

NXT – March 9, 2016: The NXT Marathon

NXT

Date: March 9, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's a special show tonight as we're back at Full Sail but also getting to find out who will be facing Finn Balor in Dallas for the NXT Title at Takeover. Sami Zayn and Samoa Joe both won a triple threat match but then drew in a singles match. Therefore tonight it's a 2/3 falls match, though the result may have been spoiled with Sami appearing on Raw earlier this week. Let's get to it.

Quick video on Joe vs. Zayn.

Opening sequence.

Here's William Regal to get things going with a quick announcement: since Baron Corbin attacked Austin Aries last week, the two of them will be facing off at Takeover: Dallas. Simple and to the point again. He wraps it up by saying we'll be getting a conclusive #1 contender tonight.

Samoa Joe vs. Sami Zayn

2/3 falls and we get big match intros. Joe teases a kick to the head to start before taking him down into an armbar. Sami reverses into a wristlock and rollup for two but Joe drives him into the corner. The referee actually stops to lecture them about wanting a clean break which suggests that they have a lot of time to work with here. Joe takes him back down with a hard headlock as the announcers actually keep up with the time frame by saying Joe had Monday off while Sami was on Raw.

The headlock eats up a lot of time until Sami reverses and armdrags Joe into an armbar. La Majistral gets two for Sami but Joe lights up his chest with a chop. Another armdrag sends Joe to the floor but he's still

smart enough to be out of the way before Sami can launch the dive. We take a break and come back with Joe kicking at Sami's chest to take over. Joe grabs an arm trap chinlock for a bit, followed by a running boot to the face in the corner. The fans start to get behind Sami as we're treated to his amazing selling.

Sami gets in a kick to the chest but charges into a belly to belly. More hard forearms to the head have Sami in trouble until he comes back with a hard clothesline in a rare power display. Joe's corner enziguri gets two and a backplash is good for the same. Sami can't get a Koji Clutch so Joe plants him with a powerslam for two. Another break gets us past the twenty minute mark and we come back to see Joe hammering him down in the corner again.

Joe takes out the legs but gets sent to the floor, allowing Sami to get in a slingshot moonsault for the first really big spot. Back in and a high cross body gives Sami a rare near fall, only to have Joe turn him inside out with a clothesline. The corner Rock Bottom sets up the MuscleBuster to give Joe the first fall at 27:56.

We take another break and come back with Sami fighting out of another MuscleBuster attempt, only to have Joe ram him into the buckle a few times. Sami dropkicks him for a breather but the referee breaks it up because Joe is busted open. The distraction lets Joe go nuts with strikes to knock Sami across the ring. We get a kickout at two with some bonus yelling so Joe puts on a chinlock. Joe misses a knee drop and gets rolled up for two.

That's about it for Sami right now as Joe sends him outside and drives Sami into the steps for a long nine count. An STO on the floor gives Joe another nine count and now it's time for Sami's comeback with forearms and a suplex which takes quite a bit of muscle. Joe rolls outside for Sami's flip dive and a quick Koji Clutch ties us up at 38:37.

We take another break and come back with Sami getting two off a Blue Thunder Bomb but both guys are spent. Joe loads up what looked like a superplex but Sami sunset bombs him down for two. With Joe heading outside for a breather, Sami brings back the dive through the ropes into

a tornado DDT for a long nine count. The Helluva Kick is countered into a powerbomb into a Boston crab into a crossface into a modified Rings of Saturn. Sami gets his foot on the ropes for the break as we hit 50:00.

Joe waits for Sami to get up and starts in with the strikes, including a hard set of kicks to the head. Sami is crumpled in a ball on the mat before popping to his feet. This time it's Sami putting Joe in the Koquina Clutch but Joe rolls over and puts his foot on the ropes for the break, just like Sami did earlier. The exploder suplex into the corner sets up the Helluva Kick but Joe steps aside and grabs the real Koquina Clutch, making Sami pass out for the win at 54:08.

Rating: A. Well that worked. Seriously what else do you want me to say? Two guys just fought for nearly an hour and it was one great stretch after another. The only minor issue was Sami being on Raw earlier in the week to spoil this a bit but I think I can live with that one. Joe needed this one as he now has a big signature win on his record and looks on fire going into Dallas where things really could go either way. Great match here and a great way to spend an evening.

Overall Rating: A+. Here's the thing that pushed this one over the top for me: before and during the match, the announcers talked about American Alpha, Carmella and Bayley being scheduled for tonight. Once we hit about forty minutes in, they said those things would have to be rescheduled. That's something you so rarely get in wrestling today: the announcers acting like this is real.

It wasn't a big main event that started with a few minutes left and happened to fit perfectly into their schedule. Instead, this match went on long enough that it changed what they had planned because this wasn't what they expected. It breaks away from the perfect structure that you're so often stuck with on most wrestling programming and that's very refreshing for a change.

Results

Samoa Joe b. Sami Zayn – Koquina Clutch

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