

Ring of Honor TV – February 24, 2016: Behold The Power Of New Japan

Ring of Honor

Date: February 24, 2016

Location: Nashville Municipal Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee

Attendance: 675

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

We're getting closer to the finals of the Top Prospect Tournament and hopefully we'll get some build on the World Title feud this week. However, it's also the start of a new taping cycle which means that this is the last week that will be taking place before the Anniversary Show airs on Friday. Therefore, the next few shows will be stand alone so enjoy the continuity while it lasts. Let's get to it.

There's a new set and the production values have gone way up.

TV Title: Roderick Strong vs. Jonathan Gresham

Strong is defending. Before the match, Veda Scott comes out to offer Gresham a lot of money in exchange for giving his shot to Cedric Alexander and then leaving Ring of Honor forever. The request is quickly denied and that's all for that story at the moment. Gresham takes the champ down by the arm to start but has to flip out of the Stronghold to give us a standoff. They trade chops (because of course) with Strong getting the better of it because Gresham is no Sting.

Gresham heads to the apron for a flip in, only to land on Strong's knee for a backbreaker. We take a break and come back with Strong chopping even more and dropkicking Gresham out of the air. A running boot in the corner misses and Jonathan bends Strong's fingers to break up a backbreaker. Gresham loads up what looks like the same thing Pentagon Jr. uses to break arms in Lucha Underground but goes after the fingers again.

It's off to some more standard arm work with an armdrag and Octopus Stretch followed by....an ankle lock. Yes an ankle lock after working on the fingers and the arm because people like Gresham think that makes you look smart and/or cool. Thankfully he's back to the arm a few seconds later (making the ankle lock stuff look even dumber), only to have Strong knee him in the head to retain at 8:45.

Rating: C-. The match was watchable if you can ignore the ankle lock nonsense in the middle. Gresham is fine but he's another wrestler who has no real character and is just out there doing moves. That's going to get you over in a place like Ring of Honor but when half the roster fits that description, it's really starting to get lost in the shuffle. On top of that, none of this matters because New Japan wrestler Tomohiro Ishii won the title because HAHA NEW JAPAN ROCKS, basically throwing the whole story out and resetting things less than a week before a pay per view.

Post match Bobby Fish comes out to steal the title, triggering a brawl.

Bob Evans/Tim Hughes vs. War Machine

Non-title. Rowe and Hughes get things going and Tim is thrown into the corner for an early tag to Evans. Bob's amateur wrestling attempts go just as badly and it's back to Hughes. The champs keep having fun with an exploder suplex and it's off to Hanson. Rowe cartwheels away from Evans and a reverse powerbomb followed by Hanson's top rope splash is good for the pin on Bob at 2:56. Total squash.

Post match the All Night Express comes out with weapons to say time is running out on the title reign. All the other teams look at War Machine and see tattooed power. Kenny King looks at them and sees some bearded thugs. They aren't here to fight tonight because they have plans for War Machine on Friday.

Silas Young is out of patience for the Boys and can't wait to crush them next week.

The Young Bucks say wrestling is very dirty so they need to bring in the Cleaner Kenny Omega. This Friday will be the world's biggest superkick party.

We look back at Adam Page attacking BJ Whitmer last week.

BJ Whitmer vs. Chase Brown

Brown is named Cauliflower and he brings some out with him. Whitmer knocks him into the corner to start and there's the exploder suplex for the pin on Brown at 56 seconds.

Whitmer gives him another exploder but here's Steve Corino before Whitmer can say anything else. Instead, BJ wants Adam Page out here so Page sneaks in through the crowd with a clothesline and right hands until we take a break.

Dalton Castle has the Boys ready for next week.

Here's Adam Cole for some Story Time. He's finally getting his shot at the World Title at the Anniversary Show and you're going to see Jay Lethal and Kyle O'Reilly trying to keep up with him. Adam promises that Kyle is never getting near the World Title and Lethal has never met anything like him. This brings out the House of Truth with Lethal talking about how Kyle has never been a champion so let's leave the kid out of this.

On Friday in Las Vegas, Lethal is going to prove that the house always wins. As Nigel groans about needing security again, here comes Kyle O'Reilly to interrupt. They don't even bother talking again and the fight is on. Cole lays Lethal out but walks into Kyle's brainbuster. O'Reilly picks up the belt to a VERY quiet reaction as security arrives.

ACH/Alex Shelley vs. Briscoe Brothers

Mark and Jay have ODB with them for an unnecessary cameo. Christopher Daniels is on commentary. ACH and Mark get things going with a lockup until ACH nails a dropkick on both Briscoes. Mark comes back with a running clothesline before Jay comes in for some uppercuts and headbutts. It's off to Shelley who sends Mark to the floor and a top rope ax handle puts Jay down.

We take another break and come back with Alex forearming Jay, allowing the tag off to ACH. Everything breaks down and the Briscoes are in

trouble with ACH mostly hitting the Jordan onto Jay. Back in and a jumping cutter gets two on Mark with Jay making the save and cleaning house. Mark kicks Alex in the face but gets kicked in the corner. Daniels gets on the apron for a distraction and ACH misses the Midnight Star, allowing the Doomsday Device to put ACH away at 8:35.

Rating: D+. You knew the ending here as there was no way they were going to job the Briscoes before the match with Tanahashi and Elgin on Friday. On top of that, the Shelley and Pals vs. KRD feud is somehow still chasing its own tail and won't end no matter how dull and uninteresting of a story it is. This was your usual "this team is on a roll" match and a lame ending to a very weak show.

Post match Kazarian and Sabin come in for the beatdown until security breaks it up.

An add for the Anniversary Show (read as NEW JAPAN IS AWESOME) takes us out.

Overall Rating: D. The more of these go home shows I see, the less interest I have in the ensuing pay per views. If there's one thing Ring of Honor needs to do, it's find a better way to build up their big shows. I really don't know what the top match is on Friday (yes I know the World Title match is going on last) because the TV Title has been built up the best, Whitmer vs. Page is associated with the most personal feud, Tanahashi is treated as a bigger star than anyone in Ring of Honor and the World Title is the World Title but it's lucky to get a mention every week.

This show didn't do much for me either as you had a decent opener, two squashes, a talking segment which drew crickets and the average main event. I'm really not sure how this is supposed to make me want to buy a pay per view but I guess the powers of New Japan and its start showing up are supposed to be enough. Not a good go home show here and the pay per view is really not doing much for me either.

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Ring of Honor TV – February 10, 2016: I'd Hate To See The Bottom Prospects

Ring of Honor

Date: February 10, 2016

Location: Cabarrus Arena and Events Center, Concord, North Carolina

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

Things are picking up again around here, as they so often do as we come up on a big match. The big story continues to be the multi-man World

Title match at the 14th Anniversary Show, but we also have the Top Prospect Tournament continuing, as well as the continuation of BJ Whitmer vs. Steve Corino. Let's get to it.

Alex Shelley vs. Frankie Kazarian

Chris Sabin sits in on commentary. Shelley starts firing off chops as Sabin's early advice doesn't seem to have done much good. Kazarian's dive is blocked with a kick to the head and it's off to the knee to keep Alex in control. It doesn't last long though as a slingshot DDT takes Shelly down as we go to a break. Back with Kazarian smacking Sabin in the face as Steve Corino calls in to the show. Corino is sick about what happened to Colby last week and he's going to be back next week to deal with BJ

Whitmer.

Shelley avoids a top rope legdrop and clotheslines Kazarian out to the floor. Back in and Kazarian grabs a swinging neckbreaker and a running Downward Spiral for two, only to get shoved away off the Killswitch. Shelley's top rope splash hits knees though, only to have Kazarian pull out a hammer. Alex takes it away and glares at Sabin, setting up Sliced Bread #2 for the pin at 11:15.

Rating: C. I don't care about this feud. Are they really building this up for the sake of a match between Sabin and Shelley? I know the Motor City Machine Guns were a big deal a few years back but are people still going to care about them enough to watch them fight in 2016? It doesn't help that I'm really not feeling Shelley's style and that Sabin is barely an active wrestler. I guess there's an audience for it, but I'm really not feeling it.

Dalton Castle vs. Joey Daddiego

Before the match, Truth Martini suggests that the Boys need a daddy instead of someone teaching them to be a man. Joey takes him into the corner to start and does the WHO'S YOUR DADDY line. Castle easily takes over with a slam but does a big walk around the ring instead of diving through the ropes to take Joey out.

However, Martini actually does something for a change by crotching Castle on top, allowing him to get in the ring for some dancing. The Boys low bridge him to the floor though, leaving us with only the match for a change. A World's Strongest Slam gets two for Joey but Castle starts the comeback with a running knee in the corner, followed by a running boot to the jaw for good measure. The Bang A Rang is enough to put Joey away at 3:35.

Rating: C-. Entertaining enough but it was a bit too much going on instead of just having the match. Daddiego is kind of worthless but at least there's someone there to do the jobbing for the House of Truth. That being said, the entire stable is basically Truth, Lethal, Daddiego and Hendrix, which isn't much more than Lethal and pals. Castle was fine though and is going to go somewhere once the Silas Young feud wraps up.

Speaking of Silas Young, here he is to make a final offer to Brent and Brendan (the Boys). As the Beer City Bruiser helps beat Castle down, Silas talks about how the Boys need to make their decision, only to have them fight back against Silas. That just earns them another beating and the villains get to yell a lot.

Top Prospect Tournament First Round: Leo St. Giovanni vs. Action Ortiz

Ortiz is described as a Bam Bam Bigelow type and was trained by Tommy Dreamer. Leo on the other hand has an MMA background. Ortiz gets knocked to the floor to start but blocks a charge with a big forearm to the face. Back in and Ortiz misses a Frog Splash, allowing Leo to go up for something like Xavier Woods' Honor Roll from the top for two of his own. After a dive over the top to stagger him, Ortiz kicks Leo in the head to stagger him again. A belly to back flip suplex (as in Leo keeps going until he lands on his face) sends Ortiz to the next round at 3:45.

Rating: D. I really wasn't feeling this one as neither guy had much of a presence. Leo was just a guy with a generic style and some decent flips, though it's nothing that I haven't seen a bunch of people do before. Ortiz is a bigger guy and moves well but again he doesn't do anything for me. It's not the worst, but it's the same problem I've been worried about in this tournament: I don't have any reason to care about these people and they're not really helping things.

Stokely Hathaway wants Kazuchika Okada to face Moose at the Anniversary Show.

We look back at Final Battle to see the All Night Express becoming the #1 contenders.

Tag Team Titles: All Night Express vs. War Machine

War Machine (Hansen and Rowe in case you're not familiar) are defending. Hansen and Titus get things going with the much bigger champion running him over. King comes in off a blind tag and an atomic drop/clothesline combination staggers Hansen, who comes right back with a double clothesline to take over again. It's off to Rowe who terrifies King back into the corner for a tag to Rhett. Well that's one way to switch things

off.

The challengers take over but Hansen breaks up what looked like a powerbomb/neckbreaker combo. Rowe slams Hansen onto King for two, followed by Hansen powerbombing Rowe onto Titus as we take a break. Back with Titus low bridging Hansen to the floor but being pulled out of the air on a dive to Rowe. Everything breaks down with King being sent hard into the barricade with both teams diving back in at nineteen.

Titus will have none of this staying in the ring thing though as he and Hansen both dive through the ropes for huge crashes. Back in and King has to escape Fallout but he might have pulled the referee into the path of Hansen's running knees. Titus pulls out a table (apparently not realizing that Nigel McGuinness is RIGHT THERE) but King gets driven through it, drawing a DQ at 11:02 as the referee wakes up just in time.

Rating: C+. The match wasn't bad but it was clearly just a way to set up another title match at the pay per view. Knowing ROH, it's going to be some big messy match with several teams that loses any sense of structure or order. However, this actually worked with the Express hanging in there with the monsters for the entire match and then somehow winning in the end. Well done and a reason to watch the rematch.

The teams keep brawling to end the show as the fans want to see them fight.

Overall Rating: C. I liked the show for the most part with enough of the stories rolling along, though the World Title situation continues to not really be a priority around here. It's cool that so many other things are treated as major ideas but the old fan in me wants to see the World Title as the centerpiece of the promotion instead of just another part of the show. Good enough show here but it was a step beneath some of their recent efforts.

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Ring of Honor TV – January 13, 2016: That's A Lot Of Tag Teams

Ring of Honor

Date: January 13, 2016

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 600

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Kevin Kelly

The show started the new year on a roll so hopefully things can keep up this week. If nothing else this week won't have build up for a show that already took place. Nothing has been announced for this show but that's normally the case for this company and things tend to turn out fine. Let's get to it.

Roppongi Vice vs. All Night Express

The Express are the #1 contenders to the Tag Team Titles so this should be a nice test for them. King and Barreta go to the mat to start and it's a quick standoff. The Express gets smart by taking Barreta into their corner for some double teaming, only to have Titus get backdropped out to the floor. King clotheslines Barreta but gets taken down by Romero. Nice starting sequence.

Romero gets kicked in the face for his efforts and Barreta gets pulled off the apron, sending him head first into the buckle as we take a break. Back with Barreta getting double teamed again but King takes a breather to shout at the crowd for a bit. Barreta gets in his double stomp out of the corner though and the hot tag brings in Romero.

House is cleaned until it's back to Barreta for a slugout, only to have Vice double knee Titus in the chest. King gets taken down by a suicide dive and there's Strong Zero (a springboard spike Fade to Black) on Titus but there's no count. Instead King, the legal man, runs in and rolls Barreta up for the pin at 10:48.

Rating: C+. I liked this a lot more than I was expecting to as I'm not a fan of either team. Instead they had a nice back and forth formula based match which worked far better than I thought it would. The right team won and they did so legally while still being heels, making everyone come out looking fine. Much better match than I was expecting.

Here's the Kingdom (including Mike and Maria who have both left and Taven who is out for the better part of a year) for the first time since Final Battle. Cole says it's time for Story Time with the Kingdom. There's security around the ring so Kyle O'Reilly can't come out here for another cheap shot. Cole says that he won but the other two dropped the ball. How can they hold all the gold without Taven and Bennett holding the Tag Team Titles?

Cue ReDRagon to say they remade tag team wrestling in this company and if they have to run through the Kingdom to get their belts back, it's time for Nigel to make the match. That's fine with McGuinness, who makes the match for next week. This brings out the Young Bucks who says if anyone is taking out these Bullet Club marks, it's them. Therefore, Nigel makes it a three way Philadelphia street fight. Well that was quick.

Donovan Dijak/Joey Daddiego vs. War Machine

Non-title. Rowe gets kicked in the face to start and Dijak knocks Hanson off the apron as well. Donovan isn't done as he takes out both champions with a corkscrew dive but he isn't interested in using the Book of Truth. Instead it's off to Daddiego, allowing Hanson to start slamming both

guys. He piles the two of them on top for some forearms to Dijak's chest, followed by a double Bronco Buster. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker into a Superman Punch drops Dijak and there's a double chokeslam to Daddiego. Fallout ends Dijak in a hurry at 3:22.

Rating: D+. Total squash here but Dijak looked solid. Daddiego is still just a small guy without much upside but Dijak is another example of a guy who really shouldn't be able to do the things he does at his size. That never ceases to impress me, though the thing with the Book of Truth would suggest a split in the future.

Post break Truth Martini says Dijak is the weak link in the team, which even the announcers find stupid. There was no Dijak at the main event of Final Battle, which was a slap in Martini's face. Truth slaps Dijak in the face and Daddiego punches Dijak down. Martini's trash talk earns Daddiego a Feast Your Eyes so Martini fires Dijak. The fans seem very pleased. Cue Prince Nana to applaud as well.

ReDRagon is ready for next week.

We look at Dalton Castle reuniting with the Boys at Final Battle.

Dalton Castle vs. Jay Briscoe vs. Matt Sydal vs. Moose

This is one fall to a finish despite being called a survival match. You have to tag but there are lucha rules so going to the floor counts as a tag. Briscoe doesn't seem cool with Castle, which really isn't all that surprising. Sydal vs. Moose gets us going with Matt teasing a test of strength as a ruse to kick Moose in the thigh. A running curb stomp misses though and Moose tells him to bring it.

Now we actually get the test of strength with Matt going down in about half a second. Thankfully it's off to Jay for the big staredown and the fans aren't sure who to cheer for. Castle tags himself in to face Briscoe though and we get a much different showdown. The Jay Driller and Bang a Rang are both broken up to take us to a staredown, followed by a break. Back with Briscoe headbutting Castle before it's off to Moose. The announcers say the two of them have been tagging in and out to work on Castle during the break, which may or may not be true but at least

they're trying to make it work.

As expected, Moose and Briscoe quickly break down and they trade some big left hands. Moose gets the better of it but stops to dance a bit, allowing Castle to get two off a German suplex. Everyone but Sydal winds up on the floor so Matt busts out a big moonsault to take them all down. The Boys start fanning until Moose's manager Stokely Hathaway steals a fan to cool Moose off.

Back in and Sydal hurricanranas Moose for two until Jay makes a quick save. Moose spears Jay down but walks into a missile dropkick from Castle, who is taken down by Sydal's reverse hurricanrana. The shooting star misses though and Castle Bang a Rangs Sydal for the pin at 9:18.

Rating: C. This was fine though more of your standard Ring of Honor formula. I know the name is a longstanding tradition in this company but when I hear the word "survival", the first thing I think of is an elimination tag. I get the idea but I still wish they would change that. Castle winning is a nice touch and a surprise as he could definitely move up in the ranks soon enough.

Overall Rating: C. It was another totally watchable show from a company that specializes in such. The Kingdom basically crumbling is sad but at least they'll have a good blowoff match next week to send them off. I'm not sure where a lot of this stuff goes but they have some time before we get to the next pay per view in late February.

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Ring of Honor Final Battle 2015: We'll Call It A Success

Final Battle 2015

Date: December 18, 2015

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Mr. Wrestling III

As the name suggests, this is the final major show of the year for Ring of Honor as well as the biggest show of the year. The main event is a dream match with Ring of Honor World Champion Jay Lethal defending against AJ Styles in a match that hasn't been the best promoted. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Cheeseburger vs. Bob Evans

This is the blowoff to a feud that has gone on far too long for a low level team that split up. Evans, with new student Tim Hughes in his corner, is a grizzled veteran and Cheeseburger is the size of a fourteen year old on a growth spurt. During the entrances, Kelly asks why Mr. Wrestling III sounds EXACTLY like Steve Corino. I'm sure you get the joke here.

Cheeseburger has to fight off Hughes to start and low bridges Evans out to the floor. An Asai moonsault takes out both villains but we get some old school distractions so Hughes can cheap shot Cheeseburger. Evans makes it even worse by putting on Cheeseburger's hat. That's like, evil man. Back in and Evans steps on Cheeseburger's broken hand (which Evans threatened to saw off) as the slow beating continues.

Cheeseburger fights back again as Wrestling III makes sandwich puns. A springboard knee to the head drops Evans for two but the much bigger Bob runs him over. Evans trips going up top and Cheeseburger hits two straight palm strikes, the second of which puts Evans on the middle rope.

A middle rope DDT gives Cheeseburger the kind of lame pin to end the feud.

Rating: D+. This is another feud where it needed to end a lot sooner than it did. It's the same story they've had for months now and I don't know why I needed to see another match between the two of them with Cheeseburger fighting from behind and getting the big underdog victory. At least it didn't eat up a lot of TV time along the way though and they kept this before the pay per view here.

The opening video is kept simple as they just look at the matches on the card.

Briscoe Brothers vs. All Night Express vs. Young Bucks

For the #1 contendership and one fall to a finish. The Express beat the Briscoes and got cheated out of a win over the Bucks. The Briscoes are here because they're the best tag team in ROH history. Mark Briscoe and Nick Jackson get things going and we get an early SUCK IT because that's what the Bucks do. As the Spanish commentary bleeds in a bit, Jay comes in to pound on Nick as Wrestling III goes on the shortest limb ever to suggest that Jay is the most decorated wrestler in ROH history.

Titus tags himself in and the fans are not happy with the Bucks being on the apron. Jay elbows Titus out of the corner but eats a superkick from Matt, meaning it's time for a mini superkick party. The Bucks are cleared from the ring and it's time for Titus vs. Mark. That doesn't last long as Mark takes him to the floor for a Blockbuster off the apron, only to have King dive on Mark. Jay does the same to King and Titus eats a superkick.

Both Bucks hit 450's for two on Titus and it's time for everyone to kick each other a bunch of times. For instance, Jay takes Nick down with a neckbreaker but eats a superkick from Matt. Of course the fans eat this up while also likely booing John Cena for only having five moves. The Briscoes take over on King with some good old fashioned double teaming. A Doomsday Device to King is broken up but the Bucks are right there with double superkicks to King and both Briscoes.

The Meltzer Driver gets two on Jay (Wrestling III: "FIVE STARS! FIVE

STARS! FIVE STARS! Uncle Dave must be smiling at home!") but More Bang for Your Buck is broken up. Mark loads Titus up for a superplex but King kicks him in the head, setting up a super One Night Stand (a powerbomb/Blockbuster combo) to pin Mark and give the Express the title shot. The fans are NOT happy with the result.

Rating: B-. Well they had the right idea here and the match was fun, though I really do not care for the Young Bucks. The idea is there but it's just not something I ever need to see again. That being said, this was a really solid choice for an opener as the fans are on fire and the match was hot enough to get the show off on the right foot. Good stuff here, though far more entertaining than quality.

We recap Silas Young vs. Dalton Castle, which is a huge culture clash. Castle is much more flamboyant and had possession of his Boys. Young wanted those Boys to become men and won them in a match a few weeks back. Tonight is the final battle (oh I think I get it now) between the two, even though the Boys seem to have chosen to stay with Young.

Silas Young vs. Dalton Castle

Young has the Boys with him but is quickly taken down with some amateur stuff. This sets up a chase but the Boys block Castle from going after their new....boss? Back in and Young sends him hard into the corner and drops Castle face first onto the buckle. Kelly thinks Castle is just a step off here, meaning the Boys are worth a half step each. A low blow make things even worse for Castle but the fans are too busy telling Young that he sucks to notice what's going on.

We hit the chinlock (now that's something you don't see too often in ROH) for a bit before Dalton pops back up with a German suplex to get a breather. A half butterfly suplex gets two on Young and it's time to pull back the floor mats. The Boys don't seem to mind and watch the two of them slug it out on the apron.

Young sends him to another part of the apron and spears Castle through the corner and out to the floor. They're doing a good job here of having Silas doing the speed wrestling and amateur stuff while Young is just doing pure power brawling. Castle catches a charge and sends him out to

the apron, followed by a nice deadlift German from the apron for two.

Young backflips out of the corner but gets speared right back in as they've swapped styles. A slugout goes to Young but he dives into a release belly to belly throw. The Boys try to break up another German and one gets pulled in, only to eat a right hand from Castle. The distraught Dalton walks into Misery to give Young the pin.

Rating: C+. I still like the story they're going with here but I'm not sure what the point here was in having Young win again. You would think the play here would be to have Castle get his revenge, perhaps with the Boys helping out, though it would kind of make their recent show of loyalty to Young seem a bit questionable.

Post match Young stomps on Castle and demands that he admit Young is a real man. Castle won't say anything so Young stomps him down even more. Silas gives the Boys some chairs and Castle finally admits that Silas is a man. A very foolish man however as those are Dalton's boys, who beat Young down with the chairs. Castle adds a Bang-a-Rang and sits on the Boys, who are now free, meaning stipulations mean nothing in ROH. There better be a Boys Are Back In Town reference some point soon.

We recap Moose vs. Michael Elgin which is all about who is the better monster. Both of them want a shot at Jay Lethal's World Title so let's have them beat on each other until one can't get up.

Moose vs. Michael Elgin

Winner might be #1 contender but it doesn't seem to be official. Moose comes out in a football helmet and shoulder pads to play up his NFL career. They shake hands to start before shoulders don't move either guy anywhere. The next set of shoulders put both guys down and they slowly slug it out with Elgin getting the better of it, setting up a delayed vertical suplex.

Elgin barely looked strained there but Moose pops right up, mainly because it's just a suplex. Back up and Elgin beats him to the punch, only to walk into a dropkick from the big man. They head outside with Moose's spear hitting the barricade, allowing Elgin to hit a cannonball

off the apron. Back in and a top rope shoulder (always cool) gets two for Mike as the announcers try to figure out if Elgin vs. Lethal, already signed for January 4 in Tokyo, will be a title match if Elgin wins here. So much for leaving any doubt about the ending.

Moose sends him flying off a fallaway slam, only to eat an enziguri. By eat I mean take because you don't eat with the back of your head of course. Some rolling Germans have Moose in trouble but he puts Elgin on the top for another impressive dropkick. That means it's time for a top rope plancha from Moose which only kind of connects but it still looked good. A sitout powerbomb gets two for Moose as they're trading bombs here.

They head to the apron with Elgin's Death Valley Driver looking to set up a corkscrew senton (not great looking but Elgin is no high flier) for two. Moose hammers away but charges into a double pop up powerbomb (That's not normal. Like at all.), followed by the Elgin Bomb for a very close two.

Elgin is stunned, allowing Moose to hit a spear out of nowhere for a near fall of his own, sending Stokely into hysterics on the floor. That Spanish commentary bleeds in again as Moose gets all fired up, only to miss a charge in the corner. A Burning Hammer of all things (reverse Death Valley Driver with a shout of I'M COMING FOR YOU LETHAL) finally puts Moose away.

Rating: C+. Take two monsters and let them beat on each other for about ten minutes. It's a formula that's worked forever and it's going to keep working, even in a smark promotion like Ring of Honor. Elgin winning was obvious as Moose still needs a lot of seasoning, but at least it was a fun match while it lasted. Good stuff, though it never hit that big power match level that these things are capable of hitting.

They shake hands again post match.

We recap Kyle O'Reilly vs. Adam Cole. They used to be partners in Future Shock and started to put the team back together until Cole turned on him at All-Star Extravaganza. Cole was ticked off about O'Reilly being dubbed a future star after Cole already held the ROH World Title. This caused

Cole to start ruining O'Reilly's life and career, setting up a showdown here. The recap promos do little to disprove the fact that Cole is so far ahead of O'Reilly on the mic.

Adam Cole vs. Kyle O'Reilly

They're all over each other to start with Kyle trying for a triangle choke, only to settle for kicking Cole in the face instead. Cole is knocked outside and tries a chair but Kyle dropkicks him off the apron to knock it away. Back in and Kyle starts in on the arm before grabbing a quickly broken choke. O'Reilly tries to get a bit too fancy though and gets dropkicked out to the floor, meaning it's time for Adam to go after the leg.

Kyle doesn't seem to mind as he fires off knees, only to get taken down by the leg again. A leg lock doesn't do much so Kyle wins a slugout but Cole takes him down into a half crab. With the holds not working, Cole blasts him in the head with a running knee instead. Kyle gets in a knee to the face of his own but it slows him down. Of course he's able to snap off a series of strikes with a leg sweep before holding his knee again.

Kyle slaps him in the face but Cole flips him off, earning himself a cross armbreaker. Cole counters with a stomp to the face as the fans think this is wrestling. Not quite but you don't argue with Philadelphia fans. They trade kicks until Kyle grabs a suplex for two to put both guys down again. Kyle's Kimura is countered into a fireman's carry neckbreaker to give Cole a breather.

Cole kicks the knee out and enziguris Kyle out to the floor, only to get caught in a guillotine. That's countered into a suplex neckbreaker to give Cole two back inside. With nothing else working, it's time to hit the Figure Four on Kyle's bad knee. They strike it off again with a bunch of Japanese kicks from Kyle, who walks into a superkick. Kyle bounces off the ropes ala Ambrose, only to walk into another superkick ala half the WWE roster.

O'Reilly gets in a lariat off the second rebound and grabs the armbreaker, sending Cole into the ropes. Fans: "THIS IS AWESOME!" I just want to shake these people hard and scream at them about how they don't

get it. Cole hits another superkick so Kyle grabs a triangle choke, only to have Cole fall forward and put his feet on the ropes for a pin.

Rating: B+. HORRENDOUS selling issues aside ("BUT IT'S FIGHTING SPIRIT!" No, it's stupid. You can call it whatever you want but it's code for they aren't selling.), this was a very well told story with Kyle being so obsessed with the submissions and making Cole tap out that he forgot you could win by pinfall, giving Cole an opening to win. All the striking was a bit more acceptable here as they would do other stuff in between, but that section where Kyle got kicked in the face over and over and then just did a clothesline followed by another hold was horrible.

Kyle destroys Cole's arm with a cross armbreaker post match.

Quick recap of Addiction/Chris Sabin vs. ACH/Matt Sydal/Alex Shelley, which is simply a way to give us Sabin vs. Shelley without giving us Sabin vs. Shelley.

Chris Sabin/Addiction vs. ACH/Matt Sydal/Alex Shelley

Prince Nana comes out for commentary for no apparent reason. Daniels and Shelley get things going with Alex taking him down by the arm. It's off to Sydal with a slingshot dropkick but Kazarian gets in a cheap shot and comes in to take over. That goes nowhere so it's off to ACH as the announcers discuss Dragon Ball Z. Sabin comes in and things speed up without much contact as it only can in ROH.

We get the big showdown with Shelley but you know it's not happening that fast, meaning it's off to Kazarian instead. ACH comes in for an awkward run into a drop toehold before Sydal comes back in for a standing moonsault. Everything breaks down (shocking) and Sabin cleans house with some running kicks/knees to the face. Daniels comes in with a running neckbreaker to Sydal as things settle down.

The heels all hit legdrops with Kazarian adding a spinning springboard to his. Addiction breaks up a hot tag attempt and it's a triple dropkick for two on Sydal. Matt finally sends him into the corner and makes the tag off to Shelley for some much needed house cleaning. A dragon screw leg whip puts Daniels down and it's off to ACH as this really isn't clicking

so far. Everything breaks down and ACH totally botches what looked to be a headscissors around the post.

Daniels can't hit the BME and it's back to Sydal for his jumping strikes. The good guys try a triple....something on Daniels that doesn't quite work, just like Matt's shooting star as Daniels gets his knees up. Daniels starts taking down all of the good guys until ACH sends him into Sabin. The Midnight Star (450) and the shooting star press from Sydal are enough for the pin on Chris.

Rating: D+. Did you know these guys are indy wrestlers? I didn't know if you knew it from the fifteen minute indy style match they just worked but they're indy wrestlers. Sabin vs. Shelley never happened and after this I really don't need to see it happen. Not a good match here and it really needed five minutes cut out. I'm not a fan of this style and it really didn't do anything for me here.

We get a promo from Bobby Fish which aired on TV last week. Roderick Strong calls himself Mr. ROH but Fish is the man that takes everyone to the limit. Tonight he's taking Strong past the limit and taking the title.

TV Title: Bobby Fish vs. Roderick Strong

Roderick is defending. They hit the mat to start with Fish getting the better of it as the fans are mostly split. Bobby goes for the arm and tries the leg, sending Strong bailing for the ropes. A few minutes in and Kelly mentions that Fish pinned Strong back in September. Strong avoids a plancha to the floor and drops Fish onto the barricade to take over for the first time.

Back in and a quick suplex gets two for the champ and a belly to back suplex into a backbreaker (not bad) has Fish in even more trouble. Strong comes back with a running elbow and a high collar suplex into the corner ala Sami Zayn. We hit the rear naked choke (rapidly becoming too popular) but Strong is quickly in the ropes and firing off the running strikes. Fish gets sent to the apron and grabs a dragon screw leg whip to take over again, meaning it's time to trade forearms. Back in and Strong hits a quick enziguri and a middle rope backbreaker for two.

They head back up top with Strong pulling him down into a super falcon's arrow for two more. This has been trading big moves for a while now and it's starting to work more and more. Strong tries the running knee but gets caught in a leg bar. Roderick taps out where the referee can't see it so Fish releases the hold, only to walk into the jumping knee to the head to give Strong the pin.

Rating: B-. While the six man needed to lose five minutes, this could have used a few more minutes. It felt like they were leading somewhere with the trading of spots but instead they went with an oddly placed Undertaker vs. Lesnar from Summerslam finish. It's clear that they're turning Strong heel with the finish, which makes me wonder who is supposed to be the top face at this point. Not a great match or anything but at least it was entertaining and told most of a good story.

Here are Veda Scott and Cedric Alexander (with a nice watch) to ignore the fans telling them to shut up and brag about a settlement with Ring of Honor over their recent lawsuit. This just ate up time.

Tag Team Titles: War Machine vs. Kingdom

Kingdom is defending here and there's no real story. War Machine came out one day and told Taven and Bennett that they wanted the belts. Speaking of the belts, the Kingdom blasts War Machine with the titles before the bell and Taven dives onto Rowe. That's not it though as the champs hit a Hail Mary (spike piledriver) onto the floor. The bell finally rings as Rowe is thrown inside for two.

Unfortunately Taven comes up limping and you can tell something is very wrong. Hanson gets sent back first into the apron and the champs are still able to double team Rowe for two back inside. Taven's knee gives out on the floor so Rowe powerbombs Bennett up against the barricade. Back in and Fallout gives War Machine the titles in just over three minutes. I'm not going to rate this as it was clearly cut WAY short due to the injury and it wouldn't be fair to grade a match where they had to go home that fast.

Mr. Wrestling III leaves commentary and here's BJ Whitmer (not supposed to be here) to accuse Wrestling III of being Steve Corino. Security

quickly gets rid of him.

We recap AJ Styles vs. Jay Lethal, which is really just to see who is better. It feels like a way to put Lethal over as they've barely done any interacting in the weeks building up to this.

Nigel McGuinness and Jerry Lynn join commentary.

Ring of Honor World Title: AJ Styles vs. Jay Lethal

Lethal is defending and has Truth Martini/Taeler Hendrix with him. Styles, who has a bad back coming in, is part of the Bullet Club but comes out alone. We get some big match intros and we're ready to go. Feeling out process to start as they seem to have a lot of time to work with. AJ gets the better of a technical sequence and Lethal bails out to the floor. Back in and AJ grabs a headlock as the announcers debate whether Elgin vs. Lethal will be for the title or not.

We get the drop down into the dropkick from Styles but Lethal hiptosses him down for a basement dropkick of his own. It's time for some big chops until Lethal gets caught in the Calf Cutter, sending him straight to the ropes. AJ has to avoid a book shot from Martini and gets dropped onto the apron, drawing a TRUTH MARTINI chant.

Lethal gets smart by sending him back first into the barricade and the pace slows down. We hit a camel clutch as the fans swear at someone over something. A suplex into the corner (also becoming too popular lately) rocks Styles' back for two more and Lethal grabs the world's least convincing bearhug. Shockingly enough, Jay Lethal holding a bearhug doesn't last long as AJ comes back with forearms and clotheslines, followed by a suplex into the corner of his own.

The springboard forearm is caught in the Lethal Combination for two and the champ takes over again. They fight over a suplex until AJ takes him over for a neckbreaker. I've always liked that move. Styles can't get the Clash so Lethal throws him into the air and pulls him down into a neckbreaker for two of his own.

Lethal gets tired of this wrestling stuff and throws AJ over the

barricade and into the crowd. Ever the genius, Lethal tries a suicide dive with AJ still behind the barricade. AJ, also not that bright, tries the forearm off the barricade but really just collides with Lethal instead. Naturally the fans think it's awesome because you could put an ROH label on Lord Littlebrook vs. Little Beaver and they would declare it wrestling.

Back in and Jay grabs a Koji Clutch, only to get countered into the Calf Cutter, sending Jay into the ropes again. A big Lethal Injection out of the corner gets two but AJ snaps off a Pele, followed by the Bloody Sunday. Styles loads up something else but gets thrown over the top and through a table, absolutely destroying it in the crash. AJ dives in at nineteen and the Lethal Injection gets two (of course). Instead, Lethal uses Jerry Lynn's cradle piledriver (due to Jerry saying AJ would win) to set up the second Lethal Injection to retain.

Rating: B+. This wasn't a masterpiece or even a classic but it was a pay per view quality main event. Lethal pinning Styles clean was a good way to make Lethal look great as AJ has been considered one of the best in the world for a long time now. I'm not sure how long Jay holds the title but if they want to pull the trigger on something, giving it back to Elgin in Tokyo would be rather smart.

Lethal and company pose to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Good show but not great. The midcard stuff really didn't work well at times and it made the show feel like it was dragging more than once. A lot of the talents are having contract issues which changed up a bunch of the results but the show still worked well enough. I liked the show and it flew by so we'll call it a success after several weeks of good TV which built the show up well enough but not perfectly.

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Ring of Honor – December 16, 2015: The Almost Final Battle

Ring of Honor

Date: December 16, 2015

Location: Tennessee State Fair Grounds, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Kevin Kelly

It's the go home show for Final Battle but the complicated TV schedule would suggest that a lot of this isn't going to be focused on the pay per view main events. That being said, Ring of Honor has been more than entertaining enough lately and I've been looking forward to these shows more and more lately. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Adam Cole vs. Corey Hollis

Unfortunately no Maria with Cole. The announcers don't try to hide the fact that this is going to be a glorified squash. Cole stomps him down in the corner to start and does his signature pose. The AA onto the knee sends Hollis into the corner again and a Shining Wizard breaks up a comeback.

Hollis tries a springboard and is quickly knocked outside for his efforts. Back in and Cole misses a superkick and has his suplex countered into a Stunner of all things. Sean O'Haire's Widowmaker (kind of a fireman's carry into a spinebuster) but Cole stops him dead with a superkick. A brainbuster onto the knee gives Cole the pin at 4:29.

Rating: C-. This was much more entertaining than I was expecting as they kept it moving but also gave Hollis enough offense to keep this from being a total squash. Cole continues to be probably the most well rounded performer in ROH and that's a good choice for a showcase match like this one.

Post match we get a quick Story Time with Adam Cole where Kyle O'Reilly is guaranteed to be destroyed.

The Young Bucks vs. the All Night Express vs. the Briscoes for the #1 contendership is confirmed for Final Battle.

War Machine vs. Washington Bullets

The Bullets are Jon and Trey Williams, who decide it's a good idea to not shake hands with the big bearded monsters about to kill them. Hanson clotheslines both of them down and it's off to Rowe to German suplex Trey. Path of Resistance sets up Fallout for the pin on Jon at 1:33. Total squash and War Machine looked awesome.

Here's former referee Mike Posey as a rapper and a five person posse. The fans sound stunned as he "raps" about Dalton Castle at a level equal to PG-13 from the Nation of Domination days.

Dalton Castle vs. Mike Posey

Posey tries to jump Dalton before the bell and is easily suplexed for his efforts. Some headbutts have Posey in trouble and Dalton goes after the posse to kill some time. The distraction doesn't work as Castle belly to bellys him out to the floor, setting up the Bang A Rang for the pin at 2:50.

Post match Castle describes himself as the Aurora Borealis of the ring and says he's as majestic as they come. Castle: "Isn't that right Planet Peacock?" He wants Silas Young out here right now but gets the Boys instead. It's just a distraction though, allowing Young to sneak up behind Castle for a beating.

Here's Jerry Lynn for a special appearance. He talks about everyone calling him as he went through a recent surgery and was overwhelmed by

all the support. We quickly move on to the upcoming World Title match and Lynn can't pick a winner. Lynn has traveled the roads with both guys and he sees it as totally even. Kelly directly asks him but here's the House of Truth to interrupt.

Lethal accuses Lynn of being too old and out of touch so Jerry picks AJ. That's enough for Jay so he takes off his shirt but Jerry says Jay beating him up would hurt Lethal's parents. Lethal goes on a Flair style rant about how great he is and how much he's done this year. He says he is professional wrestling and the House of Truth walks out. I'm not a big Lethal fan but he ran circles around the pretty bad Lynn out there.

Video on Moose vs. Michael Elgin.

Roppangi Vice vs. ACH/Matt Sydal

Alex Shelley is on commentary. Sydal and Romero get things going with Matt working on the arm. Romero lands on his feet out of a monkey flip but one shot to the face sends him crawling over to Trent. That means a double tag and Trent takes over with some chops. ACH flips around a lot and dropkicks Trent to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Sydal in a Romero Octopus hold. A regular headlock doesn't work all that well and it's a hot tag to ACH as things speed way up. Trent gets kicked in the face to put him on the floor, setting up the Jordan flip dive. Back in and a delayed German gets two on Romero but Vice comes back with a string of knees to ACH's head for two. Standing Sliced Bread #2 drops Sydal but ACH kicks Romero in the face to put all four down.

Romero goes up to but gets kicked in the head, setting up a quick hurricanrana from Sydal. ACH takes Romero to the floor but Sydal's shooting star hits Trent's knees. Trent's running knee gets two on Matt and all four are back in. Romero distracts Trent to break up his kneeling piledriver and Code Red (a sunset bomb) is enough to give Sydal the pin at 11:31.

Rating: C. This just isn't my kind of match. They're flying around a lot and hitting (moderately) big spots but there's little flow to it and the ending is about who hits the last spot. I'm not a fan of this style

though and this didn't change my mind. It's certainly not the worst but I almost never have any reaction to this style.

One more run down of the card ends the show.

Overall Rating: C-. I wasn't feeling this one as much as it was almost all a big preview for next week's major show but there was nothing that made me want to see Final Battle more. Lynn's promo with Lethal was one sided and the wrestling ranged from squashes to nothing interesting. The card was almost entirely set up already though so this was just a bonus.

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Ring of Honor TV – December 2, 2015: They Know What They're Doing

Ring of Honor

Date: December 2, 2015

Location: Wings Stadium Annex, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Kevin Kelly, Mark Briscoe

Final Battle is just around the corner and for the first time in a long

time, Jay Lethal's World Title really seems vulnerable. However, for some reason ROH seems much more interested in the tag team division, though that's been some of the more interesting stuff they've been doing in recent weeks. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Adam Page vs. Will Ferrara

Page is still rightfully ticked off that he's off Final Battle because of Whitmer and Corino being forced off the show as well. Will gets jumped from behind before the bell, which is totally dishonorable but the referee starts the match anyway. Page stomps him in the corner as Kelly runs down the Final Battle card instead of talking about the match. Back up and Page charges into a boot in the corner, only to come right back with a dropkick to send Ferrara out to the floor.

A bridging pumphandle suplex (that's a new one) gets two for Page as Briscoe cheers for Ferrara. Will makes a quick comeback with a sunset bomb out of the corner for two. It's time for a Decade meeting on the floor but Ferrara dives onto everyone. Colby offers a referee distraction and Whitmer throws in the crutch, only to have Ferrara intercept it and lay out Page for the big upset at 4:05.

Rating: C-. It's cool to see the perennial jobber get a win like this though I'm still surprised that they're going to leave the Decade off the big show after everything they've done in recent months. Corino being out changed what they had planned but there's no one else that they could swap in there?

Post match Whitmer goes after Ferrara and the referee, drawing in Mark Briscoe for the save.

Here's the Addiction to yell about how badly they've been mistreated around here. Daniels goes on a sexist rant against Maria who belongs in a kitchen or a nursery. Daniels: "YEAH I SAID IT!" Then they had a masked man run in which should have stopped the match immediately but it just kept going. Kazarian says if Ring of Honor wants to play checkers, the Addition will play chess.....in New Japan Professional Wrestling. They'll go

win the Heavyweight Tag League and then come back to regain their World Tag Team Championships of the World.

Video on Adam Cole vs. Kyle O'Reilly which will be one heck of a grudge match at Final Battle.

Package on Brutal Bob Evans vs. Cheeseburger. WHY ARE THESE TWO STILL FIGHTING??? They were fighting like six months ago and they're still at it. Evans broke Cheeseburger's hand at this TV taping and they'll be fighting again on the Final Battle pre-show in another grudge match. I'll take that over them being on the main show.

We look back at Roderick Strong winning the TV Title last week.

Here's the House of Truth (good night that's a low cut dress on Hendrix) with something to say. Lethal says Strong FINALLY beat him last week after all the tries but Jay knows Strong couldn't do it again. He'll be TV Champion again soon enough anyway. That brings Lethal to AJ Styles, who Lethal came to for advice for most of their careers. It's true that Styles was the best wrestler in the world for years, but that changed when Lethal became the undisputed ROH Champion.

Lethal is the only undisputed champion and now he wants Styles out here to say it to his face. This brings out AJ (who thankfully can walk here) to say that Lethal is right because of that belt around his waist. Jay losing the TV Title was the best thing that could have happened to him though because he needs to focus on AJ and AJ alone. They shake hands and stare each other down with Jay holding up the belt. Well done and very simple idea here.

It's time for Storytime with Adam Cole which has become a highlight of these shows. Cole never saw this coming because even after he kicked Kyle with reality at All-Star Extravaganza, Kyle still didn't get it. O'Reilly isn't going to win the World Title as long as Cole is around because that's just not how it works. Cole starts yelling that Kyle will never be champion because he's not the man that Adam is. He's going to make Kyle quit and leave ROH because he can't handle the embarrassment of how bad things are going to get at Final Battle.

We run down the Final Battle card. I might have to watch that show.

Dalton Castle vs. Adam Cole

No Boys here and Castle is clearly not happy about it. Cole on the other hand has the whole Kingdom behind him. Kelly: "I think Cole's greatest advantage, aside from being a former World Champion, is having three mates at ringside." You can't buy analysis like this people. Before we get going, cue the Boys to stand by Dalton's side but Silas Young runs out to say not so fast. How nice is it to have stipulations adhered to?

Cole jumps Castle to start and Bennett trips Dalton to break up a comeback. Nigel: "Come on I'm right here!" Castle dives through the ropes to take out the Kingdom and Cole's dive off the apron only earns him a suplex. The fans are way behind Dalton here but Cole shuts them up with a superkick. The Kingdom gets involved and it's a quick DQ at 1:45.

Since the Kingdom has a Tag Team Title defense coming up, it would seem appropriate for their challengers to come out and make this a six man tag. The fans chant SIX MAN and that's what they get, thanks to Nigel.

War Machine/Dalton Castle vs. Kingdom

The good guys take over on the floor to start with Hanson and Rowe destroying Bennett and Cole, leaving Dalton to...bite Taven's stomach? They get inside for Rowe vs. Cole with the latter getting flipped all over the place off a clothesline. Taven and Bennett trip Rowe down and crotch him though, allowing the heels to take over. A dropkick from Taven gets two and a nice high cross body (Bennett: "TAVEN! FLY!") connects for the same.

We take a break and come back with nothing having changed as Rowe is taken back into the heel corner. A missed dropkick allows Rowe to finally make the tag and it's off to Hanson to clean house with knees to the chest. Cole and Castle come in with Dalton showing him how to do a missile dropkick. Taven comes back in and trades about ten Tombstone attempts with Castle until Dalton FINALLY plants him.

Rowe knees Taven and Bennett out to the floor so Hanson busts out a big

top rope flip dive to drop everyone. Back in and the Path of Resistance sets up a middle rope splash for two on Cole as his partners make a save. Now it's Hanson missing a suicide dive, allowing Cole to drop Castle with a brainbuster onto his knee for the pin at 12:00.

Rating: C+. This was your signature Ring of Honor main event with the tagging being forgotten by the end and letting it turn into a wild mess which was just coherent enough to keep track of it. You don't want the Kingdom to lose here so having Castle take the fall was the best possible option. Good TV main event here.

The Kingdom poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Another fun show here that did a good job of setting up Final Battle, which is looking like a strong card to close out the year. It really does impress me to see how far Ring of Honor has come in just a few months as I wasn't wild on their first Destination America shows but I'm digging their product now that it's off the national network. This was fun stuff and worked more than well enough.

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Ring of Honor TV – November 18, 2015: Hokey Smoke They Can Do It

Ring of Honor

Date: November 18, 2015

Location: Wings Stadium Annex, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Kevin Kelly

The Glory By Honor tapings continue as we're gearing up for Final Battle in the next few weeks. Roderick Strong vs. Jay Lethal for the TV Title is on the horizon, along with AJ Styles vs. Lethal for the World Title. The Tag Team Title scene is still hot too with several teams fighting for the belts. Let's get to it.

We open with Silas Young telling the Boys it's time to become men, starting by changing his tire. They keep losing the tire and then stop to clean the grease off themselves. Silas tells them to clean their hands with spit (his spit that is) and gets annoyed when they can't drive a stick shift. These are the kinds of vignettes they should have been doing for weeks now.

Opening sequence.

War Machine vs. Beer City Bruiser/Silas Young

The Boys are carrying Bruiser's keg with some great difficulty. The fans chant FREE THE BOYS and of course it's already a hashtag. Hanson and Bruiser start but no one goes anywhere off a collision. They try it again with Hanson getting the better of it and Rowe comes in for running knees in the corner. Everything breaks down and the Boys try as hard as they can to get Bruiser back to his feet.

Young comes in and takes a bunch of gutwrench gutbusters, only to have the Bruiser run Rowe down. Control changes for the first time and Rowe's comeback is easily stopped and Bruiser, who must weigh at least 300lbs,

drops a frog splash for two. Back from a break with Rowe making the hot tag so Hanson can clean house again. The Boys try to grab Hanson's legs (they certainly are loyal) but get dragged in and put on the top rope.

Silas gets annoyed at someone hitting his Boys so Hanson stacks him on top of the Boys and pounds away with forearms to all three chests. Rowe suplexes Bruiser but Young is back up with a kick to Rowe's face. Bruiser takes out the Boys with an apron flip dive by mistake and Young is dropped off camera, leaving the Bruiser to take Fallout (4 I'm assuming) for the pin at 9:25.

Rating: C+. I liked this one more than I was expecting to with all four guys beating on each other with big power moves. Bruiser is a big guy and totally out of shape but he can do enough fat man offense to make his matches entertaining. I'm still digging this Boys story as Dalton is going to come back soon enough and get a huge reaction for attempting the save.

Recap of BJ Whitmer vs. Steve Corino, which we haven't gotten in the months this feud has been going on. They keep it simple with the more recent stuff this time though, which might be better given how long these two have been after each other. Corino finally snapped and punched Whitmer out, costing him his commentary job.

Here's Corino for his first comments since snapping. Nigel McGuinness recaps the whole thing again and says he can't condone what Corino did due to his no tolerance policy. Therefore, Nigel can't reinstate him as a color commentator. Instead, he can reinstate Corino as a wrestler. Therefore, at Final Battle, it's Whitmer vs. Corino in a Fight Without Honor (street fight).

Corino felt the rush of being a wrestler all over again in San Antonio and it's all he's ever wanted to do. He never would have guessed that he would still be here at 42 years old. The tours of Japan have taken a toll on his body and now it turns out he needs to have neck surgery. That means his in ring career is over but like any pro wrestler, he won't retire until his last breath.

If this is goodbye though, he wants to thank Ring of Honor for keeping

him around when he didn't have to. Corino thanks a lot of people who have been there for him in ROH, including all of the boys in the back who have busted their backs, necks and heads for the fans. Finally he thanks the fans and says that he will always be an evil man. Really, really good stuff here as Corino sounded like he was speaking from the heart which always makes for a better speech. That might be it for him and if so, this was a great promo to go out on.

The Boys don't know how to use a urinal. Seriously?

Story Time With Adam Cole is about how he isn't on the list of World Title contenders. Kyle O'Reilly is though, even after he beat Kyle a few weeks back. Maybe he just needs to whine like Roderick Strong did to get his World TV Title shot. After a clip of Strong being granted his title shot and Cole plugging next week's title match, he promises to take Kyle out of ROH forever. Again, Cole is one of the best talkers in the company.

Silas leaves the bathroom and hands the Boys a plunger.

Michael Elgin vs. Kevin Lee Davidson

Davidson is a big guy....who gets pinned off a clothesline in nine seconds? There was an edit in there so either something horrible happened or it was cut for time. You really don't see that in ROH too often so I'm curious to know what happened there.

Elgin, breathing heavily to really imply that something was cut there, talks about competing in the G1 Climax tournament in Japan. It made him realize that he wanted the ROH World Title back so now he wants to face Jay Lethal sometime soon.

We look back at the Kingdom stealing the World Tag Team Titles at All-Star Extravaganza.

Tag Team Titles: Kingdom vs. Addiction

Heels vs. heels here. Side note: it's interesting how much catchier some of these songs are than any of the TNA ones. TNA has a few good ones but so many of them are forgettable. I'm already singing Kingdom's song with

them as they come out after hearing it maybe three times.

The Addiction is challenging and have Chris Sabin in their corner. Daniels is in a military uniform which makes him look quite different from his partner Kazarian. The Kingdom still has pink on because these tapings are from October when people still care about breast cancer. As usual, Nigel is far too happy to see Maria, though at least he has great taste.

Taven and Daniels start things off and Kazarian starts cheating early with a knee to the back. Bennett and Kazarian both try to come in but both guys catch each others kicks. They make a truce and both punch each other in the jaw because they're all villains. A standoff takes us to an early break and we come back to Daniels stomping Taven down in the corner. Kazarian gets driven across the ring though and it's off to Bennett for the first time. You just can't buy good help these days.

Daniels comes in again and takes over but makes the mistake of insulting Maria, causing Bennett to get all fired up. That's fine with Daniels as it turns into a slugout on the floor, leaving Taven and Kazarian to both bring in belts. That's another standoff so they both do the Eddie Guerrero fall. Kazarian sits up and yells at Maria before collapsing again when the referee comes in. Maria: "OH MY GOD ARE YOU KIDDING???"

They run the ropes but Sabin and Maria both trip them up, earning them a double ejection as we take another break. Back with Bennett cleaning house and saying he saw this on TV before diving on Daniels. Everyone else hits a dive of their own and the fans are way too excited for an all heels match. Back in and Kazarian runs Taven over for two but gets caught in a backpack Stunner/running boot combo for two more.

Daniels is still down as Bennett loads up a spear (Bennett: "On this day, I see clearly!" I like this guy.) which takes out the referee by mistake. Cue Maria again as everything breaks down but Daniels grabs her by the hair. That's enough for a low blow and superkick (not bad either) from Maria, followed by a Disaster Kick to take Kazarian down. Cue the guy in the red mask to superkick Kazarian again, setting up a spear from Bennett to retain at 17:05.

Rating: B-. Another match where I had a lot more fun than I was expecting to. The heel vs. heel stuff actually worked and I laughed at Bennett singing Edge's music. Fun match here, though I'm hoping they wrap up this red mask thing pretty soon. It's been done long enough now and they need to go somewhere with it.

War Machine comes out to stare the champs down to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This is pretty easily the best ROH on Destination America show to date, which comes right before they're leaving the network. The wrestling was all good tonight and we had a solid promo to back it up, plus setting the stage for Final Battle. Everything had a point tonight and I want to see where some of this is going, making the show a success on its own. Really good show this week which flew by as it always does.

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Ring of Honor TV – September 16, 2015: You Might Want To

Check Those Blueprints

Ring of Honor

Date: September 16, 2015

Location: 2300 Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: King Corino, Kevin Kelly

It's the go home show for All-Star Extravaganza but that means a few different things in Ring of Honor due to their taping schedule. We'll hear about the upcoming show, but it's not clear how much of the show is going to be spent hyping Friday's show. These shows have settled into a nice groove lately and hopefully it continues tonight. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

House of Truth vs. ReDRagon

Dijak/Diesel for the House of Truth with Lethal and Martini at ringside. Lethal is defending both his titles against Fish and O'Reilly on Friday so this makes sense. The champ is even sitting in on commentary for a not very rare treat. We actually get handshakes to start before Kyle and Diesel get things going. They slug it out to start and Diesel, a Golden Gloves boxer, is throwing forearms. So much for common sense.

A big slap to the face puts Diesel down and Kyle grabs a cross armbreaker. It's way too early for that to work though so it's off to Fish for some kicks to Diesel's chest. A double kick to the chest gets two on Diesel as Dijak is totally content to stay on the apron for all of this. He finally adds a knee to Kyle's back to take over, only to chase Kyle to the floor where Fish gets in some shots to the ribs.

Back in and Dijak catches Kyle's cross body and throws him over the top like a doll. We come back from a break with Dijak throwing Kyle across the ring with a big release suplex. There's something to be said about a big strong guy throwing small opponents around. You don't see it very often in ROH, which makes it even better. A springboard elbow gets two for Donovan but Kyle flips out of a belly to back suplex and fires off his strikes.

Fish comes in to strike away on Diesel and everything breaks down. ReDRagon take turns kicking Dijak's knees until he goes down and Kyle puts Diesel in an ankle lock. Dijak comes back in and slugs away but the hold isn't broken. I rather like that idea for a change. With Fish throwing Dijak in a sleeper, Kyle adds a grapevine to the ankle lock and Diesel taps at 8:43.

Rating: C+. This was better than I was expecting with the story making the match work better. Lethal has reason to be scared of ReDRagon already and now he can see what they're capable of. Dijak is a beast though and has a ton of potential. I get a kind of Dino Bravo vibe out of Diesel and that's a very good role for someone to play.

The Briscoes are ready for any mystery team on Friday, including Godzilla and King Kong. That's not much of a team though as they would wind up fighting each other. Mark really needs to think this through better.

Dalton Castle vs. Cedric Alexander

Silas Young is on commentary before his match with Castle on Friday. Cedric celebrates an early armdrag, sending the Boys over to fan Castle off. Back up and Dalton can't get an O'Connor roll but he lands on his feet to freak Cedric out for some reason. That wasn't really surprising but wrestling heels are often stupid. Castle crotches himself in the corner and a big kick to the head knocks him silly.

Back from a break with Cedric still in control until he charges into a boot in the corner. Everything heads outside with Castle not being able to send him into the post. Instead it's something like a 619 under the apron into a hurricanrana to take Cedric down. Nice spot. Back in and a belly to belly gets two for Castle but Cedric kicks him in the head. That's fine with Dalton as he powers Cedric up into a German suplex for two. Silas goes after the Boys though, allowing Cedric to grab a rollup for the pin at 12:24.

Rating: C-. This was all story again but the entertainment level wasn't as high as it was in the opener. Castle vs. Young is a simple story and that's all it needs to be. Both guys play their roles very well and either ending having a lot of possibilities. The match was nothing great

here but it did its job.

Moose comes out to spear Cedric.

Kingdom vs. War Machine

As usual, I tend to forget anything else going on when Maria shows up. Just....good night. Bennett and Taven for the Kingdom here. Their early superkicks have no effect on Hanson and Rowe and the power guys start by double teaming Taven. We settle down to Hanson side slamming Taven before Rowe comes in for a double slam. Bennett gets in and is immediately planted with a double release belly to back.

Maria comes in and grabs Hanson's hair but gets placed on top of Bennett in the corner. Taven saves her from getting forearmed and hits a Disaster kick off the barricade to drop Hanson as we take a break. Back with the Kingdom keeping Hanson in trouble in the corner. That lasts as long as two guys can keep a monster like Hanson in trouble though as he comes back with a reverse powerslam and makes the tag to Rowe. A massive release Boss Man Slam plants Taven and everything breaks down.

War Machine easily catches both dives to the floor and powerbombs Bennett onto Taven. That looked good. Back in and Hanson and Taven trade cartwheels in a pretty stupid bit. Taven enziguris Hanson down and gets two off a Lionsault. How Jerichoish of him. Rowe comes back in for the Path of Resistance but Maria grabs Hanson's leg. Cue the Young Bucks to pull her off the apron, leaving Bennett to take a double chokeslam. Fallout is enough to put Taven away at 14:38.

Rating: C-. More storytelling but at least Hanson and Rowe were there to throw the Kingdom all over the place. Maria continues to be the star of the team and that's exactly what she's supposed to be. I'm sure we'll have some post match stuff with the Addiction because that's how wrestling works.

The Bucks superkick Bennett down but the KRD (Addiction/Chris Sabin) come in with belt shots. Makes sense.

A long All-Star Extravaganza video takes us out.

Overall Rating: C. This show was different from most go home shows as they talked about the matches, but it went from the World Title to the midcard matches to the Tag Team Title match. Other than that the rest of Friday's card was basically ignored, but there's only so much you can do in an hour of TV a week. It's entertaining enough though and the wrestling was fine, but I'm a bit less interested in seeing the pay per view than I was coming in.

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Ring of Honor TV – August 12, 2015: I'm Getting There

Ring of Honor

Date: August 12, 2015

Location: William J. Myers Pavilion, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: King Corino, Kevin Kelly

It's FINALLY a new batch of tapings as the show has moved from New York to Baltimore. The big story coming out of last week is the Tag Team Title situation as Future Shock reformed to take down the Addiction in a non-title match. This isn't cool with Future Shock member Adam Cole's stable the Kingdom, who will likely have something to say about this tonight.

Let's get to it.

Watanabe vs. ACH

Hey, it's the guy that I still don't get but keeps getting matches on TV because he's Japanese and therefore must be awesome. They chop it out to start and Watanabe kneels down, telling ACH to chop him again. ACH obliges before kneeling down, only to have Watanabe's chops work a bit better. Back up and ACH backflips to set up a dropkick as Corino runs down the Field of Honor card. Watanabe gets kicked to the floor and a running kick to the chest from the apron puts him down again.

We take a break and come back with ACH working on the arm but getting caught in a gordbuster. A backsplash (which is becoming too common of a move these days) sets up a chinlock on ACH. That goes as far as a chinlock can take you so ACH kicks him to the floor and hits a great looking flip dive over the top.

Back in and Watanabe's fisherman's buster is countered with a small package for two. They head outside again with ACH running up the pole to flip over, but he's stupid enough to stand there and pose, allowing Watanabe to hit a wicked overhead German suplex on the floor. A fisherman's buster gets two for Watanabe but ACH hits a brainbuster of his own, setting up the Midnight Star (450) for the pin at 9:42.

Rating: C. Well that happened. Seriously this had no impact on me whatsoever and was just nine minutes of wrestling with a commercial in the middle. Watanabe is as generic of a Japanese wrestler as I've ever seen and ACH can do flips. That doesn't make me want to see either guy again as they feel like archetypes instead of characters.

ReDRagon is ready for the Kingdom tonight but imply they drink their own urine. Very simple, old school promo here, minus the last part that is.

From earlier in the day, ROH boss Nigel McGuinness was here to make some announcements. He heard the FIVE MORE MINUTES chants at Death Before Dishonor when Roderick Strong vs. Jay Lethal went to a sixth minute draw, but the only thing that would happen in five more minutes was a serious injury.

However, it's clear that the people want to see more of these two, which means we'll see it again at the August 21 TV tapings. The winner there will take the title to All-Star Extravaganza on September 18 to defend against Kyle O'Reilly. Also at All-Star Extravaganza, Bobby Fish will face the TV Champion, whoever that may be at that time.

Dalton Castle and the Boys (as opposed to Dem Boys) pitch merchandise. This guy just breathes charisma.

House of Truth vs. War Machine

It's Diesel/Dijak for the House of Truth here with Lethal on commentary. The heels jump War Machine at the call for the Code of Honor but Hanson easily puts both of them on the top rope for some sledges to the corner. Lethal: "TRUTH! TELL HIM TO SLOW DOWN!" Some good old fashioned double team cheating lets Dijak kick Hanson in the face and Lethal is downright giddy.

Hanson stays down as long as a monster is going to against someone like Diesel and it's quickly off to Rowe to clean house. Dijak throws Hanson down with a release suplex and Diesel adds a spear for two. War Machine's Path of Resistance crushes Dijak and Hanson's top rope splash makes it even worse. Lethal: "SLOW DOWN!!!" Fallout (a belly to back suplex/top rope guillotine legdrop) ends Diesel at 4:52. Oh and Hanson is facing Lethal for the TV Title in a few weeks. This match makes so much more sense all of a sudden.

Rating: C. I had fun with this as there's always room for a Legion of Doom style team to destroy various people, especially someone as pesky as Diesel. Lethal was more entertaining on commentary than he was for years imitating people and I can kind of see the massive appeal he carries. Granted that's likely to end as soon as I really don't care for his matches.

Tim Hughes vs. Adam Page

This is the only match I can ever find listed for Hughes. Fans: "LET'S GO JOBBER!" The Rite of Passage ends Hughes in 24 seconds.

BJ Whitmer yells at ROH for giving Page such an easy opponent. Page calls out Jay Briscoe, much to Kelly's shock. As luck would have it, Briscoe isn't here. With that going nowhere, Whitmer yells at King Corino but Nigel comes out to say cut it out. The fans, ever bloodthirsty, say LET THEM FIGHT.

Back from a break with King Corino off commentary and Kelly going solo. We see a clip of Corino nearly killing Whitmer last week to show where this came from. I always appreciate stuff like that as not everyone saw the previous show, so let us know what's going on.

Kingdom vs. ReDRagon

Kingdom has finally lost their IWGP Tag Team Titles. Adam Cole comes out to do commentary to a huge face reaction and Maria is freaked out. O'Reilly and Taven get things going with Kyle grabbing a headlock until Taven comes back with a great sunset flip for two. It's off to Bennett vs. Fish as we have the standard double tag. Fish kicks Bennett in the chest before it's back to Kyle for a nice double suplex. A slingshot hilo gets two for Fish and we take a break with Bennett getting low bridged to the floor.

Back with Kyle diving off the apron to take Bennett down and Fish swiveling his hips for reasons that aren't clear. Maria offers a distraction (I wonder how she pulled that off) and Taven gets in a kick to the head to take over. Cole reiterates that he's the only member of the Kingdom ready to hold the World Title as Bennett puts Kyle in a chinlock. Bennett's Thesz press with punches and a middle finger elbow are a rather bizarre including so it's off to Taven for some choking in the corner.

Kyle somehow grabs a leg bar for a breather and leg trips Taven down, setting up the hot tag to Bobby. Fish cleans house but Taven blocks the exploder suplex into the corner. The second attempt works a bit better though and Fish keeps cleaning house. Everything breaks down but Taven is able to escape Chasing the Dragon. There's a choke to Bennett instead but he spins around for a running boot from Taven.

Matt's high angle Swanton gets two on Fish and the wheelbarrow suplex

gets the same for Kyle. O'Reilly eats a superkick and it's time for everyone to kick with Taven kicking Kyle into the ropes for a superkick from Bennett. Hail Mary (spike piledriver) on the floor crushes Kyle again and Cole isn't happy. Back in and Fish tries to go it alone but Taven kicks him in the face, setting up another Hail Mary for the pin at 14:04.

Rating: C+. This got a bit too insane for my tastes but they're nailing the story at this point and I'm digging this more than almost anything else in ROH right now. Though to be fair, Maria has a lot to do with that. Good match here and you can see Cole's full on face turn (he's like 90% there already) on the horizon.

Post match the Kingdom loads up another Hail Mary but Cole comes in and says cool it, which Maria agrees with to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. I'm starting to get into the stories around here, though I'm still not wild on a lot of the wrestling stuff. The tag team situation is getting better every week as you can see where they're going with things, which as usual is a positive. The Jay Lethal stuff can work for awhile but they can only carry this on so long before the midcard starts to suffer. Good show this week though and I'm hopeful going forward.

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Ring of Honor – August 5, 2015: Taped Shows Can Work

Ring of Honor

Date: August 5, 2015

Location: Terminal 5, New York City, New York

Commentators: King Corino, Kevin Kelly

These marathon TV tapings are starting to become an issue as they're still in the same venue, even after a pay per view elsewhere and as we're coming up on the next pay per view where the cycle starts all over again. Last week's show really didn't work for me but maybe things can pick up again in another stand alone show. Let's get to it.

Roderick Strong is in the back and talks about proving himself against Jay Lethal at Death Before Dishonor in their hour long draw. They went toe to toe for sixty minutes but Lethal couldn't beat him. Nighel McGuinness needs to understand that Lethal's next defense is a rematch with Strong. What Strong needs to understand is that he needs a mouthpiece because he just can't talk.

Opening sequence.

War Machine vs. Young Bucks

Oh joy, another match of hearing SUPERKICK over and over. It's a brawl to start with Hanson and Rowe destroying the Bucks with ease. An old Harris Twins H Bomb drops Nick and Rowe launches him over the top and onto his partner. The Bucks' stereo apron moonsaults are easily caught in midair and War Machine throws them into each other for a cool crash.

Superkicks (what else?) break up a chokeslam off the apron but Hanson shrugs off the Bucks' flippy splashes and takes them down with a double clothesline. That earns him a double superkick to the floor and Nick

follows with a flip dive, only to come up lame. Back from a break with Hanson throwing Matt Jackson back inside as Nick is still down on the floor. War Machine has Matt two on one but here's AJ Styles to check on his Bullet Club teammate.

This also presents another problem with the taping schedule as Styles is still announced as the IWGP Heavyweight Champion but he lost the belt over a month ago. Matt's rollup is countered with a wicked clothesline from Hanson, but he's able to roll away when Rowe tries to powerbomb Hanson onto him. Cue Styles onto the apron as the new partner to help clean house, only to clothesline the referee down by mistake. It's superkick time with Nick Jackson running in, totally fine of course, to help out. The Styles Clash puts Rowe away at 14:12.

Rating: C. So the Young Bucks. I'm still not sure what I think of them as the idea of being cool heels is played out but well done, but at the same time, I really don't like the huge wink at the camera and breaking of the fourth wall as they're as close to flat out saying "yeah we're faces but saying we're cool heels and cheating to make the whole face/heel dynamic worthless." I really can't stand that kind of character but it's something you have to deal with in Ring of Honor and other similar companies as they have to try to be smarter than the fans who want "real" wrestling.

Adam Cole knows where he is in Ring of Honor after his surgery. As far as he can tell, his handshake with Kyle O'Reilly a few weeks back didn't cause any problems in the Kingdom, because he and Kyle have been friends for years. Tonight's match is about respect.

Cedric Alexander vs. The Romantic Touch

Touch is a masked man and an over the top, stereotypical, uh, romantic, I believe played by Rhett Titus. Alexander dropkicks him in the corner during the entrances as Cedric's former partner Caprice Coleman is on commentary, taking issue with Cedric's recent heel turn. A big right hand drops Touch but he sends Cedric to the floor for a flip dive and pelvic thrusting. Veda Scott grabs Touch's leg though, allowing Alexander to kick the middle rope for some crotching. A belly to back suplex into a

backbreaker (Lumbar Check) puts Touch away at 2:45.

Post match Veda says Cedric should be tired of waiting on his time to come. She would never lie to him and Alexander knows what she needs to him: to rip off the Touch's mask and expose him as Rhett Titus. This brings Coleman to the ring for the save but here's Moose for the real save as Cedric runs off.

Jay Lethal and Truth Martini admit that Strong took Lethal to the limit at Death Before Dishonor but now he's going back to the end of the line.

Kyle O'Reilly vs. Adam Cole

These two used to be partners in a team called Future Shock and Christopher Daniels is on commentary. They wrestle around to start and tease a superkick, because that's the one move you always get in Ring of Honor. Kyle grabs a headlock on the mat (fans: "HEADLOCK CITY!") and takes Adam over with another one for good measure as we take a break. Back with Kyle headlocking Adam down a third time.

Cole flips to the apron but Kyle grabs him by the head and drags him back inside. Adam's belly to back suplex still can't break the headlock so Cole bails to the floor. That earns him another headlock with Kyle DIVING off the apron to grab the hold again. Well at least they're trying something different. Cole goes after Daniels for no apparent reason, drawing Daniels in for the no contest at 8:24.

Rating: D+. The headlock thing was an idea and was actually getting entertaining by the end but then they cut the match short to set up the post match stuff. That's fine in this case as they were talking about respect so not really going after each other makes sense. These two probably could have a good match with time and an ending but they got cut off here.

Kazarian comes down to help Daniels but Kyle gets back in and Future Shock clears the ring. Cole says they're tired of this nonsense from the Addiction, so why not settle it right now?

Addiction vs. Future Shock

Non-title. Cole grabs a neckbreaker on Kazarian to start before backdropping Daniels (in street clothes). It's off to Kyle for some chops and kicks to the chest as Future Shock is already rolling with their tandem offense. We take a break and come back with Daniels begging off from Kyle and getting hit in the face for his efforts. Addiction finally takes over and gets to double team for a change with Kazarian suplexing O'Reilly down for no cover.

A running flip neckbreaker drops Kyle again as we're into an old school tag formula here, which is probably why I'm enjoying this as much as I am. Kyle manages to crotch Daniels, allowing the hot(ish) tag to Cole. A Shining Wizard gets two on Daniels and it's time for a Figure Four but Kazarian makes the save with a springboard legdrop. For those days when a regular legdrop just doesn't do it you see. Addiction's powerbomb/neckbreaker combo puts Kyle down but Cole rolls Daniels up for the surprise pin at 8:37.

Rating: C+. I liked the ending here as the wrestlers beat the cocky team when the cocky team started showboating a bit too much. Cole as a face has potential but I'm hoping they keep ReDragon together for a bit longer as I don't see O'Reilly as a solo act. I'm sure this sets up a title shot, which likely sets up Cole's split from the Kingdom. Nice little match here.

Chris Sabin and Bobby Fish run in to keep up the brawling with ReDragon and Cole cleaning house. The Kingdom comes out to stare down the three of them as the show ends.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a better stand alone show than last week as the stories felt like they were advanced better, with the promos from Strong and Lethal making a big difference. Sure they were just basic speeches but it made you feel like you were watching something a bit more important. The matches were all decent at worst and the talking worked well. Good enough show here as we get close to some fresh shows soon enough.

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