit a rather bad looking cobra clutch. That goes nowhere so Okada sends him outside for a dive.

That's fine with Omega, who tosses the champ over the barricade for a springboard dive and a nice reaction. Back in and another V Trigger misses, allowing Okada to grab a German suplex. They're twenty minutes in here and it's felt like half of that. Okada fights out of a super Snapdragon and Tombstones Omega on the apron, thankfully without the announcers telling us that it's the hardest part of the ring. Omega gets sent ribs first into the barricade and you can see the confidence on Okada's face.

A missile dropkick gets a lazy near fall but Okada takes too long loading up the Rainmaker and gets kicked to the floor. The Rise of the Terminator sets up the running no hands flip dive and the fans are rather impressed. Back in and Okada breaks up the Snapdragon and a One Winged Angel, so Omega V Triggers him again.

Omega's German suplex gets two and there's the third V Trigger. He still can't hit the One Winged Angel (they're setting that up very well) so Okada hits his perfect dropkick. There's a Tombstone for two but the Rainmaker is countered, only to have the counter countered into a cradle to give Okada the first fall at 28:48.

We take a quick break for a few minutes before Okada dropkicks him to the floor to start the second fall. The ribs go into the apron and the barricade a second time as the champ is in full control. A hanging DDT off the barricade should knock Omega silly and they head back inside. Omega's chops are shrugged off and it's a big boot into another cobra clutch. That goes nowhere so let's head outside again with a table being laid on top of Okada for a running double stomp from the apron. Again the table doesn't break (the Dudleys must hate this country) and Omega gets his knees up to block a backsplash inside.

An AA drops Omega again and they're both down one more time. Okada goes up top but gets caught in a superplex as the fans get behind Omega again. That's cut off by a middle rope moonsault hitting knees so Okada stops to point at a table. The backdrop over the top (like in the first match) is blocked and Omega hits a running tornado DDT. Neither can hit anything off the apron but neither finisher can hit on the floor either.

Instead Omega hits a reverse hurricanrana to knock Okada silly but he's back in at nineteen. The fifth V Trigger looks to set up the One Winged Angel, which is reversed into another Tombstone (I believe we're at three now). Okada's Rainmaker is countered into a spinning Rock Bottom for another double knockdown. The Snapdragon rocks Okada but he pops up with another dropkick to send Omega into the ropes.

We haven't have a V Trigger in a bit so there's number six, only to have Okada get two off the same rollup that won him the first fall. Therefore it's another V Trigger to set up a double underhook piledriver for two on the champ. Hey look! A V Trigger! This one sets up the One Winged Angel to tie things up at 50:35. After another rest period, Okada is almost ready to remember what planet he's on. Therefore, say it with me: V TRIGGER (that's nine if you've lost count) but Okada reverses the One Winged Angel into the Rainmaker for a double knockdown.

That's good for a delayed two and neither can hit a Tombstone. Okada misses the dropkick as Omega can't come off the ropes. He's fine enough to hit a Styles Clash with Okada grabbing the rope for a save. A V Trigger in the corner connects but the One Winged Angel is countered into a Tombstone which is countered into a Tombstone from Omega. Ibushi gets up on the apron for some advice, but Omega misses the Phoenix splash (Ibushi's finisher).

We break into the hour mark with V Triggers eleven, twelve and thirteen, followed by two more dropkicks from Okada. The champ loads up another Rainmaker, which connects, but with almost no impact as he collapses from exhaustion (as Omega did last year when he was about to take the Rainmaker). They slug it out from their knees but Okada pulls him up for a quick Rainmaker. There's a fourth Rainmaker and he loads up a fifth, which is countered into a German suplex.

Omega rolls some more German suplexes but gets reversed into another German suplex. Another Rainmaker attempt is countered into another German suplex and Omega adds a reverse hurricanrana to spike Okada on his head. ANOTHER V Trigger is countered with ANOTHER dropkick but ANOTHER Rainmaker attempt is countered into a kind of sloppy One Winged Angel. Omega can't cover so it's V Trigger lucky number fifteen and One Winged Angel #3 to give Omega the third fall and the title at 69:52 (including the breaks between falls).

Rating: A+. If I could go between A+/A here I would, but I'm not one to change a system that has served me very well for so many years and make things that much more complicated for everyone involved.

The match is incredible and one of the best performances I've ever seen. The guys beat the heck out of each other and called back to their previous classics while adding in new stuff. Okada being the one to collapse on the Rainmaker was great and made Omega look like the better man. Omega winning two straight falls make him look like the rightful champion, capping off a great story.

But give me a break with the seven stars thing. As I've said many times: I'm now either supposed to believe that this is 40% better than any previous five star match, or every match ever has to be redone because the scale has changed. As I mentioned more than once: they repeat A LOT of moves and spots, plus at times it felt like they were repeating stuff and filling in spots for the sake of breaking an hour and having one of the longest title matches ever. There are times where that works (which it did here at some points) and there are times where it feels like you're trying to be epic (which it did here at some points).

Overall, it's definitely a masterpiece and well worth checking out, but is it the best match of all time? Heck if I know, and heck if anyone else knows too. This match was less than two weeks ago and I've been finished watching it for about fifteen minutes. One of the my all time favorite matches and a match that I would put on a short list for best match of all time is Austin vs. Hart at Wrestlemania XIII. I watched that match last year and I was STILL finding new stuff about it that I hadn't noticed before.

Will that be the case here? Probably, but I'd like to wait until the following month before putting it among the best of all time and above so many other things that have impressed me before. Over time, matches are looked at in different ways and tastes can change dramatically throughout the years. I know it's great, but immediately giving it some kind of other worldly praise sounds like a six year old who just saw THE NEW GREATEST AND COOLEST MOVIE HE'S EVER SEEN for the fifth time this year.

The other question is will the match hold up as well over time. I know the immediate answer is yes, but look at what they did just a

year and a half ago. The Wrestle Kingdom XI match was given six stars by Meltzer, meaning that this match has now left that one in the dust if you're using the same scale (this match would be about 17% better if you're a numbers person). If you're basing it on that, the Wrestle Kingdom match is blown away by this one and isn't even in the discussion. That took a year and a half. What is this match going to be seen as at this time next year?

In other words, let these matches sink in a bit before they're labeled as the best ever or SO much better than anything else that's ever been done before. It makes things sound silly instead of great, which is the point in offering these matches so much praise. The match was great, I'd watch it again, and Omega deserves to be champion after taking the title from maybe the best champion ever. If the match can hold up and stand the test of time, then we'll see if it's as good as some have claimed it to be. Amazing match, despite a few issues here and there.

Post match the Young Bucks come out and celebrate with Omega, officially setting things right with them before he'll even accept the title. Omega thanks the fans in Japanese and says this was his final goal. He'll be here for the future and (in English) he's been told to stay calm and tranquilo. That's not his way though and he knows with these men at his side, they can do anything. Omega bids us goodnight and goodbye but here's Cody to walk halfway down the ramp and then turn around to end the show. Eh it worked for Owen Hart.

Overall Rating: A-. Great show, as New Japan always tends to be. The first hour and a half or so didn't exactly blow me away (though it was quite watchable) and then it picked up a lot in the second half and never looked back. New Japan has stopped being on a roll and now is just this good. Wrestle Kingdom could go multiple ways and the G1 should be very interesting. I'm curious as to how long Omega holds the title, and if he'll stick around after dropping it. Really, what else is left for him to do in New Japan now that he's won the title? Anyway, another incredible night which again flew by, which New Japan does better than anyone.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the paperback edition of the NXT The Full Sail Years Volume III (also available as an e-book) from Amazon. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2018/05/25/new-book-nxt-the-full-sail-years-from-dallas-to-new-orleans/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Ring of Honor TV – June 20, 2018: Why I Don't Like The Young Bucks



IMG Credit: Ring of Honor Wrestling

Ring of Honor

Date: June 20, 2018

Location: Odeum Expo Theater, Villa Park, Illinois

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Colt Cabana

We're less than two weeks away from Best in the World and that means it's time to start setting up some of the lower matches on the card. Well at least that would be the case most of the time but around here you never know because Ring of Honor doesn't always announce a lot of its card until the weekend of the show. Let's get to it.

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

The Bullet Club is ready for Los Ingobernables de Japon because Los Ingobernables couldn't sell out an arena in thirty minutes like the Club did.

Opening sequence.

Chuck Taylor vs. Kenny King

Chuck offers a handshake but pulls it away because he's kind of a jerk. They finally do shake hands and King motions a bunch of hugs to the crowd. A headlock slows Chuck down to start and King runs him over with a shoulder, meaning it's time to dance. Chuck runs him right back over and it's time for some Kentucky dancing. They share a hug and Chuck teases jumping him to no avail. More dancing sets up another hug but this time Chuck belly to belly suplexes him to take over.

Back from a break with Chuck missing a middle rope moonsault and Kenny slugging away. Chuck gets sent outside for a dive but let's stop for King to take a picture with a fan. I mean, he's not ready to take it so we'll come back to that later. King mostly misses a high crossbody but gets two anyway. That's enough for Taylor to send him outside for a dive and NOW we'll take a picture with the same fan. A Falcon Arrow gives Chuck two and a stuff piledriver is good for two more. King is right back up with the Royal Flush for the pin at 11:37.

Rating: C-. I'm not big on this style of match as they were just trading moves on each other until one of them hit their finisher for the win. It wasn't terrible or anything but it's nothing that I'm going to remember in about five minutes. Taylor has grown on me though and he's nowhere near as bad as I used to find him.

We look back at the Briscoes attacking the Young Bucks a few weeks back.

The Briscoes aren't happy with being asked why they're going down the dark road. The Bucks are the best in the world at selling shirts

and making Youtube videos, but they can't take the titles.

Video on Shane Taylor.

Here's Shane in the ring to call out Josh Woods. He had Woods beaten in Florida when King Mo interfered. Now Taylor is going to beat Woods up faster than Derrick Rose pops his ACL.

Shane Taylor vs. Josh Woods

Taylor wastes no time in knocking Woods to the floor with the power, followed by a big headbutt on the outside. A big Cannonball crushes Woods against the barricade and a legdrop on the apron sends us to a break. Back with Woods reversing a powerslam into a sleeper but Taylor throws him down. The referee gets in the way and Taylor knocks Woods out with a right hand for the pin at 5:33. Not enough shown to rate but this was pretty much a squash.

Bullet Club vs. Los Ingobernables de Japon

Cody, Hangman Page, Young Bucks, Marty Scurll

Tetsuya Naito, Hiromu Takahashi, Evil, Sanada, Bushi

Dalton Castle is on commentary and we'll look at him for the first few seconds of the match. Cody and Naito start things off with Cody striking his pose and Naito doing his eye opening deal. Naito sends him outside and rolls into the pose, which of course is cheered to high Heaven around here. That's too far for Cody, who throws a bunch of chairs around. Scurll tags himself in to face Bushi so let's go back to Castle, who is holding the title upside down.

Ever the evil one (though not Evil), Bushi grabs the beard so Scurll goes for the fingers. That sets up a showdown between the Bucks and Bushi/Evil with the fans not being sure what to do. Ian talks about the teams fought in Osaka, even though Evil and Sanada lost the titles there but came out with them here. Nice try at least. They stare each other down and it's eventually all ten in the ring for a big staredown. The referee tries to keep order (get that man a raise) but the brawl breaks out anyway with the Bucks taking over (you're kidding me) by way of dives and dropkicks.

Scurll kicks Sanada in the face so Page can hit a running shooting star to clear the ring. Cody does the Rise of the Terminator pose to annoy the fans but Takahashi cuts him off with a Darryl shot. Everyone else gets Darryled until a double superkick takes him down, followed by a big rope walk flip dive to Evil and Sanada. The

Meltzer Driver is broken up and Evil chops a chair into Matt's face as we take a break.

Back with things having settled down a bit as Matt superkicks Sanada down. The hot tag brings in Scurll to slug it out with Takahashi but he can't quite get the chickenwing. Instead it's the Ghostbuster for two but Takahashi kicks the heck out of Scurll, allowing the hot tag to Evil. Sanada comes in for a bonus, meaning Nick can have extra targets to beat up. The Bucks grab the stereo Sharpshooters but get broken up in short order. Cue Punishment Martinez to fight Page into the back though and we take another break.

Back again with Los Ingobernables cleaning house for a change and a quadruple basement dropkick rocking Matt. There's a Destroyer to Matt and the Magic Killer gives Bushi two with Nick pulling the referee out. Even Bernard the Business Bear offers a distraction so Bushi mists him for good measure. Scurll hits Cody with the umbrella by mistake and Naito adds Destino....but it doesn't matter as the Bucks come in with a bunch of superkicks. The Meltzer Driver ends Bushi at 16:37.

Rating: C+. And that's why the Bucks get on my nerves: the Road Warriors weren't pushed as this unstoppable. The Bullet Club, who are having problems, haven't been a team as long, and are down a man due to Page being gone, is in trouble but DON'T WORRY because the Bucks are here for a bunch of superkicks. In other words, absolutely nothing in the first sixteen minutes mattered because the Bucks are going to come in and almost literally beat up the other team by themselves. What's the point in even watching a match if there's no reason to think anything else is going to happen? Good match with an annoying ending.

Cody checks on Bernard and pours water on the mask.

A Best in the World rundown ends the show.

Overall Rating: C. That ending really rubbed me the wrong way and took me out of a lot of the good things that the show had going for it. While still good, this was really all about the main event and that match was really not working for me because of the last few seconds. They did a better job of setting up some stuff for Best in the World, but so much of the TV still feels like they're filling in time because they don't have anything else to do outside of their one big match. That's been a problem for so long around here and

it's getting tiresome.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the paperback edition of the NXT The Full Sail Years Volume III (also available as an e-book) from Amazon. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2018/05/25/new-book-nxt-the-full-sail-years-from-dallas-to-new-orleans/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Ring of Honor TV – January 4, 2018: British Scoundrels

Ring of Honor

Date: January 3, 2018

Host: Ian Riccaboni

It's another Best Of show as we're STILL waiting on the fallout from Final Battle. In theory this is the last show before we move forward but that doesn't exactly do much good for the fans who are waiting around. That being said, a highlight show can do a lot of good so hopefully this lives up to expectations. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Ian welcomes us to the show and says tonight is going to be all about the War of the Wolds UK Tour.

From August 18 in London.

TV Title: Titan vs. Kushida

Kushida is defending. Technical sequence to start and it's an early standoff with the fans being impressed. Then again it's a Ring of Honor crowd so they would probably cheer if they were bored out of their mind. Titan springboards into an armdrag to the floor, followed by a running hurricanrana on the outside.

Back in and Titan teases a hand walk headscissors but Kushida throws him at the referee for a kick to the ribs. They're quickly back on the floor with Kushida putting him in a chair for a running dropkick. Kushida starts in on the arm to soften it up for the Hoverboard Lock. A basement dropkick mixes things up a bit but the actual holds sends Titan bailing to the ropes. Back up and something like a Pele cuts Titan down but he's still able to hurricanrana the champ to the floor. A big old Lionsault puts Kushida down (and sees Titan landing on the barricade) as we take a break.

Back with Titan grabbing something like a Figure Four but a rope is grabbed in pretty short order. Titan gets caught on top but Kushida pulls him down into a cross armbreaker. That's rolled into the ropes again but Titan handsprings right back into the hold. Titan rolls out of that as well and la majistral gets two.

Another wacky rollup gets the same and that draws the FIGHT FOREVER chant. A springboard hurricanrana takes Kushida down but he's right back up with the Hoverboard Lock. Titan gets a bit too close to the ropes so Kushida rolls away and tries Back to the Future. That's countered as well (geez) and Titan kicks him in the head. A Downward Spiral into the buckle sets up Back to the Future to retain the title at 15:49 shown.

Rating: B+. Wow. When this match started, I was expecting just another pretty good TV match that didn't really offer anything special. What I got was one of the best Ring of Honor matches I've seen in a VERY long time as both guys left it all in the ring and came out looking like stars. Kushida is my favorite New Japan guy and this is a great example of why. I've always really liked his matches and this is one of the better ones I've seen from him. Definitely check this out.

From August 19 in Liverpool.

Jay Lethal vs. Josh Bodom

Bodom's British Cruiserweight Title isn't on the line. I've seen Bodom's work before and wasn't that impressed but maybe a better opponent will help. They exchange wristlock counters to start until Lethal blocks a hiptoss and grabs a swinging neckbreaker. A springboard dropkick puts Bodom on the floor but he comes back in with a hurricanrana. There's a dropkick to really stagger Lethal, though not enough that he can't hit his cartwheel into a dropkick of his own.

A missile dropkick misses and Bodom knees him in the head. Bodom grabs a reverse hurricanrana to put him outside, followed by a middle rope moonsault. Back in and a top rope double stomp to the back of Jay's head, followed by a standing shooting star, gives Josh a near fall. The Lethal Combination gets Jay out of trouble and Hail to the King gets two. We hit the Figure Four but cue Silas Young for a distraction. Not that it matters as the Lethal Injection is good enough to pin Bodom at 9:18.

Rating: C-. Ok so maybe it is Bodom. This did nothing for me, again, and that's not a positive sign when we're only on the third match. Lethal shrugged off the distraction and won anyway, making me think that Lethal vs. Young was the right move here. You know, a match between two people with a story and who happen to actually WORK FOR RING OF HONOR. There were some moments here but it didn't work, again.

Once again from August 18 in London.

Bullet Club vs. Los Ingobernables de Japon

Cody/Young Bucks/Hangman Page/Marty Scurll

Tetsuya Naito/Bushi/Evil/Sanada/Hiromu Takahashi

Marty and Takahashi start things off with Hiromu stealing the umbrella. That scoundrel! Does he not know who the villain is around here? The tease of a lick to the umbrella is just too far for Scurll and the fight is on with a technical sequence into the bird pose. A

running hurricanrana allows Takahashi to do his own bird pose but he has to flip out of a chickenwing attempt.

Cody and Sanada come in with the fans singing about Cody, including his last name as a copyright infringement. Maybe that earns another Cease and Desist letter? Sanada dropkicks him into the corner and the singing continues. We get the big ten man showdown but there's no violence. Instead the fans want some superkicks so it's Page coming in and teasing one. Naito comes in as well and we take a break.

Back with Naito avoiding a lockup and handing it off to Evil. Page is sent outside and it's Naito spinning into his signature pose to a BIG reaction. Scurll jumps him from behind but Los Ingobernables clear the ring without much effort. A quick spank from Evil keeps Scurll in trouble (Appropriate?) and it's off to Bushi for a middle rope dropkick. Marty gets in a Backstabber and the hot tag brings in both Bucks (sure why not) for the house cleaning to go with the big reactions from the crowd.

Everything breaks down and the Club does the five man Rise of the Terminators, setting up four straight dives. Marty gives Bushi a reverse Razor's Edge into something like a One Winged Angel, followed by a top rope splash to give Matt two. Back from another break with Page and Nick missing moonsaults. Matt misses as well so Nick and Cody stomp away. The Club wants Marty to try a moonsault and panic sets in very quickly. He finally gets up (shaking the entire way) and...I think misses? His hands grazed Bushi but he sold it like a miss.

The hot tag brings in Sanada to tie Page up, followed by the running dropkick to the back. Everything breaks down again and Page hits Naito with the rolling lariat. Sanada comes back in with Cross Rhodes for Cody, only to have Scurll break his fingers. The Superkick Party is on and the Bucks grab Takahashi's stuffed cat Daryl. Takahashi has to save Daryl from the chickenwing but he winds up taking the Meltzer Driver.

The Club poses and Takahashi starts crying. Fans: "SAY YOU'RE

SORRY!" Takahashi fights all of them because his partners are out looking for hot dogs and beet juice. A quintuple superkick drops Takahashi but Naito comes back in. Bushi offers some mist and Naito rolls up the very green Page for two. Destino plants Page for the pin at 22:09 shown.

Rating: B. That's a great way to do a major house show main event and that's the right idea. The fans need something entertaining to make the shows feel more important and having two big groups like this in one match is the right way to go. They had some good stuff going on here, but some of the screwy comedy stuff wasn't exactly my taste. I can see why this is considered one of the best things the company had though as it was some good fun, especially for the fans there live.

Ian wraps it up and we get some credits to end the show in a nice touch.

Overall Rating: B+. In a way, I like this better than just going with the standard Best Of formula. There's way too much to cover in the course of a year in just an hour long show so focusing on a single tour might have been the way to go. Two really solid matches and...well they had two really solid matches and that's more than you get more often than not. Fun show here, but I'm really looking forward to getting back to the regular stuff.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume VI: July – December 1999 in e-book or paperback. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/11/22/new-book-kbs-monda-y-nitro-and-thunder-reviews-volume-vi/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

ROH War of the Worlds UK 2017: They Lost the War

War of the World UK 2017

Date: August 19, 2017

Location: Liverpool Olympia, Liverpool, England

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, BJ Whitmer

So this is a show that exists. I mean, you would have almost no idea about it if you just watched the regular TV show because they only mentioned it halfway through the go home show but it does in fact exist. There is such little effort being put into this show and I'm worried about how bad it's going to be as a result. Let's get to it.

The version I'm watching includes the announcers' introductions (and them asking if they can hear each other in a quick sound check) and the pre-show match.

Pre-Show: The Boys vs. CCK

CCK (Chris Brookes/Travis Banks, the Commonwealth Catch Kings) are from the UK based Rev Pro promotion and their Tag Team Titles aren't on the line. It's a brawl to start with the Boys taking down the giant Brookes (probably a foot taller than anyone else in the match) down by the legs. It's Banks and we'll say Boy #1 starting things off with #1 being tossed over the corner to land on the apron.

Some double teaming drops Banks though as the announcers aren't sure which Boy is which. Back in and Brookes puts Banks on his shoulders and launches him at #2 for a Codebreaker in a sweet spot. Brookes even drops a backsplash onto #2 for good measure as the beating begins. In what must be British humor, Chris puts #2 in a camel clutch and both members of CCK stick their fingers in Chris' mouth and then into #2's ears.

Some Twin Magic allows #1 to come in and grab a suplex as everything breaks down. The Boys hit stereo dives but Brookes catches #1 in a hanging swinging neckbreaker for two. #1 sends CCK into each other and brings in #2 for a Backstabber. Not that it matters as Banks

grabs a fisherman's driver for the pin on #2 at 6:36.

Rating: C-. Just a tag match here for the sake of firing up the crowd. I'm not sure how smart it is to have your champions lose to some outsiders but then again ROH has never really cared all that much about protecting its titles. I mean, why bother worrying about your own talent when you can put over someone else's talent? The match was watchable with some nice spots but there's a reason it was just a dark match.

Opening sequence.

Adam Page vs. Kenny King

Fallout from Page costing King his TV Title shot. They hit the ropes to start until Page misses a standing shooting star and King misses a spinwheel kick to give us a standoff. Both of them wind up on the floor with Page running him over before taking him back inside for Old School, capped off by a thumb to the eye instead of anything else. See he's in the Bullet Club and needs to do "cute" stuff like that. A sunset flip out of the corner gives King two and it's off to a seated abdominal stretch.

That goes nowhere so King grabs a spinebuster for two more. Since selling isn't a thing in ROH, Page is back up with a neckbreaker over the ropes and a tabletop suplex for two. King kicks him in the head again and hits a flip dive out to the floor. The springboard Blockbuster gives King two but he gets caught with the slingshot clothesline for the same. The Rite of Passage is broken up and it's another kick to the head to set up the Royal Flush to pin Page at 8:43.

Rating: C-. This was the Ring of Honor "style" in a nutshell: no psychology, no storytelling, no transitions between moves and little more than "I do a spot and then you do a spot". It completely felt like getting their stuff in and leaving, which isn't what I'm really wanting to see. Some of the spots were good but it felt like just a bunch of stuff instead of a match and that's not good.

Ultimo Guerrero/Rey Bucanero vs. Titan/Mistico

Under lucha rules of course. I don't know if ROH brings in these teams because they think it's more interesting than their roster or if they don't have enough talent to fill out a show on their own. The more I watch their stuff, the more I think it's the latter and

that's not good. Mistico and Buccanero start things off and it's a LUCHA LIBRE chant to spice things up a bit.

The much bigger Rey turns Mistico inside out with a shot to the mask and it's a quick exchange of near falls. Guerrero and Titan come in with Titan hand walking away from a clothesline and headscissoring Guerrero to the floor. Titan's flip dive is countered into a powerbomb on the floor though, leaving Buccanero to go after Mistico's mask.

Everyone heads to the floor with Guerrero jumping over Rey to crash onto both smaller guys at once. Back in and Buccanero moonsaults onto Titan, whose back is over Guerrero's ribs. A slingshot dropkick in the corner has Titan in trouble but he pops back up with a double handspring elbow.

It's off to Mistico for a hurricanrana each as everything breaks down. Guerrero superbombs Mistico but gets kicked in the head, allowing Titan to come back in. Why things settled back down isn't clear but lucha matches aren't exactly built on enforcing structure (not a bad thing). Titan springboards in with a dropkick to Buccanero before sending him outside for an Asai moonsault. Mistico moonsaults onto Rey as well, leaving Guerrero to hit the Guerrero Special (reverse superplex) to put Titan away at 11:34.

Rating: C+. Better match than I was expecting here though the fans cheering all four guys when Guerrero and Buccanero were trying to play heel was odd. The other problem, and I'm sure you've heard me say this many times (and I'll keep at it as long as it's a problem): I don't know who these people are and I have no reason to care.

The background I received here: Buccanero and Guerrero were the Observer's Tag Team of the Decade for 2000-2009. Uh, great, and what have they done in Ring of Honor? Or in the last eight years for that matter? As usual, it feels like I need to have a lot of outside knowledge coming in to get a lot of this stuff and when the show is barely advertised in the first place, that's hardly a good way to expand your product.

The announcers talk about Sanada's vertical leap.

Jay Lethal vs. Josh Bodom

Bodom's British Cruiserweight Title isn't on the line. I've seen Bodom's work before and wasn't that impressed but maybe a better

opponent will help. They exchange wristlock counters to start until Lethal blocks a hiptoss and grabs a swinging neckbreaker. A springboard dropkick puts Bodom on the floor but he comes back in with a hurricanrana. There's a dropkick to really stagger Lethal, though not enough that he can't hit his cartwheel into a dropkick of his own.

A missile dropkick misses and Bodom knees him in the head. Bodom grabs a reverse hurricanrana to put him outside, followed by a middle rope moonsault. Back in and a top rope double stomp to the back of Jay's head, followed by a standing shooting star, gives Josh a near fall. The Lethal Combination gets Jay out of trouble and Hail to the King gets two. We hit the Figure Four but cue Silas Young for a distraction. Not that it matters as the Lethal Injection is good enough to pin Bodom at 9:18.

Rating: C-. Ok so maybe it is Bodom. This did nothing for me, again, and that's not a positive sign when we're only on the third match. Lethal shrugged off the distraction and won anyway, making me think that Lethal vs. Young was the right move here. You know, a match between two people with a story and who happen to actually WORK FOR RING OF HONOR. There were some moments here but it didn't work, again.

Young beats Lethal down post match.

Bully Ray/Briscoe Brothers vs. Los Ingobernables de Japon

Bushi/Evil/Tetsuya Naito for Los Ingobernables here. The fans are just CRAZY for Naito but he brings in Bushi to start with Mark instead. An early hurricanrana sends Mark into the corner so it's already off to Jay for some harder hitting offense. Evil comes in to rake his eyes and shoulder Jay down, only to get kicked in the face. Bushi gets sent into the wrong corner and actually calls out Bully Ray. Well he certainly has guts.

Ray comes in and rips Bushi's shirt open for some chops before calling in Naito. They take turns sidestepping each others' lockup attempts as there's no contact for over a minute. Even the lockup gets a cheer and Naito grabs a headlock with a fist going into the eye. It's back to Jay for some stomping but Naito rips at his eye too. Bushi comes in with a missile dropkick and we finally hit a heat segment.

That lasts all of a few seconds as Jay dropkicks Evil and brings

Mark back in to speed things up. Everything breaks down with Bully coming back in to clean house. Evil is in line for What's Up but Naito dives onto the mat with his signature pose to block Mark's dive. Ok that was clever. It's Bully taking something like What's Up (Ray: "OW MY BALLS!" Ian: "I didn't know Bushi was a baller!") but Bushi mists Evil by mistake. The 3D ends Evil at 13:35.

Rating: B-. This was starting to look really good but they spent a bit too much time with the goofiness instead of the actual match. Los Ingobernables are growing on me every time I see them and Naito is clearly one of the top stars in New Japan. Giving the Briscoes and Bully the win was a nice surprise as I would have bet on them going with the New Japan guys in one of the bigger matches so it was a nice twist.

Post match, Bully and Naito have a pose off for some reason. I'm not sure if Ring of Honor thinks Bully is on Naito's level but that's not quite the case...I don't think.

Intermission eats up about twenty minutes.

The announcers talk about what's left on the card.

Silas Young vs. Mark Haskins

Mark is a British high flier and the referee is taller than both guys in a weird visual. A drop toehold just annoys Silas (like it's so hard) and they slug it out with Haskins actually getting the better of it off a kick to the face. Young bails to the floor and gets faked out off a dive, setting up the regular version on the adjacent side of the ring. Nice little sequence there.

Silas is right back with an apron powerbomb to take over for the first time but we slow down for the trash talk. A middle rope jumping back rake (that's a new one) sets up a lariat (that's an old one) for two. Haskins gets sick of being slapped in the face and comes back with some rapid fire forearms before rolling into a modified Fujiwara armbar.

It's off to a Sharpshooter instead but Silas is way too close to the ropes. An electric chair faceplant and a short DDT give Young two and the short lariat is good for the same. Misery is loaded up but here's Lethal for a distraction, allowing Haskins to roll into a Samoan driver for the pin at 10:14.

Rating: C+. The ending was fine as it helps to play up the Lethal

vs. Young feud, which has been one of the better things in Ring of Honor as of late. Haskins was a fan favorite though he didn't really show me anything that I haven't seen from a lot of other wrestlers. Still though, good match as the show continues to pick up a bit.

Referees break up Silas vs. Jay.

TV Title: Hiromu Takahashi vs. Dalton Castle vs. Marty Scurll vs. Kushida

Kushida is defending and it's one fall to a finish. Scurll is of course beloved in his home country. Kushida and Scurll head outside, leaving Takahashi and Castle to play with the former's doll Daryl (who is apparently a big thing). Takahashi gets caught between the peacock pose and the bird pose, allowing Kushida to springboard in with an elbow to the head. Now Daryl is on commentary and the announcers ask him questions because the idea of being serious around here is just not happening.

Takahashi comes back in to take out Kushida's knee, only to stop to meow at Castle. Dalton stops for his strut but gets superkicked by Scurll. Kushida grabs the cross armbreaker to make Takahashi tap on the floor but gets suplexed into the corner back inside. With Kushida down, Takahashi tries a sunset bomb to send Castle to the floor but the Boys make a save.

Back inside and Scurll hits a modified piledriver and a running knee for two on Takahashi. Castle breaks up the chickenwing attempt with a German suplex before Kushida comes back in for a pinfall reversal sequence with Scurll. It's Castle suplexing everyone in sight but getting sent to the floor.

Scurll misses a moonsault and takes one from Kushida for two. Kushida flips into the chickenwing but slips out into the Hoverboard Lock. Castle and Takahashi grab stereo German suplexes for the save and everyone is down. Cue Adam Page for a distraction so Scurll can hit Castle with the umbrella, only to have Kushida punch him down. Back to the Future on Castle retains the title at 11:28.

Rating: B-. Fun match if you ignore all the nonsense with Daryl (which to be fair wasn't all that much). Castle losing via shenanigans helps a bit though he needs to actually win something at some point. Scurll continues to grow on me a lot, even if his in-ring stuff isn't anything great. Takahashi is just kind of there, though maybe he's just one of those characters that I don't get.

Kushida shakes Castle's hand. You know, just after dropping him on his head to beat him.

Tag Team Titles: Addiction vs. Young Bucks

The Bucks are defending because Heaven forbid they're not holding titles. Addiction jumps them during the Big Match Intros to Ian's annoyance, which I guess means the Bucks are faces tonight. The Bucks easily fight them off with dropkicks so we hit the Rise of the Terminator pose. Matt gets sent to the apron where Daniels pulls him face first down as the champs are in some trouble. Eh I give it thirty seconds.

Back in and Matt gets stomped down in the corner, followed by a low bridge to the floor. The beating continues with a face to the knee and an STO to give Daniels two. Daniels' Lionsault hits knees though and it's off to Nick off the hot tag. The Bucks speed things up with the double kicks to Daniels in the corner and a Backstabber for no cover. It's off to the Sharpshooter because the Bucks needed another finisher.

Everything breaks down and it's an Unprettier to Nick but Matt hurricanranas his way out of Angel's Wings. Kazarian breaks up a Sharpshooter on Daniels and it's time for everyone to punch everyone. The Bucks get the better of it but More Bang For Your Buck is broken up. Daniels hits the BME for two on Nick, followed by a sitout powerbomb/neckbreaker combo for the same. Back up and Daniels goes up top, only to get caught in the Tree of Woe. That leaves Kazarian in trouble, meaning it's the Meltzer Driver to retain the titles at 13:30.

Rating: B. As is almost always the case, whenever the Bucks don't just spam superkicks, they're far more competitive. The problem though continues to be that there's no reason to believe they'll win. Even if they drop the titles, you know full well that they'll be getting them back anytime because that's just how Ring of Honor and New Japan roll. I'm starting to like their work better, but then they'll just do thirty five superkicks in a match again to mess that up.

ROH World Title: Sanada vs. Cody

Cody is defending and won't shake hands to start. Jerk. We hit the long form stall to start as Cody isn't cool with the fans being behind Sanada. No contact in the first two minutes. A nice little

technical sequence really gets us going with both guys trying headlock takeovers but getting reversed into a headscissors before they try dropkicks at the same time for a standoff.

Now it's Sanada who won't shake hands as they're mirroring each other so far. The Beautiful Disaster is countered with a dropkick and Cody takes another breather on the floor. Cue Naito to cut off an escape attempt so Cody throws Ian into Sanada. Did England not get the notice about Cody turning face? Back in and Cody flips off the fans before getting two off a delayed gordbuster.

An armdrag pulls Sanada off the top but Cody would rather channel his inner Scott Steiner with some push-ups. After more stalling (WAY too much of that so far), Cody grabs a quickly broken half crab. Instead it's that modified Indian Deathlock to send Sanada slowly crawling to the ropes and then the floor. Cody switches places with him but gets knocked off the apron and into the announcers.

Back in and Sanada ties him up for the dropkick to the hip, only to get caught with the Beautiful Disaster. Cody misses the moonsault press though and la majistral gives Sanada two. A TKO gives him the same but Cody spits at him. That just earns the champ some right hands to the jaw and we have a ref bump.

Cross Rhodes gets no count but Sanada's rollup gets two, only to be countered into a LeBell Lock. With that broken up, Cody shouts that he's waiting on Brian Danielson. Cody loads up a superplex but gets countered into a powerbomb for two. Back up and Sanada grabs the dragon sleeper, only to have Cody flip over into Cross Rhodes to retain at 20:02.

Rating: D+. This was WAY too long and felt like a televised midcard title match instead of a pay per view World Title defense. The ref bump didn't need to be there and Cody looked like he was more interested in wasting time than defending the title. Not a good match at all, even with Sanada doing whatever he could to make it work.

Post match Cody grabs the mic and insults the Liverpool fans for being so poor. He'll defend the title against anyone so here's Dalton Castle (thankfully with his title) to interrupt. Dalton doesn't understand why Cody doesn't like these people because he loves them. Castle is no silly goose and the only reason he's not the TV Champion is Cody sending Page out during their match. If Cody

wants to know who's left, Dalton Castle is left. Cody bails and Castle thanks the fans for coming out to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This did not need to be a pay per view and it was clear that there wasn't a ton of effort put into it (into the build, not the wrestlers/wrestling). There was almost nothing in the way of story advancement outside of the ending with the wrestling not being enough to carry things. Things got better in the second half but I really wasn't feeling most of the show. The fact that I didn't know about the pay per view until less than a week before the show tells you almost everything you need to know about the card and that's really not a good thing. There are worse shows, but few more lifeless ones, which is a lot worse.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Complete 2002 Monday Night Raw Reviews in either E-Book or Paperback. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/07/21/new-e-bookpaperback-k-kbs-complete-monday-night-raw-2002-reviews/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Ring of Honor TV – June 7, 2017: We Can Only Hope to Be Double Cheeseburgers

Ring of Honor

Date: June 7, 2017

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Colt Cabana, Ian Riccaboni

We're continuing on the road to Best in the World and it's pretty clear that we're getting Cody vs. Christopher Daniels one on one for the ROH World Title. That makes sense after what we saw at War of the Worlds and they actually have some time to build this show up for a change. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Cheeseburger/Will Ferrara vs. War Machine

War Machine's IWGP Tag Team Titles aren't on the line. Cheeseburger forearms Rowe to start for no effect. That means it's off to Ferrara, who has exactly the same result. Rowe snaps off rapid fire headbutts to both guys before belly to belly suplexing them both at once. It's off to Hanson for a spinwheel kick, followed by easily blocking a bulldog from Cheeseburger.

Ferrara's hurricanrana sends Rowe into Hanson for a breather but that's about it for the offense at the moment. Cheeseburger gets planted but Ferrara eats something like a springboard spinning Hart Attack. One heck of a powerbomb drops Cheeseburger.....FOR TWO? That was a heck of a kickout and the fans went nuts as a result.

I can't say I blame them as my head snapped back on the kickout. That's quite impressive when I already knew it was coming and was surprised anyway. Cheeseburger comes back with the palm strikes (see, it's from Japan so it's a lot more effective) but gets tossed into one heck of a powerslam for the pin at 4:16.

Rating: C+. That's for the kickout alone, which was enough to actually surprise me. War Machine is a great choice for two power guys, which you don't see very often around this place. You can only have so many fast paced flippy guys so going the opposite direction makes for a nice change of pace. Not bad here and one of the more entertaining squashed I've seen in a good while.

War Machine talks about their history in Philadelphia and this building in particular. They won the ROH Tag Team Titles here for the first time and now they want them back. That means a call out to the Young Bucks, which could be an entertaining match.

We look back at the end of War of the Worlds, along with Cody's promo from last week to continue his issues with Daniels.

The title match is official.

Daniels says he's ready.

Los Ingobernables de Japon vs. Bully Ray/Briscoe Brothers/Dalton Castle

Castle is the only one here without a title as Sanada/Bushi/Evil are the IWGP Never Openweight Six Man Tag Team Champions and Naito is the Intercontinental Champion while Ray and the Briscoes are the ROH Six Man Champions, which certainly aren't knockoffs of the New Japan versions. Naito and Mark Briscoe get things going and it's already time for Naito to fake the dive and pose, naturally turning him into an even bigger face.

Now things get interesting as it's off to Bully vs. Naito and remember we're in the former ECW Arena. Bully runs the ropes and rolls into the Naito pose, followed by Naito running the ropes and then tagging out. The fans applaud the lack of wrestling and it's off to the smaller Bushi, who gets his shirt ripped open for a chop to the chest.

The rest of Los Ingobernables get the same, save for Naito who chills on the floor. Everything breaks down as Los Ingobernables tie Castle up ala Jack Gallagher. We settle down to Castle punching Evil in the face and getting his eyes raked for his efforts. Evil drops a backplash for two and we take a break. Back with the hot tag bringing Mark in to clean house.

Everything breaks down again with Mark mostly missing a Blockbuster to Evil and Jay CRUSHING Naito with a suicide dive. Mark and Dalton hit stereo What's Ups on Evil and Sanada but now it's time for tables. Bushi loads up some mist so the Boys come in to save Castle (who would have had his hair covered in mist), leaving Jay to take it instead. Naito grabs a rollup for the pin at 9:57.

Rating: C-. Well that was....interesting. This was much more about the performance than the match and I'm rarely a fan of that style. To be fair though, ROH would be crazy to not get Bully Ray out in front of an old ECW crowd in any way they could. There wasn't exactly a lot of wrestling here but that's about what you have to expect for the most part. Not bad but more of a performance than a match.

Jay yells at Castle and the Boys scam.

Adam Page is ready to end Adam Cole.

Punishment Martinez video. It's amazing how much better he's been

since the Kevin Sullivan/BJ Whitmer garbage was dropped.

Jay Lethal is ready to team with Bobby Fish to face Beer City Bruiser/Silas Young in two weeks. Lethal didn't have to look far for Fish to help him but wants Bobby to leave Young for himself.

The announcers, now joined by Kevin Kelly, talk about the Young Bucks vs. Roppongi Vice coming up in Japan.

Roppongi Vice is ready for the Bucks and say it's illegal for the Bucks to attack them backstage like they've been doing. A six man is teased but when they open the door, SUPERKICKS! As usual, the Bucks are treated as the smartest, most amazing people in the promotion. Also ignore that this is far more about a match in JAPAN and not here.

Hangman Page vs. Adam Cole

They slug it out to start with Page being sent outside for a quick suicide dive. Back from a very early break with Page hitting his own dive and shouting "ADAM PAGE BAY BAY!" Cole misses an enziguri and a tabletop suplex (bridging fall away slam) gets two. Back up and Cole tells him to swing away and spits in Page's face, triggering the forearm exchange.

The fireman's carry neckbreaker gets two and Cole superkicks the knee. Cole grabs a Figure Four for a bit but Page is right next to the ropes. Page tries the slingshot lariat, only to walk into a superkick, followed by a Shining Wizard for a rather hot two. I mean not Cheeseburger level but everyone strives to reach that level. Maybe one day they could even, dare I say, double Cheeseburger? Page takes his head off with a clothesline and we take another break.

Back again with Cole getting two off a sunset flip and hitting another superkick. That's no sold (of course) and Page gets two off a piledriver. Cole is right back up with three more superkicks and another Shining Wizard, only to have Page hit his own Last Shot for two. Starting with the piledriver, that whole sequence took less than eighty seconds. And people wonder why old school wrestlers criticize new stuff.

Page takes him to the apron for the Rite of Passage but eats a loud superkick. That's not enough though as Cole hits a CANADIAN DESTROYER FROM THE APRON TO THE FLOOR to pretty much kill Page dead. Back in and Cole tries a regular version but gets countered into the

Rite of Passage (less than seventy five seconds between the Destroyer and the Rite of Passage connecting). A hard lariat sets up a second Rite of Passage for the pin at 13:29.

Rating: C+. The match was entertaining but GOOD GRIEF the rapid fire selling was making me long for an old cruiserweight match. A guy takes a piledriver, pops up and hits three superkicks and a Shining Wizard before taking his own finisher in about a minute and twenty seconds? Followed by a flipping piledriver ONTO THE FLOOR not even keeping someone down for a minute?

That Destroyer probably should have not only ended the match but kept someone off TV for two weeks selling it. The problem is simple: if that barely has any effect, it's a bit hard to buy any of this as being realistic. If the wrestling isn't realistic, why should I believe the stories are either? This isn't complicated: either don't do the big spots or stop trying to cram so much stuff into a match that isn't even fifteen minutes long. Let the stuff breathe and it's going to be a lot more memorable than the fact that you did ten superkicks.

Post match Page whips Cole with the belt until Kazarian makes the save to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. Just a run of the mill show here with the build to Best in the World continuing. Daniels vs. Cody officially being announced is a good thing as they actually have time to set things up now instead of cramming it all into one week. Now if only they can keep up this trend instead of turning the show into some big New Japan showcase, everything should be fine.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Histories of Saturday Night's Main Event and Clash of the Champions, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/05/19/history-of-saturday-nights-main-event-and-clash-of-the-champions-now-in-paperback-plus-price-drops/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

Ring of Honor TV – May 24, 2017: Here We Go Again

Ring of Honor

Date: May 24, 2017

Location: Korakuen Hall, Tokyo, Japan

Attendance: 1,636/1,271

Commentators: Rocky Romero, Kevin Kelly

We're less than ten days removed from the War of the Worlds pay per view and last week was a stand alone episode. Therefore, this week it's....a series of matches from the Honor Rising event back in February. In other words, these matches have nothing to do with anything going on at the moment, other than featuring New Japan stars. Let's get to it.

Ian Riccaboni welcomes us to the show via voiceover.

Never Openweight Six Man Tag Team Titles: Delirious/Tiger Mask/Jushin Thunder Liger vs. Los Ingobernables de Japon

Los Ingobernables (Bushi/Evil/Sanada) are defending as we start with five New Japan wrestlers and the ROH booker who hasn't been seen on TV for probably over a year. We're joined in progress with Tiger Mask coming in and taking over on Bushi via some choking with a shirt (despite Tiger being a face).

It's off to Jushin to face Sanada as the announcers continue to treat everyone as people we should know without offering much of an explanation. The villains start ripping as Liger's mask with Evil getting two off a backplash. Sanada misses a charge and gets sent outside, allowing the hot tag to Tiger Mask for a dropkick.

We take a break and come back with Bushi neckbreaking Tiger for two, only to have Delirious get the tag a few seconds later. Everything breaks down in a hurry and Delirious gets Sanada in a cobra clutch. The champs start triple teaming him for the save though and it's a Backstabber into a belly to back for two. Delirious grabs some rollups for two each on Sanada but Evil chairs Delirious in the face, setting up a dragon sleeper to retain the titles at 10:34 (total match time).

Rating: C. This was good enough for most of a ten minute match with people we're just supposed to know because they're in New Japan and if we watch Ring of Honor, we clearly watch New Japan. These titles have caused Ring of Honor to create their own version and the waste of time that came with them so I'm not too fond of the originals in the first place.

Never Openweight Title: Hirooki Goto vs. Punishment Martinez

Martinez is challenging and we start from the beginning for a change. Goto gets run over to start but avoids a big stomp to give us a standoff. A quick trip to the floor goes badly for Goto as Martinez hits a good looking spin kick back inside. Goto hits one of his own in the corner though, followed by a kick to the chest to drop Martinez again.

It's time for the forearm exchange/slow down/second forearm exchange until Goto hits the fireman's carry flip onto the knee (the move that Mauro Ranallo always told us that Goto invented during AJ Styles matches). Back from a break with Martinez getting two off a clothesline and going up top. Goto bails to the floor to take the over the top dive, followed by a spinwheel kick from the top. A suplex is broken up with a headbutt and Martinez is stunned but not badly enough to get kicked in the chest. The chokeslam is countered though and Goto hits the GTR (Eye of the Hurricane onto the knee) to retain at 10:49.

Rating: C+. Good power match here with the same complaint I had earlier. Martinez looked like a player here, even if there was no reason to believe he was going to win the title. This is basically

the tough man title so Martinez was a very good choice for the challenger here.

Chaos vs. Bullet Club

Chaos: Briscoe Brothers/Will Ospreay/Kazuchika Okada

Bullet Club: Cody/Young Bucks/Kenny Omega

Since we're coming up on Supercard of Honor, the Bucks keep chanting DELETE. We get the big Okada vs. Omega showdown to start but, of course, there's no contact made and it's off to Mark vs. Cody. Mark is quickly annoyed with Cody's antics so it's off to Jay, who takes an elevated dropkick from Matt. A few right hands get Jay out of trouble and Ospreay gets a chance, only to have to deal with the Young Bucks, who you know aren't going to take much offense.

Ospreay sends them outside and does the backflip into the pose, only to load up a very early Meltzer Driver. That's broken up just as quickly though and Ospreay sends the brothers outside again. A kick to the head sends Ospreay outside and we take a break. Back with Ospreay being thrown into three boots in the corner but avoiding a superkick. That's it for his good luck though as four straight superkicks set up a springboard 450/moonsault combination for two.

Omega comes in and grabs a chinlock for two arm drops (you don't see that every day) as Ospreay is in trouble. A suplex is countered into a Stunner and a tornado DDT allows the hot tag off to Okada. The Bucks aren't impressed (of course) so Okada punches them outside, followed by an over the shoulder backbreaker to Cody. Everything breaks down and the Briscoes come in to clean house as we take a break.

Back with Mark hitting a suicide dive, followed by a Cactus Jack elbow off the apron. Cody is right back up though and superplexes Ospreay onto the big pile. That leaves Omega vs. Okada (who looks like he just got out of the shower and doesn't even appear to be sweating) for the huge strike off with Omega getting the better of it. Both finishers miss though and it's the Bucks superkicking Okada down.

Omega and the Bucks get into a Three Stooges eye poke sequence on each other before a triple superkick drops Okada again. Cue Ospreay to kick Omega in the head, only to get powerslammed down by Cody. The Briscoes come back in to clean house with a superplex into the Froggy Bow on Omega.

The Rainmaker is broken up but Ospreay is right back in there to catch Kenny with the one man Spanish Fly. Will gives Cody a Falcon Arrow for two but misses the shooting star. The spinning kick to the head connects for Ospreay, only to have the Oscutter countered into Cross Rhodes for the pin at 20:16.

Rating: B+. That certainly worked. You knew what they were going to do here as soon as you saw who was in here and that's all that mattered. Omega vs. Okada was a very fresh match at this point and it's one of the few things that's actually well timed here as we're less than a month away from their rematch. Anyway, really good stuff here, which isn't exactly a surprise.

We're off the air with two minutes left in the hour.

Overall Rating: B-. This one ENTIRELY depends on what kind of wrestling show you were looking for here. If you're looking for an hour of no frills and good action, you're going to like this. If you're looking for Ring of Honor, just wait until next week. In other words, the taping cycle curse strikes again because, for whatever reason that I've never heard, we can't just move the new shows a bit closer to the pay per view. No instead we NEEDED to see a New Japan showcase. I still don't get why this company works this was and I don't see it changing anytime soon.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Histories of Saturday Night's Main Event and Clash of the Champions, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/05/19/history-of-saturday-nights-main-event-and-clash-of-the-champions-now-in-paperback-plus-price-drops/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>