

CM Punk and Eddie Kingston come face-to-face.

Credit: AEW

CM Punk beat Eddie Kingston with the GTS in an emotionally charged match filled with stiff punches and middle fingers.

Fans were split in their reactions to Punk and Kingston, with fans predictably skewing toward Kingston despite being the de facto heel in the match. Punk even leaned into the heel-skewing reaction he received by performing John Cena's signature comeback, stopping short of the Five Knuckle Shuffle.

With one face-to-face promo exchange on AEW Rampage, Eddie Kingston and CM Punk ignited their feud to the level of a show-stealer in terms of match importance. On a night all but billed as the coronation of "Hangman" Adam Page, Eddie Kingston and CM Punk seized the attention of viewers with a heated, very realistic verbal exchange. Page and Kingston's tense showdown reopened old wounds as the two captivated a mostly hardcore audience with stories of Ring of Honor locker room politics. Just one week later, the fast-rising clip of the Punk-Kingston segment has already surpassed 1.4 million views on YouTube.

Kingston and Punk's wildly entertaining verbal spat gave way to a pull-apart brawl as the two veterans deftly told a reality-based story while transcending the heel-babyface dynamic. The tension Kingston and Punk created in that environment was reminiscent of the real-life tension that arose during Shawn Michaels' iconic feud with Bret Hart.

While CM Punk remains popular with AEW fans, Eddie Kingston is the emotional leader of this promotion. Nobody captures the voice of the punchy underdog—one that connects directly with AEW fans while embodying AEW itself—better than Kingston. No matter how hard AEW tries to make Kingston a heel, he will only be booed by so many people in an audience filled with fans who love him unconditionally. In fact, the more Kingston leans into his heel bona fides, the more some fans will embrace an edgier Eddie. If Kingston's face off with CM Punk was any indication, a split reaction in their Full Gear match was inevitable.

Kingston has shown vulnerability by openly discussing his mental health issues both on and off camera. An advocate of a growing cause in the United States, Kingston has already cemented himself as a permanent babyface to many fans. Ahead of arguably the biggest match of his career, Kingston penned a harrowing article for the *Players' Tribune* (h/t [Cagesideseats.com](https://www.cagesideseats.com)) detailing his struggles with depression amid a 20-year career.

"I have been everything in this life. I have been an angry kid. I've been a depressed teenager. I've been an addict. I've seen so many holding cells it would make your head spin. I've messed up and self-destructed and burned bridges. I've been down to my last dollar," said Kingston in a [must-read post](#).

“The only reason I’m still doing this, and really the only reason I’m still on this earth is because of all the friends who never stop having my back.”

Many in Minneapolis’ Target Center had Kingston’s back throughout a match where he was a real darkhorse to pull off an upset. As of this writing, Kingston is listed at +350 per [BetOnline](#), improving from +525 when the odds were released on Tuesday.

Punk showed good sportsmanship following his victory, offering a handshake similar to Bryan Danielson on the November 5 broadcast of Rampage. Similar to that exchange, Kingston refused to shake Punk’s hand. With Kingston’s demise coming as a result of fatigue, there is an opening for Punk to continue to mock Kingston for not being in good enough shape to be a top star. In fact, this feud sets up perfectly for a rare double-turn if AEW chooses to go in that direction.

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Source: [AEW Full Gear 2021 Results: CM Punk Beats Eddie Kingston In Heated Match](#)