

# Took in the Rev Pro Wrestling Show (And a Bit of Annoyance at WWE)

As part of the Wrestlemania week festivities, I took in the Revolution Pro Wrestling show. They're a British company with major names like Ricochet, Will Ospreay, Marty Scurll and Zack Sabre Jr. so I had to take in a card with that kind of talent included. This was part of the WrestleCon weekend events so the show was only about fifteen minutes from my hotel.

Before we get to the show though, there were two rather annoying wrestling related issues earlier in the day. At 1pm, Charlotte was doing a free signing at a Cricket Wireless store roughly ten minutes away from my hotel. Of course I went and when I got there a bit after 1, the line was wrapped around the building, down the alley behind the building and around part of another building. The fact that the line was so long isn't an issue as people are going to flock for something that's free. Cricket had also put up a sign saying "all guests after this point are not guaranteed to meet Charlotte". I was standing right at the sign.

After about an hour in line, the sign was moved about 50 people forward. One of the workers came by and I asked if things were moving really slowly. It turned out that they were, because several people had upwards of ten items for Charlotte to sign. In other words, because a bunch of people just HAD to get her to sign things so they could throw them on Ebay, we were stuck standing in line even longer. Naturally this caused the line to go so slowly that it was cut off at 2:55 before I could get in. To be fair, it was a free event so I didn't lose anything but time (and patience).

No worries though as Bayley was having a signing at the Orlando Eye, which was about fifteen minutes from Cricket. This was a bit better as I had already bought a ticket (\$35, but you got a free trip on the Eye, which I had no interest in due to not being comfortable with heights) so I figured it would go better.

And of course not as the signing went until 4 and at 3:50, the Orlando Eye people cut it off because Bayley had another event to go

to immediately thereafter. I got a refund, but these events tell me two things:

1. Maybe WWE shouldn't schedule the same people for multiple events back to back. They have a ridiculous roster and I find it hard to believe they can't stagger these out a bit better, just for something like this.

2. LEARN TO CALL THE THINGS OFF EARLIER WHEN IT'S CLEAR YOU'RE NOT GETTING EVERYONE IN! When you have over 100 people left, do you really need to wait until there are 10 minutes left to realize that not everyone can get in? Also, how long can it possibly take when there are signs everywhere saying no autographs? I know people want to talk to Bayley but it needed to be a few words, obligatory hug, photo, out. That should be 40 seconds at most but for some reason we get this instead.

So anyway, I get over to Rev Pro at 4:10 (thankfully it's less than a mile from the Eye) and luckily it hadn't started yet (indy shows almost never do). The show wound up starting at 4:25 with a bunch of empty seats on the floor, though they were mostly filled in by the third or fourth match.

### **1. Sami Calihan vs. Jay White**

I've liked White since his first match with Jay Briscoe so I was looking forward to seeing him live. This wasn't the best match in the world though as they didn't have a lot of chemistry. They fought outside for two minutes early on before the referee FINALLY started counting, which got a rather jeering reaction from the crowd. The best spot was Calihan trying a powerbomb but getting blocked over and over. Instead of trying again, he pulls White up and punched the heck out of him before getting the powerbomb. White won with a Boston crab in about 12 minutes. D+.

### **2. Martin Stone vs. Jeff Cobb**

Stone is also known as Danny Burch from NXT and Cobb is Lucha Underground's Matanza. This was technical ability vs. power/athleticism and that's what you got for about ten and a half minutes. Stone is just a guy in trunks but he looks very polished and kept shrugging off all of Cobb's power stuff. Martin got in a hanging DDT for the pin. C+.

### **3. Lord Gideon Grey vs. Swoggle**

This is a storyline heavy match as Grey seemed to be a comedy/lower level guy who was just starting to turn the corner until Colt Cabana brought Swoggle to the company and somehow ruined his life. Grey walked to the ring like a zombie, even bumping into the barricade because he kept staring straight ahead. Then he wrestled a mostly normal match which saw Swoggle do a series of German suplexes and Lesnar's bounce back and forth. Grey hit a sitout powerslam for the pin in about 2:00 with a bunch of standard comedy spots. This was fine.

#### **4. Marty Scurll vs. King Ricochet**

Scurll's ROH TV Title was acknowledged but not on the line. Scurll was easily the most over guy on the show so far and he knew it, despite being billed as the Villain. You could tell these two knew each other really well and that's always going to help. There was some comedy as Ricochet did a bunch of flips into a nip-up.

Scurll, who isn't the most athletic guy in the world, said very loudly "THAT WAS SWEET! I WANT TO TRY!" He then did a front flip into a nip-up for a huge reaction but Ricochet didn't buy into the idea of a handshake. This gave us the YES/NO treatment for a big reaction. They both did their own versions of a People's Elbow with Ricochet doing a moonsault and Scurll doing an Austin style stomp and a double middle finger. Ricochet also did Tye Dillinger's cartwheel into a dropkick, followed by TEN.

They started taking things a bit more seriously by the end with Scurll teasing a big spot on the floor and then throwing Ricochet back in to annoy the crowd (because he's a villain you see). Eventually Ricochet tried a handspring elbow but got caught in the chickenwing for the tap out at just shy of seventeen minutes. Really fun stuff here and easily the best thing all night. B+.

Post match, Scurll said he loved working with Ricochet and dedicated the to a fellow wrestler who passed away one year ago to the day in a nice moment. This was repeated multiple times so this was pretty clearly a big deal to everyone.

Intermission, which was billed as 15 minutes but ran closer to 30. However, a lot of the roster was out in the lobby selling merchandise, meaning I got to meet a host of wrestlers, including: Ricochet, Colt Cabana (who I didn't recognize at first), Will Ospreay, Marty Scurll, Swoggle, Brian Cage (the biggest arms I've

ever seen), Jay White, Martin Stone (very polite), Jeff Cobb, Fenix, Pentagon Dark and Shane Strickland (Killshot on Lucha Underground).

#### **5. Interim British Cruiserweight Title: David Starr vs. Josh Bodom**

Bodom was defending but didn't have his belt for some reason. I've never heard of either guy and there wasn't much to talk about here, though Starr had about fifteen nicknames that the announcer had to read off a card. It was clear that neither guy was the biggest name as the fans didn't seem to know who they were. It was fine but nothing you haven't seen before.

This was your standard cruiserweight style match with a bunch of flips, the third standing shooting star press of the night (more on that later), a bunch of strikes to the head (the indy staple), a great looking front flip from the top to the floor and a hanging piledriver (picture Orton's hanging DDT but the guy jumps onto the back of your head to make it a piledriver) for the pin on Starr at 12:30. C-.

#### **6. Will Ospreay vs. Ray Fenix**

Ospreay is a high flying machine and one of the top stars in the promotion though his Cruiserweight Title wasn't on the line. This was a much more standard high flying match and for some reason Fenix took his sweet time coming through the curtain and didn't seem happy for a lot of the match, or after for that matter.

Ospreay flew around a lot even tricked Fenix by asking what something was out in the crowd to grab a headlock. They dove around a lot (and botched multiple things, though nothing too bad) with a Canadian Destroyer DDT as one of the cooler looking spots. Ospreay hit a big springboard cutter to win at just under thirteen minutes. This was a lot of fun but really botchy at times, which you have to expect. B-.

#### **7. Michael Elgin/Brian Cage vs. Ray Smile/Shane Strickland.**

This was power vs. speed, though Elgin and Cage got to show off a lot of athleticism. One very funny spot was Strickland doing a nipup, only to have Elgin come in and do a good looking Worm. Strickland said he was out, grabbed his jacket, walked up the ramp and through the curtain. He was back a few seconds later but it was rather funny. Other than Elgin grabbing a delayed vertical suplex and passing Smile off to Cage in mid-air to complete it, there

wasn't much here. Well not much original at least.

We did have our 5<sup>th</sup> cutter of the night, as well as the fourth person saying SUCK IT with a crotch chop. Smile also got up a bit too many times, including kicking out of a superbomb into an F5, which the fans REALLY thought should have ended the match (they were right). Instead, Strickland got Cage up for a powerbomb with Smile adding a top rope double stomp. A not great frog splash put Cage away at about 13 minutes. The match was longer than it needed to be and got too repetitive with the big power spot from Elgin/Cage and then a head kick from Strickland/Smile. C-.

### **8. British Heavyweight Title: Zack Sabre Jr. vs. Pentagon Dark**

Pentagon is WAY over with Cero Mideo (Zero Fear) being the loudest chant of the night. The fans absolutely cannot stand Sabre, who is the British Champion, the Evolve Champion and the PWG World Champion (and came out wearing all three belts like a good heel should). This was all about trading arm holds with Pentagon surprising Sabre with some sweet stuff of his own. Sabre kept countering like the master that he is though and worked Pentagon's arm half off.

Near the end Pentagon got his package piledriver onto the apron and unfortunately, Sabre was back on his feet in less than a minute. That REALLY hurt things as it should have been a pin (if there was any chance Sabre was losing here) but was just a big spot instead. Sabre got his crazy armbar to end things a few minutes later at just shy of 16:00. This was really solid stuff, save for the lack of selling. Sabre's technical stuff is must see. B+.

As I was leaving, I got to shake hands with Sabre in the lobby for a nice way to wrap things up.

Overall the show was fun with two very good matches though not much to support them. I certainly can't complain for a \$25 general admission ticket, especially with the amount of huge British names I got to see, along with the names that I got to meet at intermission. Rev Pro is certainly not bad and I had a fun time at the show. Overall: B-.

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

## Ring of Honor

Date: March 1, 2017

Location: Stage AE, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentator: Ian Riccabani

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

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

Opening sequence.

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

Cue Adam Cole and it's STORYTIME BABY! Cole says he'll beat Fish in New York City (causing Fish to crack up on commentary) but Daniels looks like he wants a fight with Bullet Club right now. Adam Page

runs through the crowd to jump Daniels but Kazarian runs out for the save. Fish: "Take your time Frankie!" Make your own Teddy Long joke.

#### Adam Page/Adam Cole vs. Addiction

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

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

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

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

Kazarian yells at Daniels again in the back.

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

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

Skyler has made a few NXT appearances and calls himself the Southern Savior. Carr is always being asked why he's not on TV and now he

gets the chance. Feeling out process to start as I'm trying to find a reason to care about either of these guys. Skyler wins a slugout and takes him to the mat for a backsplash. It's off to a chinlock for a bit as Evans talks about how important the ROH seminars really are.

Carr comes back with a superkick (he's probably getting a job based on that alone) and a second sends Skyler to the floor. A suicide dive knocks John into the barricade. They head to the apron for a kick to the face that was so far from making contact that they had to cut the camera angle. Skyler spears him on the apron (looked cool) but gets caught in a middle rope Codebreaker for two. Back up and Skyler takes him to the middle rope for a super Regal Roll and the pin at 6:12.

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

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

#### Tempura Boyz vs. Motor City Machine Guns

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

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

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

must be ok.

### TV Title: Donovan Dijak vs. Marty Scurll

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

Back with Scurll chopping away on the floor and Dijak getting kicked in the head for his efforts. Marty loads up a running kick so Dijak moonsaults off the apron to escape. That's just scary athleticism. Scurll doesn't really care as he kicks Dijak in the head for a near fall. Dijak is tired of getting kicked in the head (can't say I blame him) as he picks Scurll up for a suplex but just tosses him with ease.

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

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

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

**Overall Rating:** B-. Good show here which ROH has been needing for a

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

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

## Ring of Honor

Date: February 1, 2017

Location: Center Stage Theater, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentator: Kevin Kelly

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

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

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

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

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

This time it's Leon hitting a big corkscrew dive but here are the Young Bucks to watch (and take all the attention of course) as we take a break. Back with Ferrara taking a Shatter Machine to give Yo two and the Bucks on commentary to talk about the Hardys. The Bucks decide that the winners of this match are the new #1 contenders as Coast to Coast starts taking over. Stereo Coast to Coast dropkicks get two on Ferrara but a quick package piledriver puts Ali away at 7:24.

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

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

Video on Juice Robinson.

### TV Title: Marty Scurll vs. Juice Robinson

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Back in and a hard clothesline gets two more as this is all Briscoe so far. Briscoe slowly hammers away as Cole rips on the fans at the

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

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

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

**Overall Rating:** B. That's one of the best TV shows they've had in a good while, which says a lot considering there's a lot on here that feels like it really doesn't matter. I'm looking forward to seeing where they go with the Anniversary Show, which is a lot more than I can say for several of the most recent pay per views. Good stuff this week, which sounds rather strange to say around here.

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# Ring of Honor TV – January 25, 2017: The ECW Formula

## Ring of Honor

Date: January 25, 2017

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Kevin Kelly

Tonight we're looking at the Brits as the TV Champion Marty Scurll and his archnemesis Will Ospreay are both here tonight. It would be nice if that doesn't turn into something about Japan for a change but Ospreay is part of the Chaos stable so I don't have my hopes up. Let's get to it.

We open with a video on Scurll and Ospreay for a really good visual of how different they are.

Opening sequence.

### Jonathan Gresham vs. Marty Scurll

Non-title. Marty sends him into the corner and of course tells him to bring it on, which might have included some rather rude British hand symbols. Gresham works on the arm for a bit before getting chopped in the corner for his efforts. Scurll bounces out of a headscissors on the mat and sends Gresham outside for a hard superkick to the head. Back from a break with Marty standing on Jonathan's legs and ripping on his nose. That really is villainy.

They trade strange chokes on the mat until Marty is sent to the apron, only to miss a slingshot...something. Some very fast standing switches allowing Gresham to grab la majistral for two. A rollup gives Gresham another very close two but Scurll slams him onto the ropes. Marty superkicks him into a broken finger, setting up the crossface chickenwing to retain the title at 11:26.

**Rating:** C+. Gresham is a pretty dull guy but he can go out there and wrestle a very solid match when he's given the chance. I had more fun with this one than I was expecting and Scurll is a solid choice

for a heel champion, especially when he gets to be evil with stuff like breaking the fingers. Good little match here, which is surprising.

We get clips of Adam Cole winning the World Title back from Kyle O'Reilly at Wrestle Kingdom.

Jay Lethal is ready to beat anyone left in his quest to get the World Title back.

Jay Briscoe is ready for the other Jay...which means Lethal of course and not Jay White or any other Jay that I can't remember around here.

#### Decade of Excellence Semi-Finals: Christopher Daniels vs. Chris Sabin

Kazarian is on commentary. Feeling out process to start with neither guy being able to get anywhere off a wristlock. Sabin sends him outside by the leg and hits a quick suicide dive, followed by a chinlock which doesn't exactly fit with a speed guy. Chris takes him outside and gets sent head first into the barricade to send us to a break.

Back with Daniels putting on a chinlock but Sabin hurricanranas his way out of the Angel's Wings. A running flip dive from the apron to the floor drops Daniels again and some more kicks have him in more trouble. Not that it matters as he grabs the Koji Clutch for a breather. That goes nowhere of course so Sabin misses a charge into the corner and takes the Best Moonsault Ever to give Daniels the pin at 11:47.

**Rating:** C+. Another good match here and that's the best thing that you can get out of Daniels right now. He's been on a roll since right before Ladder War and I'd love to see him get a quick title reign, just for the sake of all those years that he's spent stuck in the midcard. It would be a cool moment and while I don't think they'll do it, there's always a chance and that would be awesome.

Daniels helps Sabin up.

Kevin Sullivan's Dark Army is standing around a barrel of fire with

Sullivan being angry at Corino. Steve can get out of trouble if he brings Sullivan the golden one. Laughter ensues.

#### Dragon Lee vs. Will Ospreay vs. Kushida

One fall to a finish and sweet goodness I'm not even going to try to keep track of what's going on in this thing. Everyone flips and spins around to start and it's a big standoff for a standing ovation. Back from a very early break with....more clips of Cole vs. O'Reilly. Back to the actual match, Kushida gets in a shot to Will's arm to keep him on the floor, only to have Lee pull Kushida into an STF.

Kushida, with light-up shoes on, cranks on Lee's arm until Ospreay comes back in. Lee is sent to the floor as Ospreay gets caught in an armbar, only to have Ospreay come right back with a handspring into a kick to the face. Ospreay dives out to the floor to take Kushida out but Lee dives onto both of them for a huge crash.

It's time to crank it up with Ospreay trying a shooting star off the apron and landing on his feet outside. Lee takes both of them out and we head to another break, this time with no Cole vs. O'Reilly. A suplex into a powerbomb gives Lee two on Kushida but Ospreay tries two moonsaults, only to switch up into a standing shooting star for another near fall on Kushida.

Lee muscles Kushida up in a German suplex but Ospreay drops Lee and all three are down. Back up and Lee snaps off a reverse hurricanrana on Ospreay and there's the Hoverboard Lock on Will. That goes nowhere so Ospreay tries a springboard cutter, only to get caught in another Hoverboard Lock. One heck of a spinning DDT plants Ospreay and Kushida FINALLY puts Ospreay down for the pin at 14:43.

**Rating:** B. Now this was more like it with the Super Crazy vs. Tajiri vs. Little Guido formula from ECW. There's just something cool about watching three talented high fliers spin around and do all kinds of spots that only the three of them can do. This was entertainment for the sake of entertainment and there's nothing wrong with that.

We see the end of Cole pinning O'Reilly to win the title to end the

show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This was the kind of entertaining show that it needed to be with a lot of entertaining wrestling and some moderate story progression. I like the idea of having some new characters brought in and everything was a lot of fun. Just do more stuff like this instead of doing the same boring stuff that this show has a tendency to put on.

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# Ring of Honor TV – December 29, 2016: The Redcoats are Coming

## Ring of Honor

Date: December 28, 2016

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness, Steve Corino

Since this year seems to be immune to traditional Best Of shows (even ones we were promised), this is another show featuring matches from a recent house show tour. In this case it's the Reach for the Sky tour of the UK which saw a lot of action surrounding the TV Title. Let's get to it.

We open with a package on the tour.

Opening sequence.

Kevin Kelly welcomes us to the show and tells us where we'll be going on the tour (Liverpool, Leicester and London).

#### TV Title: Bobby Fish vs. Will Ospreay

Fish is defending and this was originally only a Proving Ground match until ROH said "eh just make it for the title". Bobby puts the Union Jack on the mat next to the title, which seems to be a big sign of disrespect. The champ goes for the arm to start but Ospreay starts spinning around to escape, including knocking Fish to the floor, setting up a Tajiri handspring into a backflip.

We take a break and come back with a Space Flying Tiger Drop (cartwheel into a moonsault out to the floor) dropping Fish again and freaking the crowd out. Back in and Ospreay goes up top but Fish knocks him down to bang up Will's knee. An exploder suplex into the corner gives the champ two.

Fish loads up a brainbuster but Ospreay spins out into a Stunner for a very fast counter. A middle rope Phoenix splash (the knee wasn't that banged up) hits Bobby's knees so he twists Ospreay's knee down again. Ospreay is fine enough to hit a rolling kick to the head, only to moonsault right into the kneebar. Will stands up though and bends back onto Fish, giving him the pin and the title at 8:50.

**Rating:** B-. I'd like to see the full version of this as I'm sure the knee work will build up a bit better than it did here. What we got was fine enough though and the ending was a nice idea with Ospreay shifting gears and going with the wrestling instead of the high flying to surprise Fish. I liked this more than I was expecting and Ospreay could be awesome in Ring of Honor.

Fish is upset but hands Ospreay the title.

#### Tag Team Titles: Will Ospreay/Marty Scurll vs. Young Bucks

Joined in progress. Ospreay and Scurll are challenging despite being huge rivals. Scurll takes Matt to the mat to start and it's too early to try Marty's crossface chickenwing. They poke each other in the eye and dive over for the double tag, giving us a standoff. Ospreay does a lot of nipping up to get out of a wristlock and it's time for all of the flips without much contact actually being made.

A double armdrag sends the Bucks to the floor and Ospreay does his moonsault into the pose, followed by Scurll running over do pose

next to him in a funny bit. Back in and the Brits start taking over on Matt with Marty grabbing a surfboard and Ospreay adding a sliding dropkick to the face.

Nick gets the tag and does all his flips to take over again because he's sold enough so far. A double suicide dive drops the challengers and we take a break. Back with Scurll getting caught in the corner and DDT'ed onto the apron. A 450 gets two for Matt and it's Ospreay coming back in with the shooting stars and a middle rope moonsault for a very close two. All four are down and that earns a standing ovation.

The Bucks offer a double SUCK IT so Scurll BREAKS THEIR FINGERS. Now it's time for the evil umbrella but Ospreay says not so fast. As you might expect, Ospreay hits Scurll by mistake and that means a double superkick. More Bang for Your Buck gets two on Marty and that means the Meltzer Driver, only to have Ospreay springboard in to hurricanrana Nick out of the air....and right into the spike on the Tombstone to pin Scurll at 13:04.

**Rating:** B-. Ok yeah the ending rocked. I mean, it wasn't perfectly executed but it certainly looked good and that's what matters here. I'm not big on throwing two rivals together and having them become the number one contenders but it actually makes sense here. They work very well together and that's what matters the most. Good match here, even with the Bucks' usual issues.

That loss resulted in a challenge being issued for the final night of the tour.

#### TV Title: Marty Scurll vs. Will Ospreay

Ospreay is defending and this is joined in progress with Scurll fighting out of a wristlock. The bouncing escape gives us several more counters as this is British wrestling to the letter. Scurll avoids the moonsault and they flip into a kneeling standoff. The fans are split on who to cheer for but seem to shift towards Ospreay as he grabs an Octopus Hold and twists Marty down into a rollup for two.

Scurll is sent outside for a running shooting star off the apron with Ospreay looking like he had to pop his thumb back into joint. In an old school move, Scurll hides under the ring and sneaks up on Will to take over. That's enough for a lap around the ring as we take a break. Back with Scurll cranking on Ospreay's fingers and

doing that freaky CRACKING bit again.

A suplex into a Stunner and back to back shooting stars into a moonsault have Scurll reeling but he catches Ospreay out of the air in the chickenwing. Sweet, sweet sequence there with Will backflipping out to escape. One heck of a clothesline drops Will for one (yes one) and both guys are down. It's umbrella time but Scurll opts to break more fingers and STOMP WILL IN THE HEAD. Another chickenwing gives Marty the title at 9:34.

**Rating:** B. These two really do work well together and there's something very cool about swapping people in and out with the title on a house show tour. Both of these guys are signed to some form of a deal with ROH and I'm sure we'll see Scurll vs. Fish at some point in the future. Good match and a good way to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B+. Quite the show here and I had a lot of fun watching it. British wrestling is one of the hottest things in wrestling at this point and it's a good idea for ROH to sign up some of the top stars in the area. It helps that a lot of their wrestlers can wrestle that style as well, making this a very natural fit. If nothing else, it's not New Japan all over again and that's a good thing.

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# ROH Final Battle 2016: TV Not Required

## Final Battle 2016

Date: December 2, 2016

Location: Hammerstein Ballroom, New York City, New York

Commentators: Steve Corino, Kevin Kelly

This has been a fairly big request so I might as well get it out of the way before it's way too late. Final Battle is the biggest Ring of Honor show of the year and this edition is headlined by Adam Cole defending the ROH World Title against Kyle O'Reilly. The card isn't the strongest in the world but there's always potential. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We open with Story Time with Adam Cole, who has a story about two knights. One of them went on to become the King but everyone was jealous of him. The King had all the friends he needed and all the other knight had was a shot at the throne, which he failed. Then he failed again and again until Kyle O'Reilly is out of shots. Cole drops the story and promises that tonight, Kyle fails all over again.

Opening sequence.

The announcers run down the card (as in the one you already paid for) which now includes a triple threat instead of a fourway as Bobby Fish's mother passed away, forcing him out of the match.

## Rebellion vs. Motor City Machine Guns/Donovan Dijak

The Guns are still in search of a permanent partner because trios are suddenly awesome. The Rebellion is the former Cabinet (Caprice Coleman/Kenny King/Rhett Titus) because Rebellion might actually be an even weaker name. To really show how rebellious King is, he has an upside down ROH logo on his trunks. Sabin and King run the ropes a bit to start with a grand total of nothing happen. Gotta love that non-offense from these rebels.

A quick triple team puts Dijak down and it's Titus, billed as the BIG DAWG with a similar ROH logo on the trunks, getting triple

teamed right back. Shelley does a little Ric Flair strut and helps hold Titus up for a middle rope splash from Dijak. A good right hand (Corino: "PS!") drops Sabin though and it's time for the Rebellion (and their dastardly trunks to take over. Coleman, the true rebel here due to his slacks, gets in a few stomps of his own.

More triple teaming ensues until Sabin gets in a tornado DDT. That means Dijak gets to clean house with a top rope chokebreaker (close enough at least) getting two on Titus. The fans are WAY into Dijak here but the chants are cut off as the Guns start speeding things up. Well as speedy as they can make them at this point in their careers.

Dijak actually busts out a springboard flip dive to make my eyes pop open. Feast Your Eyes sends Titus into a powerbomb for two with Coleman and King diving in for the save. Another powerbomb puts King down but Skull and Bones are broken up. The Sky Splitter sets up the Big Dawg (frog) splash to put Sabin away at 12:27.

**Rating:** C+. Now this is a good way to start a show: with a mostly meaningless six man tag featuring a bunch of flying around and fast paced offense that gets the crowd going early on. Unfortunately that's about it for the good stuff as the Rebellion might be the least interesting idea for a gimmick this year. It's one of those cliched names that you throw out there on a tiny indy show, not the biggest show of the year for one of the biggest promotions in the country.

We recap Silas Young vs. Jushin Thunder Liger. Young got annoyed at a fan dressing up like Liger so he wanted to beat up the inspiration for never showing his face like a coward.

#### Jushin Thunder Liger vs. Silas Young

Young has Beer City Bruiser with him. A cheap shot puts Liger trouble but the threat of a surfboard sends Silas bailing to the floor. Back in and we hit the surfboard until Silas grabs the referee for the break. A neckbreaker puts Liger down and the Bruiser offers a cheap shot (it's not like he's going to do much else) to keep Silas in control. Young actually goes for the mask because he really is that evil.

Liger gets caught in a backbreaker for two but manages to get in a double clothesline for a breather. It's too early for the Liger Bomb though and a big neckbreaker gets two for Young. That means it's

time for a shot of beer, which is spat on Liger's mask. It's enough to make Liger hit a brainbuster but a top rope splash hits knees. Misery puts Liger away at 11:04.

**Rating:** C-. Nothing to see here but above all else the right person won. Liger is still an attraction and a win over him seems to mean something, which is exactly what someone like Silas needs. It's nothing great but it did its job well enough. I'm still not sure where they're going with Young but we've waiting on it for a long time.

We recap Colt Cabana vs. Dalton Castle, which is your standard short term tag team breakup feud with Cabana playing heel.

#### Colt Cabana vs. Dalton Castle

You can tell Colt has turned as his music into something much slower with rap lyrics. Castle comes out in a chariot pulled by the Boys. Dalton immediately poses on the middle rope with his legs crossed like a gentleman. A quick takedown puts Colt on the mat and he bails to the floor, allowing Castle to do his strut after faking Cabana out on a suicide dive. The Boys are thrown in so Castle uses them as stepping stones to set up a dropkick. Now that shows some thinking out there.

Another trip to the mat goes badly for Cabana but he finally pulls Dalton out of the corner to take over. A quick Billy Goat's Curse sends Castle diving for the ropes, which looked quite a bit like a tap. Dalton grabs a hurricanrana before sidestepping a Lionsault press. Colt pops up but can't hit the Chicago Skyline. He can however reverse the Bang A Rang into a rollup for two but Dalton grabs the Bang A Rang for the pin at 10:22.

**Rating:** C. Castle is another guy who could be something special if he's given the right kind of push. However, his character is one of those kind that has a firm ceiling above its head because of the nature of the persona. He's getting better in the ring though and those eyes being all buggy make things even better.

Jay Lethal gives a great promo about how he won't be remembered if he doesn't do something memorable. Tonight he's going to show why he's the best wrestler in the world, like he's been for years.

#### Cody vs. Jay Lethal

Brandi Rhodes gets in a chuckle worthy line with "Where we're going

we don't need Rhodes." Lethal has a vest containing his wish list, which include Cody. We're not quite ready to go yet though as the Addiction comes out to interrupt. They're cool with the night off after what they went through at Ladder War. Daniels talks about growing up watching Dusty Rhodes and how important it is to have wrestlers like Cody on the roster. Addiction will be sitting in on commentary.

Feeling out process to start as they hit the mat early on. A hiptoss exchange goes fine until Lethal gets in a dropkick for the first major offense. Cody comes right back with a very delayed gordbuster and starts in on the arm. Addiction keeps putting over the idea of Cody having experience in big matches and not buckling under the pressure.

A skinning of the cat is broken up by Jay dropkicking Cody in the face (that's a new one) to send him outside. That means three straight suicide dives with Cody being ready for the third and breaking it up with a Disaster Kick. Back in and another Disaster Kick grazes Jay's hands but he backflips on the impact anyway. Eh it wouldn't be Ring of Honor if there wasn't an unnecessary flip.

Lethal comes back with a Crossface but Cody rolls into a modified Indian Deathlock of all things. After a rope is grabbed, Cody turns him inside out again with a clothesline and the frustration sets in on the kickout. The moonsault press misses, which Kevin calls Cody's first mistake. Oh I'm sure I could find a few. Jay starts striking him in the face but we've got a ref bump, allowing Cody to kick Jay low for the surprise heel turn. Cross Rhodes puts Lethal away at 13:12.

**Rating:** B-. Best match of the night so far but it still wasn't great. Turning Cody heel is certainly interesting though as you don't often send in someone like Cody and then have them do anything other than be a short term conquering hero. A win over Lethal is still a big deal, even though Jay has taken a few steps down from where he was recently. Good enough match too.

Post match Cody mocks the Code of Honor and flips Lethal off. Addiction chases him away while Corino jumps back in on commentary to say "he was right all along." Rhodes shoves Corino down but Steve keeps his cool.

Long recap of the Six Man Tag Team Title tournament. Lio Rush is

replacing ACH, who has left the promotion.

#### Six Man Tag Team Titles: Kingdom vs. Kushida/Jay White/Lio Rush

The titles are vacant coming in and I still have no idea which one is TK O’Ryan and which is Vinny Marsegila. Before the bell, Corino says the Father (likely meaning Kevin Sullivan) said the evil was coming and that’s clearly Cody. Things start very fast with Rush hitting a standing C4 and frog splash for a pretty hot two.

After a break on the floor, White takes O’Ryan down until it’s off to Kushida for a dropkick to the head. Rush comes in for some YES Kicks but Taven sneaks in for a DDT to take over. O’Ryan adds a spear for two as things settle down into your normal formula. The first hot tag brings in Kushida for the Hoverboard Lock but O’Ryan is quickly in the ropes.

The announcers are nice enough to start explaining why we should care about the Kingdom as Kushida scores with a double Tajiri handspring elbow. Everything breaks down and White gets two off a missile dropkick. To really pick things up a bit, White gets caught in a half crab from the top rope, only to have Kushida put Vinny in the Hoverboard Lock on the top for the save.

A superplex breaks the submissions which don’t count because they’re in the ropes and it’s time for Rush to get to show off because ROH LOVES that guy. Kushida gets in a big dive to take all of the Kingdom down, only to have Taven dive onto the even bigger pile. Back in and Rush has Vinny beaten so TK dives off the top to take out the referee. Rush goes crazy with his strikes but the triple powerbomb crushes Lio to give the Kingdom the belts at 15:22.

**Rating:** C+. This is a good example of just throwing titles out there and not bothering to put anything important behind them. There’s no reason to care about Six Man Tag Team Titles when there were barely any trios in the first place. It comes off like someone else did something so now we’ve got Trios Titles. That doesn’t mean it works and the match wasn’t great either, making this the finals of one heck of a waste of time, especially with the winners being a reincarnated stable that is missing all the parts that made it work in the first place.

We recap the rapidly changing TV Title picture. Will Ospreay took the title from Bobby Fish, only to lose it two days later to Marty Scurll. Dragon Lee is involved here as well because we need to bring

in other people from around the world whether they're interesting or not. Fish is out of the match due to a death in the family earlier in the day.

#### TV Title: Will Ospreay vs. Dragon Lee vs. Marty Scurll

Scurll, dubbed the Villain (I can work with this) is defending. As you might expect, everything starts fast with all three doing a bunch of flips without making any real contact. Will and Lee chop it out before all three wind up on the floor, only to have Lee hit a big flip dive. Back in and Will's standing shooting star gets two on Lee, starting a British double team.

With Lee dispatched, Ospreay and Scurll start slugging it out until Marty gets caught in the Tree of Woe. Cue Lee for the Alberto Del Rio top rope double stomp and a near fall. A running hurricanrana pulls Ospreay off the apron and down to the floor but Will pops back up for a big running flip dive of his own.

A very fast series of dives has Scurll in trouble but he catches a final dive in his crossface chickenwing. Lee dives in for the save and it's time for the circle chop fest. Ospreay does a double Tajiri handspring spinning kick to the face. Well that works. Scurll gets tired of this nonsense and BREAKS LEE'S FINGER, setting up the chickenwing to retain the title at 11:04.

**Rating:** B+. See, now this is something I can get behind. They didn't bother trying with anything other than fast paced action and that's what we got. I was having flashbacks to the Cruiserweight Classic here as it was all about speed and nonstop action, which is why you bring people like these three in. It might not have been the highest quality match but it was a lot of fun and highly entertaining.

We recap the Tag Team Title match, which is just about the Briscoes wanting their ninth title reign.

#### Tag Team Titles: Briscoe Brothers vs. Young Bucks

The Bucks are defending. Mark and Nick get things going but it's quickly off to Jay (now with hair, making it easier to tell them apart) for an elbow. That goes nowhere so it's a big staredown. The double superkicks are countered with the Bucks being sent to the floor, only to come back in for the slingshot dropkicks. A flip dive takes the challengers down and even more dives have them reeling.

The Briscoes are a bit more old school though and will have none of

this being on defense thing, meaning a big double clothesline takes the Bucks down. Jay drops a BANG BANG Elbow off the apron because he's not that original. We settle down to the Bucks in trouble because ROH is a weird company where the heels are faces and the faces are weaker faces because the heels are cool heels in Japan, which makes them faces by default.

Nick gets up and sends Jay outside for a tornado DDT off the apron, only to have the Briscoes come back in for a double superkick of their own. Unfortunately that means the Bucks start with their own superkicks and Corino SHOUTS THE MOVE'S NAME A LOT. Eh I'll still take it over Joey Styles.

The draped over the ropes Swanton to Jay sets up More Bang for Your Buck on Mark, sending the fans even further into Buck-Love. Jay comes back in with a superkick of his own and the Jay Driller sets up the Froggy Bow for a very close two on Matt. A springboard Doomsday Device gets the same and the Briscoes can't believe it.

That's a bit too much selling for the Bucks though and it's Nick cleaning house with a bunch of strikes because he can beat up both Briscoes on his own. The Meltzer Driver gets two on Mark and then, I kid you not, TWENTY EIGHT SUPERKICKS IN A ROW give the Bucks a double pin to retain the titles at 16:08.

**Rating:** B. I know the Bucks are annoying but they're still two of the best high fliers going right now. The superkicks get really, really annoying at times (albeit nowhere near as bad as the "we're cool heels like the NWO" schtick) but at least you get some good matches out of them. The Briscoes will be fine when they do whatever is up next for them and that's been the case for years.

The lights go out....AND WE'VE GOT BROKEN MATT HARDY! They'll be coming to ROH soon (probably around Wrestlemania season) to make the Bucks and the Briscoes obsolete. The fans are WAY into the DELETE chant. The Bucks look stunned.

We recap Kyle O'Reilly vs. Adam Cole in a video that aired on ROH TV. The idea is they've spent years associated in some way and Cole is obsessed with keeping the title away from Kyle at all costs.

ROH World Title: Adam Cole vs. Kyle O'Reilly

Cole is defending and this is now anything goes as per Kyle's request to not have to be held responsible for his actions. Kyle

wins an early slugout and gets the armbreaker over the top rope. It's not clear why he lets it go but Cole kicks him in the head for his general stupidity. Back in and Kyle kicks away before getting shoved off the top to give the champ control.

Even more kicks have Cole reeling but he stops a dive with a belt shot. That's how a heel should use the weapons and it even draws blood from Kyle's forehead. Kyle can't stand up due to the blood loss so Cole puts a trashcan over him for a superkick. O'Reilly starts no selling chair shots (Seriously?) and suplexes Cole onto an open chair for....well very little actually.

Instead he takes Cole outside again and dropkicks a trashcan into Cole's chest for a big crash. It's table time and, after fighting it off for a bit, Cole gets belly to back superplexed through the table for the big crash. That's not enough for Kyle so he grabs a guillotine choke on the apron and kind of DDT's Cole off the apron and through a second table.

Kyle looks under the ring (where they keep all those freaking streamers) and finds a chain for a callback to their match in Dallas. Cole (busted as well) gets in a low blow for two and it's time for thumbtacks. The triangle choke has Kyle in control so Cole powerbombs him onto the tacks for the break. O'Reilly one ups him with a BRAINBUSTER ONTO THE TACKS, followed laying down on those tacks while locking in the cross armbreaker for the submission and the title (announced after a few seconds for some reason) at 19:14.

**Rating:** B+. I wanted to see more of this and that's a good thing. It felt like the needed a few more minutes to really flesh it out but Kyle laying in the tacks after dropping Cole onto them made it feel like he really just wanted to beat him no matter what. Cole felt like a jerk throughout but he just didn't have heart to keep up with Kyle, which is wrestling in a nutshell. It's not a classic but it told a story, albeit one that should have had its trigger pulled a long time ago. Maybe it's just that I'm not a huge fan of this feud but I never got into the big emotional impact here.

O'Reilly celebrates to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B+. The first half of the show isn't as strong as the second but it's still more than good enough to set up the main events. Nothing really stands out above everything else but nothing was bad and the last three matches range from good to very good.

This show's problem is the lack of a strong build, as nothing on here really feels like it's something worth seeing. That makes it a rare instance where it's better to watch the show with no TV build as the pay per view is actually very strong and better than most stuff ROH puts out.

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