

# NXT – April 26, 2017: The (Latest) British Invasion

## NXT

Date: April 26, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators; Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson, Tom Phillips

The British are here tonight as the big featured match will see WWE UK Champion Tyler Bate defending against Jack Gallagher. I like the idea of throwing those guys out there for some filler as it keeps the regular roster fresh and gives us a bit of a treat. That being said, I could go for a bit of a better story than “You’re British, here’s a title shot.” Let’s get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here’s the creepy Nikki Cross to call out Ruby Riot by leaning over and shouting into the microphone being held in the ring announcer’s lap. Riot comes out and the brawl is on with referees barely able to break it up.

We look back at Hideo Itami hitting Bobby Roode with a GTS.

Roode says Itami has to earn a title shot.

Andrade Cien Almas vs. Drew McIntyre

Drew doesn’t waste time by kicking Almas in the face as the announcers accuse Andrade of not focusing on his wrestling enough. Back up and Almas takes him into the corner for the running slap to the face, only to have Drew unload on him with right hands. A top rope forearm to the head makes things even worse and they chop the heck out of each other. Drew gets the better of it and the running boot to the face gives him the pin at 3:54.

**Rating:** C+. McIntyre is a completely different worker than he was in his first run as he’s wrestling like a 6’5 monster with one heck of a hard finisher. I’m surprise about Almas losing clean this fast but at least they beat the heck out of each other before the finish.

Maybe they're setting up something with the story about him not taking things seriously enough but the quick loss doesn't bode well.

We get a feature on Roderick Strong, who grew up as an athletic prodigy and had no competition on almost any field. At the same time though, his family was a mess with his dad having substance issues and abusing his mom. One day she shot his dad though and that seemed to take care of some issues.

Strong walks around his mom's backyard as we hear about how she's been there for his entire career. Jim Neidhart of all people saw him wrestle as a kid and knew there was potential there. Strong had his own ring in the backyard, which actually looked like a (very crude) wrestling ring instead of something thrown together. More next week, though this already did Strong a lot of good.

#### Aleister Black vs. Kona Reeves

Kona charges into the corner and gets kicked in the ribs for his efforts. A series of strikes set up a kick to the head, followed by Black Mass for the pin on Reeves at 1:17.

Riot talks about how she goes against the norm. Tonight she's going to take her first step towards the NXT Women's Title. Next up, we start a riot.

Almas leaves with a host of good looking women and doesn't seem to mind his loss.

#### Ruby Riot vs. Nikki Cross

And never mind as Cross jumps her from behind and the brawl starts on the floor. A suplex onto the ramp has Cross in trouble until the referees try to break it up. Riot dives off the stage to take everyone out and referees literally drag Cross away. This made Riot look like a star and showed Cross' intensity all over again. The match is going to be a lot of fun and should give the division a shot of adrenaline.

William Regal tells Asuka that there will be a battle royal for the #1 contendership. This doesn't seem to sit well with the champ.

#### UK Title: Tyler Bate vs. Jack Gallagher

Bate is defending and has grown a bit of a beard to make him look like he's in his 20s for a change. Gallagher hand walks out of a headlock to start and Bate can only smile. Back up and Tyler does an interesting walking forward counter to a full nelson. They trade some near falls and a standoff takes us to a break.

Back with Gallagher taking him down with a wristlock and stomping on the hands. Gallagher keeps him on the mat with a variety of armbars and wristlocks, including pinning one arm down and stepping on the other arm to push it all the way down as well (a bit hard to describe but it looks like the shoulder is about to be torn apart).

Tyler finally gets in a few hard punches and a German suplex is good for two. Gallagher's Jim Breaks Special is reversed into a suplex for two but one heck of a headbutt knocks Bate silly. Another headbutt is good for two but a second Jim Breaks Special is countered, setting up the Tyler Driver 97 to retain the title at 13:31.

**Rating:** B. This is the kind of different style that makes the UK wrestlers valuable. We had McIntyre wrestling a hard hitting style earlier but this was mostly submission wrestling and arm work before the power finish. It felt like something different and that makes it stand out more, which is the whole point of something like this. Good match as Bate continues to perform beyond his years. They're also setting up a way to get the title off of him as he keeps getting outperformed but hits his one big move to win every time. That's going to catch up to him eventually and it'll make the new champion look that much better.

**Overall Rating:** B-. It's a very easy to watch but entirely skippable show this week without any required viewing. The Strong video stands out as NXT is always good about setting something like that up to help you care about a performer. Overall the show felt like it was setting the table for later and there's nothing wrong with something like that.

### Results

Drew McIntyre b. Andrade Cien Almas – Running boot to the face

Aleister Black b. Kona Reeves – Black Mass

Tyler Bate b. Jack Gallagher – Tyler Driver 97

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# NXT – April 19, 2017: Ten The Hard Way

## **NXT**

Date: April 19, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

We're back to Full Sail with a major match to wrap up someone's time in NXT. This week we have Tye Dillinger's NXT farewell as he steps inside a steel cage with Eric Young. Dillinger has already moved up to the main roster so it's his last chance to get a major win in NXT. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's NXT Champion Bobby Roode to get things going. It's a momentous occasion as he's made back to back Wrestlemania weekends GLORIOUS. This year he sold out the Amway Center with 15,000 people

seeing the biggest box office superstar in the business today. The future of NXT is in his control and the transformation of Bobby Roode's NXT was completed.

Last week he saw Shinsuke Nakamura's farewell and thought it was pathetic. There was no Roode on stage to say goodbye to him because he didn't want to listen to Nakamura's garbage. Nakamura had to run away from NXT after the beatings that Roode gave him so everyone can either get on the Roode train or get out. Cue the returning Hideo Itami to slap Roode in the face. Bobby takes his jacket off and starts talking trash, only to walk into the GTS. Itami straightens his tie and holds up the title. Hideo is fine for a quick challenger and as sad as this sounds, it's probably better to get him in the title match before he's hurt again.

Tyler Bate and Jack Gallagher have a very polite discussion about their upcoming UK Title match.

Roode is still getting up after the break.

Earlier today, Andrade Cien Almas interrupted Drew McIntyre during his workout and challenged him for next week.

#### Andrade Cien Almas vs. Danny Burch

Burch sends him into the ropes but Almas hangs on and shouts a bit. A belly to back sends Almas down again but he gets in a hard clothesline to take over. The double knees in the corner set up the hammerlock DDT for the pin on Burch at 2:57. Basically a squash.

Video on Asuka, who is still completely dominant. Some people, including Ember Moon and Ruby Riot, might see some weaknesses though.

Long recap of Eric Young vs. Tye Dillinger. Tye lost to Eric a few months ago but refused to join Sanity. This set off a major feud with Tye finding a bunch of friends to help him fight. Sanity won in Orlando but tonight it's one on one in a cage for the final blowoff.

#### Liv Morgan/Aliyah vs. Billie Kay/Peyton Royce

Billie and Liv get things going with nothing happening for a good while until Liv grabs a sunset flip and rolls Billie around in a

circle for some near falls. Aliyah comes in for a middle rope legdrop, only to eat a discus forearm. It's off to Peyton for a spinning kick to the face and what looked to be a three count. Aliyah grabs a sunset flip with Liv dropkicking Billie away so Aliyah can get the pin at 3:14.

**Rating:** D. I'm really not sure what to make of this half of the women's division. The bullying story is fine enough but it doesn't feel like it's going anywhere. Peyton and Billie are a great duo but there isn't much for them to do with Asuka on top of the division. Aliyah and Liv really don't do anything for me and I think NXT is starting to agree.

Almas vs. McIntyre is official for next week.

#### Eric Young vs. Tye Dillinger

In a cage and Young sends Sanity to the back. Tye pulls him inside and hammers away to start but can't hit a very early Tyebreaker. Eric gets a toss into the cage and Tye is in trouble as we take a break. Back with Young getting two off a middle rope forearm to the back of Tye's neck.

Tye's right hands don't get him very far as Young powerbombs him out of the corner for two. It's too early to escape though as Young gets tossed off the top, sending us to another break. Back again with Young catching Tye on top and throwing him down again. One heck of a top rope elbow drop gets a very delayed two but Eric can't follow up.

Eric is busted open but takes too long to go after Tye, who grabs a Tyebreaker to put both guys down. Dillinger goes for the door but here's Sanity to slam it shut. Roderick Strong, Kassius Ohno and Ruby Riot run out for the save (so much for No Way Jose) but Dain runs both them and the referee over. Killian gets inside so Tye dives off the top to take out both Young and Dain before crawling out for the win at 23:06.

**Rating:** B-. This was more long than good but the problem is still very obvious: the ten gimmick is far more over than Tye, who just

isn't all that interesting. Dillinger is fine but he's really just average in the ring. I'm sure he'll do well on the main roster with the TEN thing, though I'm not sure how long he's going to last. The cage match was exactly what it needed to be though with Dillinger defeating Young once and for all, giving him a big win to go out on. He hasn't had that in NXT and now it's a signature moment for him. Good match but nothing remarkable.

Dillinger locks Sanity inside the cage and celebrates to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. Good show here as they had the big match to go with setting up some stuff going forward. The women's tag was short and Royce/Kay are entertaining enough to make it an easy sit which Almas got a win to regain some credibility. Roode vs. Itami is a good choice for the title match in Chicago and the show was a fast way to help set all these things up going forward.

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## Takeover: Orlando Preview

Last year, NXT held its first Takeover event during Wrestlemania weekend with the instant classic "Takeover: Dallas". The show stole the spotlight over Wrestlemania weekend and was pretty easily the

best show of the four days, possibly even the year. Now it's time for round two and as luck would have it, NXT is in their own backyard, making this almost like a cross between a major house show and one of their biggest pay per views of the year. You don't hear something like that very often so let's get to it.

### **Sanity vs. Tye Dillinger/Roderick Strong/No Way Jose/Ruby Riot**

We'll start with the most recently added match as Sanity makes a rare appearance at full strength against the combined forces of Tye Dillinger/No Way Jose/Roderick Strong/Ruby Riot. This has been simmering for months now and as usual, it's a pretty simple idea. Sanity has gone after Dillinger and it was time to even the numbers up a bit as Dillinger was tired of all the beatings. His team came together over the next few weeks and now we have a full on match between the eight of them.

Very simply put, if Dillinger doesn't get the fall here (it doesn't matter who it's over but Young would be preferable), I have no idea what they're thinking. The fans are dying to explode for Dillinger and what better place is there than this Takeover? Sanity isn't the most interesting team in the world aside from having a really cool look. While they need the win, I think they can bounce back better. Dillinger has lost so many times already that I'm not sure how many more times he can bounce back from losing on the big stage. I really hope they don't screw this up as they're running out of time to capitalize on Dillinger's popularity.

### **Aleister Black vs. Andrade Cien Almas**

We'll move on to a pretty big debut with Black making his first in-ring appearance in NXT. He already had a match at the WWE United Kingdom Championship tournament under his Tommy End moniker but this week is the first time we'll see his new gimmick. Almas has been on a roll lately with the heel character really starting to hit its stride. His match with Oney Lorcan last week was a major highlight and helped set him up for this match against Black.

That being said, this is another match where the winner should be obvious. NXT isn't going to put Black out there in his debut and



have him lose so Almas has next to no chance. That being said, you could have made the same case last year about Sami Zayn vs. Shinsuke Nakamura and that turned out fine. I'm hoping that Black can go in the ring well enough to match his great vignettes though that's what got Almas in trouble for his debut. But yeah, Black wins here and does so handily.

#### **Women's Title: Asuka vs. Ember Moon**

Asuka won the Women's Title about a year ago in Dallas and hasn't looked back since. She's completely steamrolled over everyone she's faced and it's almost impossible to imagine her losing a match. That's where the story has worked so well. It's pretty much been acknowledged that Ember Moon can't hang with Asuka all the way through a match but what she can do is hit the Eclipse, which has been built up as the most dangerous weapon the division has ever seen. It's almost reminiscent of Steve Austin vs. Shawn Michaels as all Austin had to do was catch Michaels once and it would be over. The question is can Moon get that far.

As logical as it would be to have Asuka lose here and go on to the main roster soon after, I'm really not sure that happens anymore. NXT has done a nearly flawless job of making Asuka feel unbeatable and that's still the feeling I have here. Moon should be the favorite and the place will go nuts if the Eclipse gives her the title, but I'm actually going with Asuka in my regular prediction almost guaranteed to be wrong. Moon is the best candidate to dethrone Asuka but I actually don't think she does.

#### **Tag Team Titles: DIY vs. Revival vs. Authors of Pain**

I'm very rarely a fan of triple threats but this is a case where the story has been built precisely in this direction, which makes it more than acceptable. Revival and DIY had some incredible matches against each other last year but now they've run into a wall with the champions, who run over everything in their path. Having the other teams band together to fight the Authors is interesting and could make for a very good story to the elimination tag, especially if one of the other teams gets to conquer them in the end.

I'll go with the Authors retaining here as DIY could easily be brought up to the Cruiserweight division while the Revival seem like perfect additions to the main roster tag divisions. The Authors are perfect choices to keep the titles until a new team is put together to slay them. I don't know who could fight DIY save for maybe Sanity, which doesn't seem like the most interesting thing in the world. We'll go with the titles being retained, which would make the most long terms sense.

### **NXT Title: Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Bobby Roode**

We'll wrap it up with a rematch as Nakamura, this time on two good knees, tries to get the NXT Title back from Roode, who took it from him in a great match back at "Takeover: San Antonio." This time around Nakamura knows not to underestimate him, which could make for an interesting change of pace. Roode has looked great since winning the title while Nakamura has spent most of the time rehabbing his injured knee.

I think I'll go with the champions making a clean sweep as, much like the Revival, there's no need to put the title back on Nakamura. He's held it twice already and is more than ready to move up to the main stage. Just let Roode move on and feud with someone new (Dillinger for example) before losing the title at "Takeover: Brooklyn III". The match will be fun, though I'm curious as to how they could have Nakamura lose to Roode again without some sort of shenanigans, which you don't get too often in NXT.

Overall, the show looks good but not great. As is almost always the case, it's going to come down to the performances, which have a tendency to be outstanding. Let the wrestlers do their thing in a logical manner and everything will be fine. The crowd is going to carry a lot of this and that's what arguably matters most at any given NXT show. Last year set a very high bar but I believe NXT can actually pull something like this off again.

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## NXT – March 22, 2017: They Needed This

### **NXT**

Date: March 22, 2017

Location: University Area CDC Gymnasium, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Nigel McGuinness, Tom Phillips

The main roster isn't the only place where we're getting ready for a major show. There are only two episodes of NXT left before Takeover: Orlando and that means we need to hammer out the rest of the card. While the three title matches are set, you need a lot more than that to make a full show. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Tye Dillinger/No Way Jose/Roderick Strong vs. Sanity.

Opening sequence.

### Oney Lorcan vs. Andrade Cien Almas

This is over Lorcan standing up to Almas for bullying Hoho Lun last week. Lorcan shoves him down to start and Almas takes an early break on the floor. Back in and Almas loses a strike off, sending him right back outside. A chase goes badly for Almas too as he can't get anything going so far.

Finally he's able to send Lorcan head first into the corner before a running slap to the face makes Oney even madder. Lorcan pops back up and knocks him to the floor, only to dive off the steps and into a slam. We come back from a break with Lorcan going hard into the buckle so Andrade can do that cocky grin of his. We hit the chinlock to trigger Lorcan's comeback, which includes a rather hard clothesline. A running Blockbuster is good for two but the half and half suplex is easily blocked.

One heck of a running European uppercut sends Almas outside and a big flip dive takes him down again. Four straight running charges in the corner set up the half and half for a VERY close two, which is pretty much going to do it for Oney's chances. Almas avoids a dive off the top and cartwheels into a kick to the back of the head, followed by a clothesline to turn Oney inside out for two. The announcers are selling the heck out of these shots and the kickouts. The running double knees in the corner knock Lorcan silly though and the hammerlock DDT puts him away at 13:52.

**Rating:** B+. I was late to the party on Almas but he's REALLY grown on me in recent weeks and I'm starting to see the star power that everyone said he had. Maybe it's the change in look or the hard heel turn but I'm really digging him of late and this match made him look like a star instead of a goon with a smile. Check this one out and keep Lorcan in mind as well since he more than carried his part of the match.

DIY has gone around the world and they're ready to show that all they need is a chance. They got one here in NXT and didn't get along with the Revival from the day they got here. That led them to Takeover: Toronto and the greatest night of their lives but here comes the Authors of Pain to cue their dreams off again. DIY is a state of mind though and it's all about everyone who has been there for them over the years. They'll have their moment. This was a really solid promo from people you don't expect to hear them from. Alistir Black video.

We look back at Ember Moon Eclipsing Billie Kay onto the injured

list (if that was a work, Kay is a better actress than I thought).

### Asuka vs. Priscilla Zumiga

Non-title. There's a good chance I heard the jobber's name but I'm pretty sure she's better known as Angel Rose. The bell rings and Asuka asks for a mic. She says this is for Ember Moon and takes Priscilla's head off with a kick. Zumiga makes the mistake of hitting Asuka and gets kicked in the head again. That's only good for two though as Asuka pulls up before the three. More hard strikes (Watson: "She might be trying to send a message to Moon!" Phillips: "You think?") set up the Asuka Lock for the submission at 2:56.

Post match Asuka screams in Japanese before saying "no Eclipse". They're doing a great job of selling the idea that Ember has one big shot but otherwise she probably can't hang with Asuka. That makes sense and is a great way to get the title off Asuka if she's moving up.

The Revival says their name isn't just a slogan. They've studied the best and of course they're better than the best, including Arn and Tully, the Midnight Express and the Hart Foundation. They might not do a bunch of flips but they're going to wind up on top of all their opponents. In Orlando, it's their fate to become the greatest team of all time and that's what they're going to do.

Next week it's Akum vs. Wilder vs. Gargano to preview the triple threat title match.

Long video on Bobby Roode vs. Shinsuke Nakamura. The idea is that it started last year when Nakamura made his debut and Roode showed up in the crowd, which was supposed to take the focus away from the in-ring action (not really but it's fine for a plot point). Then Roode built himself up and surprised the champ by going after his knee. Nakamura went surfing and is ready for his rematch because he knows how to handle Roode.

No Way Jose, Tye Dillinger and Roderick Strong are ready for Sanity because they have a fair numbers game for once.

Heavy Machinery is coming next week.

Last week, Kassius Ohno said he didn't expect to start off his second NXT run with a loss. Cue Elias Samson to sing about Ohno never being a champion and doesn't belong here. Ohno doesn't take kindly to this and Samson leaves.

Almas is ready to face Black in his debut at Takeover.

#### Sanity vs. No Way Jose/Tye Dillinger/Roderick Strong

Sanity is pulled outside to start and the brawl is on until Dillinger works on Wolfe's knee with a series of stomps. Wolfe and Dain are sent outside for a big dive from Strong and we take a break. Back with Jose catching Wolfe in a side slam and stopping Young with a raised elbow in the corner. Dain finally takes over on Jose and the double teaming begins, only to have Jose roll over and make the hot tag to Strong. They're certainly moving here. Everything breaks down though and the match is thrown out at 11:03.

**Rating:** C. Nice brawl here but you had to expect this one to go on to Takeover. This story has been well done since the beginning and the thrown together trio more than held their own against Sanity. I'm actually not sure who wins in the blowoff match and that's a very good thing to have coming up.

The brawl keeps going after the bell with Dillinger stomping on Young until Nikki Cross jumps on his back. Cue the debuting Heidi Lovelace (not named on screen but the fans call her Ruby, as in her NXT name Ruby Riot) to take care of Cross, allowing the three guys to take out Dain to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** A-. Now that's more like it! This was exactly the kind of strong push that NXT needed as we head towards Takeover, which was kind of lacking on the way there. All four announced matches got some time tonight (including Black vs. Almas, the latter of whom had a great match to build him up for the loss) and you can pencil in the eight person tag as well. Really solid stuff tonight and I want to see Takeover.

#### Results

Andrade Cien Almas b. Oney Lorcan – Hammerlock DDT

Asuka b. Priscilla Zumiga – Asuka Lock

Sanity vs. Tye Dillinger/Roderick Strong/No Way Jose went to a double DQ when all six brawled

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## NXT – March 8, 2017: Just A Nice Match

### NXT

Date: March 8, 2017

Location: University Area CDC Gymnasium, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Nigel McGuinness, Tom Phillips

We're on the road again and that means we're getting closer to heading back to Orlando for the next Takeover. None of the card is announced yet but with four shows left, you can imagine how fast that's going to change. We're also a week away from Bobby Roode defending the NXT Title against Kassius Ohno. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Tye Dillinger vs. Eric Young

That's quite the opener. Young sends Sanity to the back before going

to the ring. There's no bell just yet though as the team brings Roderick Strong's unconscious body out to the stage. Tye goes to check on him and No Way Jose comes out as well. Dillinger and Jose charge the ring for the brawl but the numbers get the better of them and Sanity dominates.

Peyton Royce and Billie Kay are trying to find a place to hang their award for Breakout Star of the Year. For some reason they're hanging it at the Performance Center and talk about the various posters they see around the place. Billie thinks their award should be bigger, like the Dusty Classic trophy. They see Ember Moon working out and jokes ensue until a trainer has to hold Moon back.

We see a shadowy man in a church. He says he's neither a saint or a sinner and says "fade to black." That would seem to be Alistair Black.

#### HoHo Lun vs. Andrade Cien Almas

The fans seem to enjoy chanting "LET'S GO HOHO" but Almas stomps him down and sends him hard into the corner. Some forearm to the head knock HoHo even sillier and a clothesline cuts off his comeback. The hammerlock DDT ends Lun at 2:34.

#### Billie Kay vs. Ember Moon

Kay and Royce don't seem too worried here so Ember kicks Billie in the head to take over. Peyton gets pulled inside for a second, allowing Billie to catapult Ember throat first into the ropes. Billie gets in a rolling forearm for two but Ember comes right back with a series of kicks. Another Peyton distraction fails and the Eclipse is enough for the pin on Kay at 3:33.

**Rating:** C-. Billie and Peyton are a weird case as they have the character stuff down but they really don't have the in-ring abilities to back it up. They can cheat to win but I'm not sure if it's enough to keep them that high on the card. They'll be fine as a new LayCool style act though and that's good enough.

Billie is hurt and trainers have to come check on her. She's conscious and her limbs are moving. The fans cheer for her to get up



and she's able to sit up on her own. Kay is crying and the fans give her a round of applause as she gets to her feet. She gets out of the ring on her own and walks to the back slowly. The fact that she's able to stand is a great sign. Also of note: while she was down, the announcers put the Eclipse over as a devastating move that can put anyone down. You don't hear something like that often enough.

TJ Perkins is ready to face Shinsuke Nakamura tonight.

#### Ealy Brothers vs. Revival

No match again as the Authors of Pain come out and destroy the Twins.

The Authors go after the Revival but have to settle for beating up the Brothers again.

William Regal makes Ember Moon #1 contender.

We get a sitdown interview with Kassius Ohno who says it's a little weird to be back here where he was four years ago. He's won titles everywhere he's gone and he wants to win the NXT Title.

Bobby Roode is at his home for a satellite and doesn't care what Ohno said. Would you rather have a champion in a suit or a long haired hippie from the 70s? Roode throws the camera crew out.

#### TJ Perkins vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Perkins tries to go after the leg but Nakamura sits out on him and they go to the ropes. Nakamura takes him down but it's another standoff, followed by Nakamura's COME ON to a nice reaction. TJ takes him down with a headscissors and dabs, only to have Nakamura escape and do the same thing.

Nakamura is sent to the floor and avoids the slingshot dropkick before kicking TJ in the chest. Back from a break with Nakamura missing a basement dropkick and possibly tweaking the knee. It's fine enough for Good Vibrations but Perkins comes back with a jumping neckbreaker. The second slingshot dropkick connects and a middle rope DDT gets two on Nakamura. A big shot to TJ puts both guys down but Perkins gets smart and kicks the knee out.

Nakamura grabs a Fujiwara armbar but Perkins quickly reverses into something like a Scorpion Deathlock. That goes nowhere so TJ grabs the kneebar until Nakamura makes the ropes. Back up and Nakamura's knee is WAY too fine as he knees TJ in the head. Another one to the ribs sets up the reverse exploder. Kinshasa is enough for the pin on Perkins at 14:59.

**Rating:** B. I liked this more than I was expecting as it was much more than just having Nakamura squash him in short order. Perkins was smart out there and had Nakamura in trouble before the ending was exactly what you would expect. This is a good example of a match that was better than expecting and didn't need to be any kind of show stealing classic. Good stuff here.

Regal says the winner of Roode vs. Ohno has to defend against Nakamura at Takeover.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This show was about setting up stuff for the future and that's all it needed to be. We've got one (technically two) match set for Takeover and that means we should be getting the rest of the card filled in pretty soon. I'm sure you can guess most of it but part of the fun in NXT is watching them set this stuff up.

### Results

Andrade Cien Almas b. HoHo Lun – Hammerlock DDT

Ember Moon b. Billie Kay – Eclipse

Shinsuke Nakamura b. TJ Perkins – Kinshasa

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# NXT – December 28, 2016: A First For NXT

## NXT

Date: December 28, 2016

Location: Edion Arena, Osaka, Japan

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

It's a special week in NXT as we're closing out the year with a house show taped over in Japan earlier this month. The main event is Shinsuke Nakamura challenging Samoa Joe for the title in a match we saw a few weeks back. This is also a two hour show, meaning the matches won't have to be as clipped. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick video on Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura.

Opening sequence.

### Oney Lorcan vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Almas wears a mask during his entrance and has no interest in a pre-match handshake. We hear about Almas defeating Nakamura for the IWGP Intercontinental Title a few years back which is almost unthinkable given their statuses in NXT. Almas' headlock doesn't go anywhere so he does the lay on the ropes spot before getting caught in a Lorcan headlock. We talk about the crowd being more silent than usual as Almas takes him down into a chinlock.

Back up and Lorcan hits a running corner clothesline before popping in a few shots to the face. Something like a standing backflip into a reverse DDT (I believe Tetsuya Naito uses the same) gets two on Lorcan but he comes right back with an inverted exploder. Almas sends him into the corner again with the running double knees getting two despite a foot on the ropes. The hammerlock DDT is broken up and Lorcan takes him to the top for a German superplex

(with Almas flipping over in the air) and the pin at 10:06.

**Rating:** C. It's a decent match of two lower level guys hitting each other a lot but that's not the most interesting thing in the world. Above that though, this is making me wonder why this is a full two hour show. I really didn't need to see this match getting ten minutes though there are worse ways to spend a Wednesday night.

#### Aliyah/Liv Morgan vs. Peyton Royce/Billie Kay

Billie gives Liv a quick fireman's carry to start as Corey goes into his usual anti-New Jersey rant. Morgan grabs a sunset flip and rolls Kay around the ring for a few two counts but both of them seem a bit dizzy. Aliyah comes in and gets caught in the wrong corner for some very long legged choking.

The Australians work on Aliyah's back and keep pulling her away from the hot tag. We hit the chinlock for a bit as the beating continues. Liv gets knocked off the apron, which Graves refers to as an insurance policy. Aliyah finally flips out of a double suplex and brings Morgan back in to clean house with a bulldog. An STO gets two on Billie but a blind tag allows Peyton to send Liv face first into Billie's knee for the pin at 8:29.

**Rating:** D+. This was far less interesting than it should have been and a lot of that was due to the length. It felt like they were stretching the match out to fill in time, which isn't what you want to do on a show that already feels longer than it should be. I can appreciate the idea of trying to build up Kay and Royce as the top heels in the division but I'm having a really hard time buying either of them as a threat to Asuka.

#### Tag Team Titles: DIY vs. Akira Tozawa/Tajiri

DIY is defending and this time we get the handshake. Gargano and Tozawa start things off and this time the fans are a bit more into it. The fans seem split as both guys miss big kicks and bring in their respective partners. Tajiri sprays some mist as Graves questions his fandom with DIY in the ring.

The feeling out process continues with the mist having fallen on

Tajiri's back. Ciampa wins a battle of the shoulder blocks but a headlock into a headscissor sequence takes us back to a stalemate. They're almost completely even in the first five minutes. Ciampa starts in on Tozawa's arm but gets taken down for some Tajiri kicks to put the champions in trouble for the first time.

Back from a break with Ciampa telling Tozawa to kick him harder. They take turns sticking their chests out for chops until Tozawa hits him behind the ear to take over. A gutbuster puts Ciampa down but he breaks up a tag to Tajiri as the formula changes a bit. Tozawa kicks him before bringing Tajiri back in for the REAL kicks to the chest. Everything breaks down and Tozawa hits some suicide dives to put the champs in trouble. It doesn't last long though as Gargano hits the spear through the ropes for a close two.

The Tarantula sets up a missed Buzzsaw Kick before it's back to Tozawa for a forearm slugout. Ciampa comes back in for the rolling German suplexes, only to get caught in a snap German suplex from Tozawa. That's enough for Ciampa who kicks the heck out of Tozawa and hits Project Ciampa for two with Tajiri breaking it up. A blind tag brings Gargano back in for the running knee/superkick combination for the pin on Tozawa at 21:04.

**Rating:** B. Now that's a bit more like it. They went a bit long but this was FAR better than anything else on the show so far. Tozawa is really impressive and Tajiri still has it despite being in his mid-40s. I liked this a lot more than I was expecting to as DIY can do no wrong at the moment. I'm not sure that's going to extend to the Authors of Pain though and that scares me.

DIY bows to the challengers post match.

Women's Title: Nia Jax vs. Asuka

Asuka is defending and we're in her hometown. Jax shrugs off the strikes to start and headbutts the champ into the corner. That earns her an Octopus Hold followed by a guillotine with the announcers bringing up Jax's issues with that hold. Asuka gets thrown into the corner and we take an early break.

Back with Jax tossing Asuka around even more with a release slam getting two. A sidewalk slam gets the same and another comeback is cut off in a hurry, quieting the crowd all over again. Nia drops her with a clothesline as the announcers talk about how bringing the NXT Women's Title to Raw would be a huge deal for Jax's career.

As odd as it sounds, they're absolutely right as the title is probably more valuable than the Smackdown Women's Title and just a few steps behind the Raw counterpart. Some kicks set up a kneebar on Nia but she stands up for the easy break. A hip attack knocks Nia off the apron but Asuka is easily thrown into the apron to put her in trouble again.

The big leg sends Asuka outside again and the announcers aren't sure if Nia is familiar enough with the rules. I get what they're going for but she knows that you have to get a pin in the ring. She's not Kamala guys. Back in and Asuka unloads on her with the strike, followed by a cross armbreaker. Asuka jumps on Nia's back for a sleeper but gets countered into a hard powerbomb for two. Back up and Asuka actually gets her up for a German suplex, followed by one heck of a kick to the jaw to retain the title at 18:52.

**Rating:** B-. This was a cross between Nia vs. Asuka I and either Nia vs. Bayley match, which means it's pretty entertaining stuff. The idea of Asuka having to be pushed to the limit was a good story though at some point Nia needs to find something other than being too confident and getting beaten as a result.

We're in Melbourne next week and hopefully it's not another two hour show.

#### NXT Title: Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Nakamura is challenging. They trade some kicks to the legs to start and Nakamura does his arm waving bit to mess with Joe's head. That's enough for Joe to take a breather on the floor and we take a break. Back with Joe taking it outside and chopping Nakamura to his knees. The corner enziguri drops Nakamura again and it's time to go after the knees. A spinwheel kick to the leg sets up a leglock and Nakamura is in trouble.

Joe grabs a kneebar for a bit until Nakamura makes the ropes, setting up a big kick to the champ's head. The running knee to the ribs in the corner gets two, followed by Joe's big boot getting the same. We take another break and come back with Joe holding the STF, which is transitioned into the Crossface. Nakamura finally gets to the ropes but can't hook a cross armbreaker. He can however get a triangle choke, sending Joe's legs into the rope for a break of his own.

It's too early for Kinshasa though as Joe powerslams him out of the air for two. Joe can't hook the Muscle Buster so he switches to the Koquina Clutch, only to settle for a hard German suplex instead. An enziguri sends Nakamura outside but he gets out of the Rock Bottom onto the steps that put him out of action for so long earlier this year. The running knee to the back of the neck drops Joe but he's too big for Nakamura to hold up in a fireman's carry. That's fine with Nakamura as he hits the middle rope knee, followed by Kinshasa for the pin and the title at 26:28.

**Rating:** B+. This was a lot better than the version shown before, which only gave us 10:45 of the match. Nakamura fighting back to win in his home country was the right way to end the show and it felt like a big deal on a big stage. Joe should be ready to head up to the main roster as there's nothing left for him to do in NXT.

A lot of posing ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. The problem here is the length. This easily could have been trimmed down by half an hour or so (edit some of the matches or just cut off the first two) and it would have been much better as a result. It really felt unnecessary to last this long and not much was gained as a result. I'm not going to think of this show again and that's not something I like thinking on a long NXT show. Totally watchable show but trim it down to make it that much better.

### Results

Oney Lorcan b. Andrade Cien Almas – German superplex

Billie Kay/Peyton Royce b. Liv Morgan/Aliyah – Bulldog onto Kay's

knee

DIY b. Akira Tozawa/Tajiri – Running knee/superkick combination

Asuka b. Nia Jax – Kick to the head

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Samoa Joe – Kinshasa

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# **NXT – December 21, 2016: One For Texas**

## **NXT**

Date: December 21, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

It's time to start the build towards "Takeover: San Antonio" as we have a four way elimination match to crown a new #1 contender.

Tonight it's Bobby Roode vs. Andrade Cien Almas vs. Tye Dillinger vs. Roderick Strong for the shot at Shinsuke Nakamura in January.

We've also got Daria Berenato vs. Billie Kay in a revenge match.

Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.



### Billie Kay vs. Daria Berenato

Berenato, an MMA style fighter, was betrayed by Kay and Peyton Royce a few weeks back and wants revenge. Peyton offers an early distraction from the floor so Billy can suplex Daria for two. Something like a spear puts Billie down and there go the gloves so Daria can punch a bit harder. Another Peyton offers another distraction and the big boot ends Daria at 2:25.

Post match Peyton and Billie challenge Asuka for a fight.

### Authors of Pain vs. Anthony Bowens/Johnny Vandal

Total and complete squash with the Authors throwing the jobbers all over the place. Bowens is powerbombed onto Vandal and their heads collide, giving Bowens a bad concussion. The match is stopped due to the injury at 1:05.

Ellering says they want the titles and don't care who they have to beat.

We look back at the opening match.

Asuka says Royce and Kay aren't competition. Nikki Cross is shown looking on with a smile.

Long package of videos on all four participants in the elimination match. None of them like each other all that much.

### Roderick Strong vs. Andrade Cien Almas vs. Tye Dillinger vs. Bobby Roode

Elimination rules and the winner gets the title shot in San Antonio. Roode bails to the floor to start but Strong follows him out for some chops with Dillinger following to help with the beatdown. Almas takes Strong back in for a VERY loud chop and a dropkick as we take an early break.

Back with Almas still in control and slapping Dillinger in the face. Almas tries to moonsault onto Strong and Dillinger but only hits Tye's knees, sending him out to the floor. That leaves Roode to clothesline Tye and Roderick at the same time but Strong grabs a quick backbreaker for two. Roode's neckbreaker gets the same on

Strong and Bobby knocks Almas to the floor again. Roderick comes back with a dive to take all three out and we go to a second break. Back with Roode's rollup being called off due to feet on the ropes. A release gordbuster sends Roode flying and Strong follows up with a running knee in the corner. Everyone heads to the corner for the four man Tower of Doom with Dillinger getting the best of it and small packaging Almas for two. Andrade comes back with the running knees in the corner but the Sick Kick gets rid of Almas at 17:17. Strong staggers into the Tyebreaker and is out at 18:43.

We're down to Roode vs. Dillinger for the title shot and the fans are WAY into Tye. Dillinger wins the slugout and stomps him down in the corner. Roode's attempt to bring in a chair goes badly as well as Tye superkicks him down for two. The Tyebreaker is broken up and Roode snaps off his spinebuster. The Glorious Bomb is reversed into the Tyebreaker for a VERY close two and the fans lose it on the kickout. Roode escapes a superplex attempt and the Glorious DDT sends him to San Antonio at 24:21.

**Rating:** B. This was really just a long coronation for Roode, who was the only real option to face Nakamura at this point. You might be able to consider Dillinger but the other two are nowhere near ready for something like that. I like the elimination rules as it's not just a fluke pin setting up a major title shot. Good match here but not the highest level of drama.

Replays and posing end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. Really, this was the main event and anything else. That means a short match and a squash, which isn't the most interesting stuff in the world. Now, the stuff they presented did set up some stuff for the future, which is where NXT shines. It's not a great show by any stretch but there's a main event in San Antonio and we have a good idea of where the rest of the card is going.

### Results

Billie Kay b. Daria Berenato – Big Boot

Authors of Pain b. Anthony Bowens/Johnny Vandal via referee stoppage  
Bobby Roode b. Tye Dillinger, Andrade Cien Almas and Roderick Strong  
last eliminating Dillinger

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# **NXT – December 14, 2016: Reading is the Better Option**

## **NXT**

Date: December 14, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

It's another interesting night as we have the four matches to set up  
the fatal fourway match to determine a #1 contender to the NXT  
Title. Other than that though we're heading down to Australia to see  
what should be the final match between Shinsuke Nakamura and Samoa  
Joe for the NXT Title. As a bonus, it's inside a steel cage. Let's  
get to it.

We open with a look back at the Nakamura vs. Joe rivalry with both

title changes to set up tonight's final match.

The cage is lowered and we're starting in a big way.

#### NXT Title: Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

From Melbourne, Australia. Nakamura is defending and it's pinfall/submission/escape. The champ takes him down by the leg and wins an early strike exchange. A knee drop sets up Good Vibrations in the corner but Joe comes back by sending him into the cage. Back from an early break with Nakamura in even more trouble until a spinning kick to the head drops Joe.

Kinshasa is countered with a powerslam and it's off to a standing Koquina Clutch. Shinsuke flips back to escape and the sliding knee to the head has Joe reeling. It's too early to escape though and Joe loads up the super MuscleBuster, which is countered into a powerbomb to keep Joe down. Nakamura has the chance to walk out but opts for Kinshasa instead. A second Kinshasa retains the title at 12:56.

**Rating:** B-. I'm sure the full match was a lot more entertaining than this but it was a good way to wrap things up between them. There's really no reason to keep Joe off the main roster at this point so just let him go on up like he should have done already. There wasn't much doubt in this one and there's nothing wrong with that.

We look back at Peyton Royce and Billie Kay walking out on Daria Barenato a few weeks back.

The Aussies laugh at Daria until she comes up to demand a fight with one of them next week.

#### #1 Contenders Tournament First Round: Tye Dillinger vs. Eric Young

Still no Sawyer Fulton with Sanity. Young goes right after him to start but gets clotheslined down for his efforts. Left hands in the corner (ten of them of course) have Eric in even more trouble. The Tyebreaker is loaded up but Nikki Cross comes in for the DQ at 1:20. Tye fights off Sanity until Damo comes in to lay him out.

#### #1 Contenders Tournament First Round: No Way Jose vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Jose grabs a headlock to start before slapping on an airplane spin to take us back in time while still having some fun. The announcers try to get Gravy over as a nickname for Corey as Jose knocks Almas down a few more times. A pop up right hand gets two but Almas kicks him in the face and hits his arm trap DDT for the pin at 3:54.

**Rating:** D+. I'm still not getting the appeal of Almas but I'm getting the appeal of Jose. A guy his size with that much charisma should be a guarantee for a spot in this company but I'd like to see them do something with him instead of just having him float around. Almas still doesn't do much for me but having him as a heel is instantly an improvement.

#### #1 Contenders Tournament First Round: Roderick Strong vs. Elias Samson

Before the match Samson sings a song I can't quite understand. Samson kicks him in the ribs to start as we hear about Strong's abilities with a backbreaker. It's already off to the Tree of Woe for some upside down choking followed by a chinlock. Strong comes right back with a running dropkick followed by a fireman's carry gutbuster. The Sick Kick ends Samson at 3:17.

**Rating:** C-. No time for anything here but Samson is in need of a partner of some sort. He's really not enough in the ring to make anything of himself but the guitar playing character is more than enough to go somewhere. Strong is a case of what you see being what you get though I had almost forgotten he was even part of the roster. To be fair though he's the kind of guy you can give a quick push and make something of him without too much effort.

Billie Kay vs. Daria Barenato next week.

#### #1 Contenders Tournament First Round: Oney Lorcan vs. Bobby Roode

Guess who the fans are behind here. They trade arm work to start with Roode taking him to the mat and riding Oney a bit, much to the crowd's delight. Roode stops to pose so Lorcan gives him a running uppercut to the jaw. We actually get an ONEY chant until Roode knocks him off the top and onto the ropes. Oney gets two off a

backslide and starts speeding things up with a running elbow in the corner. A running Blockbuster gets two but the regular version misses and Roode grabs a spinebuster. The inverted DDT sends Roode to the fourway at 7:16.

**Rating:** C-. Well duh. You have to assume Roode is getting the title shot in San Antonio and that's best for everyone involved. Lorcan is fine for a jobber to the stars but there's only so much you can do with a name like Oney. Graves made this even better by losing his mind about Roode on commentary, which is exactly what someone like him should be doing.

The fourway is Roode vs. Dillinger vs. Almas vs. Strong.

**Overall Rating:** C. This was a show with one goal and while it accomplished that, it wasn't the most interesting in the world. The wrestling either didn't have time to go anywhere or wasn't all that great in the first place. Roode should be a lock to win next week and I like the idea of him winning a few matches to get there. Not a bad show here but one you really should just read the results for instead of watching in full.

### Results

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Samoa Joe – Kinshasa

Tye Dillinger b. Eric Young via DQ when Nikki Cross interfered

Andrade Cien Almas b. No Way Jose – Arm trap DDT

Roderick Strong b. Elias Samson – Sick Kick

Bobby Roode b. Oney Lorcan – Inverted DDT

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# 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 – October 5, 2016: I Love That Concept

## NXT

Date: October 5, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's time to start a tournament as we have the first round of the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic kicking off tonight. Last year's event was a lot of fun and set up the NXT Title feud for the next several Takeovers. The finals of this year's tournament will be taking place at Takeover: Toronto in November so let's get to it.

The opening video talks about the Dusty Classic returning this year.

Opening sequence.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Bollywood Boyz vs.

Authors of Pain

Harv and Gurv Shira dance a lot before the bell so Razar puts Harv on the top rope for some clubberin. Gurv comes in and gets beaten down as well, setting up the Russian legsweep and clothesline combination (now dubbed the Last Chapter) for the pin at 1:47.

Dan Matha arrives tonight.

Rich Swann vs. Patrick Clark

Clark looks like he's wearing Prince style gear. Even Swann looks confused here. Rich does some dancing punches in the corner until he gets caught in a spinebuster. The fans sing Swann's theme song and he makes a quick comeback with a running kick in the corner. A running moonsault puts Clark away at 2:58.

We look back at Cedric Alexander and Andrade Cien Almas facing off a few weeks back and joining forces in the tournament as a result.

Video of Asuka squashing Liv Morgan last week. After the match, Billie Kay and Peyton Royce laughed at Morgan's loss.

### Peyton Royce vs. Danielle Kamela

Kamela starts fast with a small package and cross body for two each. Peyton sends her into the corner for some long legged choking and forearms to the chest. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Kamela fights up for handspring elbow, only to get kneed in the head. A fisherman's suplex gives Peyton the pin at 3:44.

**Rating:** D+. The wrestling wasn't much but it was a good sign that they're actually trying to make some new names both in the division and in the promotion as a whole. Royce and Kay are fine as replacements for Dana Brooke and Emma as the heel team, though I can't imagine them being much of a threat to Asuka.

Bobby Roode is way too fired up for the first round match in the Dusty Classic. He doesn't want to talk about Sanity when everyone is talking about Glorious Ten. "It will be glorious when we're victorious." Roode rushes Dillinger out before he can say anything.

Dan Matha comes out (looking like a cross between Matt Morgan and Nathan Jones) for his debut but here's Samoa Joe to beat him down instead. Joe asks Regal how many more have to suffer like this one here.

Rich Swann and No Way Jose have teamed up due to a love of dancing.

### Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Andrade Cien Almas/Cedric Alexander vs. Revival

Non-title. Alexander and Dawson start things off with Cedric getting shouldered down. Everything breaks down and the Revival is dropkicked out to the floor and a backdrop does it all over again. A big flip dive from Cedric takes the champs down again and it's all Alexander/Almas in the first four minutes. Revival finally gets it together by suckering Almas into a blindside forearm as we take a break.

Back with Dawson getting two off a northern lights suplex as the champs start in on Almas' arm. The fans want Cedric and an enziguri from Almas gives them what they want. Everything breaks down again and Alexander gets two off a sunset flip into a bridge. Almas has

knocked out to the floor though and it's the Shatter Machine to send the Revival on at 12:40.

**Rating:** B. I liked this more than I was expecting to as Almas is looking better while Alexander looks like one of the most natural newcomers to WWE in a very long time. Revival has to advance here and that's the only possibly outcome they could have, especially in the first round. Someone almost has to take them out though as you have Gargano/Ciampa and the Authors of Pain looming for them.

Post match, Almas beats Cedric down and sends him into the post. Almas soaks in the YOU SUCK chants to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. Another fast paced show with every story hitting perfectly. Almas turning is long overdue and is another example of NXT seeing something not working and changing course as a result. That's close to blasphemy in WWE but down here, it's what you do when something isn't going right. NXT actually pays attention and fixes things because they listen to their audience. I love that concept.

### Results

Authors of Pain b. Bollywood Boyz – Last Chapter to Gurv

Rich Swann b. Patrick Clark – Running moonsault

Peyton Royce b. Danielle Kamela – Fisherman's suplex

Revival b. Cedric Alexander/Andrade Cien Almas – Shatter Machine to Alexander

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