

Ring Of Honor TV – February 23, 2022: Joe Is Gonna Something

Ring of Honor

Date: February 23, 2022

It's another Hall of Fame show and this time around we are looking at Samoa Joe. That is another case where there are all kinds of matches to pick from, many of which are among the ones that helped put Ring of Honor on the map. These shows have been excellent so far and there is a chance that this one will be too. Let's get to it.

We open with Samoa Joe's Hall of Fame video, talking about how he helped put the company on the map and his still record World Title reign. We also hear about his time in Impact Wrestling and WWE, though not much is said about the latter.

From Night of Champions, March 22, 2003.

Ring of Honor Title: Samoa Joe vs. Xavier

Xavier is defending and I don't think I've ever seen him wrestle before. The rest of the Prophecy, Xavier's friends, are at ringside but CW Anderson and Michael Shane come in to take them out. That leaves Joe to chop Xavier into the corner, where Xavier's chops have no effect. Joe knocks him outside and puts Xavier in a chair for a running boot to send him head first into the barricade.

Commentary talks about Xavier getting a concussion a week ago as Joe stays on his head, which is rather disturbing in a few ways. Back in and Xavier gets in a shot to the knee as we take a break. We come back with Xavier working on the neck, which just seems to wake Joe up. Some clotheslines stagger Joe but

he rolls some suplexes to drop Xavier on his head over and over. Xavier knees his way out of a brainbuster (that was different) and an Ax breaker drops Joe again. The 450 hits raised knees though and an enziguri drops Xavier again. The Koquina Clutch gives Joe the title at 11:35.

Rating: C+. They didn't even edit that much out of here as the full thing wasn't even twelve minutes long. Xavier got in a few shots here but Joe felt like an unstoppable force who was going to get the title no matter what. It's certainly historic as Joe starts his legendary reign, but Xavier is quite the curiosity in his own right, as he was the second champion in the company's history and is little more than a Ring of Honor footnote.

From Manhattan Mayhem, May 7, 2005.

Pure Title: Jay Lethal vs. Samoa Joe

Lethal is defending and looks VERY young here. Joe gets knocked down and Lethal shouts (at his mentor) that the real champ is here. Some stomping doesn't get Lethal very far and it's time to trade some wristlocks. Joe backs him into the corner for some shots to the face but lethal is right back with a neckbreaker for one.

Lethal grabs a weird hold as he ties up the legs ala Rhea Ripley's Prism Trap but lays on his back, putting his feet under Joe's arms to raise him up in the air (it looked great). That doesn't last long as Joe falls into the ropes for his first break and comes up with a right hand. You can only use one of those so the referee yells at him, allowing Lethal to grab another neckbreaker. Joe has to go to the ropes to escape another leglock but he Rock Bottoms Lethal out of the corner to plant him hard.

The running knee drop gets two and we take a break. Back with Joe washing Lethal's face in the corner but charging into some boots. Lethal muscles him up for a suplex and scores with a

Swan Dive for two more. Another kick sends Lethal to the apron, where he uses a closed fist of his own.

That's fine with Joe, who knocks him outside and hits that big suicide elbow of his. They strike it out on the apron until Lethal grabs him, only have Joe drive both of them HARD through a table at ringside. Back in and Joe's snap powerslam gets two but Lethal has to use the ropes to escape the Koquina Clutch. A middle rope DDT gives Lethal two and his signature dragon suplex gets the same. Joe isn't having that though and grabs his own dragon suplex, setting up a cross arm suplex for the pin and the title at 19:10.

Rating: B. This was better than the opener, as Joe survived everything the game Lethal could throw at him before grabbing a suplex to knock him out. It was about Joe being a monster who could not be stopped and that made for a rather physical fight. Lethal would get better, but it was still Joe's time here.

From Joe vs. Kobashi, October 1, 2005.

Samoa Joe vs. Kenta Kobashi

Well it was going to be this or one of the Punk matches and this makes more sense. Joe gets a pop but Kobashi gets an ovation. They shake hands to start and it's time for some high intensity circling. The feeling out process continues until Joe hits the first chop for a loud gasp from the crowd. Kobashi takes him into the corner and shows him a real chop before a shoulder sends Kobashi outside. Joe hits the big suicide elbow into the barricade for two back inside and we take a break.

Back with Joe taking him outside for the big running boot in the chair. It worked so well the first time that Joe tries it again, only to charge into a shot to the face. Joe gets planted on the floor and they head back inside for some more hard Kobashi chops. We hit the front facelock for a bit until

Joe suplexes his way to freedom. They strike it out hard with the sweat literally flying off of their chests.

Kobashi gets the better of things as we take another break and come back with Joe making the comeback and striking away even faster. Some Kawada kicks send Kobashi flying into the corner and it's time for the facewashes. The MuscleBuster connects for two and Joe is stunned by the knockout. Another kick to the head sets up Joe's STF, which is switched into a crossface and then something like an octopus hold on the mat as Kobashi FINALLY gets a foot on the ropes for the break.

Kobashi manages a half and half suplex and they're both down again. Back up and Kobashi goes nuts with the rapid fire chops in the corner, leaving Joe's chest looking rather disturbed. Another half and half suplex gets two and a sleeper suplex gives Kobashi the same. Joe tries to chop away but some spinning backfists set up a huge lariat to put him away at 24:21.

Rating: A. This is a great example of a match which was made better by the crowd's reaction. The match felt like an event, as Kobashi is a living legend and having Joe face him in such a high profile match is the kind of thing you do not get to see very often. Joe is the biggest name in Ring of Honor history and Kobashi is far above him, but Joe hung in there and had him in real trouble in a classic. Great match, as you may have heard before.

One more quick Joe video wraps us up.

Overall Rating: B+. It was kind of a weird show as the focus was more on Joe milestones than great matches, though the last match checked both boxes. Joe is another case where there are so many huge matches that this could have gone on for about three hours plus without getting old. Joe vs. Kobashi is always worth a look, but the other two are more for historical purposes than anything else, which is kind of the idea here.

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