

NXT – January 4, 2017: With a Lot of Hitting Him in the Face

NXT

Date: January 4, 2017

Location: Margaret Court Arena, Melbourne, Australia

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're back with another special show as it's another two hour house show, this time from Australia. Again we've seen most of the main event but just like last week, we should get to see more than we already got a few weeks back. Other than that, almost none of this matters aside from having good matches. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Revival vs. Tino Sabbatelli/Riddick Moss

Dawson and Moss start things off as the fans are rather into this early on. That goes nowhere so it's off to Tino vs. Wilder as the slow pace continues. Tino slams Dash so Moss can get two off an elbow drop. Moss fights off Revival as Tino just stands there and lets the double teaming ensue.

Riddick can't fight them off forever though and the top guys (Graves: "THEY'RE STILL TOP GUYS!") take over as you might expect. An elbow finally misses and the diving tag brings in Tino for the house cleaning. Wilder pulls Sabbatelli to the floor though and Moss grabs a rollup for two. Back in and the Shatter Machine puts Moss away at 11:00.

Rating: C. This was a long squash, which makes for some uninteresting matches on house shows. Revival were almost the faces here, which made for a really awkward match. It's certainly not bad or anything but this is such a strange style for NXT, which is so based on building up to matches instead of one offs like this one.

Elias Samson/Bobby Roode vs. Tye Dillinger/Buddy Murphy

Samson gets annoyed at the fans cutting off his singing until Roode cuts him off again for a much more popular entrance. Murphy is the

home country boy here with Graves saying it's so Murphy can know someone likes him. Roode starts with Murphy but lets Elias know he's got an eye on the other Canadian.

We hit the posing early on with Graves suggesting that Phillips and Murphy go box kangaroos together. A kick to the face gives Murphy two as the fans chant TEN. It's off to Dillinger but Roode bails before any contact is made. With the DRIFT AWAY chants rolling, Samson works on the arm and gets the ten treatment. A slingshot splash gets two and, according to Phillips, kangaroos can't hop backwards.

Roode is dragged in but Tye beats both of them up anyway, only to be taken down by a knee to the back. The fans still don't like Samson and call him some very rude names before switching to a GLORIOUS chant. For some reason Roode won't rain down right hands in the corner so it's an a superkick to set up the double tag. Murphy comes in and cleans house, including a bad looking hurricanrana to Roode. A better looking flip dive takes him out, leaving Dillinger to hit the Tyebreaker to put Samson away at 11:19.

Rating: C+. This was a bit more my style with a standard tag formula and wrestlers that the fans were actually interested in. Also, as expected, NXT isn't about to give us Dillinger and Roode being involved in a fall, as they shouldn't here. That's still a big enough feud for one more TV match so why waste it here?

Liv Morgan vs. Billie Kay vs. Ember Moon

As expected, Kay is the big crowd favorite but bails to the floor so the other two can slug it out. Well as much slugging as Morgan is going to do. Billie tries to steal a pin but gets caught in that rolling sunset flip to give Morgan some near falls. A double bulldog puts Kay and Moon down so Liv covers one but gets kicked out onto the other over and over in a clever spot.

Back up and Billie hits Eat Defeat for two on Moon, followed by an armbar into a suplex. The fans want to know if Billie will be their girl (she's no Bayley) but settle for Liv getting superkicked off the apron. Moon kicks Billie in the face again and all three are knocked out to the floor. Back in and Kay gets double kicked but Liv breaks up the Eclipse. Instead, Billie powerbombs Liv off the top and walks into the Eclipse to give Moon the pin at 8:28.

Rating: C+. Another totally fine match here as Moon gets to look

strong again. I could easily see Moon getting her shot at the title over Wrestlemania weekend though I'm not sure if that's a big enough title match for Asuka. You know, assuming Nikki Cross doesn't take the title from her in San Antonio.

Tag Team Titles: DIY vs. TM61

TM61 is challenging and it's Ciampa and Thorn trading near falls to start. That earns a quick handshake and the fans are VERY pleased so far. Miller and Gargano come in and it's one heck of a right hand to send Johnny into the corner. A very delayed vertical suplex gets two on Gargano so it's back to Ciampa for some arm cranking. Thorn gets two off a falcon's arrow and we take a break.

Back with Ciampa breaking up a handspring elbow and bringing Gargano back in. Johnny grabs a sunset flip but leans forward and pulls on Thorn's neck for a weird looking submission hold. That goes nowhere so Thorn dropkicks Ciampa so it can be back to Miller for the house cleaning. Johnny's spear through the ropes cuts him off for another near fall. A tornado DDT/enziguri combo gives Gargano two more but Thorn powerbombs his own partner to set up a Tower of Doom on Ciampa.

Clever spot and Gargano shoving Miller into the pin for the save made it better. Project Ciampa gives us another near fall and the fans are WAY into the Aussies. Miller and Gargano slug it out in the middle of the ring with Johnny getting the better of it. Thorn is knocked to the floor and the running knee/superkick combo retains the titles at 18:18.

Rating: B. DIY really can do no wrong at this point and that's always going to be entertaining. I'm still worried about the match against the Authors of Pain but at least we had one heck of a pair of matches on these international tours. TM61 is still good but they're several steps behind the champs and Revival, which kind of leaves them out in the cold.

We get the big post match show of respect.

Recap of Nakamura vs. Joe.

NXT Title: Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Samoa Joe

Nakamura is defending and this is inside a cage. The champ takes him down by the leg to start but they grapple up against the ropes with neither being able to get much of an advantage. Joe gets taken into

the corner for Good Vibrations so he sends Nakamura hard into the cage to even things up.

The corner enziguri gets two and we take an early break. Back with Joe kicking him in the face again and dropping an elbow for two. A weak LET'S GO CENA/CENA SUCKS chant is quickly booed down as Joe slowly beats on the champ. We hit the neck crank for a bit before Nakamura fights back up with the running kick to the face. Joe gets in his own kick but misses the backsplash to put both guys down for a bit.

It's Joe up first with his rotating submissions but Nakamura slips out of the Crossface. Instead Joe sends him into the cage a few more times and we take a second break. Back with Nakamura hitting more knees to the head and lifting Joe for a big German suplex. Kinshasa is countered with a powerslam and the Koquina Clutch doesn't last long. Nakamura knees him in the head again for two and BLASTS Joe with a top rope Kinshasa. Back to back regular versions retain the title at 26:15.

Rating: B+. Again, the clipped version of this from a few weeks ago is almost unfair as it only showed about thirteen minutes instead of over twice that long. This was a good way to definitively put Nakamura over Joe for good and let both guys move on to something else. It really wouldn't surprise me if that means the main roster for Joe so at least he went out on a high note.

Replays wrap it up.

Overall Rating: B-. I actually had a bit more fun watching this one than last week's as the matches felt a little more important, possibly due to a full time team challenging DIY instead of a makeshift pairing. It's still a good show but I'm really looking forward to getting back to the regular show instead of these specials where there's no storyline development. The wrestling has been fine but I need a bit more than that.

Results

Revival b. Tino Sabbatelli/Riddick Moss – Shatter Machine to Moss

Tye Dillinger/Buddy Murphy b. Bobby Roode/Elias Samson – Tyebreaker to Samson

Ember Moon b. Billie Kay and Liv Morgan – Eclipse to Kay

DIY b. TM61 – Running knee/superkick combination to Miller

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Samoa Joe – Kinshasa

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