

# NXT – November 16, 2016: A Different Cup of NXT

## NXT

Date: November 16, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's the go home show for Takeover: Toronto and that means we get the big final push tonight. Normally that means good thing from NXT as they have this down to a science but there's a first time for everything. The other interesting note is something called the Return, which has been hyped up in recent weeks. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Liv Morgan vs. Peyton Royce

It's still so strange to see NXT women playing up the sex appeal, even in the toned down ways that Royce and Billie Kay do. Royce takes her down and hits a headbutt to start but gets sunset flipped for one. Some clotheslines have Royce in trouble and Billie gets dropped as well, only to have her come in for the DQ at 2:23.

The beatdown is on until Aliyah comes out for the failed save attempt. The beatdown is on but Ember Moon makes the real save. Morgan is very athletic but needs more ring time. The rest are all acceptable but again, in need of development. There's already progress being made though as all four are miles ahead of where they were a few months ago.

Video on Andrade Cien Almas turning on and beating up Cedric Alexander.

Video on the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic. Apparently Paul Ellering will be in a cage above the ring during the finals.

It's time for the Return and it's....Elias Samson. Elias sings a quick song about being back and Graves just unloads on him. Graves: "They should fire our sound guys. That was so bad."

### Elias Samson vs. Nathan Cruz

The jobber, as the fans refer to him, grabs a wristlock to start but is quickly kneed in the head. A jumping elbow gets two with Elias pulling him up at two, only to finish with the neckbreaker at 2:29.

Ember Moon, Liv Morgan and Aliyah are ready for Royce and Kay, particularly in a six woman tag. It would have to be better than Liv talking as she sounded really, really bad here.

Video on DIY vs. Revival.

Video on Bobby Roode vs. Tye Dillinger. This is actually a lot more entertaining than you would expect with a lot of focus on Dillinger's long tenure in developmental before he failed on the main roster and got released. You don't hear that talked about too often but it was effective here.

### Andrade Cien Almas vs. Cedric Alexander

Almas keeps hiding in the corner to start, showing that he's instantly more interesting as a heel. His attempt at coming out of the corner earns himself a dropkick and some chops in the corner, including one that makes Almas gasp in pain. The chops continue as we're over three minutes in with almost nothing besides chops.

Cedric switches things up with a stomp to the chest and even more chops to take us to a break. Back with Alexander losing a brawl and getting kicked in the face for two in the corner. Things settle down with something like a Kimura keeping Cedric in trouble, followed by a triangle choke of all things over the ropes.

We continue the arm work with a Fujiwara armbar until Alexander gets his foot on the ropes for the break. Alexander finally gets back up and sends Almas outside for a big flip dive, only to get caught in a powerbomb for two. The running double knees in the corner is countered into a Lumbar Check. Almas gets to the rope though and grabs an arm trap DDT for the pin at 17:03.

**Rating:** C-. They went with a different style here and I don't think Almas is capable of pulling it off. The problem is he really doesn't have a character. He was brought in and didn't get over as a smiling

face so now he's a smirking heel who still doesn't have much of a character anyway. Not a very good match but a lot of that was due to Almas being involved.

A long video on Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura wraps this up.

**Overall Rating:** C. This one entirely depends on how you look at this show. As a regular show, this was really, really dull and a completely skippable show. As a go home show, it was actually pretty solid with in depth looks at everything coming up on Saturday plus setting up a big enough match for (presumably) next week. I can get why people wouldn't like this show but it got me fired up for Saturday, which is the right idea.

### Results

Liv Morgan b. Peyton Royce via DQ when Billie Kay interfered

Elias Samson b. Nathan Cruz – Swinging neckbreaker

Andrade Cien Almas b. Cedric Alexander – Arm trap DDT

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## **NXT – September 21, 2016: A**

# Look Down The Card

## NXT

Date: September 21, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

Last week's show saw Samoa Joe completely snap and destroy NXT Champion Shinsuke Nakamura, who was stretchered out of the arena as a result. That leaves no one to stop the rampaging monster, who is still scheduled to challenge Nakamura for the title down the line. Let's get to it.

We get a long recap of Joe attacking Nakamura last week.

Opening sequence.

Here's Samoa Joe with a piece of paper. Joe felt it was necessary for him to come out here and address last week's altercation. Due to his actions, the NXT Champion is in a bad way. Joe has a copy of the official medical report, which lists off Nakamura's multiple injuries, capped off by a grade two separated shoulder. Surgery is not required but he's going to be out for six to twelve weeks.

Joe isn't a patient man so he wants William Regal out here right now to make him the rightful champion. Regal comes out and says the report isn't correct though he isn't sure what Joe has it. He's been talking to Nakamura but Regal is going to deal with the problem Joe started. That's not cool with Joe, who gets in Regal's face and says Regal can solve this or the entire roster is going to look like Nakamura.

We look at Kota Ibushi vs. Cedric Alexander from the Cruiserweight Classic in their match of the year candidate that earned Alexander a job.

Alexander says it took him seven years on the independent circuit to get here but that's just the start. Not much to this one but the cruiserweights aren't often going to get over on their talking.

Liv Morgan wants Asuka and the Women's Title. Asuka comes in and

says we can find out if Liv is ready. Morgan really shouldn't be talking that often.

### Oney Lorcan vs. Austin Aries

Aries rides him to the mat and grabs a headlock without looking like he's put in much effort. Back up and Oney jumps over a charge and clotheslines Aries into a headlock of his own. Aries comes back with something like a belly to back suplex over the top and out to the floor for a crash.

We come back from a break with Aries dropping a middle rope elbow to the back for two. Oney fires off his hard strikes, including some chops in the corner as the announcers keep pushing his offense as ugly but effective. A charge misses though and Lorcan crashes out to the floor again. Oney comes right back with more running uppercuts, only to miss his middle rope sunset flip. Aries hits the discus forearm and wraps Oney up with the Last Chancery at 11:29.

**Rating:** B-. Lorcan has a horrible name and not the best looking offense but he's being treated like someone with some value instead of just another jobber. NXT really needs some fresh blood in the midcard and Lorcan could mean something someday. One of the important things about NXT is that they don't cripple talent that might mean something someday and it's going to do them some good down the line.

Post match Aries says he'd call Hideo Itami out but everyone knows he wouldn't show up. Cue Itami but of course Aries runs because he wants it on his terms.

Video on a monster named Dan Matha who debuts in two weeks.

After their win at the Cruiserweight Classic last week, Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa were jumped by the Revival. The champs got beaten up though and ran off.

### Aliyah vs. Billie Kay

Aliyah starts fast by sending Billie into the corner for a running crossbody to the ribs. Billie's arm is wrapped around the ropes and a slingshot legdrop gets two. Back up and a torture rack with an arm

trap of all things has Aliyah in trouble but she comes right back with a running seated Blockbuster for two. The big boot gets Billie out of trouble though and knocks Aliyah off at 3:17.

**Rating:** C-. This was fine and there's some potential in Aliyah, who showed a lot of fire. She's in really bad need of ring time though and it wasn't the best showing in the world. Billie is working well as a heel just by looking the part and that big boot could become a dangerous enough weapon. I mean, it worked for Test.

Mandy Rose thinks Ember Moon looks like a cross between the Hunger Games and Little Red Riding Hood.

#### Andrade Cien Almas vs. Cedric Alexander

Almas comes out in just a vest and with far less flair and energy than before. We hear about Stephanie McMahon bringing the cruiserweights to Raw as Almas grabs a headscissors to start. The fans are behind Cedric as a very fast pinfall reversal sequence gives us some near falls. They fight over a wristlock but both guys flip out to give us a standoff. Almas does his posing in the ropes and catches Cedric with a slingshot dropkick and a running corkscrew dive to take us to a break.

Back with Cedric fighting out of a chinlock and scoring with a Tajiri handspring into an enziguri. Alexander adds the big flip dive over the top but Almas comes back with elbows to the jaw (Fan: "HEY! STOP DOING THAT!") and a powerbomb for two. Almas knocks him off the top for the moonsault into the standing moonsault and Cedric's kickout stuns him. The double running knees miss and a Lumbar Check is enough to pin Almas at 11:47.

**Rating:** B-. Alexander is definitely being treated like something special and with good reason. He's not going to regularly blow your mind but he does a lot of things well enough to put together a good match. Almas acting more like a heel and getting more aggressive is the right call and changing his look is an even better idea.

They shake hands and hug to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was a different kind of show from NXT as

they shifted the focus to the midcard for a week. I'm not entirely sold on having the cruiserweights appear on NXT all the time as NXT has more than enough to go around as it is but once in a while won't hurt anything. This show was more about setting things up for down the road and there's nothing wrong with that, especially when one of those things will be Nakamura returning to blow the roof off the place.

### Results

Austin Aries b. Oney Lorcan – Last Chancery

Billie Kay b. Aliyah – Big boot

Cedric Alexander b. Andrade Cien Almas – Lumbar Check

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# **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

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# NXT – April 27, 2016: The Superstars Formula

## **NXT**

Date: April 27, 2016

Location: Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's a big night around here as we're going to take a quick field trip up to Lowell, Massachusetts where Finn Balor lost the NXT Title to Samoa Joe. We'll be looking at at least part of the match tonight, which is a really cool thing that NXT can do. When is the last time you even heard WWE reference a house show other than the European tour? Let's get to it.

We're told about the title change right off the bat. Why hide it at this point?

Asuka vs. Eva Marie

Non-title. The fans tell Eva that she can't wrestle as we hit the

stall button to start. The fans are actually split on Eva as they trade headlocks and armbars. Asuka blasts Eva in the face and rolls forward for a little dancing followed by the hip attack. A Fujiwara armbar sends Eva straight to the ropes and another hip attack sends her out to the floor. Graves thinks it's starting to unravel as Nia Jax comes out to check on Eva.

Back from a break with Eva mostly missing a running boot to put Asuka down. We hit the double arm crank for a bit before a hard shot to the face keeps Asuka in trouble. Another arm crank slows things down even more until Asuka pops up with a middle rope dropkick. A second dropkick has Eva in trouble and it's time for the kicks to the chest. Eva tries to send her into the corner but eats a spinning kick to the face for the pin at 12:55.

**Rating:** C-. Eva was WAY better than usual here but it should be noted that she was doing very basic stuff for the most part. Still though, the fact that she didn't have a major botch is a step up and it's definitely one of her best performances yet. Also Graves deserves some credit here as he was channeling Bobby Heenan hard here by praising the heel throughout the match. That adds so much and everything worked well here.

We see some clips of Samoa Joe winning the title last week with the Muscle Buster. They only showed about thirty seconds total.

Joe says his win was inevitable and no more words are needed.

#### Revival vs. Matt Lee/Jeff Parker

Parker and Lee are both really skinny and I believe used to team as 3.0 in Chikara. The 3.0 on their tights would seem to support that theory. We'll say Parker is easily taken down and pounded in the corner as Lee shouts that he is respecting the rules by not interfering. Lee then starts a DEFENSE chant as Parker is dropped ribs first into Dawson's knee for two. It's off to Lee as the fans chant DEFENSE as well. The Shatter Machine puts Lee away at 3:12.

**Rating:** C. You could tell there was something to Lee and Parker after those chants. They were both entertaining and it was clear

that they had some experience. Unfortunately they didn't have any kind of a look and are almost completely interchangeable. It was a total squash though and I could get behind the new aggressive Revival, though I don't know how much steam it would have.

Post match Dawson says they're the best and want their titles back.

#### Hype Bros vs. Blake and Murphy

No Alexa here so the interest is already down. The fans want to know where she is too as Mojo scares Blake into the corner to start. Mojo gets down in a three point stance and declares that neither Blake nor Murphy are in fact hyped. Ryder comes in for two off a neckbreaker and a double facebuster to take both villains down. Blake starts in on the leg before it's off to Murphy for a shot to the head. It doesn't seem to do that well though as Ryder slips over to the corner for a tag off to Mojo. House is cleaned and the Hype Ryder puts Blake away at 4:48.

**Rating:** D+. Nothing to see here but how far have Blake and Murphy fallen in the last few months? When you're putting over the Hype Bros, it might be time to reconsider your career choices. I don't think Rawley and Ryder are going anywhere other than a midcard tag spot and there's nothing wrong with that, at least as long as the fans still dig them.

Post match the Revival comes back out and jumps the Hype Bros.

#### Carmella vs. Aliyah

Aliyah was in a battle royal recently but is probably most well known from Breaking Ground. Carmella snapmares her to start but Aliyah takes over with a seated full nelson. A middle rope leg gets two and this is almost all Aliyah so far. Carmella comes back with a hurricanrana out of the corner and a Bronco Buster, followed by the leg crossface to make Aliyah tap at 3:19.

**Rating:** C. Aliyah was a very nice surprise here and Carmella looked fine. I know they're not exactly the new Horsewomen but it's really cool to see the division being rebuilt with a fresh cast of characters. Bliss and Blanchard looked awesome recently and these

two would be a nice addition as well. Good little match here.

Elias Samson says he'll show that he's the drifter and will prove to Nakamura that he never should have drifted into NXT.

#### Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Elias Samson

Nakamura takes him to the ropes to start and holds Samson in place with his head. A knee drop sets up the shaky boot in the corner, only to have Elias explode out with a clothesline. Samson gets two off a suplex and we hit the chinlock. That's fine with Nakamura who kicks Samson in the head, setting up the running knee in the corner. Kinshasa puts Samson away quick at 4:24.

**Rating:** C. They're doing a really good job of setting up Nakamura as the new star of the roster, which is a really good idea given the possible departure of Finn Balor and having someone like Samoa Joe as champion. Samson is fine in his role and I'm kind of glad they didn't push him too hard yet as he's better as a jobber to the stars for the moment.

**Overall Rating:** B. I had a really good time with this show as they kept things moving all night long and got a lot of acts out there. It's going to be interesting to see where things go at the next TV tapings but leave it to NXT to figure out a way to move the top story along while still being on the Dallas tapings. They nailed this episode though, which says a lot when none of the matches amounted to anything special.

#### Results

Asuka b. Eva Marie – Spinning kick to the face

Revival b. Matt Lee/Jeff Parker – Shatter Machine to Lee

Hype Bros b. Blake and Murphy – Hype Ryder to Blake

Carmella b. Aliyah – Leg crossface

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Elias Samson – Kinshasa

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