

Takeover: Toronto Preview

For the first time ever, it's an NXT Takeover in the Great White North and, in another first, it's an NXT Takeover on Survivor Series weekend. As is usually the case, this isn't feeling like a huge show on paper but there's a good chance that NXT is going to surprise us again because that's what they do. These shows are almost always a case of a big pile of good adding up to a solid show. Either way, it's almost a guaranteed good show at worst so let's get to it.

We don't really have the deepest card here so we'll start with the only match with nothing on the line as Bobby Roode and Tye Dillinger battle it out to be king of Toronto. This is an interesting one as Roode is the huge smark favorite due to the power of that entrance but Dillinger is on a roll at the moment with the TEN gimmick. The winner here is nowhere near as interesting as the crowd reactions.

The main reason the winner isn't interesting is because it's not in doubt. Roode looks destined to be the next challenger for the NXT Title and he's not going to be doing that if he loses here. Dillinger is in a bit over his head here and while he's getting better, he's not about to beat Roode here. I'm sure Dillinger will get in some offense and the match will be entertaining so Dillinger saves some face but there's no way Roode is going down here, not with the roll he's on at the moment.

We'll move on to a title match now as NXT Women's Champion Asuka defends against Mickie James, who is making her first WWE appearance in years. This might not be the most interesting match on paper but the problem is how weak the women's division has been left after all the callups over the last few months. The division is getting better and there's hope for the future but they're just not ready yet.

Much like the first match, I don't think there's much drama about who is going to win. James might not even be around after this match so keeping the title on Asuka is the only possible option. She's getting close to setting the record for longest reign as champion (which she'll break in early February) and I really can't imagine anyone beating her straight up

right now. That being said, they've built her up as such a monster that the first person to actually pin her is going to be set for a long time. But yeah, Asuka retains here after a strong match.

Now we'll move on to the other non-title match but it's for a bit trophy. In this case it's the finals of the second annual Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic, which turned out to be a big deal last year. This time though we have two normal tag teams instead of guys being thrown together for the sake of a singles angle. That means TM61 vs. the Authors of Pain and I'm a lot more confused about who goes over here.

I really don't get the appeal of TM61. They're starting to grow on me but they're really missing that fire that sets them apart from everyone else. Granted it's not helping that they're the next team in line after American Alpha, DIY and the Revival and they had a huge international reputation as they came in. Unfortunately they haven't quite lived up to it, though they're far from bad. That leaves them just kind of there but maybe this can be their big pickup.

On the other hand you have the Authors of Pain, who are just old school monsters. They run over everyone in front of them and only DIY gave them a run for their money. Manager Paul Ellering will be in a cage above the ring to keep things even but I'm not sure that's enough to keep them away from the trophy.

I'm going with the Authors here but I'm really not sure on it. Either team could win here but it basically comes down to who you see getting the next title shot. Either team could face either champions but I just can't imagine giving the Authors their first loss just yet. They seem to be the team that dominates the titles until someone breaks through to take them down and that's a long term feud instead of a one off loss. So yeah, the Authors take the tournament in a good match.

Speaking of the Tag Team Titles, let's look at what should be a classic between DIY and the defending Revival in a 2/3 falls match. These teams have traded wins for months now and this should be the big blowoff. Their previous match got rave reviews and I see no reason this one shouldn't be just as good if not even better.

I'll go with the champs finally dropping the titles here as Revival has held them for a long time now and, assuming I'm right about the tournament final, there's no one left for them to fight. This is likely going to be the treat of the show though and I can't imagine it doesn't go three falls. NXT knows how to do those white hot near falls as well as anyone has ever done and that's what we're going to get here, along with new champions.

That leaves us with what should be one of the most violent brawls NXT has ever seen as NXT Champion Shinsuke Nakamura defends against Samoa Joe. These two had a huge match back in Brooklyn, which wasn't quite the wild brawl that everyone was expecting. However, that's the story they've been setting up here and these two are more than capable of pulling it off.

As great a fighter as Joe is, it's WAY too early to take the title off of Nakamura just yet. He'll need about three Kinshasas but it's going to be enough to take Joe down. This is going to be in the vein of Nakamura vs. Sami Zayn from earlier in the year where both guys were barely able to stand but that's exactly where Nakamura shines. It's going to be a blast and that's what this show needs.

There's also the possibility of a six woman tag being added with Billie Kay/Peyton Royce/??? vs. Liv Morgan/Aliyah/Ember Moon, though I'd bet on that taking place on NXT next week. As for a partner, I'd guess the Aussies bring in some lower level name like Daria Berenato, who can get a nice rub on a big show as a result. Either way, I'll take Morgan's team as either she or Moon will be the big challenger to Asuka going forward.

The thing to remember about Takeover is that while a lot of the matches aren't in question, the fun part is in the journey. It's going to be a lot of fun to see most of these matches, which have potential to be something special. The main event and Tag Team Title matches in particular should blow the roof off the place (assume it's fixed in between) and that's going to make for one heck of a kickoff to this huge weekend.

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