

Worlds Collide: And The Collision Hurts



IMG Credit: WWE

Worlds Collide

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Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton

So this is something interesting as WWE is trying a new idea. This is a tournament made up of a bunch of wrestlers from different shows with the winners getting to face the champion of their choice on any of the three brands included (NXT, NXT UK, 205 Live). We could be in for some good wrestling here as the fifteen (yes fifteen) names included are rather talented. Let's get to it.

Now this is going to be a little bit different as the special that aired on the Network only included the later rounds. WWE also aired the preliminary rounds on YouTube so I'm including them as a bonus. I'm just a nice guy that way you see.

The format was pretty simple here: there was a fifteen man battle royal with the winner advancing to the second round. The battle royal, the semifinals and finals will air on the Network. In something that won't matter much, the order of eliminations for the battle royal determined the brackets for the first round, but I don't think that's really even

worth mentioning when we get to the actual matches.

First Round: Mark Andrews (NXT UK) vs. Drew Gulak (205 Live)

Drew calls Mark a stupid kid as the announcers recap the concept. The exchange of headscissors results in Andrews flipping to his feet and it's an early standoff. A wristlock puts Andrews down for the first time so he flips up again as we get to a second standoff. The announcers spoil the battle royal results, as we now have no reason to watch the future match from the past that determines the present.

Gulak takes it back to the mat, this time with Andrews getting the better of his leg. A test of strength has Andrews down on the mat and it's time to pull on the arm. Back up and Gulak talks some trash as they chop it out. Andrews knocks him down and hits a standing Whisper in the Wind for two. The Gulock is countered into a rollup for two and we hit the pinfall reversal sequence. They run the ropes with Andrews trying a leapfrog but getting pulled down into a sunset flip for the pin at 8:29.

Rating: D+. This was an awkward match as it felt like they were trying to fill in time with whatever basic stuff they could do. It's not like they didn't have chemistry but it wasn't anything worth seeing, save for Andrews' flips. I guess we can just chalk this one up to an off night for both guys, which happens to everyone.

First Round: Travis Banks (NXT UK) vs. Keith Lee (NXT)

The much larger Lee offers Banks a shot so it's off to some kicks to the leg. Lee starts chopping away and LAUNCHES Banks across the ring to take over for the first time. A running splash in the corner gets two but Banks is right back with a dropkick. Lee gets sent into the corner, setting up a middle rope double stomp to the back. They head outside for a suicide dive but a second attempt is pulled out of the air because Lee is that strong. Back in and Banks slips out of a huge powerbomb but it's the Supernova to finish Banks at 4:50.

Rating: C-. I liked this one better than the previous one as Lee is that much more entertaining. With the right push, he could be a huge star for NXT in a hurry, just due to pure athleticism and charisma. Banks is

another talented guy who can't seem to catch a break, though he's going to be around NXT UK for the time being.

First Round: Adam Cole (NXT) vs. Shane Thorne (NXT)

Feeling out process to start with Cole working on a waistlock but not being able to get very far. Cole takes him into the corner for a clean break and ADAM COLE BAY BAY! A headlock takes Thorne down, with Cole telling him that it's the Adam Cole Invitational. Thorne fights up and kicks him to the floor, which really isn't approved of by the crowd. The arm gets bent around the post, followed by a regular wristlock back inside. Thorne goes with stomping to keep Cole in trouble, much to the fans' annoyance.

It's already back to the arm though as the annoyance didn't last very long. A knee to the shoulder sets up another armbar until Cole fights up and hits a kick out of the corner. Some elbows to the face give Cole two and a running boot to the face gets the same. The Last Shot misses though and a belly to back gives Thorne two of his own. Another attempt at an armbar gets them both sent outside for a double crash. Back in and Cole superkicks him out of the air, setting up the Last Shot for the pin at 11:10.

Rating: C+. Thorne has impressed me in his few outings since the Mighty broke up and that's a good sign for his future. If he can keep that up, there's a very nice future for him either in NXT or on the main roster. At the same time, Cole gets to show that he can wrestle a nice match with some time, meaning he's not just a rather good talker. Nice little surprise here.

First Round: TJP (205 Live) vs. Dominik Dijakovic (NXT)

Dijakovic throws him down with raw power to start as we get a pretty weak TJ chant. We get some arm work from Dijakovic but the much smaller TJP spins up into an ankle scissors for the break. For some reason he tries a crossbody so Dijakovic casually tosses him around in a nice power display. The chinlock with a knee in the back keeps TJP in trouble for as long as you would expect until the escape lets TJP wrench Dijakovic's arm. A pretty hard clothesline with the good arm gives Dijakovic two and

it's right back to the chinlock.

That's broken up again and this time Dijakovic misses a running boot in the corner. That means a one legged Tree of Woe and a running dropkick from TJP, followed by a top rope hurricanrana for two. A bunch of spins set up an STF and then a Regal Stretch to really pull on the arm. Dijakovic grabs the rope, followed by a sitout chokeslam for a close two. Trash talk just gets Dijakovic caught in a cross armbreaker but that's countered into Feast Your Eyes to give Dijakovic the clean pin at 9:00.

Rating: B. This was actually a very well put together match with power vs. speed, which is about as basic of a wrestling match as you can get. TJP is so smooth in the ring and can move around like few others, making for a very entertaining match. Dijakovic is a power guy and that's a role that is going to keep him around for a long time. I was very impressed here and this was a great time.

First Round: Cedric Alexander (205 Live) vs. Tyler Bate (NXT UK)

That's certainly an interesting pairing. The fans like both these guys and we get an early handshake. Bate spins out of a wristlock but gets taken down by the leg. A leglock keeps Bate down for a bit until they go to a test of strength and bridge up from their backs at the same time. That means a BOTH THESE GUYS chant, which gets cut off as Bate takes over with a crossarm choke. Bate is right back on the arm but Alexander pops up again as neither has had a serious advantage yet. A cartwheel gets Bate out of an anklescissors but the airplane spin doesn't last long.

Instead Alexander kicks him in the head for two and it's off to a waistlock for a bit. Back up and a nice dropkick gives Alexander two more and it's time to slug it out. Bate gets in a kneelift and the airplane spin works this time, including a pop up uppercut for two. A Michinoku Driver gives Alexander the same and they trade more right hands. The Spanish Fly gets two more on Bate so he kicks Alexander in the head. That's enough to set up the Tyler Driver 97 for the pin at 10:37.

Rating: B-. Another good match here with Bate getting to showcase himself against someone else probably too talented (in the ring at least) for the show he's on. There's no secret that Bate is going to be a big star when

he eventually becomes a full time main roster member (you know he and Dunne are coming there one day) and having him get wins like this show how ready he is for there.

First Round: Tony Nese (205 Live) vs. Velveteen Dream (NXT)

Remember how I said the previous matches could be interesting? I'm not so sure with this one. Dream goes for the arm to start (my goodness come up with something new) but Nese reverses into an armbar of his own. This time Dream spins out and stares at Nese, who isn't sure what to make of things.

Back up and Nese hides in the corner, drawing some of the louder booing of the night. A big kick misses Dream so Nese poses at him instead. Dream's dropkick hits the arm to send Nese to the floor and that means a top rope ax handle. Back in and Nese catches him with a fireman's carry gutbuster to put Dream in real trouble for the first time. A hard kick to the ribs keeps Dream down but hang on, because Nese needs to do some pushups.

The springboard Lionsault misses though and Dream comes back with shots to the face, followed by a running clothesline. The big boot into a legdrop gives Dream two but Nese is right back with a hard forearm. Dream kicks him in the face again for a delayed two and they're both spent. Nese rolls him into the corner, only to charge into a superkick when he tries the running knee. Dream goes up, blocks a top rope superplex attempt, and hits the Purple Rainmaker for the pin at 9:05.

Rating: C. This was one of the more obvious matches of the first round and there's nothing wrong with that. I liked Dream to win this when I first saw the field and it wouldn't be shocking to see him win the tournament, as he's been flirting with the NXT Title for a long time now. Nese was trying, but he was in over his head here.

The announcers recap the tournament, because in addition to not showing the battle royal here, we're also not showing the last first round match. That is airing on the Network special, because that makes so much perfect sense.

Vic Joseph takes over for Tom Phillips on commentary.

Quarterfinals: Keith Lee (NXT) vs. Adam Cole (NXT)

They lock up to start with Lee swinging him around for a crash, allowing Lee to order Cole to BASK IN HIS GLORY. Cole gets in a single shot and hits his own catchphrase but stops to take a bow, meaning it's a huge clothesline to drop Cole again. That's enough for Cole to need a breather on the floor and this time the break seems to work, as Cole takes the knee out to put Lee in trouble. The knee goes around the post and things slow down off a leglock.

A running dropkick to the knee (good looking one too) makes things even worse so Lee headbutts Cole down, as only someone his size can pull off. One heck of a beal sets up a hard running clothesline (Lee shouldn't be able to do that) but Cole goes to the knee again. A pump kick to the face gets two but Lee is fine enough for a pop up sitout Last Ride (the Spirit Bomb) for two of his own. Just because he can, Lee misses a middle rope moonsault, setting up Cole's running knee for two more. Lee's fireman's carry is broken up and it's a four straight superkicks into a Shining Wizard to finish Lee at 10:25.

Rating: C. Lee is the kind of guy who is going to be just fine in all of five minutes because he's that awesome in the ring. That's a very valuable asset to have as it allows you take a loss like this without that much damage. At the same time, it's a loss to Cole, who is one of the most over names in NXT.

Quarterfinals: Dominik Dijakovic (NXT) vs. Tyler Bate (NXT UK)

Bate tries his luck in a slugout before going after the arm that was damaged in the previous match. Dijakovic is fine enough to pick him up for some knees to the ribs and a big toss outside. There's something so cool about seeing someone throw around a grown man like that. A backbreaker sets up a middle rope splash for two on Bate and it's off to the chinlock. That stays on for a good while until Dijakovic misses the middle rope spinning splash.

Bate manages a hurricanrana to set up the airplane spin into the uppercut

for a nice two. Some right hands just make Dijakovic laugh and ask for more, which Bate is happy to give him. Bop and Bang look to set up the Tyler Driver 97 but Dijakovic powers out and connects with a spinning boot to the face. A superplex attempt is broken up and Bate tries a sunset bomb, only to have Dijakovic moonsault to his feet for a superkick. Well of course he can do that. Bate gets sent outside for a suicide dive but Feast Your Eyes is countered into the Tyler Driver 97 for the pin at 9:24.

Rating: B. This was one of those matches that was more impressive than anything else as Dijakovic got to show off some amazing athleticism. Bate is already known as an established star so having him win here makes sense. Dijakovic looked good though and some of the things he was doing were almost hard to believe.

Quarterfinals: Humberto Carrillo (205 Live) vs. Velveteen Dream (NXT)

Carrillo's first round match wasn't shown because WWE does some really questionable stuff sometimes. The traditional battle over the wristlocks start things off with Carrillo taking him down into an armbar. Dream's shoulder just lets Carrillo nip up and flip Dream outside. The threat of a dive is cut off with a clothesline and it's time for some hip swiveling. A neckbreaker drops Carrillo for two and hey, more swiveling ensues.

The chinlock goes on and for once, the fans cheer for the person grabbing the hold. You don't see that very often. Carrillo fights up and tries a handspring but Dream dropkicks him in the back for a nice counter. We hit the chinlock for the third time but Carrillo actually fights up and hits a jumping back elbow. A spinning kick to the face looks to set up a springboard, which Dream knocks out to the floor. The dive to the outside only hits barricade though and Carrillo gets in a missile dropkick.

Carrillo's moonsault hits raised knees and Dream gets two off the wind up DDT. The Purple Rainmaker only hits mat and Dream sits on the mat, allowing Carrillo to get a running start, handspring off the ropes and pick up Dream for a Spanish Fly on the way back. That's a little more complicated than it needs to be but it looked cool. Carrillo takes too

much time going up and gets crotched, meaning it's the Dream Valley Driver for the pin at 11:23.

Rating: B-. At some point, Carrillo actually has to win something. He's been very entertaining in almost every match he's been in but you can only have him lose so many times before it stops mattering. At the same time, Dream continues to be one of the best performers on any show and he'll be fine anywhere. Well not on the main roster of course but anywhere else.

We're off to the Network version now with Tom Phillips and Byron Saxton on commentary.

Battle Royal

Tyler Bate, Jordan Devlin, Mark Andrews, Travis Banks, Zack Gibson, Humberto Carrillo, Drew Gulak, Tony Nese, TJP, Cedric Alexander, Velveteen Dream, Dominik Dijakovic, Shane Thorne, Keith Lee, Adam Cole

It's everyone involved in the tournament with the winner getting a first round bye. As in a first round bye to a tournament where we already know several of the semifinalists. The order of the eliminations determine the first round matches. Dream is crazy popular here and it's a big brawl to start. Carrillo gets knocked to the apron early on and Gibson hits him in the throat for the first elimination. Lee dumps Gibson a few seconds later, followed by Dream getting rid of Alexander.

TJP and Dream have to hang on and Gulak slides back underneath the bottom rope. There's something annoying yet also necessary about having wrestlers tease eliminations that don't go anywhere in a battle royal. It's not entertaining, but you have to sit through this part no matter what. Dijakovic hits a hard clothesline to get rid of Bate and it's time to gang up on Lee. They all get knocked away so we get the Lee vs. Dijakovic showdown.

Cole breaks that up and it's Dream dumping Thorne. It's back to the regular brawling near the ropes with Cole being sent to the apron. TJP's Wrecking Ball dropkick knocks Cole out and Nese seems to take credit. Lee eliminates Gulak and Dijakovic gets the big spinning toss to put Andrews

out. Dijakovic suplexes TJP and Nese at the same time because he hasn't shown off enough yet. Devlin sends Banks to the apron and kicks the knee out for an elimination.

That's not enough either as Devlin goes outside and sends Banks knees first into the steps. Dream gets sent over the top again but still won't be eliminated. TJP follows him to the apron for a slugout as we get the Lee vs. Dijakovic showdown II: This Time They're Doing Stuff. Dijakovic puts him on the apron and, after Lee fights off a few people, it's a spinning boot to get rid of him. Everyone else gets rid of Dijakovic, leaving us with Dream, Devlin, Nese and TJP.

It turns into a three on one as Devlin isn't about to help Dream. Makes sense as they're on a much lower level than him. Dream fights them off and gets rid of TJP, leaving Devlin to go after Nese. That doesn't go very well as Nese stomps them both in opposite corners until Dream gets back up. A missed charge lets Dream clothesline Nese out but Devlin hits a dropkick to win at 19:28.

Rating: D+. This was longer than it needed to be but you have to fill in some time before you get to the first round and quarterfinals, which follow the semifinals in this wacky situation. Devlin winning is fine, though I'd question wrestling for twenty minutes to avoid a seven minute first round match.

Charly Caruso explains the tournament. This thing continues to be one of the most amazingly screwed up presentations I've ever seen.

First Round: Humberto Carrillo (205 Live) vs. Zack Gibson (NXT UK)

Now this is the ONLY first round match to air on the Network. The matchup itself isn't anything amazing so the wrestling itself better blow everything else away. Gibson jumps him before the bell and stomps away in the corner after said bell but Carrillo flips him over and starts kicking at the knee. A springboard wristdrag has Gibson in trouble so he goes with a shot to the throat.

It's off to a chinlock (Gibson: "GIVE UP!") followed by an armbar suplex and then a second chinlock. Carrillo fights up and hits the handspring

elbow, followed by the moonsault into the moonsault for two. Gibson is right back with the Ticket to Ride but Carrillo is right back up with a springboard kick to the face. A handstand springboard moonsault out of the corner finishes Gibson at 6:18.

Rating: C+. I mean, it was good but why in the world was this one on the main show instead of something else? I'm sure there's no particular reason for it but I'm still confused by almost everything I see on this thing. It's like they went out of their way to make this all the more confusing, which is so WWE when you think about it.

Recap of the first round. At least they make it a little faster here.

Vic Joseph replaces Tom Phillips.

Quarterfinals: Drew Gulak (205 Live) vs. Jordan Devlin (NXT UK)

The early lockup goes nowhere so they go to a standoff. Drew takes him to the mat but Devlin can actually hang with him there, including a quick chinlock. That's reversed into something like a forward half crab and a cravate as the crowd is trying to break out of an eerie silence. Back up and a belly to back backbreaker puts Drew in trouble, setting up a seated abdominal stretch to keep him down.

After a rope grab gets two, an argument breaks out over which of the two is cheating. Drew gets the better of the fight and stomps away in the corner, only to have Devlin nail a spinning backfist for the double knockdown. Devlin gets back up and tries a springboard moonsault press, which is countered into a loose Gulock. The break puts both of them down again as this is starting to drag a bit.

A hard clothesline staggers Gulak, who manages to counter a leapfrog into a sunset flip (cool spot) for two. Devlin pulls him up into the hard belly to back and another near fall. That means some trash talk in the corner so Gulak, known as the fair talker, takes Devlin down into an STF/armbar combination for a scary looking hold. That's broken up as well and Ireland's Call finishes Gulak in a hurry at 11:43.

Rating: C-. This was a weird one but I can go with the idea of trying

something different. You can only go with the same style of a match for so long around here so the heel vs. heel battle of the cheating was a change of pace. It wasn't the most thrilling thing in the world though, which made this feel a little longer than it should have. Then again it might be just because of how much there has been here, especially in a match between people not likely to win the whole thing.

Just because it has to change again, commentary is now being handled by Nigel McGuinness and Vic Joseph.

Semifinals: Adam Cole vs. Tyler Bate

This could be interesting. They begin with the traditional battle over the wristlock and it's Bate spinning out ala Johnny Saint, only to have Cole strike his signature pose. Bate dropkicks him to the floor for a breather, allowing Cole to snap him throat first across the top. A neckbreaker looks to set up the Last Shot but Cole just drops down for a chinlock instead. Dang Kevin Owens should be upset over that one. Cole mocks Bate, which has never been the best idea in the world but Cole has a tendency to do some dumb stuff.

Bate makes his comeback with a middle rope elbow and an uppercut for two. An exploder suplex sets up the running shooting star for two on Cole and a small package is good for the same. Cole misses the jumping enziguri and it's a bridging German suplex for two more. Bate slugs away until a quick brainbuster gives Cole his own near fall, plus the shocked kickout face as a bonus. Bop and Bang is blocked with a superkick but Bate bounces off the ropes with the rebound clothesline. The Tyler Driver 97 finishes Cole at 10:31.

Rating: B-. This was lacking a little bit though what we got was entertaining. As has been the case before, Bate winning matches over names like Cole is a good sign for him, as he's still growing as a wrestler. That's going to take some time because he's so young, but getting in there against people with different styles is a good thing for him. Nice match, though the fans are starting to get burned out and I can't blame them.

Semifinals: Velveteen Dream (NXT) vs. Jordan Devlin (NXT UK)

Dream is coming in with bad ribs and the fans are all behind him. A feeling out process to start lets Devlin grab a waistlock in a smart move. Dream goes with a shoulder, which only hurts the ribs again. Another shot knocks Devlin outside with Dream following to send Devlin ribs first into the barricade to even things up a bit. Back in and Devlin's ribs are fine enough for a release Rock Bottom into a standing moonsault but Devlin would rather mock Dream than cover.

A kind of seated abdominal stretch stays on the ribs, followed by a backbreaker for two. The chinlock with a knee in the back goes on but since he doesn't pay attention or learn from his mistakes, Devlin starts talking more trash and gets punched in the jaw. Dream scores with a spinning top rope ax handle and you can hear the crowd getting back into things. A superkick gets two and Dream hits a high crossbody but Devlin rolls through for his own two.

Devlin gets smart with a Backstabber for two (and a very weak kickout) but the backdrop driver is countered into a quick pinfall reversal sequence. Dream's wind-up DDT gets two of his own but the ribs give out on the Dream Valley Driver attempt. Now the backdrop driver connects for two and Devlin heads up, only to have his moonsault hit raised knees. Shouldn't that jar the ribs even more? Anyway the Dream Valley Driver sets up the Purple Rainmaker to send Dream to the finals at 12:23.

Rating: C+. You can really feel things dragging here and that's understandable. The ribs story worked well here with Dream selling well and Devlin being too cocky to just go for the cover, allowing the more experienced and better Dream to make his comeback. It's a good match, but this thing needs to end and soon.

Worlds Collide Tournament Finals: Tyler Bate (NXT UK) vs. Velveteen Dream (NXT)

Dream's ribs are even more injured this time around and we get Big Match Intros, which are understandable here. Say it with me: they fight over a wristlock to start (a headlock isn't too much to ask) with Bate spinning around to escape and striking a pose. Dream bails to the floor for a bit as the fans are actually split for a change. It's almost weird hearing a

crowd not entirely behind Dream. Bate goes with the obvious and drives shoulders into the ribs in the corner, followed by elbows to the ribs. You can't fault the logic.

Something like an abdominal claw and then a more traditional abdominal stretch keep Dream in trouble until of course he powers up enough for a hiptoss escape. Bate is calm enough to go back to the ribs with a bodyscissors but Dream reverses with a slam. Since he won't have many chances here, Dream goes up top for the Purple Rainmaker, only to get caught and slammed down for two. A German suplex sets up a waistlock as you would think Bate would go for something a little bigger already.

Dream gets in a knee lift for a breather and scores with a clothesline, followed by a heck of a backdrop with Bate taking one of the longest bumps I've ever seen. A superkick into a Fameasser gets two and Dream rolls through into a Dream Valley Driver for another near fall as things are picking up. Another shot to the ribs sets up the Tyler Driver 97 for two and that should sum up the ending from here. Bate goes with a Liontamer of all things (smart) and then into a regular Boston crab (not as smart, but still smart).

With Dream getting close to the ropes, Bate stomps him in the head but Dream wakes up just in time to...be dragged back into the middle. Dream finally rolls out so Bate cradles him for a very close two instead. The top rope ax handle connects for Dream but Bate catches him on top with a headbutt. Bate goes up top and loads up a super Tyler Driver 97, which of course is broken up because that's way too big of a move. A backdrop takes Bate down and it's the Purple Rainmaker to give Dream the tournament at 16:21.

Rating: B. And that, finally, is that. Dream winning makes the most sense as he was the biggest star on the show. The problem here is that we just saw a match with him dealing with bad ribs against Devlin so the story didn't have the same impact. It's a better match because Bate is a better opponent but it really came too late and was only good as opposed to great.

Bate and Dream pose to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This one depends on if you watched the first half or just the Network version. The Network version is better but feels incomplete (because it is) though the whole thing is WAY too long at just shy of four hours. The wrestling is pretty good throughout but there's no instant classic or anything. That's too long for a bunch of midcarders in a tournament and the weird structure of the shows made it worse. It's fine for background noise if you're completely out of stuff to watch, but it's not worth the time to sit down and watch.

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