

NXT Takeover – Chicago: It Worked Before And It Works Again

Takeover: Chicago

Date: May 20, 2017

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Tom Phillips, Percy Watson

How did we not get here before? If there's one town that seems perfect for one of these things, it's Chicago. We have a five match card here and thanks to the addition of the United Kingdom Title match, four of those matches are for titles. The card might be a bit predictable as is usually the case with Takeover but that doesn't mean it's a bad thing. Let's get to it.

The opening video focuses on underdogs winning here in Chicago, including a shot of Wrigley Field. As a Cleveland Indians fan, SCREW OFF! The Cubs were the favorites coming into the World Series and it was really tiresome listening to people treat the Indians like they were some kind of nuisance that had to be dealt with so EVERYONE'S favorite team could win the World Series.

Roderick Strong vs. Eric Young

Strong comes through the crowd to lay out Sanity and Young is scared about having to be on his own. The fans are behind Roddy as you can tell it's a hot crowd tonight. Young gets beaten around ringside before grabbing a neckbreaker back inside. Strong makes his comeback but goes after Wolfe and Dain, the latter of whom hits a crossbody on the floor to take over.

The slow beating continues inside with Young working on the neck to set up that wheelbarrow neckbreaker. Strong dropkicks him out of the air though and there's the first backbreaker. A belly to back faceplant sends Young bailing to the floor but he gets in the wheelbarrow neckbreaker to

take over again. It takes too long to throw him back inside though and Strong is out at two.

The top rope elbow looks to set up another wheelbarrow neckbreaker but Strong is ready for it this time. Another shot knocks Dain off the apron but Young breaks up the Angle Slam. The fans stay behind Roddy as he catches Eric on top and knees him in the jaw, knocking him down onto Sanity. Back in and a suplex into a backbreaker gives Strong the pin at 13:38.

Rating: B+. And that's how you make a star. Tye Dillinger spent months trying to do what Strong just did in one match and it made Strong look like the hottest thing in the company. If nothing else I'm glad he's going with something other than a running boot to the face, which is the same thing Drew McIntyre and Hideo Itami use, at least on occasion. Really good match here too with Strong never being far enough gone that you couldn't believe he could make a comeback.

We recap the UK Title match, which I believe is the same recap that opened the UK Championship Special from earlier this week. Tyler Bate defeated Pete Dunne to win the inaugural title back in January but Dunne is back and more serious.

Jim Ross comes out for commentary on the next match.

United Kingdom Title: Pete Dunne vs. Tyler Bate

Bate is defending and has a mustache and beard, making him look like he's a fourteen year old trying to buy beer. The fans are behind Dunne (the Bruiserweight) but Tyler does have some fans. At least they're not cheering for CM Punk. Dunne works on his arm and cranks away a bit but can't stomp Bate's hand into the steps.

Instead Bate pulls away and pops him in the jaw (I believe that one was Bop), only to have Dunne hit an X Plex (release suplex) onto the apron. Back in and it's time for more working on the finger but Bate shrugs off some kicks to the face. Bate grabs a suplex and flips out of another X Plex. A standing shooting star shows off some of Tyler's athleticism but he gets caught in a triangle choke.

Now it's time to show off the strength with Bate powerbombing his way to freedom. A very long and very fast airplane spin gives Bate two more and both guys are down. Dunne flips out of a German suplex and blasts him with a forearm, followed by an X Plex into a sitout powerbomb for a very near fall, drawing a standing ovation. They slug it out again with neither getting an advantage until Tyler rolls into a kick to the head.

Dunne gets out of the Tyler Driver but the Bitter End is countered into a DDT in an awesome counter. They're somehow not done yet as Tyler goes up for freaking SPIRAL TAP and another near fall. Bate misses a big dive over the top and knocks himself silly though, setting up the Bitter End for the pin and the title at 15:29.

Rating: A. And that's going on the Match of the Year list. That's certainly the logical ending but I completely forgot about the story and was just watching them beat the heck out of each other and trading one major spot after another. Absolutely outstanding match and if Bate isn't a major star one day, WWE is more inept than I was expecting them to be. Check this out if you have the chance.

We recap the Women's Title match. There was a battle royal for the #1 contendership but Asuka interfered, making the classic mistake of thinking that she wouldn't have any challengers. As is always the case, the boss made it a four way, though Ember Moon was injured and had to pull out.

Women's Title: Asuka vs. Ruby Riot vs. Nikki Cross

Asuka is defending and undefeated. Nikki throws her jacket at Riot to start but a hip attack puts her on the floor. We get Ruby vs. Asuka with the fans being split again. Ruby sends her outside and loads up a dive, only to have Nikki come back in to break it up. Asuka comes back in with a missile dropkick to Nikki while landing on Ruby in a top rope splash. It lands on the knees but it's still a cool looking spot.

With Nikki down on the floor, Asuka grabs a powerbomb on Ruby but Nikki makes the save. All three wind up inside again with Ruby mostly missing a hurricanrana on the champ. Asuka and Nikki head and Ruby dives on the champ, followed by a top rope backsplash for two on Cross. Nikki gets

superkicked into a German suplex from Asuka but the champ catches Ruby's dive in the Asuka Lock.

A reverse DDT onto the apron knocks Riot silly and Asuka's baseball slide gets her caught in the ring skirt for a beating. All three are down for a bit until Asuka gets sent outside again, leaving Riot to kick Cross in the head. Asuka dives back in and runs the rope before making the save, forcing Riot off the cover so she doesn't get the pin. The knee to the head knocks Riot silly and Asuka pins them both at 12:22.

Rating: C+. They were trying here but there were some noticeable botches, including the ending. I think the idea was for Cross to kick out and knock Riot into the shot to the head but that's really not how it looked. It's still good, but I don't think there's any secret to the fact that Moon is the real challenger and this was just a stop on the way there.

The Velveteen Dream arrives this Wednesday.

We recap Hideo Itami vs. Bobby Roode, which actually isn't closing the idea. Itami is finally back and healthy and Roode needs an opponent. They've been going after each other for weeks with Itami knocking him out via GTS twice now.

NXT Title: Hideo Itami vs. Bobby Roode

Itami is challenging. A computer generated piano appears on stage and plays the start of Roode's entrance before the real thing takes over. Feeling out process to start with Itami taking him down into a headlock. Roode pulls him off the ropes though and grabs a Blockbuster for two.

We're already in the chinlock as Roode is keeping things simple to continue his custom. Itami fights up and hits a running boot to the face, followed by some running clotheslines. A top rope clothesline really picks things up and Roode's missed charge sends him shoulder first into the post. Roode escapes a weak Fujiwara armbar but gets caught in a Falcon Arrow for two.

Another shot to the arm looks to set up the GTS but Roode slips away and snaps Itami's throat across the top rope. They head outside with the

shoulder going into the steps but Itami's dropkick only hits the steps, leaving both guys down. Back in and Itami has a bad knee but still manages a running dropkick in the corner.

The GTS doesn't work though and it's a Glorious DDT for a close two. Itami pops up for a GTS but it knocks Roode to the floor and only gets two. Itami punches him in the face over and over but another GTS is countered into back to back Glorious DDTs to retain Roode's title at 17:49.

Rating: B+. I love the fact that Roode keeps winning these matches pretty clean. It's similar to Ric Flair as he takes a heck of a beating but then survives long enough until he can capitalize on a mistake. The matches continue to surprise and this was no exception, even though Itami felt like a one off challenger more than anything else. I'd assume Strong is next and that's a very good thing.

Kevin Owens, Milwaukee Brewer Eric Thames, Sami Zayn, Pat Patterson and Kassius Ohno are here.

We recap DIY vs. the Authors of Pain. DIY finally beat the Revival but the Authors took them apart in their first shot at the titles. They haven't gotten a rematch yet though and tonight it's in a ladder match. The other issue is Tommaso Ciampa's knee/ankle, which he injured at a house show two days ago. Word is he's good to go but it should be interesting to see how he's doing.

Tag Team Titles: Authors of Pain vs. DIY

DIY is challenging and it's a ladder match. The fight is on in a hurry with the Authors being knocked outside. It's too early for a ladder though and Akum is sent face first into the steps. DIY brings in a huge ladder to set up at ringside but have to dive underneath it to take the champs down.

For some reason they both climb the ladder, allowing Akum to make a pretty easy save. Razar does the slowest climb in history and DIY quickly breaks it up. The Super Collider doesn't work but DIY gets dropped onto the ropes. Ciampa is holding his knee but seems to be good to continue.

The Authors are smart enough to drop down and crush DIY with the ladder again.

Now it's time for the big ladder and of course the fans (who have been good tonight) want tables. Two ladders are bridged from the apron to the barricade with a standing ladder between them but double powerbombs are broken up. Strikes to the head put the Authors on the ladders.....and DIY climbs the big one. Stereo splashes crush the champs, with Gargano nearly overshooting his target.

Back in and all four go up two ladders with only Gargano being left, only to have Paul Ellering come in for the save. Gargano superkicks him down but the Authors get back up and massacre Ciampa in retaliation. Ellering gives the sign to end things and Gargano shoves Ciampa out of the way to take one heck of a ladder shot to the face. The champs both climb again and it's Ciampa with a superplex THROUGH A LADDER (as in breaking it, not bending it) to put both guys down.

Akum knocks Gargano away before moving the ladder, which gets caught around his neck. That means Meet in the Middle to knock him silly and all four are down. DIY goes up at the same time but the Authors kick the ladder away and pull them down for the Super Collider. That's enough to retain the titles at 20:11.

Rating: B+. That was very good stuff and they've made the Authors feel invincible but NXT is running the risk of ticking the crowd off by pushing the Authors so strong. You could hear the crowd turn on things both here and in Orlando when they retained as the fans want to see DIY with the titles but it really didn't last very long. Still though, very good main event and the right choice to close the show.

Post match DIY gets the big heroes' ovation....until Ciampa turns on Gargano and lays him out with a running knee to the face. White Noise off the announcers' table and through a bunch of tables ends the show. That's the right call as it's not like they have anything else to do, especially since they're clearly not getting the titles back.

Overall Rating: A-. Yeah this worked, even though it didn't feel like a major show. I'm hoping we wait a few months to have another one as they

don't need to be monthly. Either way, at least we had an outstanding show here with the ending being the right idea. It says a lot when you can get a Chicago crowd to turn on you like Ciampa did at the end there. They put on a great show with the worst match being more than acceptable, which is how it was during the best days of NXT.

Results

Roderick Strong b. Eric Young – Suplex backbreaker

Pete Dunne b. Tyler Bate – Bitter End

Asuka b. Nikki Cross and Ruby Riot – Running knee to Riot

Bobby Roode b. Hideo Itami – Glorious DDT

Authors of Pain b. DIY – The Authors pulled down the titles

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