

NXT Great American Bash 2023 Preview

NXT is back on the road as these trips are starting to be a bit more frequent. This time the show is around Austin, Texas and we have a pretty strong card. The main event will see NXT Champion Carmelo Hayes defending against Ilja Dragunov, which should make for a big fight feel. Other than that we have a lot of title matches, including Dominik Mysterio in action, so let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Dragon Lee/Nathan Frazer/Yulisa Leon/Valentina Feroz vs. Meta Four

Now this is how you Kickoff Show, as it's one match with a lot of people running around, which should make for a nice way to get the crowd going. I've never been a big fan of the giant Kickoff Shows with multiple matches, especially when the show itself is only seven matches. This is a feud that has been going on rather quietly but could make for a good start to the night.

While the Meta Four winning seems like the more logical way to go, I'm rarely a fan of starting things off with a heel winning so we'll go with Lee and company getting the pin. The good thing about an eight person tag is there will be someone there who can take a fall without getting hurt to keep the feud going. This should be a relatively light match and that's how a show should start, including with the villains losing.

Baron Corbin vs. Gable Steveson

After nearly two years of waiting, Steveson FINALLY makes his in-ring debut, even if it might be one of his only matches before he heads back to amateur wrestling. This is a good example of a match that needs to be a degree of difficulty of five (or less) and an execution of ten rather than the other

way around. Steveson needs to look crisp and effective rather than trying to do something too complicated and falling on his face. If he can do that, this will be a success.

And yes, of course Steveson wins, as you don't bring Corbin in to give him a victory in a spot like this. Corbin is there to walk Steveson through the match and that is something he can do well. This is ALL about Steveson and if Corbin can work some magic here and make him look good, it will be a success. Just don't try to do too much and this could work, but it needs to work very well.

Tag Team Titles: Gallus(c) vs. Tony D'Angelo/Stacks

It took me time to think of who held the titles at the moment. Beyond that, I couldn't tell you a thing about Gallus' reign, which has almost reached SIX MONTHS. It says a lot that the NXT tag division, which used to be a large chunk of its backbone, has fallen this far, but here we are. The titles have very little value at the moment and it is pretty clear that something needs to changel.

I'll go with D'Angelo and Stacks to take the titles from Gallus here. Gallus has been almost ice cold as champions and there is no reason to keep the titles on them any longer. The division isn't what it used to be, but D'Angelo and Stacks are more than good enough to get the belts here. If nothing else, they need to for the sake of breathing some life back into the championships already.

Roxanne Perez vs. Blair Davenport

This is a Weapons Wild match, because we needed another name for Street Fight. Perez has been on quite the downward slide in recent months and probably needs this win a lot more than Davenport at the moment. However, Davenport is still the new star on the block and it would make a lot of sense to give her the win on the bigger stage as she hasn't had that kind of success just yet.

In kind of a hard decision, I'm going to go with Davenport, as I think she is going to get more out of a win and a sustained push at the moment. Perez is someone who has already gotten the title reign and special moment. While Perez needs the win more, she can also absorb a loss a bit better, which puts her in a weird position. As strange as it is, I'll go with Davenport, but this could be either of them.

North American Title: Dominik Mysterio(c) vs. Mustafa Ali vs. Wes Lee

This is a lot trickier than I thought, as it is a result that depends on where WWE wants to go next. On one hand, you could have Ali win and get his big moment...and we'll write that off right now, because I just can't picture it happening. That leaves us with two realistic options and I could actually see this going in either direction, which makes the match more interesting.

That being said, there is a grand total of NO reason to take the title from Mysterio here. He is getting WAY more mileage out of a title that doesn't have a ton of value on the main roster and that is a great thing to see. Mysterio is more or less the modern day Honky Tonk Man with the title and Lee doesn't need to get the title back anytime soon. Let Mysterio milk the heck out of the thing, starting with him retaining here.

Women's Title: Tiffany Stratton(c) vs. Thea Hail

They've put themselves into a weird place here as the stakes are almost too stacked against Stratton. It's a submission match and Hail has turned into a mini submission master, while Hail has only talked about introducing a submission move. Maybe they have a plan for this, but it would be almost weird to see the title change hands in this case, as the field is tilted so much towards Hail.

I'll go with Stratton retaining here, even though Hail losing

again is going to hurt her a lot. There is a chance that this is some kind of screwy finish, where Hail has to give up to save someone else, though I have no idea how that would be set up. I'd love to see Hail win the title and FINALLY give Chase U something to brag about, but I don't think it happens here, nor should it.

NXT Title: Carmelo Hayes(c) vs. Ilja Dragunov

While the reason for the match is pretty basic, there is a lot to be said about having Dragunov in this spot. Dragunov is the definition of someone you just want to watch because it feels like he is leaving everything in the ring every time he is out there. You can imagine what he is going to do when he is on perhaps the biggest stage he has ever been on. That being said, I'm not sure it means he wins the title.

This is the trickiest decision of the show, as both options are very viable. Hayes hasn't really felt like one of the great NXT Champions yet, but it's almost hard to imagine Dragunov losing. I'll take Hayes to win, but I'm not convinced this is the end of the story. Hayes needs the win more and will get more out of it, though Dragunov taking the title would not shock me in the slightest.

Overall Thoughts

The more I look at this show, the more interested I am in seeing the show. I'm not seeing some instant classic or all time show here, but I'm seeing a potentially strong show that makes everyone involved look good. There is still no reason to compare these shows to the Takeover series because it's not the same thing, but we could be in for a very entertaining two and a half or so hours of wrestling, which I would certainly call a success.

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