

Reviewing the Review: NXT Takeover: Respect

I don't know why I don't do these for every Takeover since they're NXT pay per views. This felt like a show that was thrown together for the sake of having another Takeover on the calendar, but this is NXT where you can actually have faith in your wrestling product for a change. Let's get to it.

We're going to do this one a little differently as there are four matches that matter so let's get the filler out of the way first.

Asuka squashed Dana Brooke in her debut. This was exactly what it needed to be as Asuka destroyed Brooke like she was nothing and even got in a few shots on Emma for good measure. I'm not sure what Brooke and Emma do now but it's pretty clear that Asuka needs to be pushed as something important. Save for Nia Jax, there's really no one left to challenge Bayley so it almost has to be Asuka.

As bad as the reason is, I'm hoping that Eva injuring Carmella at that house show might show WWE that she's just not ready to compete at this level. With Asuka right there and whatever Jax has (she's an Anoa'i so you know she's got a good Samoan drop), Eva really would stick out even worse than she did before. Anyway this was an awesome debut for Asuka as she showed a bunch of striking and submission abilities as well as some awesome presence. What more can you ask for in less than six minutes?

Apollo Crews beat Tyler Breeze in the featured non-main event level match. This was a match where I really didn't know who was going to win going in, but it became pretty clear that Crews is a major deal in NXT. I'm not sure what they're going to do with Breeze, but NXT is the kind of place where they can rebuild you after some losses. Breeze has earned the fans' and my respect already by taking what should have been a nothing comedy gimmick and turned it into one of the most consistent characters on the roster.

Breeze could become one heck of a face who wins with last minute

superkicks but right now he's great as a gatekeeper heel who has good matches against anyone. Crews still needs a character but the same could be said of Finn Balor back in June and he turned out fine. I like that powerbomb better than the standing moonsault as you can only get so far on a move like that. It doesn't seem like someone kicking out of it would mean that much, but the powerbomb is an upgrade.

That leaves us with just the tournament and main event to go so let's look at the three tag matches in a row.

First up we had Finn Balor/Samoa Joe vs. the Mechanics. This was an old school work the body part, which makes perfect sense given that the Mechanics are basically Anderson tribute wrestlers. Balor tweaked his knee during the match which seemed to be the most logical idea going forward into the finals. That being said, Balor and Joe won anyway after a Muscle Buster into the Coup de Grace which hurt the knee even worse. This was old fashioned tag team work and amazingly enough it still worked just fine despite people saying that those old styles don't work anymore.

In the surprise of the night (at least going on) Rhyno/Baron Corbin beat Jason Jordan/Chad Gable. I was really stunned when Corbin pinned Jordan, but the more I think about how huge of a reaction Gable received the more sense it makes. You really don't want to divide the audience with something like Balor vs. Jordan and miss the reaction that you want with Finn. Gable is something really special and could be a big deal going forward in NXT.

As for the match, they changed up the formula here and went with a fast paced tag match with a ton of saves. This is another one of the many things that I love about NXT: they know how mix up a card and not be repetitive. That's one of the things that drives me crazy about WWE. How many times do you see the same finish or the same kind of match either on the same card or in a row? Stop doing the same stuff and mix it up a little.

That takes us to the final which was the most disappointing match of the night. Balor/Joe won the tournament in a good enough match over Rhyno/Corbin, but Balor's knee injury never went anywhere. Yeah the heels

worked it over for a good chunk of the match but the injury never went anywhere. I kept waiting on the injury to cost Balor something and it just never came. I'm assuming it sets up Balor vs. Joe in the future and the match wasn't bad but it didn't do anything for me.

The Rhodes Family presented the winners with a trophy. Nothing came of this but it was a nice moment.

Oh and no Dusty Finish? Really? Not once in the whole thing?

And then there's the main event. Sweet goodness how awesome are Bayley and Sasha together? This was one of the best put together matches I've seen in years as every single thing set up the next move. I'm having trouble picking the first thing to rave about in this. We'll start with Sasha torturing Izzy.

This is one of the most inspired ideas I've seen in a long time as they took something so basic and simple as a major fan and turned it into a plot device. It's thinking outside the box, which would probably get them protested on Raw because a bunch of stupid groups who claim they're doing the best thing for children don't understand the concept that kids can handle being sad if something good happens in the end.

Bayley wound up winning and Izzy was happy, but instead of experiencing joy, there are people out there who would rather kids never have any problems in their lives because that's how things will work in the real world right? I'll cut myself off there and stick with using Izzy was awesome and made the match.

Another awesome moment was Bayley stomping on Sasha's head to make her tap in a callback to Sasha stomping on Bayley's hand in Brooklyn in a failed attempt to make her give up. It makes Bayley look like the tougher of the two and the one who deserves to be champion for never quitting in the end.

I can't praise this match enough and somehow it's just a step behind their classic in Brooklyn. This is in the running for feud of the year and this is their second great match in six weeks. Those aren't numbers you see very often and it more than lived up to the hype as the first

time two women main evented a pay per view.

This show more than exceeded expectations and was carried by the wrestling instead of the storytelling, though the main event delivered on both. For a show that felt like it was there for the sake of having a show and to give a tournament a big stage, this worked incredibly well and I had a blast watching it. As usual, NXT doesn't know how to fail at a major show. London should be outstanding, as almost everything they put on is.

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Wrestling Wars Podcast

Episode 24

NorCal and I have a long chat about Summerslam, Takeover: Brooklyn and a bit about Raw.

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwp-25-kb-is-here-for-nxt-takeover-summerslam-and-the-aftermath-rolling-into-night-of-champions/>

Reviewing the Review: NXT Takeover: Brooklyn

So in addition to Summerslam, there was NXT's biggest show of all time as they had roughly the same crowd as Summerslam in the same building for Takeover: Brooklyn. As usual I was way more excited for this than for whatever WWE was putting on as NXT actually knows how to build a full card. Let's get to it.

We opened with HHH introducing us to the show and showing off the huge crowd. It never ceases to amaze me how much cooler HHH is on his own than when he's on Raw. This feels like the closer thing to a real version of the guy and he's a lot more enjoyable like this. Also his speech was like two minutes long, not twenty. Do that more on Raw.

The opening was a surprise as Jushin Thunder Liger pinned Tyler Breeze. I've been waiting for Breeze to be pushed towards the top of the promotion but Liger getting the win is far from the worst thing in the world. Above all here: I have full confidence in NXT's ability to build Breeze back up. In WWE, or almost any other promotion for that matter, he would be finished for all intents and purposes. The match was good and Liger is a charisma machine so the fans ate this up.

The Vaudevillains brought in Blue Pants to help deal with Alexa Bliss and finally won the Tag Team Titles. As usual, Blue Pants was the perfect choice (save for maybe Lita) and the place was going insane for this. Bliss has a spot as the insanely petty and stuck up girl who can also be an evil mastermind so once you get her away from a dead end act like Blake and Murphy (they're fine but this is almost guaranteed to be the peaks of their careers), she could do some awesome stuff.

My biggest takeaway from this match was how hot the crowd was. The match was just good instead of great but the people were all over the near falls. It's what happens when they're given a reason to care about

something instead of being beaten over the head by the company saying how awesome it is. The Vaudevillains have earned the fans' respect and they were rewarded for it with a great reaction here. It's such a simple formula but almost no one gets it.

Apollo Crews debuted and beat Tye Dillinger. There isn't much to say here but Crews looks like a shorter Ahmed Johnson but with more athletic ability. As long as he doesn't get caught in bed with his goat lover while doing cocaine off an underage prostitute corpse, he's going to be fine.

We're going to have the Dusty Classic Tag Team Tournament. No idea what that is but I fully trust NXT to pull off something <http://onhealthy.net/product-category/antivirals/> cool with it.

In what we'll call the pleasant surprise of the night, Samoa Joe beat Baron Corbin with the Koquina Clutch. Joe is a likely candidate for the next title shot and this was a very good performance to get him there. This was two power guys beating each other up for ten minutes and it was all entertaining stuff.

I'm going to keep this separate from the next match: Stephanie came out to introduce the next match. Stephanie is officially the annoying mom who doesn't get that her kids don't want her around all the time because she's going to make it all about herself instead of letting the kids have fun. Unfortunately there's no way around her so we're stuck with her ego and obsession with being there for every cool moment.

Next up was Bayley challenging Sasha Banks for the Women's Title. This was good. Go watch it. Seriously what else do you want from me here? I'll give them this: that sequence of the Bank Statement and the hand stomp is as good of a back and forth as I've seen since Benoit vs. Angle in 2003. The post match scene with the Four Horsewomen posing one last time was perfect too.

The main event saw Finn Balor defending the NXT Title against Kevin Owens in a ladder match that shouldn't have gone on last. It's a really fun match and all, but there was no way these guys were going to match what we saw beforehand. I've heard a lot of people say it wasn't very good,

but I think those opinions might change with this match in a vacuum instead of right after the classic beforehand.

These two ran into the problem that so many have with ladder matches: what else can you do in them? There have been so many ladder matches over the years and it's almost impossible to come up with something fresh. Still though, they did what they were supposed to do and the match was a success. It just shouldn't have gone on last, though I understand the mentality behind it.

So yeah, Takeover rocked, because that's all NXT knows how to do. It's such a well build promotion with good to great wrestling, well done stories and an assembly line of fresh talent coming in to restock the shelves when these people are taking up to the main show and wasted because Kevin Dunn and company have to teach them how to be wrestlers because of some grudge with HHH or whatever. Awesome show, watch it again, it's better than Summerslam.

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Monday Night Raw – July 15,

2013: Take My Money For Summerslam Now

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 15, 2013

Location: Barclays Center, Brooklyn, New York

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

It's the night after Money in the Bank and the main stories are Orton and Sandow winning the briefcases. Cena retained his title, meaning that Orton is lurking in the shadows for whomever the champion is over the next year. We also saw Heyman screw Punk after berating Axel for screwing Bryan, with only the latter being a surprise. The road to Summerslam begins tonight so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Brad Maddox opens the show by announcing Ziggler vs. Del Rio in an MITB rematch. He's about to explain why he'll be the greatest GM of all time but Cena interrupts. Cena says Brad has already made history because this is the only time during his administration that he won't be the most hated person in the ring. The jury is still out on Maddox so we should give him a chance. Maddox sucks up to Cena and has been a fan of his since he was a teenager. Therefore, Cena gets to pick his own opponent for Summerslam.

The fans immediately start the YES chants but Cena thinks he could face anyone from Michael Cole to a Bella Twin. Cue Randy Orton who says Cena might not be champion at Summerslam. Orton says he isn't cashing in tonight because he doesn't want to make the same mistake Cena made last year. He isn't going to cash in when Cena is ready though, and Cena will never see it coming.

This brings out Fandango of all people to send the crowd into the dance. Fandango says he's Orton is going to cash the case in against him because the people want to see Fandango vs. John Cena. He does his name but Orton jumps him to start a fight. Fandango....actually sends Orton the floor but

Orton comes back in and lays out the dancer. Maddox makes a match between them right now.

Randy Orton vs. Fandango

This is joined in progress with Orton in control but missing a knee drop. Fandango gets in some shots to the face but Orton sends him to the floor and into the barricade. Orton sneaks up on him with a big clothesline and gets two off the belly to back suplex onto the barricade. Fandango takes over again with a cravate and the Randy Savage chant begins. Randy pounds away in the corner and gets two off a dropkick. Fandango gets a kick to Orton's head to take it to the floor. Randy is sent into the steps and we take a break.

Back with Fandango getting two off something we didn't see. Fandango hooks another cravate but has to counter the backbreaker into a belly to back for two. Orton comes back with a clothesline in the corner and a t-bone suplex for no cover. A superplex puts Fandanago down but Randy hits some clotheslines and the powerslam instead of covering. The Elevated DDT is countered by a kick to the head but Fandango is crotched on the top. Now the Elevated DDT connects and the RK0 is good for the pin at 13:05.

Rating: C+. This wasn't bad but did anyone believe Fandango was going to take out Orton the night after that big of a win? He didn't look bad out there but losing again isn't going to help him at all. Then again Fandango had the nerve to get something over with the crowd so of course he's going to lose every match he's in.

Ziggler FINALLY breaks up with AJ over last night. AJ stares off into the distance.

Here's Mark Henry with something to say. He gave it all he had last night and he came this close to winning the title. Henry has no regrets about what he did but wants to face Cena again at Summerslam. He took Cena to his limits once and he can do it again. Instead of Cena he gets the Shield of all people to surround Henry. Mark fights them off as well as he can but the numbers finally catch up to him. Henry fights them off for a bit but a Reigns spear finally puts him down. They actually hit the TripleBomb to leave Henry laying and impress the crowd.

Maddox is on the phone when Jericho comes in. He knows Jericho wants to be champion and the best way to do that is to impress Cena. Jericho could do that by facing say...Rob Van Dam? Chris likes the idea and Maddox smirks a bit.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title here. Ziggler scores with a quick dropkick and a neckbreaker for two followed by the ten elbow drops. The champion comes back with a kick to the ribs and the reverse superplex. Dolph pounds away but gets caught in a HUGE backdrop to the floor as we take a break. Back with Del Rio still in control but missing the low superkick. Instead Del Rio launches him into the air before stomping his head.

Del Rio tries a charge into the corner but gets caught in a tornado DDT for two. They slug it out but Del Rio BLASTS him with a right hand to take over. Ziggler ducks a charge and hits a big dropkick for two but can't this the Fameasser. A German suplex gets two for Alberto and he fires off some headbutts to daze Ziggy. The cross armbreaker is countered into a swinging neckbreaker but Del Rio comes back with an enziguri for two.

Alberto puts him in the Tree of Woe but misses a charge to send himself shoulder first into the post. Now the Fameasser hits for two out of the corner....but the bell rings. Yep it's AJ with the evil look on her face and the distraction lets Del Rio hit the low superkick for the pin at 13:43.

Rating: C. This was decent but not as good as last night. The WWE formula of "guy gets over so let's have him lose every big match he's in". Why they think this makes people care about him is beyond me but it's what we're going to get no matter what. Ziggler has now lost twice in a row but I'm sure it makes him look stronger or something like that.

Post match AJ goes nuts on Dolph until Langston comes out to run Ziggler over. The Big Ending leaves him laying and AJ kisses his unconscious mouth.

R-Truth comes out for a match but is cut off by the Wyatt Family. The

Family takes Truth down and send him to the floor. Harper looks to Wyatt for approval and Bray gets into the ring. He says there's no such thing as a hero anymore but the people have become addicted to the illusion of what a hero is. The people need someone to tuck you in bed at night and kiss you on the cheek. Everything isn't alright because the man who made everyone is a liar. Your own flesh and blood turned his back on you but Wyatt will never turn his back on you. Maybe he's been the answer all along.

Truth gets back on the apron with a chair but Bray sends the monsters back. He offers Truth a free shot with a big smile on his face and his eyes closed. The monsters sneak up on truth but Wyatt hits a splash in the corner. The beatdown is on and Truth is destroyed before Bray kisses him on the head and hits Sister Abigail (swinging Downward Spiral). Bray says that's not the truth he seeks and that Kane needs to follow the buzzards. The lights cut out and we go to a WWE App poll for who gets to face the Real Americans.

Video on the Performance Center.

Zeb Colter and the Real Americans rant about the American melting pot and tell Cena to pick one of the Real Americans for his match at Summerslam.

The WWE App vote selects the Usos to face Swagger and Cesaro (other options were Tons of Funk and the Prime Time Players).

Usos vs. Real Americans

Jey starts by punching Cesaro into the corner before bringing in Jimmy off a tag. Cesaro hits a quick gutwrench suplex and brings in Jack for a Vader bomb. Jimmy dives into the corner for a tag and everything breaks down. Cesaro's gutwrench is countered into a rollup for the pin by Jey at 2:17.

Damien Sandow vs. Christian

Sandow bails to the floor to start before catching Christian coming back in. The Canadian loads up a tornado DDT but gets shoved out to the floor to give Damien control. Back in and the tornado DDT connects for two on

Sandow and a high cross body gets the same. The Terminus is countered and a middle rope back elbow puts Sandow down. Sandow hits the Russian legsweep but the Wind-Up Elbow is countered into a rollup for the pin for Christian at 3:07.

Rating: D. Again let me get this straight: you have a guy win a major match after losing everything for months and he loses the first match he has as the briefcase winner. Yet this company continues to wonder why no one can get over as either a face or a heel in this company. The match was nothing of note.

Post match Sandow declares himself still the savior of the briefcase but Cody Rhodes runs in to chase him off.

Vickie Guerrero was asking people to sign a petition for her earlier today.

Naomi vs. Brie Bella

Naomi hits a quick high kick to send Brie to the floor but Brie trips her up for two. A hair drag sends Naomi down and Brie cranks on her head a bit. Naomi comes back with some dropkicks that miss so badly the announcers have to acknowledge it. The Rear View sets up a high cross body for the pin on Brie at 4:11.

Heyman bailed from the arena as soon as the show was over last night.

Here's a ticked off CM Punk. He knows Heyman and Lesnar are here tonight and wants them here right now. He only gets Heyman who says he's looking at an empty ring. Heyman says Punk was nothing when he got to WWE but Heyman built Punk into something. The two of them were WWE Champion for 434 days and nearly beat the Undertaker's Wrestlemania streak. Without Heyman though, Punk isn't the best in the world anymore.

All day people have been calling Heyman a Judas but here's the truth: Punk let everyone down by losing to Undertaker and then walking out on the company. Now Punk has found himself and thinks he's better than Paul Heyman. Heyman played him and now history is going to say that he dumped Punk instead of the other way around. Punk wanted things to be personal

so Heyman made it personal last night. Punk has no wife, no children and is estranged from his mother and father.

All Punk has is the WWE Universe and their respect and affirmation. All Punk needs is the WWE Championship but Punk took Heyman's best friend away. So Heyman took the chance at the WWE Championship away from Punk and the WWE Universe. Punk made Heyman swear on his children but it was Heyman's children who made it clear. They asked him why Punk didn't listen to their daddy and Heyman said it's because CM Punk can't beat Brock Lesnar.

Punk says he made the mistake of trusting Heyman and all he's got to show for it are 13 staples in his head. Heyman knows how relentless Punk can be because he won't stop if there's something he wants. Punk wants Heyman and swears on Paul's children that he'll get him and will go through every one of Paul's associates to do it. Heyman has no future because Punk is going to take everything he has until it's just the two of them left.

Heyman knows Punk is telling the truth but writes Punk's future on the ground. He shouts IT'S CLOBBERING TIME and here's Lesnar. Heyman tries to jump Punk but Punk fires off forearms to Brock. Lesnar takes him down with knees to the chest but CM keeps fighting. Punk is LAUNCHED over the announce table but he dives at Brock anyway, only to be rammed into the post. Brock lays him out on the table with an F5 and stands over his prey. Punk can't breathe and is holding his throat. Absolutely amazing segment here and one of the best in a LONG time.

Khali asks Cena for the title shot and Cena answers in whatever language Khali speaks. Khali is pleased.

HHH and Stephanie come in to see Maddox and mess with him about the main event tonight. They tell him he only got the job because he was standing there.

Rob Van Dam vs. Chris Jericho

Feeling out process to start with van Dam firing off forearms to take over. The fans tell him he's still got it but he walks into a dropkick

from Jericho. The ECW chants start up and Van Dam takes Jericho down with a spin kick to set up the monkey flip. Jericho comes back with the enziguri for two and a belly to back suplex puts Van Dam down as we take a break.

Back with Jericho escaping a bodyscissors and trying the Walls. RVD escapes but gets kicked to the floor but catches Jericho in the face with a spin kick for two. Back to the body vice but Jericho counters into a powerbomb to escape. Jericho rolls away to escape Rolling Thunder but hits a moonsault off the apron to take Jericho down as we take another break.

Van Dam runs Jericho over but Jericho comes back with shoulders of his own. A top rope elbow to the head drops Van Dam but he avoids the Lionsault. Now Rolling Thunder connects for two but Jericho gets the same off a DDT. The Walls are countered and RVD superkicks Jericho down. The split legged moonsault misses and Jericho hits the Lionsault for two more. Van Dam kicks Jericho in the face but the Five Star attempt is broken up. A top rope front flip takes Jericho down but a standing rana is caught in the Walls. He makes the ropes and kicks Jericho down again before hitting the Five Star for the pin at 21:30.

Rating: C+. This is firmly in the category of long rather than good. It wasn't a bad match at all but getting over twenty minutes is a big stretch. Thankfully it was a completely clean win which is what Jericho is best at: putting people over. Both guys looked solid and Van Dam can still go, but you could have cut five minutes out of this easily.

The roster is on the stage for Cena's decision. Cena talks about how the fans don't always agree with what Cena does but it's because they're honest with him. A decision this big needs help from the WWE Universe. The fans immediately chant for Bryan but Cena wants to list off some names. The fans aren't impressed with the birthday boy Heath Slater or any member of 3MB.

They're a little more interested in Randy Orton but even less in Great Khali. Del Rio is booed out of the building and Jericho gets some polite applause. RVD of course gets a good reaction but the fans aren't

interested in Fandango or Sheamus. No on Ryback as well so Cena asks if there's anyone he's forgetting. The YES chants begin but Cena says he has his decision. The Daniel Bryan chants cut Cena off but he says he respects the beard. Cena's pick is.....Daniel Bryan, drawing the biggest cheer Cena will EVER get in New York. Cue Bryan and the place goes NUTS. He does the chant in Cena's face to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This was an interesting show as there were definitely parts that dragged, but the stuff that was good was REALLY good. The Wyatt Family was amazing and thankfully the WHAT chants were pretty silent as most fans were interested in what they were watching instead of chanting. Summerslam has me drooling at a rate that I haven't seen since last year's Wrestlemania. Punk vs. Heyman and friends is going to be amazing and Cena vs. Bryan should rock as well. This was a solid show and much more entertaining than last night's PPV.

Results

Randy Orton b. Fandango – RK0

Alberto Del Rio b. Dolph Ziggler – Superkick

Usos b. Real Americans – Rollup to Cesaro

Christian b. Damien Sandow – Rollup

Naomi b. Brie Bella – High Cross Body

Rob Van Dam b. Chris Jericho – Five Star Frog Splash

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