

A Much Longer Than Anticipated Look at Bayley

I originally wrote this as a comment on a blog post about why Bayley isn't working. It was originally going to be a paragraph or two and wound up being two pages. Here's my take on why Bayley has completely missed on the main roster and why that's not a surprise at all (nor is it her fault).

As a big Bayley fan who has been more angered by how she's been used on the main roster than most, this is going to be a long one.

This is the NXT to WWE issue in a nutshell: NXT is all about the journey moreso than the result while WWE is all about what's going on right now.

Bayley started off as nothing in NXT, much like so many others down there. She slowly started building herself up and then started getting over with the hugging stuff. Then she was the biggest thing in NXT, either male or female (just listen to that pop for her entrance in London).

The other key was how people could relate to her. It's similar to Mick Foley in a way. Bayley had wanted to do this her whole life and fought and worked to get there. Her success wasn't due to being Snoop Dogg's cousin or a 6'0 physical specimen like Charlotte. She got where she was because she never gave up and kept working hard no matter what knocked her back. That kind of character will always work in any form of entertainment because people naturally appreciate hard work and fighting for your dreams. When she finally won the title in Brooklyn, people were connected to her and it was like they were beating Sasha with her (the fact that it was a great match helped too).

Now let's look at her WWE run.

She shows up in August and is treated as the latest challenger to Charlotte since Sasha Banks is out with an injury. That makes her look like a second tier performer right off the bat. After losing the title match (with Banks also involved), she trades wins with Dana Brooke of all people.

This is where her big problem begins: is she one of the Four Horsewomen and the latest awesome NXT talent or is she someone who lucked her way into being so popular? Charlotte, Sasha and Becky all came up and hit the ground running. Bayley came in and looked like she was in WAY over her head, despite being treated like a big deal at first. You can't have that both ways.

Then she's suddenly in the title hunt and gets the title shot at Royal Rumble. She loses there, only to win the rematch the next month with Sasha's help. That was Charlotte's first pay per view singles loss and instead of Bayley getting the focus, it was all about Charlotte losing. The fact that Banks interfered to help her is basically brushed aside, making Bayley look like she's less important/talented than Charlotte all over again. She wins the four way at Wrestlemania, again pinning Charlotte, but the big moment was at the previous show instead of Wrestlemania. Again, that doesn't make sense just from a logical booking perspective. Who books the big moment at the nothing show and then the far less interesting rematch at the biggest show of the year?

Then she makes the greatest mistake of her life: she's born in a town where WWE is having a pay per view. Therefore, by definition, she must lose to Alexa Bliss. Now there's nothing wrong with Bliss, who rocketed up the main roster far faster than I think anyone would have realistically expected. She was suddenly the loser who couldn't get it done again, which was a complete reversal from being able to pin the previously unbeatable Charlotte twice in a row. She then basically got

squashed in the Singapore cane match where she never got a comeback and never got to prove Bliss wrong.

That brings us to her latest stuff, where after weeks of being humiliated, she's suddenly winning two or so matches in a row and getting a title shot at Summerslam because that's all the time we have for character rebuilding. Is she over losing to Bliss? Is she upset by being humiliated like that? Eh no time to worry about that because we've got to get moving to the next pay per view. The fans will just get over those losses because, as WWE seems to think, wins and losses mean absolutely nothing, despite Cole and company never shutting up about them more often than not.

The general problem is rather simple: NXT is more about setting up a character and putting them on a path. They actually take their time in setting something up and want to get them to an eventual goal. WWE would rather rush everything together and put the character development (as limited as it is) in later. Aside from Wrestlemania (or any show Roman Reigns is on), it seems to be a concept of just throwing people into matches and filling in the details between the start and finish later.

The fans in NXT were given a reason to care about Bayley and exploded when she first won the title. WWE fans, who might not be familiar with Bayley, see a woman in weird looking clothes who they're told was a big deal in NXT, get the title and then the details can be filled in. WWE seems to think that making a person a champion is character development and actually taking the time to tell their backstory and give us a reason to care about them is a big waste of time. I'm sure the fact that NXT has had many more successful new characters than WWE in recent years is just a coincidence.

There are two more big things to cover.

Let's talk about the promos real quick. While I don't think

Bayley is nearly as bad as some people think she is, she's not great on the mic. Imagine that: someone whose main training in talking was in short, mostly pre-taped promos that had a lot of time to edit and prepare, isn't great at being handed a mic and told to talk for five minutes in front of a live audience. Bayley never was a great talker in NXT in the first place and now she's expected to be good at doing something that's much harder that she has no training in? Of course she is, because in WWE, one size fits all and everyone is expected to be able to go out and talk like they're Austin, Rock or Flair.

As for her looks, this is a tricky area. First and foremost, she's mainly worked with Alexa Bliss over the last few months. Almost anyone in wrestling history is going to pale in comparison next to Bliss, who is one of the best looking sexiest women the business has ever seen. Other than that it's usually Charlotte, who looks like she was carved out of stone or Sasha, who has a lot more charisma than Bayley in the first place. Bayley was never meant to be the hot woman in the Trish mold. She's the one there for the younger girls to gravitate towards: the nerd who was comfortable in her own skin. She's not supposed to be the plastic Nikki Bella or the blonde bombshell like Lana. She's the more average woman that girls can look up to, which doesn't do much for men who tend to think that if you're not Trish Stratus, you're just not good enough. Bayley is a very good looking woman but she's not supposed to be sexy. For some reason, this is a problem for a lot of fans and it's rather unfair.

Overall, Bayley is another victim of the same problem so many NXT callups have: despite having far more time and far more writers, the main roster sees very little incentive to actually build up a character with some solid roots. Instead they would rather throw them in the middle of the lake and see who can swim. It's a lack of time and effort that could lead to greater results, but they need to spend more time coming up with great "natural" sounding quips for Cole to read off a

paper or ways to force the Roman Reigns peg into the top star hole. People like Bayley, who don't have the family pedigree or natural talents to get them to a certain standard, are in trouble because WWE seems to think that if you're not the greatest thing in the world immediately, you're not worth the effort. It's a complete shame, but unfortunately it's how WWE thinks anymore. Bayley has the talent, but in the system she's in, it's not likely to get much of a chance to be shown properly.