

[Rock On The Range 2014](#)



By [Angela Ash](#)

Rock on the Range, held in Columbus, Ohio at Crew Stadium, is the nation's largest rock music festival. However, this simple description in no way can prepare you for the "experience" of Rock on the Range. Taking the festival scene and turning it on its head, Rock on the Range is a well-oiled machine that creates iconic moments in rock history, mixed ever so deliciously with that faint ringing in your ears that reminds you the next day at your desk job that you just had the best weekend of your life. Now a full three days, three stages, a comedy tent, and 60 of the hardest rocking bands on the planet, Rock on the Range roars to life, and is surely taking no prisoners!

Day One boasts a remarkable array of acts. The Monster Main Stage hosts Red Light King, Black Stone Cherry, Killswitch Engage, Black Label Society, Seether, Staind, and Guns N' Roses.



Black Stone Cherry's John Fred Young - Photo Credit: Jason Squires / AEG Live

In the afternoon, Black Stone Cherry absolutely explodes onto the stage with "Maybe Someday". That mid-day crowd of the main stage can be difficult to win over, but the infectious energy of these Kentucky boys even has the people in the bleachers on their feet. Ripping through familiar tracks like "Blind Man" and "Lonely Train", they prove once again that arriving early is a **MUST**.

Seether is always a Ranger favorite, flowing seamlessly through chapters of their entire catalog, with "Gasoline", "Rise Above This", "Fake It", and "Remedy". Their newest single, "Words As Weapons", is met with thunderous applause.



Aaron Lewis of Staind - Photo Credit: Jason Squires / AEG Live

And just as the sun is about to go down and the rain begins to lightly fall, the electricity in the air begins to build. Staind is about to hit the stage, and they are INCAPABLE of not rocking your face off. Even though frontman Aaron Lewis has found success in the country realm with his crossover solo project, there's no steel guitar on the stage tonight. Lewis is absolutely fierce, with his clear, resounding voice echoing throughout the arena as they emerge with "Eyes Wide Open". You will be hard pressed to find a band that plays with more complete cohesiveness than Staind. On lead guitar, Mike Mushok blends his signature sound with Lewis' voice in a harmony that almost sounds like one unit. They spin through one hit after the next, with "Right Here", "Outside", "Mudshovel", "For You", and "Spleen", which creates absolute bedlam on the stadium floor. With an

easily agreed upon attitude of "let it pour", no amount of precipitation could put out the fire generated by these Rock on the Range veterans.□

With an extremely hard act to follow, Guns N' Roses plays a fan-pleasing set to a huge crowd, despite the dropping temperatures and blustering wind.□ When watching GNR, it is almost unfathomable that one band could generate SO many hits, but the roar of applause when each opening instrumental resounds is an instant reminder that Guns N' Roses is a staple of American rock music.□

While it may be difficult to tear away from the main stadium, the folks at ROTR have made it possible to bounce from stage to stage with plenty of time to catch all of your favorite performers.□ Just a short walk from the Monster Main Stage is the Ernie Ball Stage, filling the air on Friday with music from Devour the Day, Kyng, Thousand Foot Krutch, We As Romans, Reignwolf, Living Colour, and Down (featuring Phil Anselmo of Pantera notoriety).□

And just to ensure that you have plenty of choices on your Rock on the Range playlist, the Jagermeister stage is back again, showcasing the metal madness of Kill Devil Hill (with Johnny Kelly of Type O Negative fame on drums), W.E.R.M., Truckfighters, One Ok Rock, Butcher Babies, and the hauntingly melodic Lacuna Coil.□



Lacuna Coil - Photo Credit: [Tim Ash / Graphic Brush Design](#)

Cristina Scabbia has one of the best female voices in metal today, and it is obvious that the entire crowd agrees. With a gracious demeanor that creates an instant connection with her fans, she rages through the set with Andrea Ferro, passing back lead vocals like a baton, and then culminating in a harmonious blend that is unmatched poetry for the chorus. They present "Trip the Darkness", "Spellbound", and "Our Truth" with a fury that the crowd matches... singing at the top of their lungs, fists pumping in the air, and mentally making note to fill their iPhones with Lacuna Coil's entire catalog as soon as they get back home.

Now, if it takes you a day or two to recuperate from last night's extravaganza, then put on your big girl boots, because this is Rock on the Range... THREE full days of absolute mayhem!

The Monster Main Stage once again pulls out all stops with the likes of Rev Theory, Fuel, Pop Evil, Theory of a Deadman, Chevelle, Slayer, and Avenged Sevenfold.



Leigh Kakaty of Pop Evil - Photo Credit: Jason Squires / AEG Live

Pop Evil, who is no stranger to Rock on the Range, thrills the crowd with songs like "Hero", "Torn To Pieces", and "Deal With The Devil". Lead vocalist, Leigh Kakaty, makes full use of the stage, running from one side to the next, climbing, jumping, and when that isn't enough, leaping into the

crowd to surf... all without skipping a beat. Their performance comes to a close with "Trenches", as D.M.C. joins them onstage, along with a row of US Marines, as a tribute to the nation's armed forces.



Avenged Sevenfold - Photo Credit: Jason Squires / AEG Live

And bringing the Monster Main Stage to an end for the day is Avenged Sevenfold, with the most intricate set to grace the festival all weekend. However, the set isn't the only thing in flames as they open with "Shepherd of Fire", and move on to "Hail to the King", "Seize the Day", "Almost Easy", and "Unholy Confessions". Their stage presence is exhilarating, and they are openly embraced by a crowd that is completely worked into an exuberant frenzy. THIS is how to close down a stage at Rock on the Range!

Just around the corner at the Ernie Ball Stage, eager fans cling to the guard rail to get as close as they can to Stars in Stereo, We As Human, King 810, Texas Hippie Coalition, Nothing More, The Pretty Reckless, and Suicidal Tendencies.



Taylor Momsen of The Pretty Reckless - Photo Credit: Tim Ash / [Graphic Bruh Design](#)

It seems that a generous portion of this crowd is on pins and needles, waiting almost patiently to see The Pretty Reckless. While the fact that lead

vocalist Taylor Momsen played the scandalous Jenny Humphrey on *Gossip Girl*

may have once given fans the initial nudge to take a listen to her earlier work, Momsen is in no way in the shadow of her former teen role. She prowls the stage as if she were born there... kicking, falling to her knees, and howling "I'm Going To Hell", the title track of The Pretty Reckless' sophomore release. Supported by a phenomenal band (comprised of Ben Phillipps, Mark Damon, and Jamie Perkins), it would be a lie to say that all eyes are not continuously on Momsen, as she bangs her head, hikes her skirt, and illustrates many of the lyrics from her brilliantly written tracks. The Pretty Reckless perform songs from both albums, including "Follow Me Down", "Since You're Gone", "Make Me Wanna Die", and what is sure to become an anthem sing-along at every show... "Heaven Knows".

Saturday isn't holding back on the Jagermeister Stage, either, with Wilson, Crobot, Avatar, Fozzy, and Exodus.

Avatar put on most possibly one of the best performances of the weekend... absolutely killing it with "Let It Burn", "Smells Like a Freakshow", and "Tsar Bomba". Hailing from Sweden with vocalist Johannes Eckerstrom's painted face and a theatrical vibe, if they weren't already a favorite, Avatar surely has a new slew of followers rushing to buy their newest album, *Hail the Apocalypse*.



Chris Jericho of Fozzy - Photo Credit: Tim Ash / [Graphic Brush Design](#)

Fozzy, fronted by Chris Jericho, well known for his wrestling career as the charismatic Y2J, is definitely a crowd favorite, as foam fingers and t-shirts are easily spotted in this obviously Jericho obsessed crowd. However, just as in the case with Taylor Momsen, Jericho is a natural with a microphone in his hand and surrounded by screeching guitars. Delighting the chanting

crowd with "Lights Go Out", "Enemy", and "Eat the Rich", Jericho interacts with his fans in a way that could teach rock veterans a thing or two.

On the final day of the sold out Rock on the Range, the crowd somehow seems even larger, and definitely much more eager to throw themselves into the pit that is ever present at all three stages, spiraling its inhabitants into a rock infused euphoria.□

At the center of this helix is the Ernie Ball Stage, presenting Righteous Vendetta, Gemini Syndrome, Heaven's Basement, We Are Harlot, Miss May I, Of Mice & Men, and the Jason Bonham Led Zeppelin Experience.□

The Jagermeister Stage is dueling right back with acts like Sleepwave, Monster Truck, Twelve Foot Ninja, Jim Breuer Band, Kvelertak, and Gojira.□

Jim Breuer is also capping off the Old Milwaukee Comedy Stage, entertaining onlookers with his unique brand of hysteria. With some seating available, patrons may take a load off, grab a drink, and experience comedy... Rock on the Range style.□

On the Monster Main Stage, Rangers are hit heavy today, with Trivium, Adelitas Way, Wolfmother, Mastodon, Alter Bridge, Five Finger Death Punch, and yes... KID ROCK.□



Five Finger Death Punch - Photo Credit:□ Tim Ash / [Graphic Brush Design](#)

One can easily see the crowd growing restless.□ Some are pacing, some

are stretching and hopping on both feet as if they are preparing for a bout in the ring. And they're pretty close. Five Finger Death Punch is about to grace the stage. This performance is nothing short of legendary, as they pull the crowd in with "Remember Everything", and then give them a big shove to remind them that they are at a metal show, blasting out "Under and Over It", "Never Enough", and their mind melting rendition of "Bad Company", dedicated to the country's troops. The floor is ablaze with numerous pits, crowd surfers, and hands in the air, but lead singer Ivan L. Moody takes the time to pause and remind his fans that the females in the crowd deserve a bit more respect than they seem to be getting as they surf to the front.

Following up such a performance would be daunting for anyone, but the closing performer for Rock on the Range 2014 is no stranger to adversity. Rising from a humble beginning in Detroit, Bob Ritchie has clawed his way to the top of a music industry that wasn't always welcoming. But that is obviously old news, as the crowd screams, yells, and screeches... only one name on their lips... Kid Rock.



Kid Rock - Photo Credit: Jason Squires

There is nothing quite like watching Kid Rock take ownership of the stage. He literally erupts like a volcano, spewing intricate lyrics, musical prowess, and an instinctual ability to please a crowd like no one I have ever seen. As he rolls from one hit to the next, he throws out "Devil Without a Cause", "Cowboy", "Bawitdaba", "All Summer Long", "American Bad Ass", and a brilliant rendition of "Forever" over Rush's "Tom Sawyer". Kid Rock never ceases to amaze, excite, and completely blow his fans away.

I can not think of a better ending for this weekend of emotional and energy-charged performances. Every year, it is difficult to contemplate how Rock on the Range can possibly top the experience next year. Somehow they always find a way.