

NXT – August 31, 2016: Get Them In The Tent

NXT

Date: August 31, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

The champ is back tonight as Shinsuke Nakamura makes his first appearance on NXT since winning the NXT Title in Brooklyn. I mean, that was only eleven days ago but NXT is making it seem like a big deal. It should be interesting to see who comes out to challenge him for the title, though odds are it's Samoa Joe for a rematch. Let's get to it.

Earlier today, Samoa Joe was deemed unclear to wrestle due to injuries suffered in Brooklyn. William Regal looks annoyed.

Opening sequence.

Tye Dillinger vs. Buddy Murphy

Murphy is deemed a one by the fans. Back in my day, being number one was a good thing. Tye gets him to the mat in a hammerlock but gets thrown away, meaning Blake can give himself a ten. Back up and Dillinger does his spinout into a cartwheel for the real ten. Graves: "That would get you disqualified from any gymnastics competition."

The lame wrestling goes back and forth with Murphy sending him outside as we go to a break. That's probably the good thing as this is a very simple match and there's nothing that's working especially well save for the TEN thing. Back with Dillinger making his comeback off a clothesline and a backdrop. Some TEN stomps in the corner set up the Tyebreaker for the pin at 9:46.

Rating: C-. This is a good example of the crowd carrying a match higher than it should have gone otherwise. Dillinger's gimmick is way over but his in ring work isn't the greatest. It's an

interesting change of pace from the Murphy vs. Ibushi match from a few weeks ago which was far more entertaining with Ibushi having more than one thing to carry him. Dillinger is more than worth investing in due to being so over but he needs some work. There's potential in Murphy too, albeit with some adjustments.

We look back at the Tag Team Title match in Brooklyn and Johnny Gargano's knee injury costing him in the Cruiserweight Classic.

Tommaso Ciampa says Gargano will be back soon when the Revival comes in and beats him into the arena. They take the beating into the ring and leave Ciampa laying. Wilder says everyone sounds tough until reality hits them in the mouth. Ciampa tries to get up but takes a good looking Shatter Machine.

Steve Cutler wants attention and demands respect. Dang the cupboard really is bare.

Steve Cutler vs. Kenneth Crawford

Crawford is a generic looking guy who Graves says is well dressed backstage. Cutler works on the arm to start but Kenneth flips his way out of a backdrop (didn't stick the landing but he tried) and grabs an armbar of his own. Some good looking dropkicks and a running shooting star get two on Cutler but he walks into a spinning fisherman's driver (as in a fisherman's suplex into a sitout slam) to give Steve the pin at 3:38.

Rating: C-. Crawford did some good looking stuff but neither guy was anything special here. Pushing Cutler (and by pushing I mean setting up to be fed to someone else) isn't the most horrible idea in the world as people already know him from all those jobs over the years and it's not like he can't just go back to being a jobber after this is done. It's better to give someone some value and then take it away than take away value from someone who you've invested a lot of time in.

Hideo Itami says he kicked Austin Aries in the head at Takeover but Aries disappointed him by claiming an injury. If he doesn't want to feel pain, get out of the ring.

Video on Sami Zayn vs. Nakamura back in Dallas.

Video on TM61.

No Way Jose vs. Angelo Dawkins

Jose dances around and grabs a headlock to start as Dawkins gets a few chants of his own. Dawkins' chinlock doesn't go anywhere so it's the baseball punch and a full nelson slam (looked more like a cobra clutch this time) to give Jose the pin at 2:43.

Aries, banana in hand (Dig that potassium replenishing!), interrupts Andrade Cien Almas' interview time, saying everyone is trying to steal his spotlight. Since Almas lost, Aries will just take his interview time. A challenge is issued for next week.

Video on Nakamura vs. Finn Balor.

Liv Morgan vs. Aliyah

Aliyah looks a bit more serious this time and kicks Morgan in the ribs. Some knees to the chest have Morgan in more trouble and Aliyah puts on a freaky hold where she cranks on Liv's arm and holds her head down with a leg. Morgan pops back up and tries a kind of spinning kick close enough to the head for the pin at 3:21. There was a hard edit in there so it was probably worse than it looked.

Rating: D-. If this is the future of the women's division, they've got a long way to go. Aliyah showed some fire but Morgan was a pretty bad mess. Her offense required an edit and consisted of two moves in about three and a half minutes. Also I'm really not sure how strong of a character I'M FROM NEW JERSEY is or how long of a life span it's going to have.

No Way Jose is fired up about his win and says he has the heart to go with the hair. Bobby Roode comes up, compliments Jose's head, and walks away.

Video on Nakamura vs. Joe.

Here's Nakamura for his celebration and the dancing entrance looks even cooler with the title around his waist. The YOU DESERVE IT chants start up until Nakamura starts talking about being in Japan

and wanting to face the best competition in the world. That meant he had to come to NXT where he beat Sami Zayn, Finn Balor and Samoa Joe. He's still in a lot of pain but he became the NXT Champion. The Joe Era is over and it's now the Era of Strong Style. Nakamura kind of barks and poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This show was about setting up stuff for the future as we're firmly in the fallout period from Takeover and have a long way to go before the next one. Stuff like Almas vs. Aries and Asuka coming back next week are great ways to build week to week and keep you coming back long enough to let the big stories develop. It's about making something seem important enough that you want to watch the hour of TV to see it and then get you ready for the big stuff. That's such a simple strategy and NXT makes it work as well as anyone has in a long time.

Results

Tye Dillinger b. Wesley Blake – Tyebreaker

Steve Cutler b. Kenneth Crawford – Fisherman's driver

No Way Jose b. Angelo Dawkins – Full nelson slam

Liv Morgan b. Aliyah – Spinning kick to the face

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

NXT – August 24, 2016: On Vacation

NXT

Date: August 24, 2016

Location: Barclays Center, New York City, New York

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

This is the closest thing NXT has to a week off as we'll have matches taped before Takeover this past Saturday night. That means we'll be seeing some stand alone stuff in front of a white hot crowd, which should make these matches mean a lot more than they would otherwise. Other than that and a few interviews, this isn't the biggest show in the world. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Saturday night.

Opening sequence.

Tye Dillinger vs. Wesley Blake

Dillinger is treated like a face here and the announcers seem to treat him as one. Fans to Blake: "LET'S GO ZERO!" Dillinger easily takes him to the mat and does a cartwheel before giving himself a ten. A poke to the eye puts Tye down and we take a break. Back with Dillinger's comeback being cut off by a Backstabber but Dillinger hiptosses him into the corner. A few shots to the chest and back set up the Tyebreaker (fireman's carry backbreaker onto an exposed knee) for the pin at 11:18.

Rating: C. This is where NXT is a step ahead of WWE. Dillinger was getting huge face pops and was clearly one of the most over gimmicks on the roster despite being a heel. The solution: turn him face and accept the chants. Now they have a freshly over guy who could move up the roster under the right circumstances and all NXT had to do was start putting him against heels. Dillinger did almost all the work and everyone comes out ahead. Why is this so complicated for the main roster?

Quick clip of Bobby Roode winning on Saturday.

Roode says that was no surprise. Almas was a fine opponent but he's not GLORIOUS.

Clips of Austin Aries beating No Way Jose and Hideo Itami making a post match save.

Aries is made that he didn't get to leave with his hand raised. He's tired of being interrupted and people stealing his moments. Aries has already gotten rid of people who interrupted him (Baron Corbin and No Way Jose) and Itami will be no different.

Long recap of Asuka vs. Bayley. Have they made it clear enough that they don't have much tonight?

We get a video of Bayley's time in NXT, including her reading part of her essay from middle school.

Bayley says this time was different but Asuka was just better. Ember Moon comes up and says Bayley should be proud of her performance and says she's here because of Bayley.

We see Bayley's Raw debut.

Video on Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa vs. Revival.

Revival knows they're the best and unstoppable. Top guys out. Clink me.

Recap of Shinsuke Nakamura taking the NXT Title from Samoa Joe. Nakamura is back next week.

TM61 vs. Authors of Pain

The Authors jump them before the bell and it's a brawl to start with TM61 actually taking over and sending the big men to the floor. The opening bell brings the Authors back inside and it's the tattooed Author (still waiting on names so we'll call him #1) slamming Thorn. TM61 comes back with some double teaming and a leg lariat in the corner. #1 sends Thorn hard into the post though and TM61 slows down. Apparently the tattooed one is Akum and the other is Razar. I prefer Tokka and Razar but that's just me.

Back from a break with Thorn hitting a jawbreaker on Razar and

rolling over for the tag off to Miller. Nick speeds things up and gets two off a high cross body. That's enough for the Authors as they lift TM61 up for stereo powerbombs and slam their backs together. The Russian legsweep/clothesline ends Miller at 11:29.

Rating: C. I get the idea of paying dues but TM61 is looking more and more like a pair of jobbers every week. I'm assuming this sets up the Authors of Pain as potential challengers to the Revival but I'm really not sure how that's going to go. You don't often see heel vs. heel and I'm not sure how much Revival could do with guys this big. The Authors are certainly something different though and that's usually a good thing.

Overall Rating: D+. This was the usual post outside Orlando Takeover show and there's nothing wrong with that. They cobbled together whatever they could here and it was basically a week off as a result. I'm fine with them taking a break after all the effort they put in on Takeover and next week things will be back to normal. Just a week off here and that's fine.

Results

Tye Dillinger b. Wesley Blake – Tyebreaker

Authors of Pain b. TM61 – Russian legsweep/clothesline combo to Miller

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

NXT Takeover: Back To Brooklyn: That Crowd Man

Takeover: Back to Brooklyn

Date: August 20, 2016

Location: Barclays Center, New York City, New York

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

This might be NXT's biggest show of the year, especially after last year's amazing double main event that really turned Bayley into a star. This year's main event could be even bigger with Samoa Joe defending the NXT Title against Shinsuke Nakamura and Bayley trying to get the Women's Title back against the monster champion Asuka. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at the opening of last year's show with HHH in the ring and the lights showing the huge crowd. That shot told you there was something different with this show and it was going to be something special.

Various people sit down for interviews, all looking a bit nervous. They all talk about where they were a year ago and how cool it is for them to move this far forward in such a short amount of time. Almost everyone says they take over Brooklyn. Bayley: "Tonight, I take over Brooklyn. Again."

Austin Aries vs. No Way Jose

Jose loves to have fun and Aries is serious. In the traditionally big NXT entrance, Jose comes out with a huge conga line around the ring. Aries hides in the corner to start and the very vocal crowd is all the way behind him. Jose accepts a left handshake but slaps Aries in the face. A BIG right hand knocks Aries outside and Jose follows with an ax handle off the apron. Aries finally gets an opening by dropping Jose throat first across the top rope but a few chops take him down again.

The Last Chancery out of nowhere has Jose in trouble but he crawls

over for the break. Jose grabs a TKO for two, only to have Aries send him outside for the suicide dive. Back in and Aries' suplex is countered into something like a falcon arrow for a very close two. Jose punches him down again and is showing some great fire here. The running corner dropkick gets two for Aries and another Last Chancery makes Jose tap at 10:40.

Rating: B-. I think this is proof that Jose is just waiting on a serious gimmick to go somewhere. Jose felt like someone doing a serious version of a comedy gimmick and looked great here, including the more than good enough wrestling abilities. Aries needed this win a lot more though as he really hasn't done anything special since debuting way back in the spring.

Aries puts on another Last Chancery after the match but Hideo Itami comes out for the save and uses the GTS for the first time on NXT TV. That's a good idea as they both need a feud.

Ric Flair is here.

Billie Kay vs. Ember Moon

This is Moon's debut. Ember starts fast and shows off some awesome agility with a headscissors and a hiptoss before showing off red eyes. A spinning cross body gets two for Moon but she gets caught in an Eat Defeat to give Billie two. Billie bends her over the shoulder and chokes at the same time (picture a Gory Stretch but with a choke). Ember makes her comeback with a kick to the ribs and a butterfly suplex followed by a top rope Stunner (it looked better than it sounds) for the pin at 4:32.

Rating: C. I go back and forth on how much offense someone should get on a debuting wrestler here. You don't want it to be a squash but at the same time you want the newcomer to look like a threat. The eyes and the finisher looked great (though if that's botched, it's going to look HORRIBLE) and that's all that matters though. Moon could be the fresh blood that the division needs and that's a great thing going forward.

Earlier today, Bobby Roode insulted Brooklyn and said he was more

Manhattan.

We recap Bobby Roode vs. Andrade Cien Almas, which basically means Roode debuted and needed a first victim.

Bobby Roode vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Roode's entrance gets the pop of the night and he comes out on a high podium which is lowered down to the stage. Oh and the entire crowd sings his entrance before starting a loud BOBBY ROODE chant. Poor Almas has to follow that and the lack of caring is just painful to see. Fans: "THIS IS GLORIOUS!" Roode takes him down a few times to start and the fans cheer him to no end with a GLORIOUS chant.

Almas finally gets to do something by knocking Roode to the floor and posing on the apron for a cute bit. That just earns him a crotching on the top though and we hit the chinlock. Back up and Almas dropkicks him off the top to set up a springboard corkscrew plancha. Almas has to backflip out of a German superplex but his Lionsault into a standing moonsault hits knees.

Andrade wins a slugout and kicks Roode into the corner to set up the running knee strike. Not that it matters as Roode kicks him in the face and scores with a spinebuster. A pumphandle slam (the Glorious Bomb, a good name for a not great move) puts Almas away at 10:28.

Rating: C+. I'll give Almas some credit here for trying to make something out of a match where he had no chance. The fans only wanted to see Roode here and it was clear that this was his showcase instead of anything else. It's easy to imagine Roode or Aries as the next challenger to the NXT Title as it's not like there's a better option for a non-Takeover challenger.

We get a video of a riot and anarchy with the word SANITY spray painted on a wall.

HHH and the guys from Orange County Choppers unveil the Cruiserweight Classic trophy. It's a black column with a globe on top. Uh, yeah. The finals will be on September 14.

Tommaso Ciampa throws Johnny Gargano a Do It Yourself shirt. I guess that's their official name.

We recap Gargano/Ciampa vs. Revival. Gargano and Ciampa beat Revival and then Revival won the Tag Team Titles a few weeks later, meaning Gargano and Ciampa were the obvious first challengers.

Tag Team Titles: Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa vs. Revival

Dash and Dawson are defending. Dawson works on Ciampa's wrist to start but Tommaso sends him to the floor for a breather. Back in and the challengers take over with some double teaming (your heroes) until Gargano grabs an armbar. A chase sets up a four way staredown with the champs being knocked down to reset things a bit. The breather is short lived though as Gargano and Ciampa dive onto both of them to keep the champs in trouble.

Ciampa finally gets pulled into the wrong corner and Graves calls is clubberin. Wilder grabs a chinlock for a bit until Ciampa kicks both champs down. That's not enough for a tag though as Wilder is smart enough to pull Gargano off the apron. I love it when teams show thinking like that. We hit a bodyscissors on Ciampa with Dawson rubbing a forearm across his face. The referee doesn't see a tag to Gargano and the distracted referee also misses something like a Demolition Decapitator on Ciampa.

Dawson misses a charge into the post though and Dash crotches himself, allowing the hot tag to Gargano. Johnny cleans house and spears Dawson through the ropes for a near fall. Some heel chicanery allows Dawson to grab a DDT (which works more because he got a pin with it recently) for two. It's back to Ciampa though and Dawson gets caught in the flip over armbar, only to have Dash dive in for the save.

Everything breaks down and Gargano breaks up a double suplex to let Ciampa get two more off a small package in the very hot near fall of the match. Ciampa knees Dawson in the head but the Shatter Machine is broken up, leaving Dash to take the knee/superkick combo for three but Dawson put the foot on the rope. That earns Dawson a superkick to the floor but he pulls Ciampa outside, allowing Dash to chop block Gargano. That middle rope stomp to the leg that got rid of Big Cass wrecks the knee even worse and a reverse Figure Four

makes Johnny tap at 19:06.

Rating: A-. It's not quite their classic with American Alpha but the Revival is looking more and more like the best team in a long time every time they get in the ring. They just can't do anything wrong at this point which is even more important when you consider how basic they are. This leaves either TM61 or the Authors of Pain as the next challengers, assuming Gargano/Ciampa don't get a rematch due to the false finish. Great match.

Ciampa and Gargano get a standing ovation.

Sasha Banks, Becky Lynch and Charlotte are here.

We hear about the third official theme song for the show. I'm not even sure I get the idea of an official song for a show, let alone three for a show that isn't going to run two and a half hours.

We recap Asuka vs. Bayley in a rematch from their match in Dallas. Asuka was way too much for Bayley, despite Bayley dominating the first half of the match. It's taken some time to set up the rematch as Bayley wasn't ready to fight either mentally or physically. Tonight we're in the place where Bayley made magic once before and now she has to do it again.

Women's Title: Bayley vs. Asuka

Bayley is defending and there's a Hugger Section. You know that's killer spelled backwards (some of you might not get that one). Bayley expands the entrance this time with tube men at ringside, giving us a great surprised expression from the referee. The fans are split here as we're told Bayley's headband is from part of her gear at last year's Brooklyn show.

Bayley tries a rollup but dives into a knee to the face to send her outside. Back in and Asuka hip attacks her down, followed by more shots to the face. Asuka is hardly taking this seriously as she kicks Bayley in the face for another near fall. Bayley comes back with ten rams into the buckle though and a running knee drop gets two. The running hip attack is blocked for a change but Bayley misses a high crossbody.

Not that it matters as Bayley puts her in the Tree of Woe for a running elbow but Asuka grabs a Brock Lock of all things. An ankle lock makes things even worse for Bayley and Asuka fires off some kicks to the chest. Bayley goes with the Sting vs. Vader formula of telling the monster to hit her harder, earning herself a spinning backfist. A powerbomb doesn't quite work so Bayley switches to a Dominator (good save).

Asuka grabs the Asuka Lock out of nowhere but it's reversed into a Bayley to Belly for a very near fall. You could see Sasha and Becky jump to their feet on the counter. Back up and Bayley charges into the Asuka Lock in the middle of the ring but she flips over into a cover for two. That's fine with Asuka who kicks Bayley in the head to retain 14:10.

Rating: B. Good match here, assuming you can get by the referee telling them how much time they had left (happened in the previous match too) and telegraphing the finish. Asuka winning here makes sense and can we PLEASE send Bayley to the main roster already? There's nothing left for her to do down here and there's no reason to keep her down here, including helping to grow the division or whatever they've said for months now. Just let her go up there where they can have her babysit their "star" Eva Marie.

Asuka helps Bayley up and Bayley raises the champ's hand. Asuka leaves and Bayley gets the big THANK YOU chant which really feels like the sendoff. Bayley hugs her fellow Horsewomen before leaving.

We recap Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Samoa Joe. Nakamura debuted back in April and has taken the promotion by storm. Joe on the other hand is the NXT Champion and basically unbeatable. That sounds like a recipe for a big showdown. This gets the music video treatment.

Mick and Noelle Foley and Finn Balor are here.

NXT Title: Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Samoa Joe

Joe is defending and a violinist plays Nakamura to the ring. They go right at it to start with Joe taking it to the mat but Nakamura holds him off before Joe can get in anything major. Joe's headlock

keeps Nakamura in trouble but he comes back with knees to the chest. Good Vibrations gets on Joe's nerves and they head outside for a chop out before barely making it back in.

Back in and Nakamura kicks him in the head, only to miss a knee drop on the apron to send the knee straight into the floor. That earns him a suicide elbow from the champ, followed by more heavy kicks and stomps to the ribs. We hit a dragon sleeper of all things as this really hasn't been the match I was expecting. It's not bad mind you but when you're expecting a knock down dragout fight and get a hard hitting match, it's a bit surprising.

Joe does the powerbomb into the Boston crab into the STF into the Crossface but Joe lets him up. Nakamura kicks the champ in the head and loads him onto the top rope for the running knee to the ribs. More knees to the head have Joe in trouble as we're getting into the hard hitting part now. The Rock Bottom out of the corner drops Nakamura but a middle rope kick to the chest puts the champ down again.

Nakamura grabs a triangle choke but can't get it on full, allowing Joe to reverse into a Cloverleaf. The Koquina Clutch goes on without the legs fully wrapped, allowing Nakamura to get to the ropes. The referee says go to the finish as Kinshasa is countered with a snap powerslam. A quick Muscle Buster gets two, followed by Kinshasa for the same with Joe holding his face. The middle rope knee to the back sets up another Kinshasa for the pin and the title at 21:14.

Rating: A. Was there really another option here? This wasn't quite the war I was expecting but they nailed the ending and went with the best possible choice to wrap up the show. Nakamura taking the title and remaining undefeated makes sense to give the show a special feeling. Joe likely stays around for a well deserved rematch but he'll be on the main roster by the day after Wrestlemania at the very latest, if not in the Rumble.

Joe has to be helped up the ramp as Nakamura celebrates to end the show.

Overall Rating: A-. Somehow that's on the lower end of this series'

spectrum. The main event and Tag Team Titles matches are both worth seeing and bring this one up into the realm of greatness though and that's what NXT is all about. Nothing on here is bad, they set up some stuff for the future and gave us some great wrestling to go with it. Above all else though is the crowd. They basically had the same attendance that Summerslam will have tomorrow and that's impressive no matter how you look at it. I would tell you to check this out but does anyone not watch these shows? Great stuff, as expected.

Results

Austin Aries b. No Way Jose – Last Chancery

Ember Moon b. Billie Kay – Top rope Stunner

Bobby Roode b. Andrade Cien Almas – Glorious Bomb

Revival b. Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa – Reverse Figure Four to Gargano

Asuka b. Bayley – Kick to the head

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Samoa Joe – Kinshasa

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

NXT – August 17, 2016: This Is What They Do

NXT

Date: August 17, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's the go home show for Takeover: Back to Brooklyn and that means it's time for the big hard push towards New York. Odds are we'll be getting the big showdown between Samoa Joe and Shinsuke Nakamura, possibly with Nakamura getting taken down as payback for embarrassing Joe last week. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Hideo Itami vs. Mustafa Ali

Ali is from the Cruiserweight Classic. Itami starts fast with the strikes and sends him to the apron for a baseball slide. Back in and Ali takes him down for a chinlock followed by a kick to the head for two. Itami is tired of playing around though and starts firing off the strikes, capped off by the running knee for the pin at 3:20.

Rating: C. The silent assassin could work for Itami as it's better than watching him just not have much charisma. I do like the idea of bringing in the cruiserweights as NXT isn't going to treat them as worthless jobbers. Ali certainly wasn't squashed here and that makes all the difference in the world.

Video on Bobby Roode. Any excuse to hear GLORIOUS is worth it.

Video on Asuka vs. Bayley, which makes it feel like the ultimate rematch and challenge for Bayley after she was destroyed in Dallas. Asuka has gotten even more aggressive since winning the title and Bayley could be in way over her head on this one. Bayley said the underdog has become the champion before and she's going to do it again.

Music video with footage of Aries vs. No Way Jose, Roode vs. Almas

and the Tag Team Title match.

William Regal is talking about how awesome Takeover is going to be when Billie Kay comes in and asks why she's not on the card. Regal agrees and gives her a match with newcomer Ember Moon. Simple and effective again.

Carmella/Liv Morgan/Nikki Glenncross vs. Alexa Bliss/Mandy Rose/Daria Berenato

Rose is from Tough Enough, Glenncross is from Scotland and Berenato is from New Jersey. You can tell Rose is glorified eye candy in the vein of the early days of Eva Marie. Graves: "Mandy Rose is only second to one person in my heart: Eva Marie." Berenato (a newcomer just like Glenncross) is dressed like a boxer. Ten seconds in and Graves is reaching Jerry Lawler levels of drooling over the women.

Bliss and Nikki start things off with a quick cross body putting Alexa down. The villains take a break on the floor and it's off to Daria, who immediately takes her gloves off as we go to an early break. Back with Daria fighting out of Liv's chinlock before Bliss offers a distraction so the bad women can take over.

We hear about Daria's MMA training before it's off to Mandy with Graves losing his mind in the vein of Cole freaking out over Miz. A running knee puts Liv down before Daria comes back in for a kick to the chest. We hit the chinlock with a body vice and Daria even adds some trash talk. You don't see that enough.

Morgan enziguris Alexa down and the hot tag brings in Carmella to clean house. Carmella speeds things up with clotheslines and a hurricanrana to take Rose down for two. Everything breaks down and Mandy's rollup is countered into the Cone of Silence for the tap out at 11:35.

Rating: C+. This was a very nice surprise and a good hope for the future of the women's division. Rose is already a mile ahead of Eva Marie in the ring as she looked competent and comfortable with the basic things she was doing. Glenncross didn't get to show off all that much but Daria had a unique enough character to stand out

immediately. Carmella and Bliss definitely looked ahead of the others and I'm sure they'll be fine on the main rosters with a little more time.

Regal tells security to keep Joe and Nakamura apart during their interview.

Ember Moon is coming.

We run down the card. I miss that happening on the main shows.

It's time for the sitdown interview with Joe and Nakamura. Both of them say they're excited to start before Joe says he doesn't like the lack of respect. Joe had to go through the entire roster for months to get a title shot but Nakamura beats Balor once and gets his shot. Bayley only had to ask for a rematch and Regal checked with Asuka to make sure it was ok. Nakamura says he's a calm man by definition, especially outside of the ring.

Joe says Nakamura came to his dojo for training earlier in his career. Nakamura doesn't remember it being Joe's dojo and smiles a lot. Joe respects what Nakamura has done but maybe not Shinsuke himself. In answer to the same question, Nakamura leans forward and smiles a lot which gets Joe out of his chair. Regal has security break it up.

One last Takeover ad ends the show.

Overall Rating: B. This show had one goal and that was to make me care about Takeover more than I did coming in. They more than accomplished that task so anything else they do is a bonus. The wrestling was really an afterthought at this point and the fact that the women's tag worked as well as it did is a bonus. It's a really fast show and they covered all of Saturday's matches, albeit some a bit faster than others. Joe vs. Nakamura has the potential to be an absolute war and I'm looking forward to seeing it. Well done all around here and a great go home show.

Results

Hideo Itami b. Mustafa Ali – Running knee

Carmella/Nikki Glenncross/Liv Morgan b. Daria Berenato/Alexa

Bliss/Mandy Rose – Cone of Silence to Rose

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

NXT – August 10, 2016: Mission Accomplished Again

NXT

Date: August 10, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

With Takeover: Brooklyn just ten days away, it's time to start the final push towards the big show. In this case we have the contract signing between Bayley and the now evil Asuka for their Women's Title match as well as (more than likely at least) a showdown between Samoa Joe and Shinsuke Nakamura. Let's get to it.

A very happy Bobby Roode exits William Regal's office.

Opening sequence.

We open with the contract signing with both women coming to the ring and Regal moderating. Bayley talks about last year in Brooklyn being her dream but Dallas being her nightmare. She wasn't ready in Texas but now she's a different person and ready to take the title back.

Asuka says Bayley isn't ready and offers a handshake but Bayley doesn't fall for it. They both sign and the champ offers another handshake but Bayley slaps it away and leaves. We're not done yet though as Bayley gets back in and does the big staredown.

Authors of Pain vs. Rob Ryzin/Adrian Nailz

The Authors don't have names yet so we'll say #1 throws Nailz into the corner. #2 comes in and tosses Ryzin around with ease. Stereo powerbombs set up the clothesline/legsweep combo for the pin at 1:20.

The beating continues post match but TM61 comes in for the brawl, only to get powerbombed as well.

Nakamura says he isn't hard to find and he'll find Joe when he wants to.

Andrade Cien Almas vs. Angelo Dawkins

I saw this match at a house show recently. Dawkins runs him over to start and we're in the chinlock after about a minute. Almas comes back with a kick into the corner and the running knees, followed by a hammerlock DDT for the pin on Dawkins at 2:20. The silence when Almas won is a really bad sign as he's just flopped so hard coming out of the gate.

Post match here's Bobby Roode to say that he's been to see William Regal and the two of them will be facing off in Brooklyn. Almas doesn't need to get a big head though because the people will be there to see Bobby Roode and Bobby Roode alone.

Austin Aries is explaining the health benefits of eating oranges to William Regal before saying he wants a match at Takeover because it's supposed to be special. Regal agrees and make Aries vs. No Way Jose.

Liv Morgan vs. Billie Kay

Kay takes it to the mat with an armbar to start but Morgan climbs up on her hands and spins into a headscissors to escape. A discus forearm puts Morgan right back down for two and we hit the chinlock. Back up and the big boot puts Morgan away at 3:12.

Rating: D+. Not much here but if Billie Kay is the next woman to be built up in NXT then so be it. They need a lot of fresh bodies down there right now to replace the ravaging from the Draft. Billie just getting presented as a big deal for two weeks has already done more for her than anything else in the last year so they're on the right path. It's a good sign that NXT can just flip a switch on someone and see results like this.

We look at Tommaso Ciampa vs. Johnny Gargano from last week in the Cruiserweight Classic.

Regal (we've seen a lot of him tonight) gives Ciampa and Gargano a Tag Team Title shot in Brooklyn.

Ember Moon is coming in Brooklyn. This time we can see a woman's eyes.

Tucker Knight/Patrick Clark vs. Tommaso Ciampa/Johnny Gargano

Gargano and Clark get things going with Johnny easily wrestling him to the mat. It's off to Knight to splash Ciampa in the corner before Gargano and Ciampa turn up the serious and kick the jobbers down. The running knee/superkick combination put Knight away at 3:13.

Rating: C. Gargano and Ciampa are on fire right now and I'm honestly not sure who is going to win in the title match. That's one of the best feelings you can have in wrestling: seeing both options as distinct possibilities because they're both on a roll and could get the win over the other. It's really hard to do but it's a blast when it's pulled off.

We look back at Hideo Itami's return match last week.

Mojo Rawley won't stand for being attacked by Samoa Joe and he's bringing the fight tonight. It's about getting even, not getting hyped.

Samoa Joe vs. Mojo Rawley

Non-title. Mojo goes right after Joe to start and actually succeeds with a headbutt. The champ pounds him down with the snap jabs to the jaw but Mojo still won't give up and knocks him into the corner again. Mojo charges into the Rock Bottom out of the corner though

and the Koquina Clutch gives Joe the win at 4:35.

Rating: C+. That's probably it for Mojo and it's a shame that he finally got the whole aggressive things down in his last match here. Joe mauling anyone was the best option for him here and it makes him look like a monster who can absorb a beating and still win the match with little more than a sweat.

Post match Joe keeps the hold on until Nakamura comes down. Security holds Joe back so Nakamura puts his hand on Joe's face and then slaps him. Joe is barely controllable to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. I'm really starting to like these shows where they do the heavy lifting to get us to the next Takeover show. Almost every match got a little time tonight and three new matches were added to give us the meat of the card. I came into this show with a fairly strong interest in Brooklyn and now I want it to be tomorrow. Mission accomplished, as usual.

Results

Authors of Pain b. Rob Ryzin/Adrian Nailz – Clothesline/Russian leg sweep combo to Nailz

Andrade Cien Almas b. Angelo Dawkins – Hammerlock DDT

Billie Kay b. Liv Morgan – Big Boot

Tommaso Ciampa/Johnny Gargano b. Tucker Knight/Patrick Clark – Superkick/running knee combo to Clark

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

NXT – August 3, 2016: A Little Old And A Little New

NXT

Date: August 3, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're less than three weeks away from Takeover: Back To Brooklyn and a lot of the card seems to be set. Before we get there though, we have two big names back/returning tonight with Hideo Itami making his TV return after nearly a year and a half away and Bobby Roode making his TV debut. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Hideo Itami vs. Sean Maluta

Maluta was in the Cruiserweight Classic so Zack Sabre Jr., Drew Gulak and Tony Nese are in the front row. Hideo shoulders him down to start and kicks Maluta in the back before casually kicking him in the face. Something like a middle rope Codebreaker gives Maluta a near fall and it's off to a bodyscissors. Itami comes right back up with his quick strikes to set up a hesitation dropkick in the corner. The running knee puts Sean away at 3:49.

Rating: C. Itami is the same guy he was back in the day and that's not the most thrilling person in the world. He has all the skills you could need but there's just not the kind of fire that's going to get me interested in seeing him come out. The barrage of strikes feels old hat now as there are so many people who do the same thing and that gets a bit tiresome. Still glad to have him back though as NXT really needs top names at the moment.

We look at the Authors of Pain beating American Alpha in Alpha's

last match.

Revival says they're the best team in the world but here's TM61 to say the world is a big place. They've fought the best around the world so how about a title shot. Revival suggests that they go to the back of the line but here are Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa to say that their ticket says #1. Revival says the teams can figure it out amongst themselves.

Mojo Rawley vs. Chris Atkins

No time to talk as Samoa Joe comes in for the DQ at 23 seconds.

Joe says if Regal doesn't have to ask him who he's facing then he doesn't have to ask Regal when he can disrupt the show. Rawley tries to fight back and gets choked out with ease.

Bayley has been studying Asuka's matches and thinks she's ready. Asuka comes in to say not so fast.

Asuka vs. Aliyah

Bayley is on commentary but Asuka offers her a chair to sit down in the aisle. That's fine with Bayley but she would rather stand actually. Asuka cuts off Aliyah's early offense and nails a running hip attack. Aliyah gets up a boot to stop a charge but dives into a kick to the head for two with Asuka pulling her off the mat. The Asuka Lock ends the destruction at 2:30.

Bayley comes in to break things up and Asuka holds up the title.

We look back at Oney Lorcan beating Tye Dillinger in an upset last month.

Lorcan wasn't sure it was an upset but he knows the competition is going to get stronger. He needs to go back to his roots.

The universe is shifting vignette. It's for Ember Moon, who debuts at Takeover. That would be the recently signed Athena.

Here's Bobby Roode with his rather awesome theme song which keeps saying "GLORIOUS! I WILL DEFEND" in the chorus. Roode says the wait is over because he is NXT. A few months ago he was in Dallas for Wrestlemania weekend and he knew it was the place he needed to be.

He was very lucky to be with those fans because they're just as much NXT as anyone else.

Roode is ready to take NXT to that next level but it needs him, just like everyone else here needs him. Now that NXT has found their new superstar, his face will be on billboards and TV campaigns so he can take the company to corporate America and Wall Street. Then this place will be filled with Presidents of Fortune 500 companies instead of people in cargo shorts and overly large shirts. He is a superstar from his watch to his socks because there has never been anyone like him. From now on NXT will be GLORIOUS. This was some combination of Rick Rude and Ric Flair and it was rather awesome.

TM61 vs. Revival

Non-title. Miller cranks on Dawson's wrist to start and a double shoulder gets two early on. Thorn keeps him on the mat with the wristlock but a hair pull gives Dawson some relief. A quick dropkick hits Dawson in the face and we take a break. Back with Thorn's shoulder being worked over like only an old school tag team can. Dawson hits a dropkick to a downed Thorn for two more.

Dash almost does the dive into two boots but is fast enough to catch himself, only to get kicked into the corner. The hot tag brings in Miller as everything breaks down. A spinebuster gets two on Dawson and it's time for a chase, capped off by Dawson grabbing a DDT on Miller for the pin at 11:16.

Rating: C. I'm liking the Revival more and more every time they're out there while TM61 continues to look like a team that is just kind of there. This was a fairly decisive victory but to be fair it was too early for them to give the Revival much of a fight yet. It's pretty clear that Gargano and Ciampa are the next challengers and they certainly should be after that recent win over the champs.

Post match Revival brags about beating a bunch of teams but here are Gargano and Ciampa to pick up some of the names Revival just dropped. That means teams like the Hollywood Blonds, Kermit the Frog/Miss Piggy and Pikachu/Charizard. Fans: "POKEMON! POKEMON!" Gargano: "Serious question: have you caught them all?" The challenge

is issued but Revival goes to leave, triggering the brawl. Wilder is taken down and Gargano counts his own three count to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The women and the tag division got some major boosts here which they were really needing as neither feud was really on fire heading into Brooklyn. The two big names showing up were a nice way to make the show feel important but it's all about Brooklyn at the moment and we can really get more into those two in the coming weeks. Another good show here as we're firmly getting ready for the big show.

Results

Hideo Itami b. Sean Maluta – Running knee

Mojo Rawley b. Chris Atkins via DQ when Samoa Joe interfered

Asuka b. Aliyah – Asuka Lock

Revival b. TM61 – DDT to Miller

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

NXT – July 27, 2016: And They're Off

NXT

Date: July 27, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

Brooklyn is still on the horizon and it's time to start setting up more of the card. The big story coming off last week is Bayley defeating Nia Jax again to presumably become #1 contender the Women's Title. The other interesting thing should be seeing some of these people for the last time before they head up to the main roster. Let's get to it.

New opening sequence.

Earlier today, Blake and Murphy got in another argument over who carried the team. I thought we were pretty clear that it was Bliss.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Wesley Blake

This is the new Blake, meaning Blake with tassels on his boots. The fans sing Nakamura's song and Blake isn't sure what to think. Blake blows a kiss to Nakamura, who catches it and stomps on it to go....I guess bigger face? Good Vibrations has Blake in trouble but he comes back with a clothesline and we hit a chinlock. For some reason Blake tries Good Vibrations, earning himself a kick to the face. The reverse exploder sets up Kinshasa for the pin on Blake at 4:30.

Rating: C-. This would be in the "what else were you expecting" category with Nakamura allowing Blake to get in some offense before finishing him without breaking much of a sweat. I'm not sure why they're waiting to announce Nakamura vs. Samoa Joe for Brooklyn because it's not exactly a surprise anymore.

I spoke too soon as here's William Regal to announce Nakamura vs. Joe for the title at Takeover.

Billie Kay vs. Santana Garrett

Feeling out process to start with Billie working on an armbar. A dropkick puts Billie down but she forearm Santana in the back to take over again. The announcers keep talking about Billie's recent Smackdown appearance going to her head as Garrett starts her comeback. It's not much of a comeback though as Billie kicks her in the face for the pin at 3:07.

Rating: D. Nothing match but I like the idea of them trying to make

new stars. I know "she was on the main roster once and it's gone to her head" isn't much but it's not like the division can be picky right now. Garrett probably isn't sticking around but she's good for one off jobs like this.

We look at Bayley appearing at Battleground.

Bayley asks Regal for a title shot in Brooklyn and her request is granted pending Asuka's approval. Why does he need Asuka's approval and not Joe's?

We get a promo for someone sitting in the moonlight with a voice saying the universe is shifting.

TM61 vs. Rob Ryzin/Adrian Nails

Miller and Nails start things off with Adrian being sent to the mat so Thorn can jump on his back. A standing moonsault/jumping fist drop combo suggests that this isn't going to go long. Ryzin comes in to punch Thorn down in the corner but he misses a charge in the corner, allowing the hot tag to Miller. Thunder Valley ends Nails at 3:07.

Rating: C-. Just a squash here which is becoming a recurring trend around here again. TM61 is probably getting the next title shot after Ciampa and Gargano, all of which should lead to some great matches with a lot of really solid action. TM61 has taken some time to grow on me but they're getting better.

Handshakes all around post match.

We look back at Austin Aries turning full heel on No Way Jose, who attacked Aries two weeks back.

Hideo Itami returns next week.

No Way Jose vs. Steve Cutler

I want to cheer for Cutler for the facial hair alone. We start with a good old fashioned dancing wristlock but Cutler makes the mistake of hitting Jose in the face to fire him up. Some right hands and a hiptoss set up the Baseball Punch, followed by a cobra clutch slam to end Cutler at 1:52.

Post match Jose says he wants Aries because all he was trying to do was show Austin how to have fun. There won't be any dancing next time because it's time for a whipping.

Buddy Murphy vs. Kota Ibushi

This is Ibushi's NXT debut. Some shoulders put Kota down to start but he gets in a nice dropkick and a kick to the chest to send Buddy outside. Back in and Murphy knees him in the back to set up a chinlock but the fans keep cheering away. Buddy gets a close two off some running knees (WAY too common of a move around here) but gets his head kicked into the fourth row.

A German suplex gives Ibushi two but he has to bail out of a moonsault. Murphy sends him face first into the middle buckle for two but makes the eternal mistake of putting a high flier on the top rope. Ibushi can't quite get a sunset bomb so he settles for a sitout powerbomb and the pin at 5:21.

Rating: B-. Who thought this would actually be good? On top of that who thought Ibushi would win with a powerbomb of all things? Ibushi looked good here as I think everyone expected. Murphy was a very nice surprise here though as there's actually potential there if they give him a gimmick and he gets a slightly better arsenal.

Joe feels disrespected about not being told of his title defense.

Bobby Roode debuts next week.

Here's Joe for a chat to close the show. Apparently he was just told about the title defense when he got here. So he didn't show up until about eight minutes left in the show? Champion's privilege I guess. Joe will NOT be defending the title against an undeserving contender like Nakamura. This brings out Regal to say oh yes you will defend that title against who I say you will but Joe still isn't happy.

Regal looks especially ticked off as Joe tells him that they can go to Regal's office and determine an opponent of whom Joe approves. Regal says fight Nakamura of the title is forfeited. That's enough for Joe and the match is on, assuming he doesn't take out Nakamura before Brooklyn. Cue Nakamura to make a telescope with his hands

(because he can) and stare down Joe as we go off the air.

Overall Rating: B. This was one of NXT's specialties: moving a lot of things forward in a single night. In the span of fifty three minutes, we have three matches announced for Takeover and the debut of a big name. You really can tell when it's time for a major show as NXT turns it up to twelve as only they can. Good show here and it flew by, making things even better.

Results

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Wesley Blake – Kinshasa

Billie Kay b. Santana Garrett – Big Boot

TM61 b. Rob Ryzin/Adrian Nails – Thunder Valley to Nails

No Way Jose b. Steve Cutler – Cobra clutch slam

Kota Ibushi b. Buddy Murphy – Sitout powerbomb

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

NXT – July 20, 2016: Those Final Shows

NXT

Date: July 20, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're heading towards Brooklyn and it's going to be a few weeks before we can really feel the differences from the Draft. There are three matches scheduled for tonight with the headliner of American Alpha vs. the Authors of Pain in the Authors' first match on the show. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about all three big matches tonight: American Alpha vs. Authors of Pain, Bayley vs. Nia Jax and Rhino vs. Samoa Joe.

Opening sequence.

Rhino vs. Samoa Joe

Non-title. I love the fact that Rhino is the exact same guy he was back in ECW. There's something refreshing about having someone where you know exactly what you're going to get and nothing more. Rhino runs him over with a shoulder to start but Joe comes back with his corner charge and the enziguri. A hard whip across the ring puts Rhino down again and it's off to the nerve hold. The backsplash misses and Rhino gets in his belly to belly. Joe blocks a Gore with some palm strikes and the Koquina Clutch puts Rhino away at 6:23.

Rating: C+. Two big and thick guys beating on each other for a few minutes with Joe winning off his submission move. Like I said, you know exactly what to expect from someone like Rhino and that's exactly what you can get. The thing is he knows how to wrestle that style and make it work perfectly well.

Asuka would love to face either Bayley or Nia Jax.

We look at the NXT names being taken in the Draft.

American Alpha vs. Authors of Pain

The Authors jump them on the ramp and it's not clear if we're going to have a match. Back from a break with Alpha charging to the ring with a referee right behind them. The brawl is on and Alpha clears the ring as we're still waiting on names for the Authors. Jordan starts with the bearded one (we'll call him #1 though they're pretty much interchangeable) and hits the running shoulder in the corner

and a double northern lights suplex gets one.

It's quickly off to #2 who catches a launched Gable in a bearhug so #1 can splash him from behind. #1 slaps on a bearhug but Chad quickly escapes and makes the hot tag off to Jordan for the house cleaning. A belly to back suplex gets one on #2 but Gable tags in again and runs over #2 before throwing him across the ring on a release suplex. The ankle lock has #1 in trouble and Jordan dives over the top to take out #2. Gable goes outside as well but gets swung into the LED board. Jordan is sent into the steps, leaving Gable to take the Russian legsweep/clothesline combo for the pin at 6:34.

Rating: B-. This was a good way to get rid of Alpha and let them go up to the main roster. Sure they went out on a loss but NXT was smart enough to not have it be clean. The Authors are another simple idea for a team but that doesn't mean it's an idea that can't work. I liked the idea of Alpha being able to suplex these guys though as it prevents the match from being a squash, which makes it a lot more interesting.

Revival takes credit for the Authors' win because they softened Alpha up. Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa come in to say they've beaten Revival once and that the clock is ticking.

Austin Aries vs. Patrick Clark

Clark was on Tough Enough and I believe this is his TV debut. Aries gets caught in an early armbar but he forearm Clark in the face and gives him a flip belly to back suplex. The Last Chancery is good for the submission at 1:53.

No Way Jose comes out and beats on Aries post match.

Bayley vs. Nia Jax

Nia throws her into the corner to start and grabs an armbar of all things. Bayley swings away but walks into Snake Eyes. Some elbows and shoulders to the ribs before Nia just throws her outside as we take a break. Back with Bayley's crossbody working as well as you would expect and Nia throwing her outside for nine.

Now it's Nia being sent outside where she misses a charge into the steps for a near countout of her own. Well if it's good enough for Bayley it's good enough for Nia. Back in and Bayley slips out of an electric chair and into a victory roll for two before Nia just plows over her. A Jackhammer of all things gets two more but Nia stops short before trying the legdrop. Instead Nia goes to the middle rope, only to get pulled down into a super Bayley To Belly for the pin at 13:36.

Rating: B-. These two work well together and this was another good one with Bayley knowing how to play the underdog. That being said, I don't think anyone really bought Nia as having much of a chance here. It's a formula that's always going to work but as is almost always the case, the more you do a match the less interesting it becomes.

Overall Rating: C+. You can really feel the Draft starting to take its toll here as two of these matches have been effected by the people being called up. You have to think that the next few weeks, at least until Takeover, are going to be the final shows for a lot of these people and it's going to be a hard transition to fix things. Still good here though and that's what matters for now.

Results

Samoa Joe b. Rhyno – Koquina Clutch

Authors of Pain b. American Alpha – Russian legsweep/clothesline combination

Austin Aries b. Patrick Clark – Last Chancery

Bayley b. Nia Jax – Super Bayley To Belly

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

NXT House Show – July 15, 2016

The wife and I took in the NXT house show in Highland Heights, Kentucky (ten minutes from downtown Cincinnati) on Friday night. I had wanted to go to one of these things for a long time and was almost more excited to see this than I was for Takeover: Dallas.

The arena held roughly 10,000 people but it was cut in half and the upper deck was tarped off, leaving only a few thousand seats. The place was just over half full as the floor seats were full but only the back section (as in facing the screen) was anywhere near full. We were on the first row of our section (maybe three feet above the floor) with our tickets running about \$33 each so it's not like they were overly expensive.

Before the show we saw some WWE Top Ten videos and the fans were allowed to pick a classic NXT match with options of:

Seth Rollins vs. Jinder Mahal

Sami Zayn vs. Neville

Sasha Banks vs. Bayley

The latter won by a landslide though it was only a highlight package, which really did make sense as you don't want to get the crowd that fired up before the actual show starts.

No Way Jose vs. Hugo Knox

Knox is a very muscular British wrestler, meaning the fans were chanting various British swear words at him. Jose is a lot of fun live and a perfect choice to open the show. He did all of his baseball slide, including running around the ring and touching all of the buckles into a dropkick. A legdrop of all things put Knox away at 8:12 for a really fun opener that did everything it was supposed to. Knox was nothing great but he would be fine as a Chris

Masters type midcarder.

Angelo Dawkins vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Dawkins is from Cincinnati, earning himself his only reaction ever. This was the exact same problem that Almas had in the Dillinger matches: putting him in a match where there was no way he was going to be the most over guy and it really dragged things down. Almas really isn't the most exciting guy in the world though he played a subtle heel here, as was his only option. Dawkins won with a Sky High at 5:26 and they hugged after. This was nothing but the fans reacted to Dawkins for being the hometown guy.

Bayley vs. Billie Kay

This was a change in the card (which was shown on an old school wrestling poster which seems to be a normal thing for NXT house shows and were selling very well) as it was originally going to be Bayley/Asuka vs. Kay/Alexa Bliss. Billie did her closest thing to sexy in NXT stuff to start but Bayley laughed at her and stole some of her gear. Billie begged her not to so Bayley relented, only to point out to the crowd that Billie actually lost to Dana Brooke.

This started off as a comedy match with Bayley promising to hug her and then ambushing the referee with the hug instead. The match was your standard Bayley stuff with her having fun against the less talented Billie to start, getting beaten down and having her ribs worked over for a bit and then hitting the Bayley to Belly for the pin at 10:22. The fans LOVED Bayley and she received the pop of the night, save for maybe one name later. She's a total superstar down there though and I'm really scared that they're going to ruin her on the big shows.

Finn Balor vs. Bobby Roode

Roode's music is really awesome and one of the better songs they've done in a good while. Before the match, Roode called all of us fat out of shape losers and said he was going to be the new star of NXT. Even with all this stuff and insulting fans ala Ric Flair, the fans just would not hate him. Balor on the other hand was as revered as you would expect and we got a strong SEE YOU TUESDAY chant to start things off.

This was actually a pretty short match with Balor never being in any real danger. The Sling Blade and Coup de Grace finished Roode in

about seven minutes and Balor took a bow before leaving. It's really clear that he's going and it's cool to see him getting a nice sendoff on the house show circuit after a great TV match.

Intermission.

Before we got back to the matches, the female host (who shared hosting duties with Tom Phillips for a very good pairing all night long) had a fan answer a question for a prize. The idea here was pretty simple: we saw a clip of something in WWE history and were given choices of what happened next. The clip was Vince walking down the hallway and getting into his car on Vince McMahon Appreciation Night and the next scene was him being blown up. One problem here: THE KID WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD!

As soon as the clip started you could hear the crowd gasping and almost panicking because an eight year old, as in someone who wasn't alive when this aired, was playing a game involving attempted murder. Oh and to make matters even better, the fourth option was "The Undertaker takes Vince McMahon to" a very dark and scary place as the host put it, thankfully censoring the actual option.

So yes, since the WWE has NO OTHER CLIPS OF ANYTHING, an eight year old played a game involving seeing Vince McMahon blown up with the other option being Undertaker taking Vince to a place that had to be censored. This was so out of place and really felt like no one actually thought about it, which isn't something you expect from NXT, or anyone with a brain for that matter.

Hideo Itami vs. Beautiful Blonde Blake

This is Blake's new gimmick but there's really nothing different about him. If he hadn't been introduced under the new name, no one would have really noticed a difference. Blake also had a generic Titantron video with his name spinning around over a blue background, which is the same thing Dawkins and Knox had. They're not much but it's better than nothing. Itami got a pretty standard WELCOME BACK chant and is basically the same as when he left.

The match was comedy to start with Blake heading outside because he didn't like all the kicks and strikes. That didn't last long though as he called himself Black Belt Blake and tried to throw some kicks with a fairly obvious result. The fans got on Blake for his tasseled boots, saying that Bayley wanted her boots back. We also got a MURPHY'S BETTER/CENA SUCKS chant for a bit of a chuckle. Itami came

back with his bunch of kicks and won with the shotgun kick at 10:07. This was longer than necessary and Itami still doesn't show much fire.

Women's Title: Asuka vs. Alexa Bliss

Alexa had her hair pulled back here for a new look. This was actually one of the best matches of the night as Bliss has gotten way better in recent months and actually had a good match here. Asuka showed some personality here by dancing a lot when Bliss tried to get too fancy. The Asuka Lock retained the title at 12:14. This might have been the second best match of the night.

NXT Title: Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

I'll give you two guesses who got the bigger pop than Bayley. Before the match Joe said he hated being here in Highland Heights and didn't like NXT having to lie about being in Cincinnati because that town sucks too. This wasn't going to be a title shot though because Nakamura beating Balor wasn't enough to earn himself a title shot. As he was talking, the Revival ran in for the beatdown but American Alpha came out for the save. Nakamura wanted to make it a six man against Joe and.....Nakamura to Jordan: "What their names?"

Revival/Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura/American Alpha

This was exactly what you would expect with the good guys doing a big, fast paced cleaning of the ring to start with suplexes and strikes to set up a big pose for one of the loudest reactions of the night. Gable played Ricky Morton for a bit before Jordan did the same, setting up the hot tag to Nakamura. Everything broke down and Nakamura pinned Dash with Kinshasa at 14:00. This was a lot of fun but the crowd was starting to get a bit burned out. The winners all did Nakamura's pose by the ropes to end the show.

Overall this was a very fun night with NXT knowing exactly how to give the fans a fun night. The faces won every match and you got to see every big name (Austin Aries being the biggest name missing and he's hardly a main eventer) on the roster. With cheap tickets and not a bad seat in the house, this was definitely worth going to and really well organized for a much more fun feeling than a lot of WWE house shows. Check them out if they're ever near you, in case you actually need that advice.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my

new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

NXT – July 13, 2016: One More Match

NXT

Date: July 13, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's a big show this week as we've finally reached the showdown between Finn Balor and Shinsuke Nakamura. This is another instance of NXT building up a match to be a huge deal and it's made things feel even bigger than they would have otherwise. It's likely that the winner will face Samoa Joe for the title in Brooklyn at the next Takeover. Let's get to it.

We open with a long video on Balor vs. Nakamura. They really are making this feel important.

Opening sequence.

One more thing I like that seems to be a normal thing around here: Corey Graves is introduced as a former Tag Team Champion. I know he's been around on commentary for a long time but that one line lets new viewers know he has some credibility. I'd love it if WWE acknowledged that with their announcers more often. JBL is mentioned as the longest reigning Smackdown Champion but Lawler's title reigns

are almost never mentioned and he comes off as just an old guy making bad jokes instead of someone with a long history in wrestling.

Here's Samoa Joe for an opening chat. Like a lot of people tuning in tonight, he's here to see Balor vs. Nakamura. He finds it disrespectful that both of them seem to think whoever wins here will be a contender to his championship. Some people here think Balor will win and get his title back. Then some people think the King of Strong Style will overthrow the emperor. Joe (who is sweating buckets here) brought strong style to these shores though and will make the King bow. This brings out Rhyno to say he's ready to face the warrior but Joe walks away without a fight.

For next week:

Bayley vs. Nia Jax

American Alpha vs. Authors of Pain

Samoa Joe vs. Rhyno

Another Balor vs. Nakamura video with wrestlers talking about how big this is due to how big they were in Japan and how close they are in real life. HHH talks about how it would be disrespectful of either of them not to push their friend as hard as they can.

Finn Balor vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

No Demon for Balor. Actually none for Nakamura either but I thought that might be implied. Even the Big Match Intros get THIS IS AWESOME chants. They trade wristlocks to start until Balor takes it to the mat for a headlock and a BOTH THESE GUYS chant. Nakamura fights up and does the head on Balor's chest thing but Balor flips him around and gives him a Too Sweet on the head.

It's back to the headlock to keep Nakamura in check but he sends Balor to the corner. Finn jumps over the ropes to avoid a running kick but his enziguri is blocked for an enziguri from Shinsuke. Good Vibrations set up some running knees to the head and we take a break. Back with Balor getting smart by dropkicking the knee to take away Shinsuke's best weapon.

We hit a leg lock on the mat for a bit before it's time for the chops. Thankfully Balor goes right back to the knee by hanging it over the middle rope and stomping down onto it. More stomps to the knee have Nakamura screaming and it's off to another leglock. Shinsuke gets up and hits him in the ribs with the injured knee, followed by a spinning kick to the face for a breather.

The knee is suddenly fine enough for the running knee to Balor's ribs in the corner as selling isn't modern wrestling's strong suit. Balor gets in a running kick to the face though and we take another break. Back again with Balor putting on something like a shortarm scissors but on the knee, drawing even more screams before Nakamura can make it to the ropes. Shinsuke grabs a triangle choke but Balor dives over and puts his foot on the rope for the break.

The reverse 1916 gets two and Balor is in shock. He's in so much shock that Nakamura gets in a quick Kinshasa to the back of the head for two more. Balor can't get the regular 1916 and it's time for the big slugout. Another shot to the knee has Nakamura in trouble but he kicks Finn in the head. That just earns him a Sling Blade but the Coup de Grace misses, setting up the Kinshasa for the pin at 25:14.

Rating: A-. This was exactly what was expected with two guys beating on each other for a long time. The knee work didn't really play into the ending but it made up the middle of the match and told a good story. As usual the winner wasn't the biggest shock but it's no real secret that Balor is probably bound for the main roster around Battleground at the latest. Above all else though, this felt like a major showdown and a passing of the torch which left Nakamura as the only logical option to face Joe in Brooklyn. Great match here and that's exactly what it was destined to be.

A lot of posing and replays takes us out.

Overall Rating: A+. That's really all you can give a show where they set up a match, announce two other matches that people have been waiting for and then spend half the show on a great match. If the card that is expected goes through for Brooklyn, it has the

potential to be one of the best Takeovers to date, which really shouldn't be happening given how great some of them have been.

This was all about one match and that made it feel special. NXT has really grasped the concept of not not cramming too much stuff into one show, which is something so many other shows need to learn. They didn't try to put anything major other than this one match onto the show and anything else would have felt out of place here. Really good stuff and a great way for Balor to (presumably) go out.

Results

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Finn Balor – Kinshasa

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>