

# NXT – July 8, 2015: Do We Have Proof He's A Human?

## NXT

Date: July 8, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Corey Graves, Rich Brennan

We have a new NXT Champion though we're likely only going to hear about it in voiceovers as this is a taped show from a few weeks back. Finn Balor took the NXT Title from Kevin Owens in Tokyo on 4<sup>th</sup> of July and you know Owens is going to be gunning to get his title back. Other than that though, we have the Vaudevillains vs. Enzo/Cass for the #1 contendership. Let's get to it.

### Sasha Banks/??? vs. Dana Brooke/Emma

The new announcer introduces Dana and then throws in that she's accompanied by her partner Emma. Dana laughs at Sasha for not having a partner so the fans chant Blue Pants. Sasha is ready to fight on her own but here's someone to back her up.

### Sasha Banks/Charlotte vs. Dana Brooke/Emma

Charlotte says she'll be Sasha's partner but Banks owes her one. Banks kicks Dana around to start but Brooke runs when it's off to Charlotte. That means it's off to Emma, who bails to the floor to avoid a knee drop. The heels finally take over but the fans are busy arguing over whether Dana is ratchet or not. Emma bodyscissors Charlotte to slow it down but she fights up for the tag off to Sasha and the champ cleans house. A running knee in the corner and the Bank Statement makes Brooke tap at 4:39.

**Rating:** C. This didn't have time to go anywhere and it dragged the match down a lot. Dana tapping out is a bad sign for her but I don't think anyone really bought her as the top star of the division or anything like that. Sasha vs. Charlotte again is going to be fine and Becky and Bayley

returning will make things even better.

As you might guess, Charlotte's payment will be a title shot next week, which Sasha is just fine with.

Bayley says she can't wrestle at the moment because of a broken hand. She'll be back for the NXT Title, but Emma is in for more than a hug.

Video on Finn Balor's rise to the top of NXT and becoming #1 contender.

We get a clipped version of Balor vs. Owens for the title in Tokyo, but here's the full match in case you haven't read it yet.

### NXT Title: Finn Balor vs. Kevin Owens

We get the Demon entrance and oh yes it's still glorious. For a bonus, the camera changes to an arena shot at the crescendos of the music. To make it feel even more special, we get the full on flower presentation from geisha girls (Owens throws his into the crowd of course) and streamers for both guys. Get this through your head ROH: doing the same thing for every match doesn't make it feel more special. Hideo Itami is shown in the front row and we're ready to start. Balor has more paint than ever with his face, torso and left leg covered.

Balor charges at the bell and loads up the Coup de Grace in the first ten seconds. Owens rolls outside so Balor nails a big dive as the NXT chants start up. He tries to bail again and eats a baseball slide as Balor is all over him. Back in and Owens hammers away to take over for the first time. Owens: "AND THAT'S WHY I'M THE CHAMP!" We hear more of Balor's accomplishments in New Japan as Owens takes some bows.

It's off to Chinlock City before a forearm breaks up Balor's springboard. The slow pace is working for Kevin here and it fits him very well. Finn beats the count back in but takes the backsplash for two. Back in and Owens snapmares him down and runs the ropes...before stopping for a chinlock. Owens: "Are you not impressed? I don't care. I hate this country and all its stupid people!" Balor fights back again with a middle rope forearm for two so Owens does Cena's finishing sequence, complete with an attempted AA.

Balor is afraid of a lawsuit over gimmick infringement (only Kurt Angle can steal that many finishers) and slips out twice in a row. Bloody Sunday is teased (and the fans gasp) but it's a Pele Kick to put Owens down instead. Owens takes a big flip dive and a top rope double stomp to the back, followed by a reverse Bloody Sunday (not called that of course) for a VERY close two. The Coup de Grace misses though and Owens' Cannonball gets two. The package piledriver slam gets the same but Balor hits a quick Sling Blade.

Another Coup de Grace is countered so Balor kicks him in the head and FINALLY connects with the stomp...for two. Dang I thought that was it. Owens can't hit the swinging fisherman's superplex so he settles for a middle rope Regal Roll for two. That looked great. Kevin's Swanton hits knees and the real Bloody Sunday gets an even closer two. They're trading bombs here and it's getting awesome. Owens makes the eternal mistake of slapping a hero in the face and saying the hero can't beat him. Balor dropkicks him into the corner, hits a running corner dropkick and a second Coup de Grace for the title at 19:30.

**Rating:** B+. Was there ever any doubt that this was going to be awesome? Owens is one of the best heels that I've seen in years and he does everything he can do to make you hate him. The fact that he can go as well as he does in the ring makes him even better, which is saying quite a bit as he's that good as a character.

Tatsumi Fujinami congratulates Balor on his win.

Kevin Owens doesn't have anything to say about the loss.

Chad Gable doesn't know why Jason Jordan doesn't want him as his partner other than he's happy with losing. Jordan finally comes up and asks Gable to be his partner next week. Well it's more saying they'll be partners next week but it's as polite as Jordan gets.

Solomon Crowe says he's back to be the resident monster.

Marcus Louis vs. Solomon Crowe

Louis is back with no music but he's still crazy. A chop puts him down

and Crowe puts on a standing Crippler's Crossface with his leg tied into Louis' to crank on the shoulder. That's a new one. Louis crotches him on top for a very aggressive two and puts on a kneeling abdominal stretch. Crowe fights up again and slaps on a Brock Lock, apparently called the Crowebar for the tap out at 3:18.

**Rating:** C-. Well Crowe looked better, but it's still not fitting for him. I'm also never a fan of a crazy guy tapping out as it shows way too much logic and common sense to give up like that. The match wasn't anything special but neither guy has anything going for them so seeing them on TV is a good sign.

The Vaudevillains say they'll be the #1 contenders.

Clip of some guys congratulating Balor on winning, including John Cena. Balor says this couldn't have gone any better.

#### Vaudevillains vs. Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady

English is rocking a MANLY beard. Enzo and Gotch get things going with Simon getting a rollup for two. Off to English for a headlock on the mat but he's back out just a few seconds later. Cass shoves both of them to the floor and calls them S-A-W-F-T as we take a break. Back with Cass throwing Enzo into Aiden for two but Enzo charges into a boot in the corner, giving him one of the best eyes wide open stunned faces I've ever seen.

It's Enzo playing the semi-human in peril (I've yet to see actual proof that he's a person) in a chinlock followed by a legdrop before diving over for the tag to Colin. Everything breaks down and Aiden gets kicked in the face. The Rocket Launcher has to be changed into a cross body though and English rolls through for the pin and the title shot at 10:48.

**Rating:** C+. I liked this more than I thought I would but my goodness they're really not going with Enzo and Cass getting the titles in Brooklyn? Are they just asking for the worst reaction in years? I know the Vaudevillains will be well received, but my goodness this is one of those layup ideas that they're just missing. Granted there's another month before we could get there so all hope isn't lost.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was another shot that set the stage for later more than a good stand alone episode. However, it's setting up Takeover in Brooklyn and there's no way that's not going to be awesome due to the crowd reaction alone. Things will pick up when they can say Balor won the title instead of just having the commentary do it, but Sami will get a great reaction next week in the last show of the taping cycle.

### Results

Sasha Banks/Charlotte b. Dana Brooke/Emma – Bank Statement to Brooke

Solomon Crowe b. Marcus Louis – Crowebare

Vaudevillains b. Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady – English rolled through a high cross body

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# **NXT – June 24, 2015: In Which Mojo Rawley And Sami Zayn Sit On A Couch**

**NXT**

Date: June 24, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

We're getting closer to the big July 4<sup>th</sup> showdown for the title and that means Finn Balor needs to rack up a few wins. Up first we have the second half of the big sitdown interview with Balor, which is likely focusing on his time in New Japan Pro Wrestling. Other than that we might get some fallout from Joe vs. Owens from last week. Let's get to it.

We open with the roster on the stage and HHH talking about the loss of Dusty Rhodes. Dusty was family to everyone on this stage because he thought they were his kids. HHH, barely able to keep his voice together, asks for a moment of silence as the bell rings ten times.

Opening sequence.

Here's Hideo Itami for his first comments since being injured. He acknowledges that he'll be out another 3-4 months due to his shoulder injury but promises to come back and win the NXT Title. This brings out Kevin Owens, who is glad Itami will be in Japan for the July 4 show, but it's cute to hear Itami imply that Owens won't be leaving Japan as NXT Champion. Owens slips up on the word delusional but makes up for it by saying he sounds like Itami trying to speak English.

However, there are two things Kevin wants to make clear. First of all, he didn't hurt Itami because if he did, there's no chance Itami would be standing there. The other reason is because Owens wants an apology for Itami implying that Owens attacked him. Itami calls him a terrible human being, so Owens thinks that if he's going to be accused of hurting Itami, he might as well do it. Kevin comes to the ring but Balor comes out for the save, only to have Rhyno jump Balor and knock him off the stage.

Balor vs. Rhyno later tonight.

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Jason Jordan/Sylvester LeFort

The entrance sounds a bit faster this week but Enzo makes up for it by saying he sees two mushrooms from Mario's world in the ring: they're about to get flattened. Cassady's part didn't sound very smooth but he

got the lines out well enough. I had been wondering what happened to LeFort. Colin puts Sylvester down to start and slams Enzo down on top of him for two, only to have Jordan tag himself in and catch Enzo in a slam. LeFort's cobra clutch doesn't get him very far so it's quickly off to Jordan, who gets rolled up for the pin at 2:32.

After last week's main event, Joe talks about hearing the people chant LET THEM FIGHT. He got the fight he wanted but he didn't get the fight he wanted (not a typo) because Owens is still walking. Joe wants Owens again.

### Dana Brooke vs. Cassie

Brooke has Emma in her corner and Cassie is K.C. Cassidy. A quick rollup gets two on Brooke and a headscissors puts her down again. That's enough for Dana as she throws Cassie down and gets two off a slam. Dana cranks on an arm and leg at the same time while advising Cassie to tap. Cassie comes back with something like a Thesz press and some clotheslines but Dana Whiplashes her off the top for the pin at 3:36.

**Rating:** D+. This wasn't quite a squash as Cassie got to show some spunk, which means she'll probably be pushed as something more serious when she gets some more ring time. Brooke is still definitely a work in progress, but if there's one thing NXT has shown it can do, it's take their girls and improve improve them about ten fold overnight.

Charlotte isn't worried about Dana.

It's time for part two of Balor's sitdown interview, which starts with some clips of Sami Zayn hanging out at his house. Balor likes to put jigsaw puzzles together (amen brother) and still plays with Legos while watching old pay per views. Suddenly I'm digging the heck out of this guy.

NXT head trainer Matt Bloom (actually called that here instead of Jason Albert) talks about meeting Fergal Devitt in Japan about eight years ago. We get some pictures of them hanging out over the years, including Bloom pulling Devitt's pants down as they posed for a picture. Bloom explains the concept of a young boy and we see some stills and videos of Fergal's

time in new Japan. Prince Devitt was someone obsessed with trying to master the Japanese style and he felt more like Prince than Fergal over there.

Then WWE came calling right around the annual Tokyo Dome show and Fergal wasn't sure if he could do it or not. He had to try though because there was nothing left for him to prove in Japan so here he is, with Sami Zayn and Mojo Rawley sitting on his couch in the background. He calls it an incredible journey but it's still continuing. Next week: the NXT days.

Bull Dempsey has been trying to get in better shape without much success. This is shown through a series of Instagram shots of Dempsey falling asleep while trying to train. So he's narcoleptic instead of just fat?

#### Hype Bros vs. Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins

That would of course be Rawley and Zack Ryder. You know what? Why not? It's not like Ryder has ANYTHING better to do. Mojo runs Dawkins over to start and it's off to Ryder for a nice dropkick to Fulton. Back to Rawley for HAMMER TIME, allowing the amateur guys to take over with the old Benjamin jumping over Haas' back onto Mojo's back spot. A backdrop ends Angelo's offense and it's off to Ryder for all his usual stuff. The Broski Boot gets two and everything breaks down. Rawley holds Dawkins up for a middle rope Rough Ryder and the pin at 4:00.

**Rating:** C-. Ryder and Rawley have a weird chemistry together and I've always been a fan of Zack so it's cool to see him do something other than losing to Rusev in 45 seconds. Fulton, Dawkins and Jordan seem like the perfect choice for a stable along with Chad Gable but for some reason the Shoot Nation stable was called off. They're still fine for roles like this though and you can easily rally them together later.

Eva Marie wants a match but Regal needs proof that she has more than charm.

#### Finn Balor vs. Rhyno

Kevin Owens comes out and shoves Byron away from his chair to do commentary. Balor takes it to Rhyno to start and slugs him down in the



corner. Rhino gets sent out to the floor as Owens denies attacking Itami again. A big flip dive puts Rhino down again and gets two back inside. Owens promises to win on July 4, even though he doesn't know what it is. "I'm Canadian so it doesn't mean anything to me. Independence Day? Will Smith? Good movie."

Rhino gets in his first offense with a spinebuster and puts on a bearhug. Owens has completely taken over commentary by ripping on Brennan, because Kevin doesn't believe that Brennan has talked to anyone on the roster. "I've seen them running away from you." Owens now has his arm around Saxton and has pulled Byron's head onto his shoulder. We take a break and come back with Balor fighting out of a second bearhug.

Owens is annoyed at all the questions Brennan is asking him as Balor gets two off a dropkick to the side of the head. That earns him a northern lights suplex but Balor staggers him with a Pele Kick. The Coup de Grace is loaded up but Owens comes down for a distraction, allowing Rhino to hit the belly to belly. The Gore is countered by a kick to the face though and the Sling Blade sets up the Coup de Grace for the pin at 11:40.

**Rating:** C+. This was fine. The idea behind Rhino is that he's intense enough to lose every big match he's in, beat some jobbers, and then come back for another loss to make someone look good. There's awesome value in that and it's something you can never have enough of. Balor vs. Owens is going to be awesome, especially if the demon shows up.

Owens comes in and double teams Balor until Samoa Joe comes in for the save, likely setting up a tag match next week.

**Overall Rating:** C. Not their best show this week but they did a good job of setting up Balor vs. Owens in less than two weeks. Other than that they have enough feuds and stories going on to set up a big non-Takeover show before we get to the REALLY big stuff down the line. Good effort this week, even though it was mainly a placeholder outside of the main story.

Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady b. Jason Jordan/Sylvester LeFort – Rollup to Jordan

Dana Brooke b. Cassie – Whiplash

Hype Bros b. Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins – Middle rope Rough Ryder to Dawkins

Finn Balor b. Rhyno – Coup de Grace

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## **NXT – June 17, 2015: Who Is Fergal Devitt?**

### **NXT**

Date: June 17, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Rich Brennan

It's a big week here in NXT as last week saw Samoa Joe challenging Kevin Owens to a title shot but getting turned down because he hasn't racked up enough wins yet. Fair point said Commissioner William Regal, so it's a non-title match tonight instead. This is probably just filler until we

get to July 4 in Japan but NXT filler is still good stuff. Let's get to it.

As you would expect, this show is dedicated to the American Dream Dusty Rhodes.

We open with the Dusty tribute video, which is still awesome stuff.

Opening sequence.

### Blake/Murphy/Alexa Bliss vs. Carmella/Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady

Enzo's speech this week is about Star Wars but he keeps it short. Carmella wants a piece of Alexa Bliss, and Cass is nice enough to spell out the one word that describes Blake, Murphy and Bliss. There's a new ring announcer who sounds like he has no idea who any of these people are. He has a good, deep voice though. The fans think Blake and Murphy look stupid but switch to BONAFIDE STUD/CERTIFIED G.

Blake and his headlock slow Enzo down to start before a shoulder puts him on the mat. With nothing else working, Enzo opts to dance and hits a very unique cross body where he doesn't actually jump but takes Blake down anyway. Everything breaks down and the Long Island guys (and Carmella) clean house.

Back from a break with Enzo slugging Blake down but getting dropped from behind by Murphy. We hit the headlock on the mat for a good while before Cass gets dropped off the apron. Enzo avoids a charge in the corner though and makes the tag off to Carmella, meaning Alexa has to come in. Carmella dominates in a hurry as everything breaks down again. Cass plants Blake with the side slam, setting up the Rocket Launcher for the pin at 10:22.

**Rating:** C-. This was fine, but there's a major point that caught my eye here. Since turning heel, Alexa has been wearing more revealing attire and Carmella was wearing even less than usual tonight. However, other than Enzo calling Carmella hot during the entrance, their looks or attire are never addressed. The lack of comments from Lawler or the girls ripping on each other for their appearances and just fighting because

they hate each other. I love that about NXT and it continues to show how lame and behind the times the Divas division really is.

Stills of Cena vs. Owens II and the aftermath.

Joe is here to deal with Kevin Owens but more than that he's here because he wants to wrestle in places that are cutting edge. That explains the departure from TNA as I doubt they could even cut paper. As for Owens, his running away last week told Joe that he didn't want to fight. Tonight though, the NXT World Champion (that's a new one) is getting what he deserves.

We get the first part of a look at Finn Balor, mainly due to a sitdown interview. First question: who is Fergal Devitt? Balor talks about growing up in Ireland and how his dad built his way up from a cleaner to a train engineer in a cool story. One day a show called Superstars came on his TV and he was instantly hooked. We get some really cool clips of him in some tiny independents as well as Insane Championship Wrestling (Scotland) and Revolution Pro Wrestling UK.

Becky Lynch cries talking about how Fergal (her word) opened a wrestling school in Ireland and got her into the business as a result. She lied about her age to get into the school and so that Fergal might ask her out, which apparently he did. There are some really cool pictures of the two of them going through school and starting their careers, including stuff like being in the ring or just listening to music together so you could tell they were close.

There are clips from Insane Championship Wrestling with him in the demon paint where the announcers praise him for being amazing. Next up was New Japan but he said he's be back to Ireland. This was about eight minutes long and totally awesome as it made me care about Balor more than I even have before. Part two is next week.

Charlotte vs. K.C. Cassidy

A headscissors takes Cassidy down to start but she comes back with a quick rollup for two. That goes nowhere as Charlotte kicks her in the face and chokes with the boot when asking the referee about the speed of

the count. Charlotte's cravate doesn't work very well as K.C. comes back with a cross body for two, only to have her eat a spear (good selling too). The Figure Eight makes Cassidy tap at 3:50.

**Rating:** D+. Just a squash here to remind us that Charlotte is awesome before she gets back into it with Barrett and Emma for the big feud. That spear looked good and could be a good power finisher for her as Charlotte is tall and strong enough to make it work well. Cassidy has potential but is clearly not that experienced.

Dana Brooke says she's misunderstood because she's a current fitness competitor who isn't scared one of Charlotte. She's replacing Charlotte because she's the total diva and not using her family name to get into NXT. I have no idea what Carmella was looking at that was just a foot or so off camera but it made her look really weird. She makes up for it just a bit by coming back to pat Devon on the head.

#### Kevin Owens vs. Samoa Joe

Non-title. The crowd going silent when Joe's music changes tells you all you need to know about how horrible it really is. Owens bails to the floor to start but Joe goes right after him and gets in the champ's face. Back in and the fans already think this is awesome. Not so fast kids. Owens: "THE CHAMP IS HERE!" That earns him a right hand to the face and a big chop to the head as Joe gets in the first offense.

A back elbow drops Kevin again as the fans are quieter than you would expect. The corner enziguri sets up the Facewash and the big running boot to the face to send Owens outside for a break. Back with Joe missing a charge in the corner, allowing Owens to hit a Cannonball, almost out of desperation. A chinlock keeps Joe in trouble and the second version slows things down even more. Fans: "HEADLOCK CITY!" It's a chinlock but points for creativity.

The hold is finally broken and Joe drops his own backsplash for two. Something like a running enziguri gets the same on the champ but he fights out of the Muscle Buster. They fight to the floor but Owens can't powerbomb the baron of the buffet. The referee gets shoved down and that's a DQ at 14:39.

**Rating:** C-. This was more of an angle than a match but that chinlock in the middle killed everything they had going. I have a feeling they'll move on to Balor vs. Owens for now before Joe gets his big title match, or maybe just a non-title match against Owens instead. Fun power brawl while it lasted, but that chinlock went on way too long. It was much more of a preview than a showdown.

They do the big brawl with security not being able to hold them back post match. Owens shouts that the champ is here to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. It was another of those setting the future shows, which are often some of the best episodes NXT puts out. The Tag Team Title rematch is set, Charlotte looked dominant and Brooke is ready to fight her, there's a reason for Joe vs. Owens II and you top it off with the really awesome Balor video. That's quite an impressive use of 53 minutes as you have four stories set up, which could cover a month of upcoming TV. It's back to efficient for NXT and that's what they do best.

### Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady/Carmella b. Blake/Murphy/Alexa Bliss – Rocket Launcher to Blake

Charlotte b. K.C. Cassidy – Figure Eight

Kevin Owens vs. Samoa Joe went to a double DQ when they both shoved the referee

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# NXT – June 10, 2015: Oh How I've Missed You

## NXT

Date: June 10, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton

The big story tonight is the in ring debut of Samoa Joe, who debuted a few weeks back and has had some intense staredowns with NXT Champion Kevin Owens. It should be interesting to see who Joe's first victim is, because it's fairly clear that he's coming for Owens and the title. Right now though, Finn Balor is the #1 contender and will be facing Owens for the title in Tokyo on July 4. Let's get to it.

The opening video is all about Joe debuting in NXT and setting his sights on the title.

Opening sequence.

### Zack Ryder/Mojo Rawley vs. Mike Rallis/Elias Samson

Ryder is WAY over here and the fans even seem happy to see Rawley. Mojo shoves Rallis down, slams Samson, but then stop, HAMMER TIME. Ryder comes in and takes some shoulders in the ribs, only to raise his knees in the corner to stop a charge. The middle rope dropkick sets up the Broski Boot but Samson offers a distraction to take over.

We hit the chinlock but a GET HYPED chant brings Ryder to his feet for the hot tag to Rawley. Mojo cleans house with some very fast paced offense, including a big running punch and capped off by a middle rope Hart Attack with the Rough Ryder instead of the clothesline for the pin on Samson at 3:55.

**Rating:** C. I've always liked Ryder and this was a good sign for him. A

lot of guys could use a recharge down in NXT and Ryder is probably at the top of that list. He clearly still has a following as the fans were all over him. Rawley was doing exactly what he should have done all along here: cleaned house and never looked back. One of his biggest problems was getting beaten up until the last 45 seconds of the match for a big comeback. Guys like him should hardly ever be on defense and the reaction was a lot better as a result.

Finn Balor promo with his voice talking about how everyone has two sides. Shots of the demon paint keep appearing until "FINN BALOR ARRIVES – July 4 in Tokyo" comes on screen. Oh that's going to be amazing.

Dana Brooke video. She's the Total Diva.

### Emma vs. Blue Pants

SHE'S BAAAAACK! Big Cass' Price Is Right entrance music got one of the loudest reactions in recent weeks. The fans are smart enough to know that it's Blue Pants' birthday. Emma jumps her to start, making her the most hated woman in the promotion. A dropkick gets two and we hit the bow and arrow on Blue Pants. Fans: "BLUE PANTS ROCKS!" Blue Pants gets some rollups for two but it's back to the chinlock. Emma drops an elbow to the back of the head for two more but Blue Pants comes back with some kicks to the head. Blue Pants gets going but Emma trips her down and the Emma Lock gets the submission at 4:40.

**Rating:** D+. Here's the key thing about Blue Pants: she isn't used that often. They could bring her in more often for some loud reactions, but they would eventually die down because Blue Pants is so beloved due to being a special attraction. If this were the main roster, she would be in five segments a night and people would get sick of her in two weeks. This common sense stuff is addictive.

Enzo, Cass and Carmella say that Blake/Murphy/Bliss wouldn't last one week in the Hunger Games and if they grew up where they're from, it would be time to go live with Uncle Phil. Six person tag next week.

### Tyler Breeze vs. Bull Dempsey



Dempsey knees him in the head to start and we're quickly in a chinlock. Fans: "BULL IS GORGEOUS/NO HE'S NOT!" Back up and the standing splash sets up the top rope headbutt but Breeze rolls away before the jump. Breeze gets him in a chance around the ring and Bull keeps getting winded. Fans: "CARDIO! CARDIO!" Breeze laps Bull, throws him inside and gives him a Beauty Shot for the pin at 2:49. Tyler is basically a face now due to all of his hard work and string of good matches.

We look back at Becky Lynch's standing ovation after losing to Sasha Banks. Brennan's nickname for her: The Lass Kicker. As much as I hate myself for this, I kind of dig that name.

### Becky Lynch vs. Jesse McKay

Becky has a very high energy entrance now, complete with smoke along the entrance. The fans are responding to it and it's easy to see why. McKay used to wrestle in Shimmer under the same name. Jesse gets in a kick to the ribs to start, followed by another to the face. An armbar has Becky in some trouble but she comes back with a hammerlock suplex and some legdrops. "BETTER THAN HOGAN!" Let's not get crazy here. Something like a torture rack Samoan drop sets up the armbar (Rich: "The Disgusted Armbar!" Graves: "The WHAT?") for the submission at 4:16.

**Rating:** D+. I really wasn't feeling this one as Jesse got in way too much offense in what should have been a Becky showcase match. McKay was good enough in there though and could be something interesting if she's allowed to develop like the rest of the girls down here have done. This was too much like an old Mojo Rawley match though: awesome entrance, next to no offense until the very end.

Regal announces that Owens will be on commentary for Joe's match but Bull Dempsey comes in eating a bag of Doritos. He blames his loss on a lack of sleep. Regal gets serious and tells Dempsey to get his act together. The boss leaves so Dempsey pulls an open Snickers out of his singlet. Well they had to do something new with Dempsey so this works well enough.

Jason Jordan says he has another partner when Chad Gable comes in, saying it should be him. "I'm ready, willing and Gable. See what I did there?" Jason says no but Gable adds his name to Jordan's locker.

## Baron Corbin vs. Angelo Dawkins

Corbin throws him around to start and walks him around the ring before a slam. A bulldog attempt is countered by a huge clothesline and End of Days gives Baron the pin at 2:29.

## Samoa Joe vs. Scott Dawson

Owens is on commentary and Joe's music still sucks. He does however look a bit more toned. Fans: "PLEASE DON'T DIE!" How nice of them to be worried about Joe's safety. They trade armbars to start until Joe takes it up a notch with a back elbow to the face. Owens: "Wow a back elbow! I've got a mean back elbow." The release Rock Bottom out of the corner sets up the Muscle Buster for the pin on Dawson at 3:45.

**Rating:** C. Total squash here and it did exactly what it was supposed to do. Owens is great on commentary as the guy trying to cut into Joe's hype and this was a very fun use of about five minutes. Joe's physique looked about as good as you can fairly expect. The guy is never going to look like John Cena and it's unfair to expect him to, but he looked fine here.

During the replays, Kevin offers to get Brennan a Joe shirt from the merchandise table. Owens goes to leave but Joe calls him to the ring. Kevin won't get in because he's a good man who won't drop Joe after his first match. Joe is a rookie here in NXT and one win isn't enough for an NXT Title match. Cue Regal who agrees with Owens. Joe hasn't earned a title shot, but he's earned the right to a non-title fight against Owens next week.

**Overall Rating:** B-. Matches made for the future, six matches, some amusing promos, two in ring debuts and a new character for Dempsey. How in the world can they get all that inside an hour and have almost no filler? This was the efficient NXT that flies by every week because it's very well put together. Couple that with an energetic crowd and you have one heck of a fun show.

## Results

Zack Ryder/Mojo Rawley b. Elias Samson/Mike Rallis – Middle rope Rough

Ryder to Samson

Emma b. Blue Pants – Emma Lock

Tyler Breeze b. Bull Dempsey – Beauty Shot

Becky Lynch b. Jesse McKay – Disgoosted Armbar

Baron Corbin b. Angelo Dawkins – End of Days

Samoa Joe b. Scott Dawson – Muscle Buster

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# **NXT Takeover: Unstoppable: Joe Is Gonna De-But! Joe Is Gonna De-But!**

**NXT Takeover: Unstoppable**

Date: May 20, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's another live two hour special with a rare rematch for the main

event. Tonight it's Zayn vs. Owens II as Sami tries to get the NXT Title back from the man who beat him by referee stoppage back at Takeover: Rival. These shows are always worth checking out and there's no reason to think this won't be the same so let's get to it.

The opening video features a bunch of fans talking about why they love NXT and thanking the promotion for giving them wrestling back. It transitions into a regular opening video with clips of every match and soundbytes from the wrestlers.

Four models, wearing fur and talking pictures of themselves, walk the aisle like a runway and I think you know where this is going.

### Tyler Breeze vs. Finn Balor

This was supposed to be a triple threat but we get a clip of Hideo Itami being attacked in the parking lot as he arrived. Kevin Owens is there and says that's a shame. THANK YOU! This is one of those things you never get anymore in wrestling and it drives me crazy. Itami is injured, so why not give Owens (or anyone) credit for it instead of just saying "yeah he's hurt. Too bad." It's so nice to see. It's also nice to see the full on Irish demon entrance for Balor again, complete with dreadlocks, paint, the dragon style cape and spikes down his back. He even has a huge yellow eye on his back.

Feeling out process to start with Breeze looking disturbed (rightfully so) by Balor's appearance. Tyler finally nails a big kick to put Balor on the floor before choking with the boot in the corner. We hit the chinlock on Balor and Tyler seems to have his own group of fans tonight. Balor rolls up and tries a sunset flip but rolls through into a basement dropkick. Another dropkick to the side of the head sends Breeze outside and Balor hits a running double stomp to the back from the apron.

Back in and Balor kicks him in the head for two more. The Sling Blade gets the same but Breeze stops a charge with a Supermodel Kick for a very close two. Tyler unhooks a buckle pad but misses the Beauty Shot. Balor misses a double stomp and gets rolled up for two before being sent into the exposed buckle, setting up a Beauty Shot for two.

Balor rolls outside and walks a bit (Fans to the referee: "YOU'RE NOT COUNTING!") before surprising Breeze with a running forearm. Finn goes up to the bottom of the Titantron (Fans: "PLEASE DON'T DIE!") for a big dive to take Breeze down again. Back in and the Coup de Grace makes Balor #1 contender at 11:05.

**Rating:** B. Great choice for an opener here and Breeze continues his hot streak. Balor was just too much for him here though and that's the right thought process. It's hard to go with Breeze, who has gone from a comedy character to a serious wrestler, over someone who is one of the best packages in all of NXT. Balor vs. Zayn or Owens should rock the house too.

Owens watches from the back.

Someone from Game of Thrones and Stephanie McMahon are in the front row.

Clips of the northeast tour.

#### Dana Brooke/Emma vs. Bayley/Charlotte

That place is going to erupt when Bayley finally wins the title. Bayley catapults Dana into a clothesline from Charlotte to start and chases Emma to the floor. Emma hides behind her partner on the floor but eats a dropkick from around the corner. Back in and Emma gets in a blind shot to take over on Bayley, setting up a neck crank. The Emma Sandwich gets two and Emma mocks the Bayley high five. That earns her a suplex and it's off to Charlotte who comes in with a double DDT. Emma's cross body is countered into the Figure Eight but Dana makes a save, only to walk into the Belly to Bayley. Natural Selection ends Emma at 6:38.

**Rating:** C+. This was fine but a bit short. It's a good move to not have Brooke take the fall as they're probably setting her up for something bigger down the line. Bayley not getting the pin keeps Bayley vs. Emma ready for later on and hopefully then on to the title pursuit again. Nice little match here but the time hurt it.

We look at Sami injuring his shoulder on Raw a few weeks back. I'm still not sure how legit that injury is and I love that I can't tell.

Some NXT rookies are here, headlined by the still yet to be named Uhaa Nation.

### Baron Corbin vs. Rhyno

Just a power brawl here. Rhyno looks almost the same as he did back in ECW. Baron gets sidestepped and clotheslined to the floor to start and Corbin is in early trouble. Back in and Corbin knocks him off the top and out to the floor as the fans think Cor-Bin Sucks. Rhyno tries to fight back but gets thrown into the corner and stomped down until the referee pulls him off. We hit the chinlock and the fans aren't sure who they like more. Rhyno fights up and wins a slugout but Baron headbutts out of a belly to belly. Instead it's a spinebuster for two on Corbin but he blocks a Gore with a clothesline, setting up End of Days for the pin at 7:13.

**Rating:** C. Take two guys, let them beat each other up for seven minutes, soak in the cheers. There isn't much more to this one than that as Rhyno was brought in exactly for this purpose: make other people look good and do the job at the end, because he's an established veteran who is going to bounce back from whatever losses he has. Good power match.

We look at Owens beating up Cena on Raw.

Owens is asked about his busy week, which he breaks down in detail. The NXT Title is a real prize, unlike the US Title. He has a bit of veteran advice for Sami: don't show up tonight, because it's the last time anyone will ever see (insert You Can't See Me) him.

### Tag Team Titles: Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Blake/Murphy

Enzo and Cass are challenging with Carmella in their corner, who may or may not have turned on them. Enzo says Team Cottonelle is taking an L tonight because there's a bounty on their head. In a nice touch, Cass spells out the word and we cut to a SAWFT sign in the crowd with the camera panning over each letter in time.

Enzo takes Blake (with his hair in ponytails) down to start and it's off to Big Cass, sending the champs hiding in the corner. Murphy's chop has

no effect on Cass so he throws Murphy hard into the corner for two. Enzo adds a high cross body for the same but the champs cheat a bit to take over, setting up Murphy for a backbreaker. Enzo gets stomped down in the corner and caught in a powerbomb into a Codebreaker for two more.

Back to Murphy for a superplex but Amore fights him off and hits a tornado DDT to set up the double tag. Cass cleans house and gets two off the Empire Elbow before tagging a very banged up Enzo for the Rocket Launcher. Cue Alexa Bliss to jump Carmella, drawing Cass out before he can throw his partner. Bliss crotches Enzo to give Blake the pin to retain at 8:48.

**Rating:** C. Nice swerve here as Bliss going after Carmella was teased a bit last week but it wasn't enough to make you think it was going to happen. People were waiting on Carmella to turn and then you get a nice surprise instead. Enzo and Cass probably aren't taking the titles anytime soon and it might be time to send them to the main roster.

Eva Marie is here and is met with indifference.

We look back at Sasha Banks vs. Becky Lynch. Banks took Lynch under her wing and used her to retain the title. Becky shook her off and has become #1 contender, saying it's her time to prove that her career has all been worth it by becoming Women's Champion.

#### Women's Title: Becky Lynch vs. Sasha Banks

Becky is challenging and sporting a new look with orange hair, a black coat, goggles and shorts. The ring gear is similar to Lita's look when she returned from her broken neck. Becky cranks on the arm to start and trips Sasha down into a rollup for two. We hit a pinfall reversal sequence for some near falls each until Sasha bails from an armbar attempt. Sasha crawls away from a stomp on the apron and twists Becky's arm into a faceplant on the apron. Fans: "LIKE A BOSS! LIKE A BOSS!"

Now it's Sasha going for the arm and posing on the apron to mock Lynch's entrance. We hit the chinlock from the champ before she switches to a double arm choke with her foot in Becky's back. Sasha's double stomp in the corner lands on the arm for two and Banks steps on the arm, bending

it all the way back to the mat with her boot on the wrist. Off to a short arm scissors for a bit before Becky rolls over and does her Backlund/Bulldog lift into a slam to break the hold.

Becky makes the one armed comeback and gets two off a missile dropkick but Banks goes back to the arm for two. Sasha goes for the arm again but they both wind up on the floor. It's Becky going after the arm this time before throwing it back inside for a suplex onto the arm. An armbar with the feet has Banks in trouble and another suplex gets two. Fans: "SUPLEX CITY!"

Sasha flips out of a pumphandle suplex but gets pulled down into the seated armbar, sending her crawling to the ropes for the break. Becky gets kicked out to the floor again for a suicide dive but Lynch catches her (mostly) on the fly and drives the champ into the steps. Back in and Becky gets knocked off the top, setting up the Bank Statement (with an additional arm trap) for the tap out at 15:30.

**Rating:** A-. I know I say this every time, but I can't remember the last time I was this into a women's match or most matches for that matter. These two were beating the tar out of each other with the arm work going back and forth making for a great story throughout. These girls somehow get better and better every single time and they're stealing all of the Takeovers. Great match.

Becky gets a standing ovation.

We recap Owens vs. Zayn. They were friends for years but Owens attacked Zayn after Sami won the title at Takeover: R-Evolution. Owens said he wanted to provide a better life for his family but has been using that as an excuse to be an evil jerk. He beat Zayn for the title last time but now Sami is coming in with a bad shoulder.

NXT Title: Sami Zayn vs. Kevin Owens

Sami is challenging. Owens comes out wearing a John Cena The Champ Is Here shirt. After the Big Match Intros, Owens bails to the floor as is his custom. Sami gets tired of waiting and goes after him by sending Owens into the steps and hammering away. He throws Owens into the



barricade before they spill into the crowd. Owens tries a powerbomb on the concrete but Sami grabs a barricade to escape.

Sami knocks him onto the concrete to take over again and they head inside with the Blue Thunder Bomb connecting for two. The half nelson/chicken wing suplex gets the same and Sami loads up a tornado DDT, only to have Owens block it with a raised knee to the back for a unique counter. The Cannonball misses though and the t-bone into the corner rocks Owens again. He's able to roll away from the Helluva Kick though and it's back to the floor. Another exploder suplex staggers Owens but he catches a running boot and powerbombs Sami onto the apron.

Cue the referees to check on Sami but Owens keeps hammering away. Owens stomps away as the fans want to let them fight. Kevin throws Sami against the steps and punches him down again as the doctor keeps trying to check on him. They actually get back in the ring and I'm not sure if this match is still going.

GM William Regal comes out and calls Owens off, eventually ripping at Owens' face, earning Regal a headbutt. Kevin gets the title and a chair (the same weapon that started their feud in ROH) but we've got music. Cue SAMOA JOE (with that name on his shirt and called that name by Brennan) and the fans are stunned. Joe gets right in Owens' face and the champ runs. We'll call the match a no contest at about 12:00.

**Rating:** B+. Heck of a fight while it lasted but that's twice in a row now that Owens has knocked Zayn out to beat him. It's one heck of a rub for Owens and the beauty of it is that Zayn is going to be right back on top through pure charisma. Joe vs. Owens is going to be a war and that's quite the way to have him debut, even if it was spoiled.

Owens comes back out but says he's done his job to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B+. Somehow, this is a downgrade over their previous shows. Really fun show this time with the girls making up for the angle disguised as a main event. Joe debuting is a great moment as he's such a huge name on the indy scene that the NXT fans are going to accept him with open arms. This was another great Takeover and the future continues to shine so brightly for this company's future.

## Results

Finn Balor b. Tyler Breeze – Coup de Grace

Charlotte/Bayley b. Dana Brooke/Emma – Natural Selection to Emma

Baron Corbin b. Rhyno – End of Days

Blake/Murphy b. Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady – Blake pinned Amore after Bliss crotched him on the top rope

Sasha Banks b. Becky Lynch – Bank Statement

Kevin Owens vs. Sami Zayn went to a no contest

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# **NXT – April 29, 2015: That Old Feeling**

## **NXT**

Date: April 29, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton

We're at the start of the new taping cycle this week, meaning it's time to get ready for the build to the next Takeover special. Sami Zayn made his big return last week to go after NXT Champion Kevin Owens, which almost has to be the next big main event. Other than that, most of the card is pretty clear at this point. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of last week's show with Kevin Owens beating Alex Riley again, only to have Sami Zayn return and start a pull apart brawl with Owens.

Here's Kevin Owens for a chat to get things going. He talks about having everything in hand last week and giving Alex Riley what he deserved, but then Sami Zayn had to play hero again. Owens wants Sami out here right now but gets Commissioner William Regal again. The fans start chanting for one more match but Regal says Owens won't be using this place for his own agendas.

That's not good enough for Owens who still wants Sami right now. Cue Zayn to fire the fans up even more but Regal stops him on the steps and says this isn't happening. Regal looks at both of them and says this is the easiest thing he's had to do in weeks. Obviously these two want to fight each other, so let's do it on May 20 at Takeover. Owens chuckles but says it's a non-title match because Zayn hasn't earned a shot in the last month. Sami thinks Owens needs this match. It has nothing to do with last week, but over the last twelve years, Owens hasn't done a thing without having Sami's name right next to it.

Even now as NXT Champion, the fans are only talking about what Owens did to him. You could say that Kevin Owens has been living in Sami Zayn's shadow. That one gets to Owens and the fans tells him he got told. Sami fights for a prize, and Owens is no prize. That's enough for Kevin to put the title on the line and the fans strike up their OLEs. Notice how they got to this point in a totally logical way without using the phrase "contractually obligated rematch" and in less than ten minutes on screen. It can be done and all it takes is a single promo.

Enzo, Cass and Carmella are jabbering about the jewelry Blake and Murphy gave her but she says she can handle herself. The guys leave and Blake

and Murphy come up and insult Enzo and Cass, which isn't cool with Carmella. They step back so Alexa Bliss comes up, only to get shoved away. Blake and Murphy come up to Bliss but she doesn't seem interested in hearing from them. This was kind of an odd segment and I'm not entirely sure what they were shooting for.

Sami signs his contract when Alex Riley comes up and asks for one more match with Owens. Regal snaps about giving Riley so many opportunities but Sami says don't let Owens get to you. Riley doesn't want to hear that from Sami so Zayn offers to fight Alex for a warmup.

### Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Blake/Murphy

Non-title. Before the match, Enzo calls the champs Frosted Flake Wesley Blake and the Sugar Cube Dude. You know there's just one word to describe them. Blake and Enzo get things going but the champs quickly get Amore into the corner for some stomping. A clothesline gets two for Blake as the fans chant LET'S GO Z0.

Enzo breaks free with a jawbreaker and it's a double tag to bring in Murphy and Cass. The big man cleans house and hits a splash in the corner before Enzo misses a high cross body. That's so appropriate for him for some reason. Carmella distracts Blake and it's a big boot to the face, followed by a Rocket Launcher for the pin on Blake at 3:18.

**Rating:** D+. I'm not wild on having champions lose as you could pretty much do the same match with any combination here. The interesting part here is Carmella, who I'm hoping joins the champs but gets dumped by them too, leaving her all alone since no one likes her in the first place.

Becky Lynch talks about traveling the world to become the best in the world. She's here to become the best in the NXT women's division and won't just be another face in the crowd.

Bayley can't find her gear and is freaking out. Emma is show with Bayley's headbands and shirt.

Video on Baron Corbin, talking about wanting to crush the dreams of everyone in NXT. Rules don't apply to him and that's not his problem.

This is yet another example of character development and telling us more about a character in twenty seconds than we've known about him in four months.

### Bayley vs. Dana Brooke

Bayley looks a bit off without her stuff but of course she has a huge smile on her face. Bayley grabs a headlock to start but Dana throws her down and flexes. The fans want Blue Pants but get Bayley taking Dana to the mat and rolling around on her back. Dana goes nuts and slams Bayley's head into the mat a few times before doing her headstand foot choke. Wasteland gets two for Dana and we hit a half crab with a knee in Bayley's back. Bayley gets up and gets all aggressive with elbows in the corner but cue Emma in a Bayley shirt to Bayley's music and full entrance, allowing Dana to hit a Whiplash for the pin at 4:16.

**Rating:** D+. So yeah, Dana isn't quite there yet but this was a match designed to advance Emma vs. Bayley instead of Dana's push. Right now Dana just needs ring time and she's got the core base figured out. Emma stealing Bayley's stuff, which is almost Bayley's identity, is an interesting idea and could work out well for a short feud. If nothing else it means I get to hear more of Bayley's infectious theme song.

Regal announces a triple threat for Takeover for the #1 contendership between Finn Balor, Tyler Breeze and Hideo Itami.

### Hideo Itami vs. Adam Rose

Itami looks so insulted by the Rosebuds and Adam's entrance. This is billed as fallout from the Andre battle royal. Rose rolls around to start and eats a chop, followed by a running kick to the face for two. A quick trip lets Rose have a breather and he drops a fist for two. Rose's chinlock doesn't go anywhere so Hideo hits his array of kicks, capped off by the Shotgun Kick for the pin at 2:52. Just a step above a squash.

### Becky Lynch vs. Sarah Dawson

Dawson is a pretty generic looking girl but she gets half of a dueling chant. A quick rollup gets two for Sarah but Becky takes her into the

corner for a good stomping. Lynch drives her down into a Fujiwara armbar before sitting up to crank even harder, drawing the submission at 2:12.

Rhyno has heard what Baron Corbin is all about but Rhyno isn't the past. Methinks we have our power match for Takeover.

### Alex Riley vs. Sami Zayn

Owens is in on commentary. Feeling out process to start as Owens asks if Riley being let out of a cage means he can't take a shower. Riley cranks on an armbar and gets two off a dropkick. We're in a chinlock less than three minutes in until Sami fights up, only to get caught in a TKO for two. Riley misses a charge and falls to the floor, setting up the big flip dive. That's enough for Owens as he gets up and decks Sami for the DQ at 4:40.

**Rating:** C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere but they were trying to set up a match instead of doing anything interesting here. Owens going nuts and attacking everyone in sight is a good idea as it's in his nature to be insane. Riley still looks decent in the ring but it might have gotten ugly had he tried to hang in there with Sami.

Kevin powerbombs Riley on the apron and smiles to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Yes, I'm aware that's higher than all of the matches and you should be aware by now that there's a lot more to a wrestling show than just the wrestling. Owens vs. Sami is going to blow the roof off the place and the triple threat and Women's Title matches should both be great. It's not a great show, but the energy is back after going missing for the last month or so. That's what NXT thrives on and it's still working here.

### Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Blake/Murphy – Rocket Launcher to Blake

Dana Brooke b. Bayley – Whiplash

Hideo Itami b. Adam Rose – Shotgun Kick

Becky Lynch b. Sarah Dawson – Armbar

Sami Zayn b. Alex Riley via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

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# NXT – April 15, 2015: Can I Marry This Show?

## NXT

Date: April 15, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

NXT is back home tonight after last week's show took us to Axxess weekend. Things are starting to get back to normal around here and there are some interesting stories at the moment. Kevin Owens needs a new opponent for the NXT Title, Blake and Murphy are on a collision course with Enzo and Cass, Dana Brooke debuts tonight and we have Sami Zayn vs. Rhyno. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

## CJ Parker vs. Solomon Crowe

I'm pretty sure this is Parker's last appearance. The fans are behind Crowe as Parker hammers on him in the corner. I love that Crowe has said

he wants to be NXT Champion. Even if that's not a realistic option (at least not yet), it's what a wrestler in NXT should want to be. Crowe takes Parker down in the corner and threatens a charge, sending Parker out to the floor. He settles for a suicide dive and Parker is in pain on the ramp.

Back in and Crowe charges into a pair of boots in the corner to put him down for the first time. A backsplash gets two for CJ and we hit the chinlock, completely with a few LET'S GO CJ chants. Crowe fights up with some right hands but gets turned inside out by a clothesline. A side kick gets a near fall on Solomon but another backsplash hits feet. Crowe goes up for a splash onto the leg, setting up an old Brock Lock (bending Parker's knee around his neck) for the submission at 5:09.

**Rating:** C-. I'm not sold on Crowe yet but I like the idea of him using a submission instead of a pin. He's built a bit like Taz and it's kind of hard to buy him throwing punches and coming off the top as a result. This worked well enough though as he wrestled a scrappy style and found an opening to win. I'd like to see more development from him though as there's something in that hacker character. If this is Parker's last appearance, I'm going to miss him. You need jobbers like him who are over with the fans no matter how many times he loses.

Post match, Crowe says the show is just beginning.

#### Baron Corbin vs. Steve Cutler

I had been wondering what happened to Corbin. He was one of the hottest things on the show and then he was jobbing in a highlight package. Cutler eats an early clothesline but gets his days ended at 25 seconds.

Sami Zayn isn't surprised that he still has a target on his back. Kevin Owens used him to get to the top but Rhino isn't going to do the same.

#### Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins

Carmella is back and still loathed by the fans. Enzo says he has a spectacular vernacular and the Michael Jordan of Jargon. Cass says they are who they say they are and they aren't gonna fake it. Blake and Murphy



have something they want so they're just gonna take it. Enzo grabs a headlock on Fulton to start and takes him down for a walk over his back. Fulton gets hold of Enzo's wrist though and hooks a fireman's carry takeover. That's fine with Enzo who brings in Big Cass for a beating.

It's quickly back to Enzo but Fulton crotches him on top. Cue Blake and Murphy with flowers for Carmella, who seems impressed despite the NO chants from the fans. Back inside, Fulton goes old school with an abdominal stretch to Enzo. He's too close to the ropes though and Amore escapes, followed by a Downward Spiral Stunner to get a breather. The hot tag brings in Cass to clean house with the East River Crossing, setting up a Rocket Launcher to pin Dawkins at 3:48.

**Rating:** C. This is one of the things that I love about NXT: they take a really basic idea for a feud like this one but execute it well enough with characters that the crowd cares about that it's easy to get into. There's nothing revolutionary here but the fans love Cass and Enzo so they're easy underdog challengers. Carmella turning heel seems to be the next step, but maybe the champs are just using her and both teams dump her?

Cass and Enzo aren't happy with Carmella taking the flowers.

Alex Riley says he isn't going away that easily. Not after all those years of fighting for every inch, because Owens has painted a bullseye on his back for the rest of his career. He has nowhere else to go, so he'll be waiting for Owens in the ring next week.

### Blue Pants vs. Dana Brooke

Blue Pants has a recorded version of Cass' da-da-duh da-da entrance and is introduced from the clearance aisle. The fans still love her too and it's one of those things that can only work here in NXT. Brooke is a former bodybuilder with a decent rock song for her entrance. She shoves Blue Pants down and hammers in some slow right hands.

The fans don't seem to like Dana, but it might have something to do with her being billed as the Total Diva. Graves sounds like he has a big crush on her for a bit of flavor. Brooke sends Blue Pants into the corner and

stands on her head to choke Pants with her boot. Blue Pants comes back with some jobber offense but walks into a forearm, setting up a Whiplash for the pin at 2:04. Total squash.

Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch vs. Bayley in a #1 contenders match next week.

### Sami Zayn vs. Rhino

Sami dodges a bit to start but gets caught with a right hand to the face. A headlock works a bit better for Zayn until Rhino shoves him away and shoulders him out to the floor. The fans are split about 60/40 in Sami's favor but the Rhino cheers are certainly there. Back in and Sami grabs a headscissors to send Rhino outside for a second. It just seems to make Rhino angrier though so he pounds Sami into the corner and chokes with the boot.

A stiff SHUT UP to the fans get the cheers more in Sami's favor (at least they're obedient) and Rhino chokes on the ropes. Sami comes back with forearms and a dropkick but Rhino takes his head off with a clothesline. Back from a break with Sami fighting out of a chinlock and bobbing and weaving to stay in a slugout. That's fine until Rhino plants him with a spinebuster for two.

Sami can barely get to his feet as Rhino hits him with a running shoulder in the corner. Fans: "BETTER THAN ROMAN!/NO IT'S NOT!" With the wrestling not working, Sami gets up and starts firing off right hands before the Blue Thunder Bomb gets a close two. Rhino catches the high cross body and muscles Sami up into a TKO for a near fall of his own.

Barely on his feet, Sami slaps Rhino in the face, earning him a bunch of right hands to the head. Rhino goes up for some reason and gets punched in the jaw, knocking him down to the floor. There's the big flip dive from Sami but Rhino throws him down with a belly to belly inside. The Gore misses though and the Helluva Kick gives Sami the come from behind win at 15:16.

**Rating:** B. They had the right idea here by having Sami get a warmup for Owens by facing someone who wrestles a very similar style and with a similar body type. Sami is back to form here and the fans are going to be

ready for his rematch. That being said, hats off to Rhyno here, who hasn't been around the big leagues in a while but he put on a solid performance here. Getting veterans here who can put over people like Zayn while still looking good in the ring is invaluable for a place like NXT, or any wrestling organization actually.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was back to form for NXT as they have a solid show with a good main event and story advancement coupled with some quick matches to help fill things out. The key to this show is that it doesn't do a lot of stupid things that drag the product down. They let the wrestling do the talking and the stories tell themselves naturally. In other words, they don't shove things down your throat and beat you over the head with them. Those key differences are why NXT work so well and I hope they don't change anytime soon.

### Results

Solomon Crowe b. CJ Parker – Brock Lock

Baron Corbin b. Steve Cutler – End of Days

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady b. Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins – Rocket Launcher to Dawkins

Dana Brooke b. Blue Pants – Whiplash

Sami Zayn b. Rhyno – Helluva Kick

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# NXT – March 25, 2015: They're Nothing If Not Perceptive

## NXT

Date: March 25, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

We're back home in Florida tonight with the main event being Kevin Owens defending the NXT Title against Finn Balor. This is the lower level main event that still has the potential to tear the house down if they're given enough time, which NXT is usually really good about doing. In addition to that, we have Sasha Banks defending the Women's Title against Alexa Bliss. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's road trip to Columbus for the first episode out of Florida.

Opening sequence.

### Women's Title: Sasha Banks vs. Alexa Bliss

Sasha is defending after losing a non-title match via countout last week. Bliss grabs a quick rollup for two and a crucifix gets the same. More rollups get more near falls and Sasha is having trouble keeping up with Sasha early on. Bliss tries to jump over her in the corner but gets kicked in the ribs to finally slow things down. A running slap to a seated Bliss gets two and the double knees to the ribs in the corner get the same. Sasha shouts that Bliss isn't in her league but Bliss escapes the straitjacket choke into a small package for two.

The champ gets thrown out to the floor for a big crash. Back in and Bliss lands a slap of her own followed by some forearms before the Glitz Flip (moonsault into two knees to the chest) gets two more. The fans are WAY

behind Bliss now which really does show both how good she is as a plucky face and how awesome Sasha is as a heel. Bliss takes time going up and gets slammed down, setting up the Bank Statement for the submission at 5:38.

**Rating:** C+. I seem to be the last person to notice it, but Sasha has gotten AWESOME in the last few months and is looking like the next big star of the Women's Division. I believe Sara Del Ray is training the girls down there and it might be time to bring her up to train the Divas, because I don't remember the last time these girls had a bad match. That's unthinkable for the main roster Divas.

Kevin Owens says Finn Balor made his mark by dressing up like a demon. Owens made his mark by debuting and becoming NXT Champion in two months. Bring the demon tonight because it won't matter. No one is taking this title from him and his family.

Video on Owens' short time in NXT and his quick rise to the top.

Emma comes up to Bayley in the back and says she told Bayley so. Bayley has been being too nice with the hugs and then she went out and lost to Becky Lynch. She needs to find her inner aggression because the NXT Universe will lie to her. Bayley doesn't but it and stands up to Emma, so the Aussie slaps her HARD in the face. Emma as the disenchanting main roster failure is an interesting new character and a logical progression for her.

Tyler Breeze doesn't like being asked what his next move is because it's a stupid question. After beating "Hideous" Itami last week, he wants to get the NXT Title and make it gorgeous. Itami comes up and says he beat Breeze too, so he wants 2/3 falls next week.

Wrestlemania card rundown.

Finn Balor video, showing him taking NXT by storm.

We look at Alex Riley getting beaten up by Owens last week.

Enzo, Cass and Carmella are in the back when Murphy and Blake come up to apologize to her. They bring her jewelry but the guys aren't impressed.

Carmella wants to know why they never get her jewelry.

### NXT Title: Finn Balor vs. Kevin Owens

Owens is defending and Balor isn't in the demon paint. We're ready to go after some Big Match Intros and they have well over twenty minutes for the match not counting commercials. Kevin bails to the floor to start before getting back into the corner. It's a trap though as Balor shoves him back but eats a hard shot to the face. A headlock slows Balor down a bit and Kevin wants to know where the demon is now. He's a Dale Torborg fan? Finn gets up and scores with a nice dropkick as we take a break.

Back with Balor holding an armbar before a basement dropkick gets two. Owens drives him into the corner but uses the weakened arm to drive a shoulder into the ribs, only to further damage it. A Stunner over the top rope puts Balor down and Owens puts his boot on Finn's jaw. We hit the chinlock as this is clearly going like a long match instead of just running through the motions. Back up and Owens levels him with an elbow to the face but is good enough to hold the arm after, making it easier for Balor to kick out. Off to another chinlock as we take a second break.

Back with Owens driving his boot into Balor's ribs before putting on another chinlock with his knee in the back. This one doesn't last as long as Owens throws him to the floor and has an evil look on his face. The powerbomb onto the apron is countered with a backdrop and they head back inside with Owens catching him in something resembling White Noise for two. The backsplash gets the same and we hit the chinlock again. That's getting a bit repetitive which isn't something you often see in NXT.

Owens asks if Balor wants to stand back up and whips him hard into the buckle. A nice overhead belly to belly (with an even better face from Balor) gets two and we're back to the chinlock, earning a big ovation from the crowd. They're nothing if not perceptive. Back from another break with Finn making his comeback with forearms and a backdrop to put the champ on the floor. He follows Kevin out with a big flip dive and the top rope double stomp to the back for two in the ring.

The Pele drops Kevin again but Finn can't follow up. The Sling Blade sets up the reverse Impaler for two more and Balor is STUNNED. Owens avoids

the running corner dropkick and Finn comes up holding his knee. The champ goes right after the injury with kicks and chop blocks before ramming it into the apron. A backsplash on the knee sets up a half crab but Balor crawls over for the rope. Balor escapes a powerbomb attempt and hits the jumping double stomps to put both guys down.

Owens goes up but gets kicked in the head, only to counter Finn's superplex attempt into a spinning release fisherman's superplex (freaking SWEET) for two. Kevin can barely move so Finn kicks him in the head again, only to have the champ chop block him again. The Cannonball connects and Finn is almost out of it.

Owens wraps the bad leg around the ropes and hits a Cannonball onto the leg, but his third attempt only hits buckle. Finn hits a running dropkick (he really shouldn't be able to do that) and the Coup de Grace but his knee is too hurt to cover. That's more like it. Owens gets up and hits the pop up powerbomb to retain at 30:37.

**Rating:** B+. This took its time getting going and the first half had too much chinlockery, but once they got in a groove and had Balor messing up his leg, this was all gravy. Owens is ready for the main roster and Balor has been ready since before he set foot in NXT, but I'm very glad they're sticking around here and getting to put on awesome matches like this one. That arena is going to come unglued when Sami comes back to fight Owens again.

**Overall Rating:** B. Good episode this week as we wrap up the first half of this cycle and can move on to the next big batch of matches, perhaps with the next Takeover coming soon. This was a really fun night though and Balor showed how ready he is for the main roster. I wasn't completely thrilled with the main event at first but they made me care about it. That's one of the hardest things to do in wrestling and those two nailed it. Finally, I continue to love this crowd as they acknowledged the amount of chinlocks and applauded to let the guys know to mix it up a bit. How awesome is that?

## Results

Sasha Banks b. Alexa Bliss – Bank Statement

Kevin Owens b. Finn Balor – Pop up powerbomb

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# NXT – March 18, 2015: Road Trip!

## NXT

Date: March 18, 2015

Location: LC Pavilion, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Jason Albert, Corey Graves, Rich Brennan

This is a very interesting show as we have matches from outside the NXT Arena for the first time. A few weeks back, NXT held some shows in Columbus, Ohio as part of the Arnold Sports Festival and the matches were recorded for TV. Other than that we also have Owens vs. Riley in a showdown over Owens being a bully. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about being in Columbus and previews the major events tonight.

Opening video.

The arena looks similar but there are a lot more seats opposite the Titantron. The wrestlers have to come down some steps off to the side instead of a ramp as well. Finally the cameras are facing the Titantron



instead of having it on the right.

### Kalisto vs. Tyler Breeze

Breeze main events one week and jerks the curtain the next? Kalisto takes him to the mat but Breeze bails to the ropes like a heel should. Fans: "WATCH THE FACE!" It's a really good sign if the fans are just as hot on the road. They trade leapfrogs until Kalisto does his hand want into a headscissors, followed by a big flipping wrist drag. He tries to fly a bit too much though and gets dropkicked out of the air for a delayed two.

Breeze rips at the mask and puts on a chinlock as we take a break. Back with Kalisto fighting back but not being able to hit the Salida Del Sol. Instead he dives into the Supermodel Kick for two and Breeze is getting frustrated. Kalisto knocks him down again and nails a 450 but Breeze is right next to the ropes. Salida Del Sol is countered again and the Beauty Shot is good for the pin at 10:07.

**Rating:** C+. Breeze has been on a roll lately and I'm digging his matches more and more every time. I wouldn't mind seeing him move up a bit higher on the card, but I don't see him fighting Owens or anything like that. Kalisto is great as a high flier and could be something special if he's put on the main roster.

We recap Owens vs. Riley, which is entirely built around Owens being a bully and Riley wanting to stand up to him. Riley has come out of retirement to fight Owens and proved himself against CJ Parker last week.

Hometown girl Alexa Bliss promises to show Sasha Banks what she's made of.

Video on the WWE Experience at the Arnold Sports Festival as well as their visit to a children's hospital and HHH being inducted into the International Sports Hall of Fame. Also included are clips of Hogan and Flair appearing. Hulk Hogan showed up and thought being NXT Champion sounded good.

Finn Balor tells Alex Riley he'll be watching tonight. Riley is ready for Owens but Balor tells him not to take Owens lightly. We haven't seen Zayn

or Neville since Owens hurt them and Riley could be next.

Video of HHH talking about what it means to expand and the potential of NXT as a touring brand.

### Colin Cassady vs. Wesley Blake

Carmella is with Enzo and Cass and is booed out of the building. Cass says they're at Arnold Sports Festival where people like to pump weights, but Cass and Enzo like to pump fists. "As for the Australian guy, why don't you didgeridoo yourself a favor a skedaddle?" Cass sends him into the corner to start and the fans declare Blake SAWFT. Wesley runs the ropes but charges into a knee to the ribs as the fans want Blue Pants. I can't say I blame them.

A springboard spinning forearm gets two for Blake and we hit the chinlock. Colin fights up and stomps away in the corner, setting up a side slam. Murphy gets up on the apron and Carmella gets up to yell at him, only to have Cass boot him down. Carmella goes down at the same time though, allowing Blake to roll Cass up and grab the trunks for the pin at 3:55.

**Rating:** D+. This was nothing special but it advanced the stories. If nothing else it might be a step towards getting Carmella away from the guys, which would be better for everyone involved. There's potential in Carmella, but not as a face and not with Enzo and Cass. Thankfully this isn't WWE where they would just take her off TV and blame her for what happened.

Video on bodybuilder Dana Brooke who has signed with NXT.

### Alexa Bliss vs. Sasha Banks

Non-title. Sasha is nailing the charisma at this point and is ready to be on the main show. Sasha goes after the nose, which she broke to put Bliss on the shelf for months. The double knees out of the corner gets two and we hit the chinlock. Alexa fights up and moonsaults into a double knee of her own before the Booker T. spinning sunset flip out of the corner gets two. Sasha bails to the floor so Alexa dives out onto her, only to be

sent into the apron. Bliss quickly posts her though and wins by countout at 3:18.

**Rating:** C-. Bliss has gotten a lot better in a hurry and seems to be the next project of the division. I still think Bayley is the one to take the title off of Banks (if nothing else because I want to see the fans lose their collective minds) but Bliss is a good choice for a lower level challenger for now. Also, points for not jobbing her in her hometown or having the champ get pinned.

Kevin Owens is ready for Riley but is looking forward to facing Balor as well.

Alexa is happy with her win but Sasha comes in to say that wasn't a pin. Regal pops up and makes the title match for next week.

#### Alex Riley vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title. The fans chant for Owens to start as they shove each other around. The champ knocks him down and hammers Riley in the back and the fans call Owens Mr. Wrestling. Riley nails a dropkick but gets sent hard into the corner. There's the Cannonball for two before Owens puts on the chinlock. Riley gets up though and blasts Owens with a right hand, sending him out to the apron.

Another right hand puts him on the floor but Owens is ticked off. Back in and Owens misses another Cannonball, setting up a spinebuster for two. Riley hits the ropes on a missed crossbody, setting up three straight backsplashes. Instead of covering though, Owens sends him back out to the floor. Back in again and the pop up powerbomb gives Kevin the pin at 6:00.

**Rating:** C+. This was exactly what it should have been with Owens getting rocked a few times but never being in any serious danger. Riley got to try but gets beaten up in the end and Owens gets to look like a killer all over again. Good stuff here and nothing great, which was pretty much exactly the idea.

Owens goes after Riley post match but Finn Balor comes out to stare him

down. Kevin reaches for Riley again but Balor dives off the stage (nothing that great as it's not a high stage) take him down. They head inside but Owens bails before Balor can hit the top rope double stomp. The champ bails but makes sure to get in a cheap shot on Riley because he's a great villain.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This wasn't a spectacular episode, but it was a very successful experiment. The crowd was great on their first trip outside of Florida and that's the best news NXT could have. As for the actual content, this was little more than a preview for next week, but it still worked well enough. Balor vs. Owens could be a lot of fun if they let them beat on each other for fifteen minutes. Good show here and hopefully the first of many road trips.

### Results

Tyler Breeze b. Kalisto – Beauty Shot

Buddy Murphy b. Wesley Blake – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Alexa Bliss b. Sasha Banks via countout

Kevin Owens b. Alex Riley – Pop up powerbomb

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# NXT – March 11, 2015: There's Always Next Week

## NXT

Date: March 11, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips, Jason Albert

Things are starting to pick up again in NXT as commentator Alex Riley is coming after NXT Champion Kevin Owens for bullying him on commentary recently. First up for Riley is CJ Parker, as Alex has to earn a shot at the champ. Other than that we're waiting on the return of Sami Zayn and the Finn Balor showdown with Owens for the title. In other words, no one likes Owens except the audience. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Lucha Dragons

No Carmella this week. Enzo thinks the Dragons are more like the Geico Lizards. Cass: "Either save us 15% or more or get out of our way!" When I grow up, I want to be Enzo's beard. Enzo and Kalisto get things going as the fans duel between "GEICO LIZARDS!" and "FIFTEEN PERCENT!" Kalisto grabs an armbar to take Enzo down and it's quickly off to Cara, who slams his partner into a senton on Amore for two. The tag brings in Big Cass who shows Cara how to throw your partner around.

Enzo comes back in but gets kicked away, allowing the hot tag to Kalisto as things speed up. The Dragons take over again as this is going longer than your average opening match on this show. Everything breaks down with Enzo and Cass going outside. Cass shoves his buddy away to take the double dive but is still able to break up the swanton from Cara. He does the smart thing by dragging Enzo over for the tag and the East River Crossing plants Kalisto, setting up a Rocket Launcher from Amore for the pin at 5:40.

**Rating:** C-. The match dragged a bit but you have to give Amore and Cass a

win or two here and there to set up their title program down the line. Cass is big and strong enough to make up for Amore and they have great comedic chemistry together. Also, notice how much more into them the fans were without Carmella at ringside. NXT gets that logical thinking thing while it's totally lost on WWE.

Next week we see matches from NXT at the Arnold Sports Festival in Columbus, Ohio.

Video on Alex Riley.

Video on Kevin Owens' dominance.

### Alexa Bliss vs. Carmella

Carmella throws her away from a headlock to start but Bliss grabs the arm to take over. Alexa misses a charge into the corner so Carmella just hammers her in the face. The fans aren't exactly interested in having Carmella out there. We hit the body scissors on Bliss before Carmella drives her back into the corner. This really isn't much to see so far. Bliss comes back with some forearms and a flip splash for two, followed by a spinning splash from the top (the Sparkle Splash) for the pin at 5:03.

**Rating:** D+. These two aren't exactly on Charlotte and Banks' level. The fans flat out do not like Carmella and it's definitely good to keep her apart from Enzo and Cass. Bliss isn't great but she's adorable and can carry herself well enough in the ring. To be fair though, I never thought much of Sasha or Charlotte at first and they've turned out great.

Alex Riley gives a very serious speech about being stuck in a cage for two years and constantly being told "maybe next week kid." Owens talks about having a wife and kids but Riley's family is in that arena. It's time to fight for his family. Really good stuff from Riley here and I've always been a fan of his. I always thought it was a waste of his talents to put him behind a mic for so long but at least he's getting back in the ring now.

Breeze says this didn't have to get ugly with Itami. "Well you were

involved so maybe it did have to get ugly.”

### CJ Parker vs. Alex Riley

Riley's entrance cuts off Parker complaining about the world. Riley is still in shape but his face makes him look a bit homeless. Parker's headlock doesn't get him very far as Riley comes back with a nice dropkick. The TKO is countered though and Parker lays in some left hands. The Third Eye is countered with a backdrop and Riley nails a hard clothesline. Something like John Morrison's flip neckbreaker puts Parker down again and a Blockbuster is good for the pin at 3:20.

**Rating:** C-. Not terrible here but Riley had some ring rust. That's the point of something like developmental but he needs to do some more before he's ready to make it onto the main roster. I'm hoping he uses the TKO again instead of a Blockbuster as a few people are using that one already.

Post match Kevin Owens comes out and calls Alex Riley the dumbest man in NXT. Riley gave up his commentary career just so Riley can destroy his in ring career too. Owens hasn't forgotten about Finn Balor either.

### Tyler Breeze vs. Hideo Itami

Rematch from Rival. Breeze heads to the floor to start and says this won't be like last time. He does it a second time and the fans keep booing. Old style heat still works. Back in and Breeze drives Itami into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs but Itami kicks him right to the floor. Itami throws him back inside for a running knee in the corner and the tornado DDT into a guillotine. He goes back up but gets crotched this time, giving Tyler his first real advantage.

The fans think Itami is gorgeous as Breeze drops a leg and puts on a chinlock. Back from a break with Itami punching Breeze away and hitting a top rope dropkick to put both guys down. A leg trip sends Breeze to the floor and a big kick gets two. Itami kicks him in the face but walks into the Supermodel Kick for two.

Breeze gets pulled face first into the post while trying to crotch Itami,

setting up a top rope knee to the back of the head. Breeze gets up again though and Itami is getting mad. The fans call for the GTS but have to settle for a hard series of strikes instead. Itami misses a running dropkick in the corner though and the Beauty Shot is good for the pin on Hideo at 11:25.

**Rating:** B-. That's a surprising ending but I like it better than just giving Itami the pin. The problem with Breeze was that he kept putting people over and it stops meaning anything after so many times. This win gives him some credibility back and makes future wins over him mean more. In other words, it's trading in the short term for the long term, and that's rarely a bad thing.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was solid enough for the most part and I really like that we're getting the short term stories instead of the major stuff every week. Riley vs. Owens isn't the biggest feud in the world, but it lets the anticipation for Owens vs. Balor and eventually Owens vs. Zayn build up instead of just blowing through them immediately. Another thing that NXT understands better than WWE is you don't have to get everything in by a certain date, at least not most of the time. Take the extra time, because as HHH said on Austin's podcast, there's always next week.

### Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady b. Lucha Dragons – Rocket Launcher to Kalisto

Alexa Bliss b. Carmella – Sparkle Splash

Alex Riley b. CJ Parker – Blockbuster

Tyler Breeze b. Hideo Itami – Beauty Shot

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