

# Death Before Dishonor 2023: Why Would You Do It Again?

## Death Before Dishonor 2023

Date: July 21, 2023

Location: CURE Insurance Arena, Trenton, New Jersey

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Caprice Coleman

Ring Of Honor is back on pay per view and the card has been tacked together rather quickly. The World, Television and Women's Title matches were added in the last few days and the Tag Team Title match is a four way featuring two teams who haven't been around in months. They're going to need a heck of a show to make up for the build so let's get to it.

## Zero Hour: Tracy Williams vs. Josh Woods

Pure Rules and Woods has Mark Sterling and Tony Nese with him. They go with the grappling to start and Woods takes him to the mat for an arm crank. That sends Williams to the ropes for his first break but he makes the mistake of grabbing the rope to avoid an Irish whip, meaning that's the second break.

Williams goes with a suplex to take over and hits a running shot in the corner for two. A piledriver gets two more, though Woods has to put his foot on the rope for a break. Woods is back up with a gutwrench suplex for two as Williams uses his last rope. They go to the apron with Woods snapping off a German suplex before tying him up in a guillotine in the ropes. With no more breaks, Williams has to tap at 8:40.

**Rating:** C. The match was fine enough but these matches just aren't that interesting. It doesn't help that so many of the same wrestlers are used in them over and over, but the bigger thing is nothing really makes them stand out. Other than the rope break, this was more or less the same match that you

could see from almost anyone. Perfectly nice technical match, but Woods doesn't feel like some breakout star.

#### Zero Hour: Workhorsemen vs. Action Andretti/Darius Martin

The Workhorsemen jump Andretti and Martin to start but the good guys fight back. We settle down to Martin getting beaten down in the corner, with Drake getting to stomp away. Henry grabs a front facelock to slow Martin down but he gets away and brings Andretti in to pick up the pace. House is cleaned but Martin gets taken down, allowing Henry to hit a moonsault. Andretti picks up Henry for a Death Valley Driver, with the referee being nice enough to stop and look at them before the save because they were quite late. Andretti muscles Henry up for the torture rack neckbreaker for the pin at 7:14.

**Rating:** C. That mistimed save in the middle was terrible but the rest was mostly just a power vs. speed match, which will work every time. I'm not sure why Andretti and Martin aren't in the Tag Team Title match tonight as they work well together and have at least been around. They got a bit of a showcase here, though the Workhorsemen looked rather good as well.

#### Zero Hour: Trish Adora vs. Leyla Hirsch

Leyla wins the grapple off to start so Adora goes for the arm to take over with the power. That doesn't work for Leyla, who slips to the floor for a breather and leaves Adora frustrated. Back in and Leyla goes after the legs to take over but Adora blocks a suplex attempt with straight power.

Leyla switches to the arm and cranks away but Adora manages a bridging German suplex from her knees in a rather awesome power display. Leyla knocks her into the corner for a running dropkick, only to have Adora come back with a backbreaker. The running kick misses for Leyla so they trade rollups for two each. Leyla pulls her into the cross armbreaker to make Adora tap at 8:32.

**Rating:** C+. This was a nice power vs. technical match and I was getting into seeing how Adora was going to deal with Hirsch. There is something awesome to seeing Hirsch pick someone apart like that and it worked well here. Ring Of Honor has something with either of them and if they get built up a little more, the division could get a very nice boost.

### Zero Hour: Shane Taylor vs. AR Fox

Fox tries to grab the wrist to start and is quickly knocked silly by a single shot. Back up and Fox kicks away, including an enziguri into a dropkick to send Taylor outside. The big dive drops Taylor again and Fox adds another one for a bonus. Back in and Taylor unloads in the corner to knock Fox outside, where the beating can continue. Fox gets in a shot of his own and hits a springboard imploding 450 to take Taylor down for a change.

Some more kicks to the head set up a springboard Stunner but Taylor headbutts him in the chest. A release Rock Bottom sets up a splash to give Taylor two. The apron legdrop misses for Taylor though, allowing Fox to hit a running hanging DDT for two more. Back up and Taylor...at least tries to crotch Fox on top but Fox rolls through. Welcome To The Land gives Taylor two as Fox gets his hand on the rope. A middle rope Marcus Garvey Driver is broken up and Fox manages a Death Valley Driver. The 450 finishes Taylor at 10:22.

**Rating:** B-. Match of the Zero Hour by far as they traded one big shot after another until Fox won. It makes sense as Fox has the International Title shot coming up next week on Dynamite but at least he had to work to get the win here. Taylor is still a great monster and I was getting into this one by the end. Good stuff.

### Komander vs. Gravity

Gravity flips out of a wristlock to start and then bridges back into a rollup for two. Back up and Gravity does his slow

motion walk (because of gravity issues you see) before being sent outside for a big dive from Komander. One heck of a shooting star press gives Komander two but Gravity sends him outside. A big running dive is teased but Gravity flips onto the top turnbuckle instead, setting up the dive instead (that was cool).

Back in and Komander kicks him down but his moonsault hits raised boots. A sitout powerbomb gives Gravity two but Komander faceplants him down. With Gravity rolling to the floor, Komander hits the big multiple springboard spinning dive but Gravity crotches him back inside. Komander drops him ribs first on the top and hits the rope walk moonsault for two. Gravity gets planted again and tries to drag Komander to the middle of the ring, only to get small packed to give Gravity the pin at 10:02.

**Rating:** B-. This was on the weaker end for Komander, as he was taking a lot of time to set things up. The positive spin on that is that it played into the finish, with commentary pointing out that Komander was more worried about going for something cool rather than the pin. It's a solid choice to open the show, as despite not having a ton of importance, it had a lot of energy and that's a great thing.

#### TV Title: Dalton Castle vs. Samoa Joe

Castle, with the Boys, is challenging after winning a tournament. Stokely Hathaway joins commentary and Joe goes outside to glare at him to start. Back in and Castle takes a breather this time, meaning we get a lap around the ring. Castle comes inside again and starts striking away before tripping Joe down.

Some splashes to the back keep Joe down despite Castle's ribs being banged up. Back up and Joe is sick of Castle so it's a heck of a clothesline to put Joe in control. A chop to the back sets up the neck crank to keep Castle down. There's a

snap suplex for one and Joe sends Castle outside, only to have the Boys throw him back in.

Joe's powerslam gets two but a Boys distraction lets Castle get in a hurricanrana on the floor. There's the suicide dive to Joe, followed by a t-bone suplex. Joe is sent outside and tells Stokely to FIX THIS, which earns the Boys an ejection. The distraction lets Joe hit him low and grab the Koquina Clutch to retain at 11:40.

**Rating:** B-. Another good match but Joe's title reign has reached the point where it's probably time to take it from him. He doesn't defend it often and it isn't exactly changing much. Castle is such a ball of energy that it could have been interesting to see him get the title, though I can see why they've kept it on Joe here. Rather entertaining match, though some of that is Joe having to deal with Castle's antics.

Tag Team Titles: The Kingdom vs. Aussie Open vs. Best Friends vs. Lucha Bros

The Bros are defending and it's one fall to a finish. Chuck and Taven start things off but quickly hand it off to Bennett and Trent for the chop exchange. Fenix comes in and gets slammed by Fletcher, setting up a double Aussie elbow. We settle down to the Bros and the Aussies exchanging kicks to the head as everything breaks down. The Best Friends are sent outside but rent is back in to superplex Bennett onto the pile.

Back in and Taven hits Aurora Borealis for two on Trent but the Proton Pack is broken up. Trent gets in a tornado DDT and he reluctantly brings in Penta for a high crossbody to the Kingdom. The Fear Factor gets two on Taven but the Aussies kick Penta down. Fenix gets dropped into a cutter from the top and the Aussies kick people in the face. The Whirlybird gets two on Penta but the Kingdom is back in with the Rockstar Supernova for two, with Chuck making the save.

Hail Mary is broken up but the big hug is broken up as well. Soul Food into the dragon suplex drops Bennett but Maria gets on the apron and opens her jacket for a hug from Chuck. Trent gets said hug instead (Caprice: "BROS BEFORE MARIA!") but Davis pulls him into a piledriver.

The Bros are back in with the spike Fear Factor to Davis for two, with Bennett making the save. Hail Mary and the Proton Pack are both broken up and Storm Zero hits Bennett, with the Bros having to pull the referee at two. Penta takes out Trent and Davis has to make a diving save. The Coriolis hits Trent to give the Aussies the pin and the titles at 17:13.

**Rating:** B. This was all about the insanity and everyone making diving saves, so it was certainly not boring. At the very least, it ends the Bros' completely nothing reign and if the Aussies are actually around, they could make quite the champs. The titles really needed to change hands here and while the Kingdom feel like the better option, I'll take the Aussies over either the Bros or the Friends. Heck of an entertaining match here and they did what they should have done with it.

The Righteous and Stu Grayson threaten the Dark Order with pain, bruises and agony.

Six Man Tag Team Titles: Master Wato/Ryusuke Taguchi/Leon Ruffin vs. The Embassy

The Embassy is defending and Cage gets triple teamed to start, which is quickly broken up by Loa. Ruffin is suplexed hard into the corner and the champs take over in a hurry. Cage comes in to get in his own shots as we see Big Bill watching in the back. Kaun hits a running backplash for two but Ruffin grabs a jawbreaker.

A clothesline drops Ruffin again though and the beating gets to continue. Ruffin manages to reverse a backbreaker onto the top turnbuckle into a DDT and it's Wato coming in to clean house. Kaun has had it and grabs a suplex but Taguchi is back

in with the Funky Weapon. The ankle lock has Kaun in big trouble until Toa makes the save.

Taguchi gives Cage a 619 but Kaun elbows Ruffin's head off. There's a low blow to stagger Kaun though and a small package gives Taguchi two. Back in and Ruffin hits a flipping cutter on Cage but Toa gives him a swinging backbreaker for two. The champs all grab Ruffin and throw him into the air for the crash to retain the titles at 11:38.

**Rating:** C+. And that's a Six Man Tag Team Title match, as the action was fine but there is nothing resembling a division, meaning there is little reason to get behind the challengers. Ruffin can sell rather well and knows how to play his size. Wato and Taguchi were just there and there was little reason to believe the titles were changing hands. As has been the case for months. Ring Of Honor might want to work on that.

#### Pure Rules Title: Katsuyori Shibata vs. Daniel Garcia

Shibata is defending and takes Garcia to the mat to start for the stomp onto the fingers. A Figure Four has Garcia going straight to the ropes and taking a breather on the floor. That's fine with Shibata, who sends Garcia into the barricade a few times to put Garcia down again. Garcia gets in a quick shot though and holds up the title for some showboating.

Back in and Garcia works on a nasty hammerlock but Shibata pops up for the standoff. Garcia dances so Shibata sits down and grabs the arms. There's the slap to Garcia and Shibata takes him into the corner for the running basement dropkick. Garcia is right back with an STF but Shibata reverses into a bow and arrow.

An exchange of suplexed leave them both down and they slug it out from their knees. Garcia charges into a boot to the face and they trade clotheslines for another double knockdown. They slug it out until Garcia gets the Dragon Tamer. Shibata escapes as well and wins a chop off, setting up the sleeper.

The PK retains the title at 14:34.

**Rating:** B. This felt like the time to give Garcia the title but keeping it on Shibata is certainly a logical choice as well. I can't imagine Shibata holds the title that much longer, as it isn't like he is anything more than a glorified special attraction. The Pure division isn't much but I'll take Shibata retaining over having to see even more Garcia. Good match here, as they were beating each other up while telling the silly vs. serious story.

Post match Shibata shakes his hand but Garcia pulls away.

Aussie Open is proud of their win and promise more.

### Dark Order vs. Righteous/Stu Grayson

Fight Without Honor, meaning anything goes. Uno hammers on Grayson to start but Grayson sends him to the apron for a spear through a well placed table. Dutch brings in a barbed wire 2x4 and Reynolds is already busted open. Silver busted out the bag of thumb tacks but is quickly Boss Man Slammed onto them for two. Uno chairs Grayson in the back but Vincent makes the save.

Vincent tears the mask open and Uno is cut, with Vincent hammering at the gash. Reynolds is back in with a chair for the save and the finishing sequence gets two on Dutch. Now it's Uno getting his own bag containing....Legos. A triple flipping slam to Grayson is broken up, leaving Dutch to powerbomb Uno onto the Legos.

Vincent tries a Swanton to the floor onto Silver on the table, which doesn't break at all. Back in and Uno gets powerbombed onto the Legos for two, meaning it's time to head up to the stage. Dutch is slammed through a table off the stage, leaving Silver to kick away at Vincent inside. Grayson kicks Uno down and sets up a huge ladder but takes WAY too long to climb. Instead, Grayson crashes through a table, minus Uno. The Order

triple slams Grayson for the pin at 15:36.

**Rating:** B-. It was your usual six man weapons match with the big ladder at the end being the high point. This was the big victory for Evil Uno over Stu Grayson, which in theory should set up a singles match to wrap everything up for them for good. It's still not a very interesting feud as there hasn't been an overly clear explanation for WHY Grayson walked out, but at least they got to the big team match here.

### Ring Of Honor World Title: Claudio Castagnoli vs. Pac

Castagnoli is defending and hits a quick Swiss Death for an early two. They head outside with Castagnoli dropping him onto the barricade but the Swing is broken up inside. Back to the floor and up the ramp they go, with Castagnoli Swinging him on the stage. Castagnoli comes up favoring his knee though, allowing Pac to score with a top rope moonsault back at ringside.

A whip sends Castagnoli's knee into the barricade again, setting up a missile dropkick for two back inside. The top rope superplex gives Pac two but Castagnoli is back up to send Pac crashing through a well placed ringside table. Back in and the seated elbows into the Neutralizer gives Castagnoli two. Pac fights up and starts striking away until Castagnoli blasts him with a clothesline to leave them both own.

With Pac on the apron, the apron superplex is blocked but a super hurricanrana is blocked as well. What looked to be a super Riccola Bomb is countered into a hurricanrana. The lack Arrow misses for Pac but the Riccola Bomb is once again countered, this time into the Brutalizer. Castagnoli has to climb the corner for a super Air Raid Crash to escape so Pac goes for the turnbuckle. Cue Wheeler Yuta to distract Pac, allowing Castagnoli to hit a running Riccola Bomb to retain ta 18:56.

**Rating:** B. You knew what you were going to get here and it

still worked very well. These guys beat the figure out of each other, though suddenly having Wheeler come in to give us the lame distraction finish didn't help. The good thing is that Pac can slug just as hard as Castagnoli, meaning Pac can hang with him the entire way. Best match on the show here, which was all but guaranteed given who was in there.

Post match the Lucha Bros come in for the beatdown but the Best Friends and Orange Cassidy make the save. Cassidy Orange Punches Castagnoli and stands tall.

Here's what's coming on various shows.

### Ring Of Honor Women's Title: Athena vs. Willow Nightingale

Athena is defending in the rubber match and immediately bails to the floor. Back in and Willow powers her around before they forearm it out. Athena gets two off a crucifix but Willow's fisherman's buster gets the same. A crucifix gives Athena two and she sends Willow outside in a crash. Back in and the double knees connect in the corner, setting up the chinlock.

Willow powers her way up and hammers away, only to get dropped with a quick shot to the face for two. Willow is fine enough to try the Babe With The Powerbomb but Athena reverses into a snapmare driver for two. Willow's swinging neckbreaker gets two but Athena is right back with Obliteration. She muscles Willow up and into a sitout powerbomb for two (that was impressive) before going up.

That takes too long as well though and Willow grabs a super Death Valley Driver for a rather near fall. They head outside and Athena posts her, setting up the O Face for a VERY near fall back inside. The Babe With The Powerbomb gets the same but Athena is back up with another O Face. The crossface goes on and Athena even grabs a leg. Willow passes out to retain Athena's title at 20:28.

**Rating:** B-. Well. Ok then. I'm not sure what this weird

obsession Ring Of Honor has lately with the heroes losing in the end but they did it again here. It also makes me wonder why the Owen Hart tournament wasn't just for the title shot with someone else in Athena's place, thereby giving us the same result and no Athena loss. They had a hard hitting fight, but that was one more deflating ending on a long list of them in Ring Of Honor's recent history. Someone is going to have to beat Athena, and it's going to have to be an AEW import at this point. Anyway, solid main event with a rather surprising result.

Post match respect is actually shown to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. As is usually the case with these shows, the action was good, but as is becoming the case with these shows, there is a grand total of nothing to really make you feel good. The biggest happy moment here was Evil Uno (a heel in AEW mind you) getting a pin over Stu Grayson. Willow doesn't win the big one, the Best Friends don't win the Tag Team Titles and Pac, who isn't really a face but he could have beaten the villain, loses too. This had a bunch of mostly good matches with some strange decisions, but what do you expect from a slapped together pay per view?

### Results

Josh Woods b. Tracy Williams – Guillotine choke

Action Andretti/Darius Martin b. Workhorsesmen – Torture rack neckbreaker to Drake

Leyla Hirsch b. Trish Adora – Cross armbreaker

AR Fox b. Shane Taylor – 450

Gravity b. Komander – Small package

Samoa Joe b. Dalton Castle – Koquina Clutch

Aussie Open b. Best Friends, The Kingdom and Lucha Bros – Coriolis to Beretta

Mogul Embassy b. Leon Ruffin/Master Wato/Ryusuke Taguchi – Triple toss into the air to Ruffin

Katsuyori Shibata b. Daniel Garcia – PK

Dark Order b. Righteous/Stu Grayson – Triple slam to Grayson

Claudio Castagnoli b. Pac – Running sitout Riccola Bomb  
Athena b. Willow Nightingale via referee stoppage

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# Ring Of Honor – July 13, 2023: Do This!

## Ring Of Honor

Date: July 13, 2023

Location: Brandt Center, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

Commentators: Caprice Coleman, Ian Riccaboni

We are eight days away from Death Before Dishonor and have a total of one match announced for the show. That leaves a lot of open spots, but it has me worried about how many matches are going to be dumped onto the card in rapid succession. Just getting a handful of them covered this week would be nice so let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Matt Sydal calls in Brian Cage for a chat, saying Cage can't beat him. Cage tells him to find two partners, which Sydal says will be easy.

### Serpentico vs. Big Bill

Serpentico tells Bill to bring it and is quickly knocked outside. Back in and Bill sends him outside again so this time Serpentico strikes away. Bill charges after him and gets caught with a suicide shove but Bill sends him flying inside. The chokeslam is escaped though and a headscissors sends Bill into the corner. Then Bill knocks him out of the corner and nails a big boot. Another big boot sets up the chokeslam to finish Serpentico at 4:30.

**Rating:** C. This was little more than a squash as Serpentico was more like a fly buzzing around Bill, who eventually caught him. Bill is getting the idea of being a to the point giant and that should work well for him. Don't overthink him and it will work out well, and thankfully AEW seems to get that.

We're having a four man tournament for a TV Title shot at Death Before Dishonor and here are the brackets:

Dalton Castle

Tony Nese

Shane Taylor

Shawn Dean

### Athena vs. Ava Lawless

Non-title Proving Ground match, meaning if Lawless wins or survives the ten minute time limit, she gets a future title shot. Lawless hits her in the face a few times and grabs a Sling Blade. That's too much for Athena, who BLASTS her with a

shot to the face. A big boot sets up a crossface to make Lawless tap at 1:43.

Post match Athena sends her face first into the title, as usual.

### The Righteous/Stu Grayson vs. Levi Night/Michael Allen Richard Clark/Evan Rivers

Grayson jumps Rivers to start so it's off to Night, who gets a nice reaction. He also gets driven into the corner so Dutch can come in to put him down. Cue Evil Uno to sit in a chair at ringside as Vincent comes in to stomp on Night. A double belly to back suplex is broken up and it's the hot tag to bring in Clark for the house cleaning. The Righteous isn't having that and it's Nightfall into the triple flipping slam to finish Clark at 4:14.

**Rating:** C. That's what he gets for having such an unnecessarily long name. The Righteous and Grayson are fine but the Evil Uno stuff continues to be there for the sake of trying to draw some interest. Evil Uno isn't interesting on Dynamite and he's not going to be here either, but he's going to stick around no matter what for some reason.

Post match Uno is told to come in but he chairs Rivers in the back instead.

Matt Sydal has found Christopher Daniels and Darius Martin to go after the Six Man Tag Team Titles.

### Bambi Hall vs. Leyla Hirsch

Hall powers her down to start but Hirsch is right back up with a running forearm. Some clotheslines against the ropes have Hall in more trouble but she powers back up. A Backpack Stunner is broken up though and Hirsch cross armbreakers her for the tap at 3:16.

**Rating:** C. Hirsch instantly feels like someone who could be a

big player in the women's division and that is great to see. She has a different enough style that it makes you want to see what she can do and that is a rare treat. I still think there could be something in Hall, but she needs a lot more ring time to get polished up.

#### TV Title #1 Contenders Tournament: Dalton Castle vs. Tony Nese

Before the match, Nese (with the rest of the Varsity Athletes) does his usual insults to the health and hygiene of the fans. Castle, with the Boys, interrupt and we're ready to go. They trade waistlocks to start but it's too early for the Bang A Rang, with Castle getting knocked into the ropes. Back up and Castle wrestles him down without much trouble and hits a splash.

They head outside with Castle clotheslining the post by mistake to give Nese a big target. Back in and Nese cranks on the bad arm before missing a springboard moonsault. Castle snaps off the overhead belly to belly suplexes but Ari Daivari offers a distraction. Not that it matters as Castle snaps off the Bang A Rang for the pin at 8:14.

**Rating:** B-. It's amazing how much easier Nese is to watch when there is SOMETHING on the line. That being said, Castle winning here, and probably the whole tournament, is absolutely the right way to go. He feels like an absolute star and it makes sense to give him the title shot, if not the title outright.

#### TV Title #1 Contenders Tournament First Round: Shawn Dean vs. Shane Taylor

Dean fires off a dropkick to start but Shane hits one heck of a shot to the face to knock him down. Some shots to the ribs have Dean in trouble and a bearhug makes it worse. Taylor misses a charge into the corner though, allowing Dean to hit a jumping knee to the face. Dean gets planted again but Taylor misses a middle rope splash. An uppercut staggers Taylor but

he comes right back with a headbutt. The big forearm finishes Dean at 6:39.

**Rating:** C+. This wasn't so much a competitive match as much as it was a study in Dean trying to survive. Taylor is a monster and was wrestling like one here, which didn't leave many openings for Dean. There's nothing wrong with a match without much drama and that is what we had here, as Dean tried but was completely overwhelmed.

### The Boys vs. The Kingdom

There's no Maria here (as Jerry Lynn is apparently investigating her injury from last week). Taven takes Brent into the corner to start and then scores with a dropkick. Brent doesn't like Taven ordering Brent to call him daddy and hits Taven in the face, earning himself a bigger beating.

It's off to Brandon, who gets chopped down by Bennett as the fans wonder where Maria is. Brandon gets knocked silly with a left hand and the backbreaker/elbow combination gets two. An armbar sends Brandon over to the ropes as commentary thinks the Boys are being taken lightly. Brandon manages to flip out of a belly to back suplex though and it's time for Brent to clean house. Not that it matters as the Kingdom cleans house, setting up Just The Tip into Rockstar Supernova to finish Brent at 8:50.

**Rating:** C+. The Kingdom is still good in the ring, but you can really feel the lack of Maria here. She makes the team that much more interesting and it hurt a lot to have her gone. Hopefully she is back soon, as I could go for the Kingdom getting a title shot, perhaps even at the pay per view.

### Six Man Tag Team Titles: The Embassy vs. Christopher Daniels/Matt Sydal/Darius Martin

The Embassy is defending. Kaun takes Daniels into the corner to start but gets hit in the face for his efforts. Daniels

manages to knock him into the corner for a Downward Spiral and Sydal comes in. Martin hits a dropkick but gets dropped with a chop so Toa can come in. That doesn't last long so Cage comes in for the curling all away slam to Daniels. A corner splash crushes Daniels and Cage suplexes him for two.

Daniels slips away and brings in Martin to clean house, including a bulldog to send Toa throat first into the middle rope (that's a new one). Martin kicks Cage in the chest and hands it back to Sydal for the top rope Meteora. An F5 gives Cage two but Sydal counters a powerbomb into a hurricanrana for two. Everything breaks down and Sydal has to be saved from Open The Gates. Sydal small packages Cage for two but gets caught with the Drill Claw for the pin at 12:01.

**Rating:** C+. And so we continue to see how little these titles matter, as a group of challengers are literally thrown together and get their title shot on the same night. Other than giving Cage something to do, why are these titles here? Yes I know that they were around because New Japan had some years ago and Ring Of Honor copied them, but look around. There is no division and it isn't like they make anyone look more important. Granted that has been the case for years and nothing has changed, but egads it's getting worse every time they're out there.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Now this is more like it. This show went just shy of 80 minutes, didn't overstay its welcome, and never felt like it was dragging. I've said from the beginning that there is a nice hour to hour and a half show in there somewhere and that is what we were seeing here. This was WAY easier to watch and they even had something on the line in some of the matches. Now granted I'm scared of the huge card dump that we're going to get because Death Before Dishonor is in eight days and has two matches, but that's a Tony Khan production for you. This was a much better way of doing things and please keep it up.

## Results

Big Bill b. Serpentico – Chokeslam

Athena b. Ava Lawless – Crossface

The Righteous/Stu Grayson b. Levi Night/Michael Allen Richard Clark/Evan Rivers

Leyla Hirsch b. Bambi Hall – Cross armbreaker

Dalton Castle b. Tony Nese – Bang A Rang

Shane Taylor b. Shawn Dean – Forearm

The Kingdom b. The Boys – Rockstar Supernova to Brent

The Embassy b. Darius Martin/Christopher Daniels/Matt Sydal – Drill Claw to Sydal

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# **Ring Of Honor – July 6, 2023: That's A Different Show**

Ring Of Honor

Date: July 6, 2023

Location: First Ontario Center, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Caprice Coleman

We have three shows to go before Death Before Dishonor and a grand total of nothing has been announced for the show. Coming out of last week, Claudio Castagnoli has no one set up as a challenger to the World Title and that means something needs to change. Some stuff needs to be announced for the show this week but there is no guarantee that it will get done. Let's get to it.

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

### Gringo Loco vs. Komander

Komander has Alex Abrahantes with him. Loco takes him down to start and fires off some jumping jacks but Komander is back with a rather spinny armdrag. Back up and Loco flips away a few times before sending Komander hard into the corner. A running kick to the head gives Loco two but Komander runs up the corner into another flipping armdrag.

Loco scores with a backbreaker and chokes in the corner a bit but a headscissors gives Komander a breather. Another armdrag sends Loco outside for the big running flip dive. Back in and they both go up top, with Loco jumping from one rope to another into a super Spanish Fly (that was awesome).

Komander is right back with a cutter but they head back outside with Loco powerbombing him against the barricade. Back in again and a top rope cutter gives Loco two but Komander runs the corner for a super hurricanrana. A double springboard dive wipes out Loco on the floor and a double springboard 450 finishes for Komander at 10:42.

**Rating:** B. This wasn't about psychology or storytelling but rather doing their big flips and dives all over the place. As a result, it was one of the more entertaining things I've seen

from either of them in a long time. It might be the best I've seen Komander look, as he didn't waste time with a bunch of nonsense and just did his thing with the flying all over. Good stuff here and a rather entertaining match.

Lee Moriarty and Big Bill want the Tag Team Titles and are going to wreck the Boys tonight. It's not exactly an exciting match but they would be fine enough for one off opponents for the Lucha Bros. Granted it would be nice to see the titles defended at all as the Bros won them three months ago and have defended them twice (both times in AEW).

### Daniel Garcia vs. Christopher Daniels

Daniels works on a hammerlock to start but Garcia takes him down and gets in the dancing. Then Daniels walks over him and does the Curry Man dance for a bonus. Back up and Garcia knocks him out to the floor as we hear about Daniels getting his eye worked on and his vision improving.

Garcia gets an STF but Daniels grabs the rope, as well as a Blue Thunder Bomb for two. They slug it out until an STO puts Garcia down and there's Angel's Wings, but Garcia rolls outside. Back in and Garcia kicks the rope into the eye, setting up a gutbuster to finish Daniels at 7:34.

**Rating:** C+. This is where people like Garcia and Daniels can shine: by going out there and having a completely watchable match without going much higher. Daniels is mainly going to be around to put people over and Garcia's push towards the top didn't exactly go so well. Let them stay here where they belong and they're much easier to watch, as was certainly the case here.

Willie Mack is ready to win a six way scramble and the \$25,000 prize. He could go to Jamaica and get some real jerk chicken!

### Gates Of Agony vs. Action Andretti/Darius Martin

Kaun drives Andretti into the corner to start but gets caught with a quick dropkick. Andretti and Martin clear the ring with some more dropkicks but a Prince Nana distraction cuts that off. The Gates send Andretti and Martin into various hard objects to take over and it's Andretti getting beaten up inside.

Andretti gets over for the tag to Martin though and house is cleaned as everything breaks down. Toa catches Andretti in the air on the floor so Martin hits a dive to take them both down again. A standing Spanish Fly hits Kaun but Nana offers another distraction. Andretti makes the mistake of chopping both Gates and it's Opening The Gates to finish him off at 6:35.

**Rating:** B-. As usual, power vs. speed is a difficult concept to screw up and they made it work well here. Andretti and Martin are still in that weird place of being a makeshift team though and that is only going to get them so far. The Gates actually won something over a more worthwhile team too and that is a nice change of pace for them. Keep doing that and they might actually start to matter.

#### Righteous/Stu Grayson vs. Rip Impact/Zak Patterson/Macrae Martin

The beating starts fast and it's Grayson planting Impact with a release Rock Bottom. The triple flipping faceplant finishes Impact at 1:03.

#### The Boys vs. Lee Moriarty/Big Bill

Moriarty wrestles Brandon down to start but Brett comes in to pick up the pace. Bill comes in so Brent gets on Brandon's shoulders (Muppet references are made on commentary), which is quickly broken up by a big boot. The Boys try to pick up the pace and manage to send the villains outside for some suicide dives. Bill chokeslams Brent onto the apron though and it's Moriarty hitting a running forearm to finish Brandon at 4:45.

**Rating:** C. The Muppet Man bit was funny but other than that this was the Boys trying to slug away at the monster and coming up short. Moriarty and Bill seem like they are being primed for a Tag Team Title shot and having them pick up wins like this will bolster their case. Not a bad match and it might have served a purpose so well done.

### Athena vs. Selezuya Sparx

Non-title Proving Ground match, meaning that if Sparx wins or lasts the ten minute time limit, she gets a future title shot. Apparently Sparx was in Ring Of Honor nine years ago. I'm not sure why that matters but commentary felt the need to bring it up. Athena kicks her in the face but Sparx muscles her up for a slam. A t-bone suplex drops Sparx though and a hard forearm finishes her off at 2:07. Sparx was starting to show something here when she got knocked silly in a hurry.

Post match the beatdown is on again, as no one stops Athena.

### JD Drake vs. Tony Nese

They're kidding right? Anthony Henry and Mark Sterling are here too. Hold on though, as before the match, Nese says that Drake is a bit big so instead of the match, we're going to do group training! Drake doesn't approve, because he doesn't like Canadian food in the first place. He'll beat Nese up anyway, but here is Mark Briscoe to interrupt. He and Tony Khan agree: no one cares about these two and we're making this a three way.

### JD Drake vs. Tony Nese vs. Mark Briscoe

Briscoe is sent to the apron but comes back with a bunch of chops to take over. Drake and Nese are sent outside for the big flip dive (thanks chair) as it's all Briscoe to start. Back in and Drake blasts Briscoe with a clothesline to take over and the stomping ensues in the corner. Briscoe is tied in the Tree of Woe and the villains take turns stomping away.

We pause for some jumping jacks though, allowing Briscoe to fight back. Drake slams Briscoe for two though, with Nese not being happy as he breaks it up. Nese breaks up the Froggy Bow to Drake and takes Drake out of the corner. Now the Froggy Boy can hit Drake, followed by the Jay Driller to give Briscoe the pin on Nese at 5:56.

**Rating:** C+. It was a quick match and I'm really not sure why this needed to be a three way. Granted it was more interesting than having Briscoe beat up someone like Nese or Drake on their own, but Briscoe needs to get to the TV Title already, as he isn't getting anywhere with something like this. Decent match, but Briscoe didn't get much out of it.

We look at Eddie Kingston winning the Strong Openweight Title.

Kingston says he won't be at Death Before Dishonor, so he wants Mark Briscoe to go beat Claudio Castagnoli for the Ring Of Honor World Title.

Briscoe says the match is on and Tony Khan has approved it. Claudio Castagnoli comes in to say Briscoe hasn't manned up yet but he wants Briscoe to do it at Death Before Dishonor. Deal. So we're dropping the TV Title stuff and having Briscoe jump into the main event scene out of nowhere? Ok then.

#### Diamante vs. Vanessa Kraven

Kraven is rather tall so Diamante goes after the legs. That earns her a fast knock out to the floor but Diamante sends her into the post. Back in and a dropkick sends Kraven into the corner for a running dropkick and two. A wheelbarrow Stunner into a Code Red gives Diamante the pin at 2:26.

#### Shane Taylor vs. Josh Woods vs. Brian Cage vs. Willie Mack vs. Dalton Castle vs. Trent Seven

The winner gets \$25,000 and it's one fall to a finish. Woods catches Trent's crossbody as the other four fight on the

floor. Mack comes in to kick seven in the face and then sends Castle outside in a crash. We settle down to Taylor and Mack slugging it out but Cage takes Mack's place.

Castle and Woods fight over a hiptoss until it's off to the parade of shots to the face from everyone involved. Woods Doctor Bombs Castle but gets taken out by Mack, who gets taken out by Cage. Castle gets shoved off the top and onto the pile at ringside before Cage apron superplexes Seven onto everyone else. Back in and Mack frog splashes Cage for two before hitting a parade of Stunners. Cage is back up though and rolls Mack up (with trunks) for the pin at 6:32.

**Rating:** C+. Matches like these are always hard to rate as there is very little in the way of structure. Instead it's just a big series of spots and moves, which does make for an exciting match. Having some kind of a prize on the line is a great touch too, as it automatically gives the match some stakes. Fun stuff here and I could go for something like this every once in awhile.

#### Infantry/Trish Adora vs. Kingdom/Maria Kanellis-Bennett

Hold on though as Maria says that she isn't medically cleared to wrestle so she has a replacement: Leyla Hirsch, making her return after a year plus away with a torn ACL. Bennett and Bravo chop it out to start until Bravo hits a dropkick so he can get in a salute. It's off to Dean to headlock Taven and a quick legdrop gets two. The women come in and the fans are happy to see Hirsch back.

Hirsch works on the arm and sends Adora shoulder first into the buckle. Adora manages a quick Lariat Tubman for a breather and brings Bravo back in to clean house. Dean comes in with a running elbow in the corner as everything breaks down. Taven breaks up Bravo's dive, setting up the Flight Of The Conqueror. Back in and Maria offers a distraction, allowing Hirsch to cross armbreaker Adora for the win at 7:32.

**Rating:** C. This was about Hirsch's return and that's a cool thing to see. She has been gone for so long after just starting to get the hang of things before she got hurt and now she might be able to make it work. In addition, I have no idea why the Kingdom is stuck down here when they would make perfect challengers for FTR, that's how Ring Of Honor works in a lot of ways.

Leyla says she's here in Ring Of Honor to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This show felt rather different and that is a good thing. In addition to being on the shorter side at just over an hour and a half, they mixed it up a bit with the three way, the match for the money and more promos. It felt like they were actually trying to develop some people and stories more and that helped a lot. The show was much easier to watch than most weeks and that is a very nice change of pace. Now just add a lot more to the Death Before Dishonor card and we're good to go.

### Results

Komander b. Gringo Loco – Double springboard 450

Daniel Garcia b. Christopher Daniels – Gutbuster

Gates Of Agony b. Action Andretti/Darius Martin – Opening The Gates to Andretti

Righteous/Stu Grayson b. Rip Impact/Zak Patterson/Macrae Martin – Triple flipping faceplant to Impact

Big Bill/Lee Moriarty b. The Boys – Running forearm to Brandon

Athena b. Seleziya Sparx – Forearm

Mark Briscoe b. JD Drake and Tony Nese – Jay Driller to Nese

Diamante b. Vanessa Kraven – Code Red

Brian Cage b. Shane Taylor, Josh Woods, Willie Mack, Dalton Castle and Trent Seven – Rollup with trunks to Mack

Leyla Hirsch/Kingdom b. Infantry/Trish Adora – Cross armbreaker to Adora

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# Collision – June 17, 2023 (Debut Episode): An Actual Difference

## Collision

Date: June 17, 2023

Location: United Center, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

It's the debut episode of the new two hour Saturday night show and the big draw is the return of CM Punk. After being gone for about nine months due to an injury/suspension, Punk is back for a six man main event which has some potential. Other than that, the card looks decent enough so let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence, set to Saturday Night's All Right For

Fighting by Elton John.

The fans are chanting for CM Punk so here he is, with a pair of shoes around his neck and a bag in his hand. Punk talks about how he's back and fired of being nice. This is still the wrestling business and it's for serious people. When he was fifteen years old, he wouldn't have believed that he would sell out all kinds of buildings and arenas around the world. He's tired of being nice and tell him when he's telling lies.

Punk says he has made his career because he is uncompromising and that makes people uncomfortable. He is the truth and that makes people uncomfortable. FANS: "F\*\*\* THE ELITE!" He points out some pro and anti-Punk signs in the crowd and says you can call him whatever you want. He is the one genuine article in a business full of counterfeit bucks. The king is back and he has some things to get off his chest. He has a question for Chicago: why would he change?

If you're here today and you feel he owes you an apology, here it is: he's sorry that the only wrestlers softer than him are the ones you like. He picks up the bag and implies that the World Title is in there, saying it's his until someone can pin him or submit him or it. He takes the shoes off his neck and says he knows there are people who wanted him to leave them in the ring and walk away. Instead, he isn't walking away until someone can fill those boots. Stop him when he's telling lies.

I'm not sure how much of a difference this kind of a promo is going to make. If you like Punk, it was great but if you don't, it was more of the same from him. Punk is one of the most polarizing figures in wrestling and that was on display here, as he took a few shots in some thinly veiled references while also showing more fire on the microphone than most of the roster. He's a star, and if he can stay healthy (that's a big if), there is no reason to not have him as a focal point. Seeing what happens when he's not in Chicago will be interesting, but this felt like a huge moment.

## TNT Title: Luchasaurus vs. Wardlow

Wardlow is defending and Christian Cage is here with Luchasaurus. They go straight to the brawling and fight to the floor, with Luchasaurus sending him into the steps for one back inside. Some shots in the corner drop Wardlow again and we take a break. Back with Wardlow hitting an electric chair and driving shoulders in the corner. Luchasaurus catches him on top though and a chokeslam brings him down for two.

Wardlow pops back up and loads up the Powerbomb Symphony but Christian gets on the apron. Not that it matters as Wardlow hits the first powerbomb, but spends too much time loading it up and gets chokeslammed for two. Wardlow tries to pick him up for something but can't quite get it, instead settling for a powerslam. The Swanton makes it worse and Wardlow is fired up...but Christian takes a camera from a ringside photographer and breaks it over Wardlow's head. Luchasaurus hits him from behind to win the title at 10:50.

**Rating:** C. I guess the TNT Title is designed to be the one that changes hands a lot, and now I'm sure Wardlow will get to rebuild himself and win it back, because he has spent what feels like years doing just that. Luchasaurus getting the title is fine enough, but my goodness I do not get what they are doing with Wardlow. He seemed ready to break into the main event (which could use some homegrown stars) and instead he's just doing the same thing over and over.

Post match Christian grabs the title and celebrates with it, as Luchasaurus never actually touches the thing.

QT Marshall says that Powerhouse Hobbs was never advertised to be WRESTLING tonight but he's here anyway. He'll win the Owen Hart tournament.

## Andrade El Idolo vs. Buddy Matthews

Julia Hart is here with Matthews. The fans are happy to see

Andrade and they start fast by running the ropes. Andrade does his hang in the ropes deal and avoids a charge to send Buddy outside. A cartwheel moonsault off the apron drops Matthews again and they crash onto the announcers' table.

Back in and Matthews pulls him shoulder first into the post, followed by a knock off the apron and into the barricade. A top rope meteora gives Matthews two and we take a break. We come back with Andrade working on the leg and hitting the double moonsault for two. Matthews gets a hanging DDT but his knee gives out in the corner. That allows Andrade to hit a discus elbow but Matthews is back up with a jumping kick to the face for two. The Figure Four goes on and Andrade turns it into the Figure Eight for the tap at 13:05.

**Rating:** B. These guys were working hard and the arm vs. leg stuff worked, but egads it was strange to see Andrade get that strong of a reaction. I can't imagine he sticks around that long but for now, or at least for tonight, the fans were way into him and that is a good sign for his future. Matthews looked good as well, and if he ever gets out of the House of Black (which he doesn't need to at the moment), there should be a strong singles push waiting on him.

Post match respect is offered but the lights go out. Cue the House of Black to lay Andrade out.

Here is Tony Nese, with Mark Sterling, to lead this out of shape crowd in exercise. We'll start with stretching, but someone cuts him off.

### Miro vs. Tony Nese

Miro runs him over to start and hits some of Sheamus' forearms to the chest. Nese gets in a neck snap across the top and adds the Randy Savage jumping neck snap. Miro pulls his high crossbody out of the air but a Sterling distraction lets Nese get in a kick to the face. That earns him a Miro Up and a swinging release Rock Bottom plants Nese down. The camel

clutch finishes Nese at 3:17.

**Rating:** C. This was about getting Miro back out there and having him run through someone annoying. That certainly worked, as Nese got flattened in short order. I'm sure there was more to it than meets the eye, but how Miro was stuck sitting at home for six months instead of doing something like this is baffling. He has a presence to him and that is the kind of thing that anyone would want on their show.

Video on CM Punk.

### Ruby Soho/Toni Storm vs. Willow Nightingale/Skye Blue

Blue is the hometown girl. The Outcasts jump Blue and Nightingale to start and the beating is on outside before the bell. Storm even shoves Blue's mom at ringside and gets slapped for her efforts. Nightingale Pounces Soho into the barricade and Blue adds a hurricanrana to drop Storm. The bell rings as Nightingale takes over inside, only to get taken into the wrong corner as we take a break.

Back with Nightingale clotheslining her way out of trouble and bringing Blue in to clean house. Everything breaks down and Nightingale plants Toni with a pumphandle slam. Storm is right back with the hip attack to each of them, setting up the spray paint. Nightingale isn't having that though and the paint hits Soho by mistake. Code Blue finishes Soho at 8:04.

**Rating:** C. Good enough match here and it was nice to see the emotional Blue get a win in front of her hometown crowd. I could go for seeing her get a bit of a push towards a title shot, though if AEW doesn't strap a rocket to Nightingale, I have no idea what to tell them. For now, this felt like a step towards something else and it went fine.

Ricky Starks is in the Owen Hart tournament.

Jeff Jarrett is ready to hurt Mark Briscoe...in a concession

stand brawl!

Here are the Acclaimed and Billy Gunn for a chat. They're so happy to be here that Billy bought a new scissoring outfit. They might as well stick around for Dynamite and here's a scissoring to commemorate the moment. And that's it.

Here's what's coming on various shows.

### FTR/CM Punk vs. Samoa Joe/Bullet Club Gold

Harwood and White start things off with the latter firing off chops in the corner. A backdrop gets Harwood out of trouble so it's off to Robinson for a strike off. Wheeler comes in for some dropkicks but a glare from Joe cuts him off. A gorilla press plants Robinson and it's back to Harwood, who immediately hands it off to Punk. Wheeler hits a middle rope powerslam on Robinson with Punk getting two and calling for the Go To Sleep. That's broken up so Joe comes back in for the big showdown. Joe chops away in the corner but gets pulled down into a chinlock as we take a break.

Back with Harwood caught in a chinlock before Robinson stands on his head. Harwood finally manages to get over to the corner and brings in Wheeler to clean house, including a rollup out of the corner for two on Robinson. A Rick Steiner powerslam gives Wheeler two and it's back to Punk for a Demolition Decapitator and a near fall of his own.

We take another break and come back again with Robinson hitting a backsplash for two on Wheeler. Joe enziguris him in the corner but Wheeler grabs a belly to back suplex to drop Robinson. The hot tag brings in Punk to clean house but White rakes his eyes. White's swinging Rock Bottom gets two but the Bladerunner is blocked.

Instead Punk takes him into the corner for the PowerPlex into Punk's top rope elbow. Joe comes back in to take Punk out and everything breaks down. Joe gets the Koquina Clutch on punk

and White sleepers Harwood. Wheeler breaks that up and Harwood makes the save, meaning it's the Shatter Machine to Robinson. Punk adds the GTS for the pin at 25:12.

**Rating:** B. This is an example of a match that was long without being great. There were times when it felt like they were just stretching things out because they had to and that gets old quickly. What mattered here was getting Punk back in the water and his flourish at the end looked good. Punk and FTR do work well together, and I wouldn't be surprised to see it be a semi-regular thing. For now, you can probably get two feuds out of this and it should work well.

Punk and FTR celebrate to end the show with nothing interrupting them.

**Overall Rating:** B+. There's a lot to this one and we'll start with the biggest: it felt like an AEW show but not Dynamite. There was nothing but straight matches throughout and it felt more like a traditional wrestling show. Punk got the big promo at the beginning but other than that it was mainly wrestling based with a few interviews and some talking in the middle. Commentary was a nice change as well, with Kelly and Nigel being SO much more laid back than what you get on Wednesdays.

As for everything else, the action was good, the stories (what there were of them) made sense and it felt like a show that wasn't just trying to be the same thing. If this is what we get on Saturdays then we're in for some fun nights. It was a heck of a debut, though I'm curious to see how things are going in a few months when they're out of Chicago and the new show smell has worn off. For now though, heck of a show and more enjoyable than most Dynamites in a lot of ways.

### Results

Luchasaurus b. Wardlow – Clothesline to the back of the head

Andrade El Idolo b. Buddy Matthews – Figure Eight

Miro b. Tony Nese – Camel clutch

Skye Blue/Willow Nightingale b. Ruby Soho/Toni Storm – Code Blue to Soho

CM Punk/FTR b. Bullet Club Gold/Samoa Joe – GTS to Robinson

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# Ring Of Honor – June 15, 2023: For What Purpose

## Ring Of Honor

Date: June 15, 2023

Location: Universal Studios, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Caprice Coleman, Nigel McGuinness

We're about five weeks away from Death Before Dishonor and that means the card needs to start coming together. There is still enough time to burn off another show or two but things need to start heading in that direction. If nothing else, Claudio Castagnoli certainly needs a new challenger for the

World Title. Let's get to it.

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

Matt Sydal is ready to face Samoa Joe for the TV Title.

Samoa Joe is ready to face Matt Sydal for the TV Title. Points for treating this like a big time fight.

Opening sequence.

TV Title: Samoa Joe vs. Matt Sydal

Joe is defending and they're starting fast here. Sydal goes after him and is immediately taken into the corner and forearmed down for his efforts. Back up and Sydal hits a jumping kick to the face to put Joe outside. The Meteora off the apron hits Joe but he runs Sydal over without much trouble back inside. The nerve hold keeps Sydal down and Joe cranks on the arm for a bonus.

Sydal fights up with some chops and a jumping knee, followed by a spinwheel kick, which leaves Sydal on the floor in a weird result. Back in and Joe's powerbomb is countered into a hurricanrana, though Sydal comes up holding his knee. The knee is fine enough for a top rope Meteora and a near fall so Sydal goes up top. That's fine with Joe, who crotches him down and grabs the MuscleBuster to retain at 6:46.

**Rating:** C+. That's it? They built Sydal up as this big challenger for months and he just loses in about seven minutes? Joe has held the title for about fourteen months now and very few have given him a run for his money. I don't think you can quite add Sydal to the list, but as for now, I'm not sure who else can challenge for the title, save for reheating Mark Briscoe.

Respect is shown post match.

Deimos vs. Nick Comoroto

This is Deimos', with Teal Piper (Roddy's daughter), debut. Deimos (rather tall and muscular) pounds Comoroto down to start and counters a slam into one of his own. They fight to the floor with Comoroto sending him into the steps to take over, followed by a running powerslam for two back inside. A Widowmaker gives Comoroto two but Deimos is back with a spinebuster. Deimos' big boot gets two as Piper is starting to panic. Comoroto gets in a throat snap across the top though and it's an Alabama Slam for the pin (with feet on the ropes) on Deimos at 5:14.

**Rating:** C. They were lumbering around a bit but this was a nice enough power match. Comoroto still feels like he could be something as he has the rather unique look and a good offense to back it up. Deimos is a tall guy and looks great, though he didn't do much here to set him apart. I could go for more from both of them though, as some seasoning and experience could get them somewhere.

Mark Sterling has gotten Tony Nese some time to speak tonight.

### Iron Savages vs. Tracy Williams/Rhett Titus

The Savages have their hype man Jacked Jameson with them. Boulder suplexes Williams to start before it's off to Bronson, who gets sent into the corner. An armbar over the ropes slows Bronson down but the Savages get in stereo gorilla press slams to take over again. Titus comes in and kicks Bronson in the face, followed by a quick belly to belly.

Boulder comes back in for a Boss Man Slam/swinging sidewalk slam (cool) to plant them both. Back up and Williams/Titus manages something like a double AA on Boulder. Bronson comes back in and gets caught with a Hart Attack but Boulder is back in for the save. Bronson fire thunder drivers Titus onto Williams (that's a new one) and an electric chair splash gives Bronson the pin at 4:56.

**Rating:** C+. The Savages might not be the most complicated team

in the world but it is nice to see someone with that kind of power around here. Being so different makes them stand out ala a team like War Machine back in the day and Jameson is funny enough in short doses. Let these guys run through some more people on a regular basis and I could see them getting a title program down the line.

The Workhorsesmen (who seem to be on every week) don't like FTR, or Mark Briscoe for that matter. Briscoe can take FTR's beating for them.

### Diamante vs. Teal Piper

Deimos is here with Piper, who gets in a quick slam to start. A neckbreaker over the middle rope cuts Piper off though and Diamante hits the running corner dropkick. Diamante slaps her in the face, which is enough to fire Piper up for some kicks in the corner. A sleeper doesn't work for Piper as it's something like Cross Rhodes to bring her back down. Diamante ties up the arms in a choke for the stoppage at 4:11.

**Rating:** C. Piper didn't get squashed here but she only showed so much. Maybe it would have been better if she hadn't popped up in the earlier match, but seeing her twice in one night took away some of the special feeling. She has enough skill to have a run on the indies somewhere though and with some more experience, could be something down the line. Diamante is still good for a spot like this and I'm still not sure why she hasn't gotten a bigger role before.

Respect is not shown post match.

### Tony Nese vs. Serpenticco

Before the match, Nese and the rest of the Varsity Athletes say they have tried to get the fans' respect for years but it has never happened because the fans aren't on the same level. Instead, the wrestling is on hold because it's time for group exercise! Ari Daivari leads the exercise until Serpenticco's

entrance interrupts.

Nese wrestles him down without much effort but Serpenticco comes back up with a slap. That's too far for Nese, who stomps away and nails a hard elbow for a bonus. Serpenticco tries to fight up but gets caught with a spinning kick to the face to put him right back down. Nigel goes old school by saying Nese is the winner of this year's Jesse The Body Award. Hold on though, as Riccaboni says that he won a pose down against Frankie Kazarian.

With that out of the way, Nese grabs a bodyscissors and hammers away, only to miss the springboard moonsault. Serpenticco's jumping Downward Spiral gives him a breather but Nese German suplexes him into the corner. The Running Nese is enough to finish Serpenticco at 6:05.

**Rating:** C. As much as Nese vs. Serpenticco is a main event...I'm thinking nowhere in the country, I can go with Nese and company actually having something to annoy the fans. Calling the fans fat and out of shape isn't much, but it's something that might get Nese some heat for a change. The match was little more than a squash, but they might be trying something with Nese and I'll take the effort.

Athena makes fun of Kiera Hogan and gets decked from behind by the real one.

### Notorious Mimi vs. Miranda Alize

They trade slaps to start with Alize knocking her into the corner and sweeping the leg out. A butterfly suplex gives Alize one and a hurricanrana driver is twice as good. Alize stops to yell at her and gets faceplanted for two but Alize is right back with a cutter. The Drive By (Shining Wizard) finishes Mimi at 3:11.

**Rating:** C-. Now this was more of a squash, as Alize ran through Mimi save for about fifteen seconds. I never got the

big appeal of Alize in her original Ring Of Honor run and that has only been slightly upgraded here. She could certainly be a midcard villain and I could see a big showdown with someone like Skye Blue, so there does seem to be some value there. Mimi is apparently rather young and like many others on the show, needs a good bit more experience.

### Dalton Castle/The Boys vs. The Righteous/Stu Grayson

Brent and Vincent start things off with Vincent running him over with an elbow. A dropkick works better for Brent so it's Brandon coming in with a springboard high crossbody to Grayson. Everything breaks down and Castle is sent into the post, leaving Brent to get beaten down without much trouble.

Dutch hits a splash and Grayson adds a heck of a clothesline to keep Brent down. An enziguri gets Brent out of trouble though and the hot tag brings in Castle to clean house. A reverse Sling Blade drops Vincent but Dutch blocks a suicide dive. Back in and a triple flipping faceplant finishes Brent at 7:24.

**Rating:** C+. This was an energetic match with Castle and the Boys being their usual entertaining selves and the villains working well together. Grayson being the unofficial member of the Righteous works for him and they could be a nice team, especially if they're done with the Dark Order. For now though, I'll take a nice trios match.

The Dark Order promises to get more violent and ask if they're Grayson's family.

### Athena vs. Trish Adora

Non-title Proving Ground match, meaning if Adora wins or survives the ten minute time limit, she gets a future title shot. We pause for Athena to yell at the fans to start, with commentary pointing out how stupid that is in a ten minute match. Adora slips out of an early headscissors but a test of

strength lets her crank on Athena's arm.

Athena bails to the floor and the distraction lets her snap the leg across the rope to take over. A leglock with a hair pull has Adora in more trouble, at least until she makes the rope. Some trash talk lets Adora come back with a German suplex and a powerslam gets two. Athena manages a quick whip into the corner though and the O Face finishes Adora at 7:10.

**Rating:** C+. Adora continues to feel like someone who has a lot of breakout star potential around here and I could go for seeing her featured a good bit more. That being said, Athena gets to take out someone else, likely on her way to another match with Kiera Hogan for whatever reason. That's the feud that has been decided on, no matter how much Athena dominated the first match.

Post match Athena attacks her again but here is Kiera Hogan with a trashcan lid for the brawl. Athena takes it away and knocks her down but Hogan takes it back and blasts her (Riccaboni: "Bangin on a trashcan!"). Hogan sets up a table...which Athena spears her through, just in case Hogan started to feel like a viable threat. Athena knocks herself silly too though and both of them have to be helped out.

### Mark Briscoe vs. Anthony Henry

JD Drake is here with Henry. Mark slugs away to start and sends Henry outside for the dropkick through the ropes. Back in and the rolling Death Valley Driver hits Henry but a Drake distraction lets him get in a dropkick. A DDT into a double armbar has Mark in trouble but Mark gets up and kicks him in the face.

Henry kicks him right back and we hit the crossarm choke. Back up and Briscoe hits a dropkick of his own, followed by a fisherman's buster for two. The Jay Driller is blocked and Briscoe pulls him into a dragon sleeper. With that broken up via a handy rope, they chop it out until the Jay Driller

finishes for Briscoe at 7:17.

**Rating:** C+. It seems that they're building towards another Briscoe title shot, which makes the loss at Supercard of Honor all the more confusing. I get the idea of Mark being built up after adversity but I believe he's already checked that box this year. For now though, it's another pretty nice Briscoe match, as the Workhorsesmen get in their required appearance.

Tony Khan introduces Stokely Hathaway and praises him for his good job so far. Hathaway pitches a Chicago street fight between Athena and Kiera Hogan next week. Sure.

### DKC vs. Daniel Garcia

This is from Dynamite in Colorado Springs, it's under Pure Rules and DKC is a student of Katsuyori Shibata. Garcia takes him to the mat without much trouble as we see Jerry Lynn sitting in as a judge. Not talking despite being one of the bosses of the show, but he's here. A loud chop seems to wake up DKC, who is right back with a running hurricanrana. DKC goes up top but gets knocked outside, allowing Garcia to pose a bit.

Back in and Garcia gets two off a suplex, setting up the STF. DKC uses his first rope break, which has Garcia applauding himself. Garcia loads up a charge in the corner but stops to dance, which is apparently a shot at Shibata. DKC hits a middle rope jumping kick to put Garcia down and then fires off a series of chops. A neck crank sends Garcia over to the ropes for the break, allowing him to come back with a Boston crab. With that not working, the Dragontamer finishes DKC at 7:34.

**Rating:** C+. This was a logical step towards Garcia vs. Shibata, even if that might not be the most thrilling feud. The Pure Rules matches are something different, but they are only so interesting in the first place. Garcia vs. Shibata does feel like something of a feud, but it's something that could be dropped without missing much.

Post match Garcia sits ala Shibata.

The Mogul Embassy knows they have beaten everyone and they'll do it again against more weak competition.

### Viva Van vs. Skye Blue

Van, who apparently holds five titles right now, grabs a wristlock to start but gets taken down just as quickly. A rolling kick to the face gives Van two but Blue gets in a boot to the face. Blue's hurricanrana into a Shining Wizard gets two, only to have Van grab a wheelbarrow suplex for the same. Back up and Blue superkicks her, setting up Skyfall for the win at 4:01.

**Rating:** C. This match is the prime example of something that did not need to be on this show and could have been cut to shave off some time. Blue won a #1 contenders match on Rampage and then lost last night on Dynamite. Did she really need a rebound win 24 hours later? She's been on six of the last eight Ring Of Honors so it's not like she's never around. This was there to add another match to a show for the sake of adding another match to the show and that's where this show gets really tiresome every week.

Respect is shown post match, which makes sense as Van looked solid.

### Six Man Tag Team Titles: Mogul Embassy vs. Action Andretti/Darius Martin/AR Fox

The Embassy, with Prince Nana, is defending. Fox and Cage get things going with Cage running him over with a shoulder. A slingshot splash is pulled out of the air and Fox is sent flying with a fall away slam. Martin comes in to dropkick Cage into a tag to Khan as the pace picks up.

Toa walks on Martin's back but he's right up to his feet for a tornado DDT. Andretti gets the tag and is knocked outside for

some whips into the apron. Back in and Andretti is fine enough to hit a Canadian Destroyer on Cage. That's enough for the tag to Fox as the pace picks up again. A springboard missile dropkick hits Cage and a big dive to the floor does it again. Back in and a Swanton gives Fox two, followed by an assisted middle rope cutter for the same.

Everything breaks down and Toa runs over all three challengers at once. Khan hits a fireman's carry gutbuster on Martin but Fox is back in with a 450. Fox and Andretti kick away at Cage and Andretti hits his torture rack neckbreaker. Khan gets sent to the floor but Cage is back with a discus lariat to Martin. The Cheeky Nandos kick hits Andretti and Weapon X retains the titles at 10:19.

**Rating:** B. They went with a simple concept here and had every go nuts for the last few minutes. It was a power vs. speed match and that might be the most basic wrestling formula there is. That is the case for a reason as it works well when it is done right, as was on display here. The champs got rocked before coming away with the dramatic win and that made it the best thing on the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I liked it better than last week as it felt like there was a bit more purpose to some of the matches, but on the other hand there was (yet again) a lot of stuff that felt like it was there to pad the run time. There's little need to have a lot of these people on the show every single week, and now Tony Khan is apparently going to be around to make matches while Hathaway plays a suck up villain and Jerry Lynn doesn't talk. It's nice to see them trying something, but a two hour show with a bunch of seven minute matches featuring so many of the same people week after week is only going to be so exciting.

### Results

Samoa Joe b. Matt Sydal – MuscleBuster

Nick Comoroto b. Deimos – Alabama Slam

Iron Savages b. Tracy Williams/Rhett Titus – Electric chair splash to Williams  
Diamante b. Teal Piper via referee stoppage  
Tony Nese b. Serpentico – Running Nese  
Miranda Alize b. Notorious Mimi – Drive By  
The Righteous/Stu Grayson b. Dalton Castle/The Boys – Triple flipping faceplant to Brent  
Athena b. Trish Adora – 0 Face  
Mark Briscoe b. Anthony Henry – Jay Driller  
Daniel Garcia b. DKC – Dragontamer  
Skye Blue b. Viva Van – Skyfall  
Mogul Embassy b. Action Andretti/Darius Martin/AR Fox – Weapon X to Andretti

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**Ring Of Honor TV – April 13,**

# 2023: They're Listening To Me?

## Ring Of Honor

Date: April 13, 2023

Location: Ryan Center, Kingston, Rhode Island

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Caprice Coleman

The show continues to go on the road with AEW and that could make for some changes to how things work. It is almost impossible to imagine doing the nearly two hour show in front of Dynamite so maybe things are going to be shuffled up a bit. Either way, I would still bet on Athena and Tony Nese getting in their regular appearances. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

## Ari Daivari vs. Mark Briscoe

Tony Nese, Josh Woods and Mark Sterling are here with Daivari. They roll around a bit to start until Daivari charges into an overhead belly to belly. A vertical suplex sends him outside but the distraction lets Nese get in a cheap shot to take over. The chinlock goes on for a bit, followed by a hammerlock DDT for two on Briscoe. The frog splash misses though and Briscoe gets to chop away. A Rock Bottom suplex into a hangman's neckbreaker plants Daivari but it's too early for the Jay Driller. Sterling's distraction lets Nese and Woods interfere but they're thrown out, meaning the Jay Driller can finish Daivari at 6:10.

**Rating:** C. This was a way to get Briscoe back on track and that is a perfectly fine way to go. Daivari is still enough of a name around here that beating him means enough when you combine him with the rest of his goons. If nothing else, it's

not the Trustbusters so this could be a heck of a lot worse.

Post match the Varsity Athletes jump Briscoe but FTR makes the save. Mark Briscoe: Friend Of Tag Teams is an interesting way to go.

Eddie Kingston reveals that he is suffering from a hernia and has been dealing with it since September. He went through the Supercard Of Honor match against Claudio Castagnoli but isn't making any excuses. Odds are he is going to need surgery though and a lot of that is due to the beating Castagnoli gave him. He has been thinking back to his match with Cody Rhodes, when he gave his heart to AEW in the first place. Then he went home and he thought about it and now he is going to have to do it again. Kingston going away for a bit might help him, as he has been kind of all over the place in recent months.

#### Kelly Madan vs. Skye Blue

Blue teases a superkick to take Madan down and another kick puts her on the mat. Madan gets in a kick of her own and stops to dance, allowing Blue to kick her down again. Skyfall finishes for Blue at 2:06. Not quite a squash but it did what it needed to do.

#### Mike Bennett vs. Darius Martin

Matt Taven and Maria Kanellis-Bennett are here with Bennett. Martin wins a slugout to start and they trade chops in the corner. The fight goes to the floor with Bennett being sent into the barricade but Taven offers a distraction on the way back inside. That's enough for Bennett to take over on the apron, with a superkick rocking Martin. Bennett drops him hard onto the apron but Martin manages to get up for a clothesline through the ropes. Back in and a Spanish Fly gives Martin two but Taven comes in for the DQ at 4:57.

**Rating:** C+. It's almost strange seeing a DQ on one of these shows, but it's also weird seeing Martin doing this on his

own. That's what we're going to have to get used to in the coming months, but he did look comfortable out there in a singles match. I'm curious to see who is going to make the save/help Martin against the Kingdom, as he certainly can't do it on his own. For now though, nice start to his singles run, even in a limited time.

Post match the beatdown is on but Action Andretti makes the save. I've heard worse ideas.

### Wheeler Yuta vs. Tracy Williams

They go technical to start (shocking I know) but it's too early for Williams to get in his crossface. The cross armbreaker is broken up as well and it's Yuta grabbing a German suplex. Yuta ties up the legs and forearms away but Williams slips out. A belly to back suplex rocks Yuta but he's right back with the strikes in the corner. The double arm DDT onto the top sets up a brainbuster and Yuta is down again. The crossface still doesn't work and Yuta is back up with an Angle Slam. A dragon sleeper with Williams' arms tied back is enough to give Yuta the win at 5:11.

**Rating:** C+. Williams is rather good at this kind of a match and Yuta can go move for move with him the entire way. Yuta is on a roll right now (save for the Shibata loss) so getting a win here is no surprise. What is a bit of a surprise is seeing Williams lose again, as has been the case since he came back to Ring Of Honor. I get the idea of having someone with a name do some jobs, but Williams has a strong enough resume that he should be able to do better than this.

Darius Martin is glad that he has a friend in Action Andretti, who knows what it's like to deal with numbers. The challenge to the Kingdom is on for next week.

### Katsuyori Shibata/Alex Coughlin vs. Workhorsesmen

Drake won't shake Shibata's hand to start so Shibata starts

with Henry instead. They go to the mat for a quick standoff and Shibata blocks an early Penalty Kick. Drake adds a headbutt to Shibata and it's off to Coughlin to give Drake a belly to back. Another suplex drops Coughlin though and a Vader Bomb from the middle of the ropes crushes Coughlin again.

Henry comes in and goes technical with Coughlin, who starts while sitting down and manages to grab a suplex and stand up while holding Henry in the air (WOW). It's off to Shibata, who tries a sleeper but can't get anywhere. Drake breaks it up with a chop to the back so Shibata sleepers Henry again,, with Drake breaking it up again. A kick to the back/Downward Spiral combination plants Shibata but Coughlin makes the save. Coughlin takes Drake outside and it's the Penalty Kick to finish Henry at 8:46.

**Rating:** B-. That suplex alone made this worth a look as Coughlin might be able to live up to that cyborg nickname. Shibata was a bit off here and even commentary was surprised at some of the mistakes that he was making. The Workhorses were their usual reliable selves and this was the best match on the show by a wide margin so far.

Post match Coughlin says he wants the Pure Title.

### Willow Nightingale vs. Little Mean Kathleen

Nightingale slams her down to start but gets sent into the corner for some running stomps. Back up and Nightingale runs her over, setting up a Stampede for the pin at 1:47. As it should be, given that Kathleen is rather tiny and not overly impressive.

### Stu Grayson vs. Tony Nese

You knew Nese would get a match in there somewhere. Mark Sterling, Josh Woods and Evil Uno are here too. Grayson starts fast and sends him outside, only to have Sterling's

distraction let Nese get in a cheap shot. Back in and Nese hits a running uppercut in the corner before a hard kick to the face gets two. Another forearm wakes Grayson up and a swinging Rock Bottom gives him two more. A fireman's carry spun into a faceplant gives Grayson another near fall but Nese sends him face first into the buckle. Back up and a Pele kick rocks Nese, setting up Knightfall to finish for Grayson at 7:14.

**Rating:** C+. Well at least the right person won, as I was worried Grayson would take another loss. Grayson has something with the look and energy so giving him a win over anyone, even Nese, is a nice boost. If nothing else, it would be nice for the Dark Order to have someone who might be able to win a match of some value at some point. The team has needed that for a long time now so maybe they are finally getting the idea right.

Post match the Righteous come out to stare down the Dark Order. Er, actually just Grayson.

Post break the Righteous says the Dark Order is about power (How?) but now it's like a shell of itself. Vincent has the keys to Grayson's freedom.

### Ashley D'Amboise vs. Athena

Non-title Proving Ground match, meaning that if Ashley can survive ten minutes or win, she gets a title shot. Ashley dropkicks her down to start so Athena dropkicks her a few times to take over. The Crossface is broken up and Ashley gets two off a cradle. Something like a leg lariat gives Ashley two and a Samoan drop gets the same. Athena isn't having that and dropkicks her off the top for a big crash. A clothesline on the floor drops Ashley again and the running knees against the steps make it worse. Back in and the O Face finishes for Athena at 5:09.

**Rating:** C+. I've heard of D'Amboise before but I've never seen

her in a match that let her shine a bit. She did well with the time that she had here, though this was all about keeping Athena as a monster. I'm not sure who is going to take the title from her, but they are making her feel like a force. Maybe just give her a week off here or there though, just to keep her appearances feeling more special.

Post match Athena throws her to the floor.

Post break D'Amboise isn't happy with the lack of honor so Athena jumps her again. Athena wants better competition and sends D'Amboise face first into the title.

### Ring Of Honor World Title: Claudio Castagnoli vs. Metalik

Metalik is challenging and gets taken into the corner to start. A legsweep drops Metalik but he kicks Castagnoli into the corner without much trouble. Castagnoli gets sent outside, where he cuts off a dive and drops Metalik hard onto the apron. The neck crank goes on back inside and there's a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. Metalik fights up and slugs away but Castagnoli sends him into the corner for the stomping. Back up and Metalik manages a kick to the head and a springboard hurricanrana.

A pop up Sling Blade (cool) drops Castagnoli again but the Metalik Driver is blocked. Code Red gives Metalik two more but a moonsault only hits raised boots. Castagnoli hammers away in the corner until Metalik kicks him in the head again. The rope walk elbow is cut off though and a Crossface has Metalik in trouble. That's broken up so Castagnoli blasts him with the uppercut. The Neutralizer retains the title at 11:59.

**Rating:** B. I wasn't expecting much coming into this one but they had a nice power vs. speed match with Metalik getting in a lot of offense. This could have been a four minute squash but they stretched it out a bit and made Castagnoli break a sweat. While there was no drama over a title change, it was nice to see this be more competitive than it could have been

**Overall Rating:** B-. This show was about 20-30 minutes shorter than the show's average so far and my goodness it was more enjoyable as a result. Running just shy of an hour and a half, this show didn't drag or feel like it just kept going and that is a huge improvement. I had a good time with the show and the action was good, but I never sat there wondering how much more they could squeeze in. Keep it around this length (or maybe a hair shorter) and it goes WAY up in value. Good show this week, with one of the biggest issues being addressed, at least for now.

### Results

Mark Briscoe b. Ari Daivari – Jay Driller

Skye Blue b. Kelly Madan – Skyfall

Darius Martin b. Mike Bennett via DQ when Matt Taven interfered

Wheeler Yuta b. Tracy Williams – Dragon sleeper

Alex Coughlin/Katsuyori Shibata b. Workhorsesmen – Penalty Kick to Henry

Willow Nightingale b. Little Mean Kathleen – Stampede

Stu Grayson b. Tony Nese – Knightfall

Athena b. Ashley D'Amboise – 0 Face

Claudio Castagnoli b. Metalik – Neutralizer

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# Ring Of Honor TV – April 6, 2023: They're Here...Again

## Ring Of Honor

Date: April 6, 2023

Location: UBS Arena, Long Island, New York

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Ian Riccaboni, Caprice Coleman

We're done with Supercard Of Honor and that means it is time to get to whatever this show is going to be without a pay per view coming up. I'm not sure what that is going to mean, but I'm assuming that the Trustbusters/Varsity Athletes are going to be involved. We should be in for a fun show here as is tradition, but it might be a bit before we have another major show. Let's get to it.

[Here is Supercard Of Honor if you need a recap.](#)

Christopher Daniels is ready to take the Pure Title from Katsuyori Shibata because championships are on his agenda. Daniels has beaten him before but Shibata has gone through a lot since then. Now Shibata is one of the toughest men in the world but Daniels wants him anyway. I do like these promos for some of the feature matches. Do some more of them throughout the show.

Opening sequence.

Shane Taylor/Workhorsemen vs. Mark Briscoe/Lucha Bros

Shane shoves Mark around to start before running him over with a shoulder. It's off to Anthony Henry, who walks into a big boot to cut him down. Fenix comes in for the top rope low stomp and the good guys clear the ring without much trouble.

For some reason Penta tries a package piledriver on Taylor, which is blocked just as fast. JD Drake comes in to strike it off with Penta against the ropes and it's back to Henry for a quickly broken chinlock.

The reverse Sling Blade gets Penta out of trouble though and it's Briscoe coming back in to clean house. The Bang Bang Elbow hits Taylor on the floor as everything breaks down. Back in and Taylor hits Welcome To The Land (over the shoulder piledriver) for two on Briscoe as the Bros have to make a save. A quick Jay Driller finishes Henry at 8:48.

**Rating:** C+. This was a fast paced match and it was the kind of effort that can help turn Briscoe and the Bros into a more serious team. There are only so many worthwhile trios in AEW/ROH so making someone new is a good idea. Now just let them actually be built up with some bigger wins and it could work well.

#### Pure Wrestling Title: Katsuyori Shibata vs. Christopher Daniels

Daniels is challenging and gets taken to the mat rather quickly. Shibata takes over with the grappling so Daniels bails away, which seems like a smart move. Back up and Daniels starts in on the arm but gets pulled into a quick Figure Four. The rope is grabbed and Shibata misses a Penalty Kick, allowing Daniels to start in on the neck.

The Downward Spiral into the Koji Clutch has Shibata in more trouble but he's fine enough to knock Daniels into the corner. The chops just annoy Shibata and there's a running dropkick in the corner to rock Daniels hard. A rear naked choke makes Daniels bail to the rope for the second break. Back up and they trade STO's before Shibata strikes him down. The Penalty Kick retains the title at 10:07.

**Rating:** B-. This is why Daniels is around, as he can still wrestle a nice match and look good in the process. Shibata

gets his first title defense under his belt and that is exactly what he needs to do. If nothing else, it's nice to see the champion establishing himself and Daniels is as good as you can get for a first challenger.

Claudio Castagnoli is ready for anyone.

### Brian Cage vs. Ortiz

Prince Nana is here with Cage. Ortiz slips out of an early suplex attempt and gets knocked into the corner for his efforts. Back up and Ortiz sends him to the floor for the first dive but Cage is fine enough for the apron superplex. Cage does the reps before tossing him with a standing fall away slam but Ortiz grabs a DDT.

A Death valley Driver gives Ortiz two and Cage's GMSI gets the same. Some headbutts stagger Cage in the corner, at least until he comes out with a superkick. Another apron superplex is countered into a powerbomb but Cage is right back with the Drill Claw to finally put Ortiz away at 8:24.

**Rating:** C+. This went a bit longer than it needed to but Cage winning was the way to go in the end. Ortiz hasn't had much to do as of late and Cage is still a champion, so giving him the pin made sense. It was a pretty nice power vs. speed match, even if Cage is capable of doing just about anything in the ring at the same time.

### Darius Martin vs. Jay Lethal

Satnam Singh and Sonjay Dutt are here too as Maria Kanellis, with the Kingdom, is on commentary. Darius wastes no time in sending him outside for the dive and a near fall back inside. Lethal crotches him inside and hits a dive of his own, setting up a strut on the floor. Darius is right back with a few shots of his own but has to stop and look up at Singh.

Back in and a springboard Downward Spiral gets two on Lethal.

They slug it out as Maria and her husband Mike Bennett make “getting lucky” jokes. Matt Taven thinks he sees an untied shoe and heads to ringside as Darius accidentally dropkicks Singh to no avail. Taven superkicks Darius so Lethal (with a “sure, why not” shrug) hits Lethal Injection for the pin at 5:29.

**Rating:** C+. This didn't have a ton of time and there was more than enough interference but the action that we got was good enough. Martin is going to have a long way to go to set himself up as a singles star without Dante around but putting him in the ring with someone like Lethal can be a nice boost. Now just win a few times.

Post match Singh gives the Kingdom his jacket and both guys fit inside (that's not normal).

#### La Faccion Ingovernabile b. The Infantry

Preston Vance and Jose The Assistant are here too. Dean and Dralistico start things off and they trade leg trips for a quick standoff. We pause for a Code Of Honor, allowing Dralistico to kick him in the head. Bravo comes in and chops it out with Dralistico until Rush gets in a cheap shot to the back to take over. Rush adds a face wash in the corner and the Tranquilo pose gives La Faccion a break. Dralistico double underhooks Bravo and flips him into a knee to the face for the pin at 3:41.

**Rating:** C. Total and complete squash here, which is what should happen to a team like the Infantry. Rush and Dralistico still don't do much for me but it is nice to see the two of them getting to dominate like this for a change. Let them get built up as a bigger team and let them go after the champs, as there are certainly worse ideas.

Post match La Faccion poses over the Infantry.

#### Tracy Williams vs. Daniel Garcia

They go to the mat to start with Williams slipping out, earning some applause from Garcia. Some chops into a hammerlock suplex drop Garcia but he's right back with a cheap shot to take over. Garcia teases grabbing a weapon but opts to flip off the fans instead. We pause for some Garcia dancing, allowing Williams to come back up for a slugout. Williams catches him in the corner and gives him a DDT onto the top rope, sending them into a series of standing switches. Garcia lifts him up and hits a gutbuster for the pin at 6:11.

**Rating:** C+. They had a nice technical match here but neither is exactly the most interesting star at the moment. Garcia got beaten up by Tanahashi at Supercard Of Honor and Williams has been here to put people over since he came back. I've never been overly interested in Garcia and giving him just a slightly above ok TV win isn't helping that.

#### Notorious Mimi vs. Willow Nightingale

Mimi is formerly known as Sloane Jacobs in NXT. Nightingale takes her down to start and drops a quick backsplash. An open hand shot gives Mimi a breather but the Pounce takes her down. The Doctor Bomb finishes Mimi at 2:02.

#### Steve Somerset/Stephen Azure vs. The Righteous

The Righteous returned to ROH at Supercard Of Honor. Somerset and Azure (in matching sweater vests and apparently called Even Stevens, making them rather awesome) get jumped to start and the beatdown is on. Azure (with his Vest In The World pants) gets chopped and beaten down, setting up an exploder suplex. A swinging Boss Man Slam into a Swanton sets up Autumn Sunshine (assisted Dudley Dog) to finish Azure at 1:55. Total squash and a nice debut/return.

#### Tony Nese vs. Konosuke Takeshita

The rest of the Varsity Athletes and Mark Sterling are here with Nese. They start fast with Nese kicking him down and

striking a bicep pose. Takeshita even offers a handshake but gets hit in the face. That's fine with Takeshita, who knocks him away and does a bicep pose of his own. A distraction lets Nese send him into the steps and we hit the bodyscissors back inside. The running Nese is cut off by a clothesline and Takeshita gets in a series of shots to the face, setting up a top rope backsplash for two.

The Blue Thunder Bomb connects but Sterling pulls Nese outside. That means the big flip dive and Nese goes into the steps this time. Back in and Takeshita gets tied in the ropes for a springboard moonsault. They slug it out until Takeshita pulls him into a leg trap Tombstone for two. Nese hits a pumphandle piledriver for two but the running Nese is countered into a rolling German suplex to give Takeshita the pin at 10:25.

**Rating:** B-. Good match, but why in the world did Takeshita, who feels like a breakout star in the making, going back and forth for ten minutes against TONY NESE? I'm not sure if Nese has ever won a meaningful match on AEW/ROH TV so why is he not the next person getting squashed on this show? Takeshita hasn't won much around here, but he's way better than Nese and I do not get the thinking here. Put him in there with someone you're willing to squash or don't have the match as we just saw Takeshita win a bigger match at Supercard Of Honor.

#### Ring Of Honor Women's Title: Athena vs. Miyu Yamashita

Yamashita is challenging and was all over Wrestlemania weekend. Athena armdrags her down to start but Miyu misses a Skull Kick. Both of them miss some kicks until Miyu hits a spinning kick to the head out of the corner. Athena manages a trip to send Miyu throat first into the top rope.

A DDT on the leg on the floor slows Miyu down and Athena grabs a leglock back inside. Miyu kicks her away and hits a kick from the apron, only to have Athena block another one. A ram

into the post doesn't do much to Miyu, who is back with a knee. Back in and a super Attitude Adjustment gives Miyu two and there's a big kick to Athena's head. Athena is back with a half crab to stay on the leg, followed by an ankle lock.

With that broken up, Miyu kicks her away and tries another spinning heel kick, with the ducking Athena going to the floor. They slug it out on the stage with Miyu hitting another AA as commentary says the referee has relaxed the rules so the match can continue. Back in and Athena sends her off the stage, setting up a Cannonball to take Miyu down again. They get back in the ring and Athena ducks another kick, setting up the crossface to knock Miyu out at 13:34.

**Rating:** B-. There's your Athena match of the week, as she has now been on four out of the six episodes of the show. It was a longer match and Miyu has looked good in everything I've seen her do. The problem though is Miyu hasn't exactly done much in AEW/ROH. She's had two matches in AEW (most recently last summer) and wrestled on last week's ROH in her only appearances. The match was good, but it's hard to care about a challenger who is basically a newcomer/stranger.

Post match Athena teases more violence but leaves instead.

**Overall Rating:** B-. Another nice show but there's still nothing on here that really feels important. Whenever I watch this show, I get one of two thoughts to most wrestlers: "I just saw you on Dynamite" or "hey, it's this person...again", as there are more than a few people who pop up here fairly often. I really don't need to see Nese or Athena or Cage or Garcia or Nightingale as often as they're around and having them in so many matches makes them feel less and less special. If this show just has to be as long as it is every week, they need to find a way to keep things fresher, because the charm is going to be lost fast.

Results

Mark Briscoe/Lucha Bros b. Shane Taylor/Workhorsemen – Jay Driller to Henry  
Katsuyori Shibata b. Christopher Daniels – Penalty Kick  
Brian Cage b. Ortiz – Drill Claw  
Jay Lethal b. Darius Martin – Lethal Injection  
La Faccion Ingovernable b. The Infantry – Spinning knee to the face to Bravo  
Daniel Garcia b. Tracy Williams – Gutbuster  
Willow Nightingale b. Notorious Mimi – Doctor Bomb  
The Righteous b. Steve Somers/Stephen Azure – Autumn Sunshine to Azure  
Konosuke Takeshita b. Tony Nese – Rolling German suplex  
Athena b. Miyu Yamashita – Crossface

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**Ring Of Honor TV – March 30,**

# 2023: Where Did That Come From?

## Ring Of Honor

Date: March 30, 2023

Location: Chaifetz Arena, St. Louis, Missouri

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Caprice Coleman

It's the go home show for Supercard Of Honor and that means we should be in for a big night. The card is mostly set and while a lot of the build should be focused on the event, there is a good chance that we will be seeing a lot more than that. The show has been good so far though and hopefully they can keep that up. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

## Tony Nese/Ari Daivari vs. Aussie Open

So yes, Daivari is now in TWO groups and Mark Sterling is here with Nese/Daivari. Fletcher works on Daivari's arm to start and throws him down without much effort. Nese and Davis come in with the former going straight to the bicep pose and the Aussies take over on him rather quickly.

Sterling offers a distraction though and Fletcher is brought to the floor for a ram into the apron. Back in and Daivari misses a top rope splash, allowing Fletcher to roll over for the tag to Davis. Everything breaks down quickly but Sterling's distraction breaks up Coriolis. Daivari knees Fletcher in the head and Nese adds a 450 for a rather close two. Davis makes the save and the Aussies superkick Sterling, setting up Coriolis to finish Nese at 9:20.

**Rating:** C. This is exactly what the match should have been, as

the Aussies have a big match coming up and they need some momentum. Nese and Daivari aren't a regular team but they have enough value on their own. At the same time, anything involving Sterling being hit in the face is a good thing so this could have been a lot worse.

### Miyu Yamashita vs. Shazza McKenzie

Respect is shown and Miyu snapmares her down for a kick to the back. A suplex gets McKenzie out of trouble but Miyu powers out of an abdominal stretch. Back up and Miyu hits a heck of a kick to the chest but Shazza kicks the leg out. Some kicks to the chest rock Miyu but she rolls through a crossbody. A big kick to the head knocks Shazza silly for the pin at 4:43.

**Rating:** C. Short match here but Yamashita is someone who feels like a big star, especially with those hard kicks. McKenzie is someone who has been around for a long time but hasn't had a lot of exposure on the big stage. As good as she was though, this was all about Miyu, who lived up to the hype and would be nice to have around here/AEW more often.

### The Embassy vs. JD Griffey/Dak Draper/Arjun Singh

Non-title and the Embassy has Prince Nana with them. Cage leapfrogs the rather tall Draper to start and powerslams him down. A release German suplex drops Draper again and it's off to Griffey to strike away at Toa. The strikes don't exactly have any impact though so it's Kaun coming in for a hard clothesline. Singh gets blasted by the Gates' double clothesline and the apron superplex finishes for Cage at 3:14.

**Rating:** C-. More dominance from the Embassy before their title defense on Friday. Much like the opener, this was to the point but the speed made the team look even more dominant. I'm still not sure why I'm supposed to be interested in guys who aren't much more than a bunch of size and power but there have been weaker reasons to give people belts before.

## AR Fox/Metalik vs. The Infantry

For and Metalik have a Six Man Tag Team Title shot coming up but they're in a regular tag match here. I'm sure that makes sense somehow. Metalik breaks up Dean's headlock to start and hits the reverse Sling Blade. The rope walk dropkick gets an early two and it's Fox coming in to almost piledrive Dean down for two. Bravo comes in and hits Metalik in the face to take over though, including Snake Eyes in the corner.

Fox tries to come in and gets caught with a wishbone to put him down as well. A suplex gets two on Metalik and a heck of a right hand into a Sky High is good for the same. Metalik manages a sunset bomb though and an enziguri allows the tag back to Fox. House is quickly cleaned and an enziguri knocks Bravo into a rolling cutter. Metalik adds a heck of an Asai moonsault, setting up Fox's springboard Downward Spiral. The top rope elbow gives Metalik the pin at 8:14.

**Rating:** B-. This was all action and it was rather entertaining, despite the weird choice of not having Blake Christian here. The Infantry might not be the most successful team in the world but they are more than capable of having a nice match. Fox and Metalik are a nice team together too and the four of them made this work well.

## Ring Of Honor Women's Title: Athena vs. Emi Sakura

Athena is defending and gets chopped to the floor to start. Back up and Athena is able to get in a posting, setting up something close to a belly to back suplex on the apron. Athena slams Sakura's manager but the distraction is enough for Sakura to hit a running crossbody against the steps. Back up and Athena is fine enough to tie her in the Tree of Woe for some kicks to the back as the intensity cranks up a bit.

Sakura cuts off a flip with a chop though and a rather delayed butterfly backbreaker drops Athena again. A moonsault gives Sakura two and it's time to chop it out. Athena gets knocked

down but nips up, where she has to cartwheel out of something close to Cross Rhodes. Sakura gets knocked away but manages to pull the 0 Face out of the air. A suplex gives Sakura two but Athena forearms her in the face. Something like a powerbomb flipped into a Codebreaker sets up a choke to make Sakura tap at 8:33.

**Rating:** B. This was a heck of a fight and the crowd carried it that much further. The fans were actually rocking over this one and it was well deserved as it was one of the best Athena matches I've ever seen. Sakura brought it as well and it was rather good once it got going. This came out of pretty much nowhere and it was quite the hit.

Post match Athena goes after Sakura's knee but Yuka Sakazaki runs in for the save. Security has to break up the brawl but Sakazaki dives off the top to take out a bunch of guards and Athena at once.

#### Rush/Dralistico/The Kingdom vs. Top Flight/Lucha Bros

Jose the Assistant, Maria Kanellis-Bennett and Alex Abrahantes are here too. Taven and Darius start things off but Taven wants (and receives) Penta. That means a slap with the glove, which Alex catches on the floor. That's too far as everything breaks down and the good guys clear the ring. With that not working for the villains, they pull the other four outside and the brawl continues.

Taven kicks Penta in the head and a slingshot elbow gets two. Rush and Dralistico stomp away on Dante, setting up a double basement dropkick to make it worse. It's back to the Kingdom, who can't quite manage Hail Maria to Dante. Fenix comes in to clean house but Penta has to save him from the Proton Pack. Top Flight comes in with the kicks to the head, only to have Dralistico come in with a springboard Codebreaker to Darius. Dralistico's springboard Canadian Destroyer (geez) gets two and the Bull's Horns finishes Darius at 7:32.

**Rating:** B-. This is about as logical of a way as they could have taken to set up the ladder match and I appreciate them keeping it to one match here rather than spreading it out. If nothing else, there is something fun about having everyone in there running around until one team catches the pin. The win means nothing for tomorrow, but at least they had an entertaining match on the way there.

Here is Mark Briscoe to say that tomorrow night is the biggest singles match of his career. This one is special because it's for his family, from his wife to his kids to his brother to everyone back in Delaware. He and Samoa Joe have beaten on each other for years but now it's time for Briscoe to claim his destiny. Joe pops up on screen to say he does NOT like the sound of that and promises to win. They kept this one to the point.

In the back, Jay Lethal is waiting for Mark Briscoe and tells him to bring home the title. Lethal was being sincere here.

#### Pure Title: Leon Ruffin vs. Wheeler Yuta

Yuta is defending and has a newly designed title. They go with the hard lockup to start with Yuta taking over off a wristlock. Ruffin fights out and goes to the middle rope, only to get tossed back down. The Octopus hold goes on (in a nod to Katsuyori Shibata/Antonio Inoki) but Ruffin makes it over to the rope or the break. Yuta ties up the legs and bridges back while posing a bit for a bonus. Ruffin has to burn off another rope break and he bounces off the ropes, only to get knocked out of the air. The hammerlock crossface finishes Ruffin at 5:28.

**Rating:** C. This was little more than a squash for Yuta and a match that probably didn't need to be on the card. Yuta has long since been established as being able to take out those beneath him and Ruffin would certainly fit the description. The Shibata match should be good, though I'm not sure where

Yuta is supposed to go after that after beating so many people.

Post match Yuta promises to beat Katsuyori Shibata...who is here in person. They go nose to nose and Shibata backs down.

### El Hijo del Vikingo vs. Blake Christian

Non-title. Commentary can't believe we're getting this match and...yeah it's quite the odd choice. Feeling out process to start until they start running the ropes. Christian gets knocked down to set up a quick standing shooting star press to give Vikingo two. Vikingo snaps off an armbar for two as commentary makes the good point of how fast Vikingo's mind must go to do those moves.

A rope walk hurricanrana drops Christian to the floor and the big springboard flip dive takes him down again. Back in and Christian avoids a charge and hits a basement dropkick to the floor. Christian kicks him down again back inside and there's the Fosbury Flop to drop Vikingo again. A standing flip splash hits Vikingo back inside and we hit the chinlock. That doesn't last long and Vikingo is up with a spinning kick to the head.

Vikingo's springboard corkscrew 450 gets two and Christian drops him down hard. They head to the apron and Vikingo hits a poisonrana but Christian catches him with a running C4 on the floor. Back in and a running Death Valley Driver gives Christian two and they go up top. Both of them backflip down at the same time (that looked sweet) where Vikingo plants him with a hurricanrana for the pin at 10:38.

**Rating:** B+. This was a different kind of match as it was Christian trying to match Vikingo instead of trying to survive him. Christian absolutely help up his side of things and it was a heck of a match. I'm not sure why this match needed to air this week when Christian has a title match tomorrow but the action involved makes up for pretty much all of that.

Post break Prince Nana interrupts Blake Christian, who isn't worried about being beaten up and is ready to win the titles. Then the Embassy jumps him to make it worse.

### Eddie Kingston vs. Christopher Daniels

Daniels' running shoulders don't work to start so Kingston hammers him down to take over. A running neckbreaker gets Daniels out of trouble though and an STO gets two. Daniels Downward Spirals him into a quickly broken Koji Clutch and Kingston grabs a backdrop. They chop it out with both lowering their singlets to make it more painful.

Kingston goes with a jumping enziguri to stagger Daniels and an exploder suplex sends him flying. Daniels gets in a shot of his own though and pulls up the straps to protect the damaged chest. Back up and Kingston has had it with this, meaning it's a pair of Spinning Backfists to the Future to finish Daniels at 7:25.

**Rating:** C+. You knew these two were going to be fine against each other as there is way too much talent between them. Kingston is going into the World Title match at Supercard and Daniels mainly exists to put other people over these days so this was a completely logical setup for the main event.

Post match respect is shown...and here is Claudio Castagnoli (also with redesigned title). Daniels leaves and Kingston wants to fight right now. The referee stays in and Castagnoli takes off his shirt...before leaving. Kingston says if the fans don't buy the pay per view, they'll feel like s\*\*\* because he needs to be a World Champion.

Kingston's mom isn't a grandmother because he doesn't have time for anything but wrestling. He accuses Castagnoli of leaving to go be an entertainer (with an uncensored F bomb included). Castagnoli leaves and Kingston promises to fight until he dies in the ring and lists off some Ring Of Honor World Champions to end the show. Good fired up promo from

Kingston here and I would hope that they change the title, though I don't think I can picture it.

**Overall Rating:** B. This show started slowly and then didn't look back with pretty much nothing short of rather good after the first three matches. There were some weird booking choices here and there but what matters is they made me want to see Supercard of Honor more than I did coming in. Solid show here which would have been a bit sharper with a bit of it trimmed off and maybe another promo or two.

### Results

Aussie Open b. Tony Nese/Ari Daivari – Coriolis to Nese

Miyu Yamashita b. Shazza McKenzie – Kick to the head

The Embassy b. JD Griffey/Dak Draper/Arjun Singh – Apron superplex to Singh

AR Fox/Metalik b. The Infantry – Top rope elbow to Bravo

Athena b. Emi Sakura – Choke

Rush/Dralistico/The Kingdom b. Top Flight/Lucha Bros – Bull's Horns to Darius

Wheeler Yuta b. Leon Ruffin – Hammerlock crossface

El Hijo del Vikingo b. Blake Christian – Hurricanrana

Eddie Kingston b. Christopher Daniels – Spinning Backfist to the Future

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# Ring Of Honor – March 23, 2023: Well Done

## Ring Of Honor

Date: March 23, 2023

Location: Universal Studios, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Caprice Coleman

We continue the rapid fire build towards Supercard Of Honor with week four of this show, which hopefully continues to have solid action. At the same time, things need to loosen up a bit as the show is so packed that it is hard to remember much of what happens week to week. Odds are they won't slow down but you have to have hope. Let's get to it.

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

We open with Samoa Joe telling anyone to come get a TV Title shot because it's an open challenge.

Opening sequence.

## Tony Nese vs. Mark Briscoe

Mark Sterling and Josh Woods are here with Nese. Briscoe gets jumped to start but fights back as they head outside. The Bang Bang Elbow connects from the apron but Nese knocks him up against the apron. Woods tries to get in a cheap shot but Briscoe knocks him away, only to have Nese snap off a suplex.

Back in and Nese kicks him in the face for two and the bodyscissors goes on. A springboard moonsault misses for Nese

though and Briscoe strikes away. The Iconoclasm gets two on Nese and the hangman's neckbreaker is good for the same. Nese is fine enough to strike away and he flips out of a German suplex for a bonus. Briscoe clotheslines the heck out of him though and the Froggy Bow finishes Nese at 8:52.

**Rating:** C. This is exactly what it needed to be: Briscoe fighting through some adversity and finishing Nese clean as he continues to build up wins before what should be the title win at Supercard Of Honor. Briscoe is going to get a big reaction from the fans and you know he is going to bring the energy so starting the show with him is a good idea. Nese being relegated to losing here is good as well, as he is talented in the ring but rather horribly dull, so this is about as high as he needs to be going for the time being.

#### Trustbusters vs. Metalik/AR Fox/Blake Christian

Mark Sterling is with the Trustbusters. Ian: "In what has become something of a grudge match." WELL WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU CALL IT??? Ian on Metalik and company: "What a combination this team has made!" You mean the team that hasn't wrestled together yet? Kay headlocks Fox to start and then snaps off a dropkick for a bonus. Fox is right back with a neckbreaker though and it's off to Christian, who is quickly taken into the wrong corner.

Christian is fine enough to slap on a seated abdominal stretch but Daivari sends him into the corner. Slim J comes in to stomp away as the villains start taking turns on Christian. A quick comeback finally allows Christian to bring Metalik in for the rope walk into a top rope splash. Metalik gets taken into the wrong corner as well though and it's Slim J taking over. Kay grabs the chinlock and a splash gets two.

An enziguri gets Metalik out of trouble and a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker allows the hot tag to Fox. Everything breaks down and Fox hits a bunch of cutters to take the villains down. The

springboard flip dive takes out Kay and Slim J on the floor, followed by Christian's big dive onto all three. Back in and Sterling gets kicked off the apron, allowing Kay to superkick Fox for two. The Tower of Doom, with a double Spanish Fly, knocks out just about everyone, leaving Fox to cutter Daivari. A 450 gives Fox the pin at 13:20.

**Rating:** C+. I'm sure that's going to be enough to get Metalik and company a Six Man Tag Team Title shot as the titles continue to be among the most worthless in all of wrestling. Somehow a team winning their first match together over a team beating a team who is teaming together for the first time on this show is supposed to mean something. While the match was fast paced and gave us the right result, the only thing the next step shows me is that there is absolutely zero need for Six Man Tag Team Titles.

Post match the Embassy runs in to beat down Metalik/Christian/Fox.

### Lady Frost vs. Skye Blue

Blue works on a wristlock to start but can't get very far. Frost sends her into the corner and we pause for a breather. A hard kick to the face in the corner rocks Blue and a handspring Cannonball connects, allowing Ian to make Frozen references. Some knees to the back keep Blue down and Frost kicks her hard to the floor.

Back in and Blue kicks her down for a change but can't follow up. A middle rope hurricanrana drops Frost again and a kick to the head gets two. Frost is right back with an Air Raid Crash for two, only to get slammed off the top. Blue hits a quick high crossbody into Skyfall for the pin at 7:19.

**Rating:** C+. They were both working hard here and Frost looked rather good in defeat. She was hitting some nice spots but Blue is the one who seems ready to move up a little bit on the AEW/ROH ladder. That isn't going to change until Blue wins a

bigger match but for now, at least she got a tough win.

### Rush/Dralistico vs. Tracy Williams/Rhett Titus

Rush and Dralistico jump them to start and send the other two outside, setting up the double pose. Back in and we settle down to Dralistico striking away on Williams. Rush takes his shirt off and chops away at Titus, who gets tied in the ropes. That means the top rope legdrop can give Dralistico two but Williams suplexes his way out of trouble.

It's off to Titus to slug it out with Rush, who is fine to strike back. A running boot in the corner rocks Rush and Dralistico gets knocked down as well. Everything breaks down and Dralistico hits a springboard Codebreaker on Williams. Rush's Bull's Horns is cut off by Williams' spear but Dralistico sends him outside. There's the big flip dive, leaving Titus to get Bull's Horned for the pin at 5:34.

**Rating:** B-. This was energetic while it lasted but it was almost a squash for Rush and Dralistico. Williams and Titus could be something in the tag division but for now it seems that La Faccion is getting the focus. Odds are they'll be in the ladder match for the Tag Team Titles, which might make Rush interesting for the first time...well ever around here actually.

We get a sitdown interview with Claudio Castagnoli and Eddie Kingston. Castagnoli has said that Kingston is without honor and thinks his words speak for himself. Kingston only cares about winning the title and lists off some wrestlers who have held the title and served as his mentors. Castagnoli doesn't think much of Kingston referring to himself as a fighter, because Kingston is the one who ran away when it became hard.

Kingston doesn't like that but Castagnoli is scared for him. That makes Kingston challenge for the title and Castagnoli is in, because he can win and leave Kingston blaming everyone. Oh and then he'll quit. It's on for Supercard Of Honor. This was

all but set weeks ago but it's nice to have it made official.

### Matt Taven vs. Darius Martin

The rest of the Kingdom is here but there is no Dante Martin. Darius armdrags him down to start and Taven needs a quick breather. Back in and Darius grabs a headlock before drop toeholding him down without much trouble. Bennett and Maria offer a distraction though and Taven takes over for the first time. Another Maria distraction lets Bennett hit a hard forearm on the floor and Taven's double underhook backbreaker gets two back inside.

Taven misses the springboard senton though and Just The Tip doesn't do much better. Darius atomic drops him out of the air though and a slingshot Downward Spiral gets two. A Spanish Fly gives Darius two more but they trade enziguris for a double knockdown. Back up and Just The Tip gives Taven two but Darius German suplexes him down. Taven is sent outside, where Darius dives onto Bennett. Maria grabs the boot though and Taven Climaxes Darius for the pin at 8:35.

**Rating:** C+. The more I see of Taven on his own, the more I like him. Taven is someone who works well on his own but his stuff with the rest of the Kingdom works well too. I'm not sure why the team (or just Taven) hasn't been featured on AEW a bit more but at least they're getting to do some stuff here. I'll certainly take Kingdom vs. Top Flight in a bigger feud and we might be on our way there.

Post match the beatdown is on until Dante Martin makes the save. Where the heck was he two minutes ago???

### Tony Deppen vs. Brian Cage

Prince Nana and the Gates of Agony are here with Cage. For some reason Deppen slaps him in the face to start and is quickly knocked to the apron for his efforts. The apron superplex plants Deppen and Cage drops an elbow into some

pushups (must be a Scott Steiner fan and yes the jokes are too easy).

Deppen manages to catch him on the ropes and hits a Backstabber to send Cage outside. That means the big dive drops Cage again and the running knees connect back inside. Deppen's top rope double stomp gets a close two, with commentary going NUTS on the cover. Back up and Cage blasts him with a clothesline but gets small packaged for two more. Cage spinebusters him though and a Drill Claw finishes Deppen at 4:27.

**Rating:** C+. They packed a lot into about four and a half minutes with Deppen showing some great energy. Commentary had me buying the chance of a big upset on that double stomp and the small package almost got me there too. At the end of the day though, Cage is a much bigger star and a champion isn't going to get pinned so close to the big event (and likely title defense).

Post match the 3-1 beatdown is on until Metalik, Blake Christian and AR Fox (with pipes) make the save.

### Silas Young vs. Shane Taylor

This could be interesting. They fight over a lockup to start until Young slaps him in the face. That's not a great idea as Taylor shoulders him down but misses the apron legdrop. Young knees him in the back and drops a backsplash for two. A bunch of elbows give Young one but Taylor BLASTS HIM with a clothesline.

Taylor's neckbreaker is broken up and Young knees him in the face. A DDT gives Young two, only to have Taylor pull him into a release Rock Bottom. The big splash gives Taylor two but Young knees him again. Young can't hit his moonsault out of the corner though, allowing Taylor to hit a knee of his own. The package piledriver puts Young away at 6:46.

**Rating:** C+. Another hard hitting match here as Taylor gets a win over someone with a name in his own right. Pushing either of these guys would make sense, as they both have ties to the old Ring Of Honor but also have a lot to offer now. I'm not sure about putting them together so fast, but at least someone won definitively.

### Billie Starkz vs. Miranda Alize

Alize is a luchadora who was around in the last phase of the old Ring Of Honor. The fans are behind Starkz and the lockup goes nowhere early on. Alize bails to the floor and the fans are already getting on her nerves. Back in and Alize bites the hand to take over but a dragon suplex gets Starkz out of trouble. Starkz has to roll out of a dive off the top though and Alize takes her down for two.

A running slap to the head (rather than the signature Shining Wizard) lets Alize brag a bit before grabbing the Miranda Rights (Crossface). With that broken up, Starkz elbows and kicks her in the face. Starkz charges into a shoulder to the ribs though and Alize grabs a hurricanrana driver for two. A cutter looks to set up a Shining Wizard but Starkz blocks it and hits the Starkz Driver (Tombstone) for the pin at 6:58.

**Rating:** C. Starkz is rather talented for her age but she needs some more seasoning. Hopefully she can get some of that on a slightly bigger stage like Ring Of Honor before getting in over her head elsewhere. Alize is a fine midcard villain, but I'm not sure I can see her going much further than that.

### Aussie Open vs. Christopher Daniels/Matt Sydal

Sydal takes Fletcher down to start and grabs a quick rollup for two. It's off to Daniels to take over on Fletcher's arm before Davis comes in. Daniels takes the leg out and nails a clothesline to the back of the head. Sydal comes back in and flips Daniels onto Davis, setting up a standing flip of his own for two. Daniels is even smart enough to slide between

Fletcher's legs and pull him to the floor for a right hand.

Back in and Davis decks Daniels, setting up a slingshot cutter. Sydal gets dropped as well and it's Davis hitting Daniels in the face again. The hand off suplex is countered into a small package to give Daniels a breather but Fletcher kicks Sydal off the apron in a smart move. Daniels manages to send them into each other though and grabs a middle rope Downward Spiral to Davis. Sydal comes back in with a hurricanrana driver on Fletcher but Davis slows Sydal down.

Daniels is back in and sends Davis outside, leaving Fletcher to get powerbombed/top rope Meteoraed for two. Everyone gets dropped for a breather until Sydal gets tossed into Fletcher's boot to the chest. Daniels Downward Spirals Fletcher though and clotheslines both of them. The Blue Thunder Bomb gets two on Fletcher, who accidentally kicks Davis in the head. Sydal tries to come back in but gets Tombstoned, only to have Daniels release Rock Bottom him down. The double clotheslines stagger Daniels though and Coriolis gives Fletcher the pin at 14:10.

**Rating:** B. Best match of the night so far and it's nice to see the Aussies get a win after losing so often on AEW. Daniels and Sydal were built up (as much as a team can be in one match) to be fed to them and odds are we'll be seeing the Aussies at Supercard Of Honor. They had a heck of a match here as it even overcame my lack of taste for Sydal.

Post match Daniels and Sydal tease leaving but come back and shake hands.

TV Title: Samoa Joe vs. ???

Joe is defending against...Cheeseburger. Joe hammers him down in the corner and gets annoyed at Cheeseburger swinging at him. The MuscleBuster retains the title at 1:01. That's a relief, though the lack of Cheeseburger would have been a better one.

Post match Joe wrecks Cheeseburger but Mark Briscoe makes the save to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. The show had its usual setup problems but I think we've covered those enough forever. I'm aware they're not going to change because this is what Tony Khan likes to do but they're by far the show's biggest problem. It was another show with good action and a lot of talented people, but I'm looking forward to a few weeks from now when Supercard Of Honor is over and the show can breathe a bit. Or just keep piling stuff in until the good stuff is overwhelmed by the sheer volume. For now though, another perfectly fine show, with the Aussie Open match being rather good.

### Results

Mark Briscoe b. Tony Nese – Froggy Bow

Metalik/AR Fox/Blake Christian b. Trustbusters – 450 to Daivari

Skye Blue b. Lady Frost – Skyfall

Rush/Dralistico b. Tracy Williams/Rhett Titus – Bull's Horns to Titus

Matt Taven b. Darius Martin – Climax

Brian Cage b. Tony Deppen – Drill Claw

Shane Taylor b. Silas Young – Package piledriver

Aussie Open b. Christopher Daniels/Matt Sydal – Coriolis to Daniels

Samoa Joe b. Cheeseburger – MuscleBuster

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# Dark: Elevation – January 30, 2023 (100th Episode): It's Not Bad

## Dark: Elevation

Date: January 30, 2023

Location: Rupp Arena, Lexington, Kentucky

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Matt Menard, Paul Wight

It's the 100th edition of the show and I happened to be in the house for it so let's take a look at this show. Thankfully this is now just the series of dark matches before Dynamite and not the insane marathon sessions this/Dark had back in the day. If nothing else we should get a nice main event so let's get to it.

I was sitting in the middle deck for this show with the big screen on my right. Traffic did cause me to miss the first ten or so minutes though.

## Red Velvet vs. Billie Starkz

Velvet takes her down without much effort but Starkz is back with a German suplex. It wasn't quite as good as the commentators made it seem, as Velvet Iconoclasms her off the top for two. A kick to the face out of the corner rocks Velvet again but Velvet hits a running knee to the back. Starkz tiger suplexes her for two and a Swanton is good for the same.

Velvet is right back with a poisonrana into the Final Slice for the pin at 3:18.

**Rating:** C. Starkz impressed while she had the chance and that German suplex was pretty good. I can see why she has the hype that she has been receiving at this point in her career, though she needs something to set her apart. Velvet seems likely to be fed to Jade Cargill soon, because that is a feud the world has been waiting to see wrapped up.

Athena takes over her own interview as she looks for a tag partner for tonight. Diamante (with Athena being reminded of her name) will do, with Athena offering a future title shot in exchange for a win. That's enough for Diamante.

#### Workhorsesmen vs. Dark Order

John Silver and Alex Reynolds, with Evil Uno, for the Order here. Silver and Henry start things off with Silver running him over without much trouble. Drake comes in with a slingshot hilo on Silver and a falling headbutt gets two. Silver manages to roll away from Henry though and it's off to Reynolds to clean house. A tiger driver gets two on Henry but he's back up with a flipping faceplant. Drake kicks Reynolds in the face but accidentally gets dropkicked by Henry. That's enough for a series of strikes to Henry, setting up the cutter into the German suplex into the flipping rollup to give Reynolds the pin at 4:23.

**Rating:** C. The Dark Order have settled into a nice role: the team who is there to do nothing more than fire up the crowd in a pretty nothing match. That is a valuable piece to have and what is left of the team plays it well. Just don't try to make them too serious and everything should work out well for them.

#### Rush vs. Brian Pillman Jr.

I had forgotten Pillman Jr. was still here. Rush chops away to start and rakes the eyes over the top for a bonus. A hard

right hand sends Pillman outside, with commentary getting to talk about the new barricades. Preston Vance gets in a few cheap shots and Rush is able to kick away at Pillman's head back inside. Pillman actually wins a strike off and hits a dropkick, only to get knocked into the corner. The Bull's Horns finishes Pillman at 4:06.

**Rating:** C. This show is already getting into a funk of having matches on a similar level over and over. This one at least had some more star power to it, as Rush certainly feels like a big deal, even if he hasn't really done much around here. Pillman Jr....dang I just don't know what happened. He felt like he had the potential and it just never took off. It still could, but he might need to go somewhere else and build himself up first.

Post match Rush whips him with an electrical cord and bends Pillman's arm.

#### Diamante/Athena vs. Yuka Sakazaki/Skye Blue

Madison Rayne is here with Blue/Sakazaki. Diamante runs Sakazaki over to start but Sakazaki pops up with a sliding lariat for two. The camera goes a bit nuts for a second as Blue comes in and headscissors Athena into the corner. A Diamante distraction lets Athena knock Blue off the top though and Athena pats Diamante on the head.

The villains take turns suplexing Blue until she kicks Athena away for the hot tag. Sakazaki gets to clean house, including a missile dropkick to Athena. Everything breaks down and Athena powerbombs Sakazaki. Back up and Sakazaki hits Diamante in the face, setting up a spinning armtrap faceplant for the pin at 7:08.

**Rating:** C+. They had some more time with this one and it helped let them flesh things out a bit. Sakazaki is a ball of energy and Blue has come a long way in her time around here. At the same time, Athena is growing into her heel role rather

well and I'm curious to see how far she can take it after her previous pushes have stalled so often.

### Top Flight vs. Ari Daivari/Tony Nese

Mark Sterling is here with Daivari and Nese and offers free soap to everyone here. There is allegedly a bar of soap under their seat, but everyone who checks is declared guilty of breaking Kentucky's showering laws. Darius dropkicks Nese down to start as we hear about Sterling's toy podcast. Dante comes in with a slingshot hilo but Nese gets in a cheap shot from behind.

The springboard moonsault gives Nese two on Darius and the villains double team him down in the corner. A double hurricanrana is enough to get Darius over for the tag though and everything breaks down. Dante and Darius both hit big flip dives but the Nose Dive is countered back inside. Instead it's a Dominator/sliding cutter for two on Dante but he is right back up with the Nose Dive for the pin at 5:03.

**Rating:** C+. This was another fun one as Top Flight continues to rack up wins. I could see the team getting somewhere in AEW and a title reign is not out of the question. The fact that they went from little more than an ok team to one of the most entertaining acts around. Go with that and have them do their thing here and there.

Yuka Sakazaki is asked about Athena but the Dark Order comes in to offer her a spot on the team. She says "hai" (yes in Japanese) but they don't quite get it and leave.

### Kings Of The Black Throne vs. Turbo Floyd/Truth Magnum

Floyd and Magnum have rather toothpaste colored gear. Black spins Magnum around to start and has a seat to wait on him, much to Magnum's shock. Turbo and King come in, with King chopping away at Floyd and Magnum. Everything breaks down and the toss over the shoulder piledriver finishes for King at

2:52. The House Of Black is getting a bigger and bigger reaction every week. They're going to be turned face sooner than later at this rate.

### Ring Of Honor World Title: Claudio Castagnoli vs. Blake Christian.

Castagnoli is defending and runs Christian over to start. A shot to the face drops Christian again but he manages to knock Castagnoli outside. That's fine with the champ, who drops Christian chest first onto the apron. Back in and Castagnoli is not looking worried but an attempt at a Samoan drop changes things.

Christian gets a boot up in the corner though and Castagnoli gets kicked down. With Castagnoli on the apron, Christian cuts him down with a spear and adds a top rope double stomp for two back inside. Back in and Castagnoli tries the Swing but gets rolled up for two. Christian hits a springboard 450 for two but gets pulled into a powerbomb. The Swing makes Christian tap at 7:17.

**Rating:** B-. It wasn't a classic but Castagnoli let Christian get in some nice stuff near the end. Castagnoli is one of the better things that AEW has been doing as of late, especially with the Ring Of Honor World Title not being the focus so often. Christian is someone who has looked good during his appearances so we should be in for something good when he gets to stick around.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This is another one of those shows that is almost entirely wrestling rather than advancing any stories. That makes a lot of sense as ultimately, it is the second internet show that AEW produces every week and it doesn't mean much. For about an hour of action a week though, it is about as harmless as it could go, which is at least one way to go. This show was far from great and it's still too long, but getting the stars out there to do something is better than

having them sit at home. Pretty good show here.

### Results

Red Velvet b. Billie Starkz – Final Slice

Dark Order b. Workhorsesmen – Rollup to Henry

Rush b. Brian Pillman Jr. – Bull's Horns

Yuka Sakazaki/Skye Blue b. Diamante/Athena – Spinning armtrap  
faceplant to Diamante

Top Flight b. Ari Daivari/Tony Nese – Nose Dive to Nese

Kings Of The Black Throne b. Turbo Floyd/Truth Magnum – Toss  
over the shoulder piledriver to Floyd

Claudio Castagnoli b. Blake Christian – Swing

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