

Took in the NXT House Show Tonight

I took in the NXT house show tonight in Highland Heights, Kentucky (basically Cincinnati) at the BB&T Arena on the campus of Northern Kentucky University. NXT was at this same arena about nine months ago and they're already back, though after how things went tonight, I don't know if there's going to be a third show.

In short, the place was EMPTY. I showed up at about 7:00 for a 7:30 show and there were only a few hundred people in the arena (which isn't even very big in the first place). After grabbing some food from the fastest concession stand I've ever seen and looking at one of the lamest merchandise stands I've ever seen (two titles, a poster of the people appearing on the show and a handful of shirts), I went into the arena and found out that I was sitting next to someone in the corner.

Since there were a few hundred empty seats closer, I sat in one of those, only to have an usher come up and say I could have a third row floor seat for free if I wanted. Even with the ushers giving away dozens of floor seats, there was still an empty seat next to me and three empty seats in what would have been the sixth row. There were a few more people in the stands later in the show but it was still really bad looking.

During the opening matches there was a video feed of the entrances on the Titantron but it had a slight delay, which was really jarring. Then they just stopped doing it and had regular entrance videos.

1. No Way Jose b. Wesley Blake via DQ at 4:23. This was a really oddly booked match with Jose dancing and doing the standard comedy stuff, only to have Blake choke him with his vest. I have no idea why they did it this was as Jose beat him up after the match and hit his pop up right hand finisher anyway. I know Blake is going to be facing McIntyre on TV next week but they can't have him lose a match like this on a house show? Odd way to open a show but Jose has a future opening house shows for years. He might not work as a regular act and while that's a problem, he definitely has a place.

2. Sonya Deville b. Lacey Evans at 8:18. This was WAY better than their squash match the previous night on TV. They beat the heck out of each other and Evans was rocking the former Marine gimmick and looked rather fetching doing so. I'll let you figure out what I mean on that one. Deville hit a Shining Wizard for the pin. Also of note, Lacey's daughter might have been in the front row. Either that or Deville had a very long running joke about yelling at a girl and calling her Lacey's daughter.

DIY did a quick promo, talking about how they would beat Sanity later and then lead a parade down the Ohio River. They did almost the same thing at a show in Louisville where Gargano said they would ride horses to Indiana. Ciampa: "HORSES???" Anyway this was fine and I have no idea why it was the only one all night.

3. Drew McIntyre b. Patrick Clark at 8:45. McIntyre has more star power than anyone in NXT save for maybe Bobby Roode. He's big, he's in great shape, he wrestles like a veteran and he's a former Intercontinental Champion. There's something about him that makes you think he's a bigger deal than anyone else around and that's a very good thing. Can someone give me one good reason why he's not on Takeover?

4. Aleister Black b. Oney Lorcan at 3:20. I was looking forward to this one and it was over way too fast. Much like the women earlier, these two beat the heck out of each other and the chops were some of the loudest I can ever remember hearing. Black's entrance is still awesome and that Black Mass looks like it could stop a bull.

5. Asuka b. Nikki Cross and Ruby Riot at 9:54 to retain the Women's Title. This was a preview for Saturday's title match and there was one very odd detail: they used the old Women's Title belt. I know they'll use the new one on Saturday but why in the world not use it here?

Anyway, this was your standard "two in, one out" formula with everyone getting a chance to fight each other. One cool spot saw Asuka come in with a missile dropkick to Cross and land in a splash on Riot for two (I believe that's how it went but it might have been Riot coming off the top.). We had some near falls until Asuka kicked Cross in the head to retain. Asuka definitely came off like a face here, complete with throwing her shirt to the crowd and offering one heck of a gorgeous smile.

Intermission with trivia and What Happens Next. This is a game where a kid is shown a clip and has to pick what happened next from four choices. Here's the thing: not only was it the same clip from the last show I went to in the same building (which apparently was the same one they had used at other shows on the tour) but it was Vince being blown up in his exploding limo.

Just in case that's not clear: the ONLY clip that they can pick from their ENTIRE VIDEO LIBRARY is a man apparently being killed in a firey explosion. You can't pick, I don't know, ANYTHING ELSE? The kid got a program, a card with the roster on it and a signed picture of Bobby Roode. At least the prize was good.

6. DIY vs. Sanity (Young and Wolfe) went to a no contest at 4:24. This looked to be the first longer match of the night but it was called off after Ciampa came off the apron with a running knee and seemed to hurt himself on the landing. He crashed all of ten feet in front of me and almost immediately got up and hopped to the back. Someone said he was busted open but I didn't see it. This seemed like a legit injury as there was no reason to end the match so quickly with the show already seeming to fly by.

Post match Eric Young issued an open challenge for anyone to come out and fight Killian Dain.

7. Killian Dain b. Kassius Ohno at 12:00. This was about what you would expect from Dain as he powered Ohno down and used a bunch of chinlocks. Ohno fought back with some strikes and the pump kicks, plus a Diamond Dust of all things. Dain was busted open off a shot to the face (not bad) but finished him with the Ulster Plantation.

Post match Sanity beat Ohno down but No Way Jose came out for the same. The fans were into Ohno, especially his theme music.

8. Hideo Itami/Roderick Strong b. Bobby Roode/Andrade Cien Almas at 20:52. Let me put it very simply: Roode is an absolute star and he knows exactly what he's doing out there. From his timing during the entrances (turning around to show off the GLORIOUS written on the back at the right times) to the pose to everything else, it turned into the biggest face pop of the night by a long stretch.

Anyway, this was about what you would have expected as the good guys controlled to start and threw in a lot of mocking Roode's poses. At the same time, Roode was doing everything he could on the apron, including telling Almas to "come on amigo". During Almas' time in

the ring, a fan shouted that Roode loved six sides and you could see Bobby covering up a laugh. Eventually Strong got beaten down but avoided a charge and made the hot tag to Itami. Everything broke down and Itami hit a GTS on Almas for the pin.

Itami went to the back almost immediately but Strong went around the ring high fiving fans (including me) and taking some quick photos, which I always find cool. The announcers gave us a quick thank you to end the night.

Overall it was a fun night and about what you would expect from an NXT house show. Counting Ticketmaster fees a mid level seat cost \$40 and floor seats were \$75, not counting any fees that would be included. A bit pricey but it's the kind of arena where there isn't a bad seat in the house. Go and check one of these out if you've never seen one before as you're guaranteed some fun reactions and a good presentation.

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