

# NXT – November 25, 2015: Don't You Dare

## NXT

Date: November 25, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

It's another title match week with Bayley defending against Eva Marie in a match that has the potential to burn the place to the ground. The Full Sail fans just do not like Eva no matter what she does and it's going to be quite the moment if she takes the title from the most popular act in NXT. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Michael Cole of all people is in the ring to open the show, though unfortunately we don't get his sweet theme song about how awesome his life is. Cole says he's in charge while Regal is out recovering from neck surgery. First up tonight: a contract signing for Takeover: London (finally not the week before the match) between Finn Balor and Samoa Joe. Cole goes to introduce Joe but Balor comes out first and promises to take Joe out in London. This brings out Joe who walks into the ring, signs the contract and walks out without saying a word or even looking at Finn. The champ goes to leave but Joe attacks and chokes Finn out.

Tag Team Titles: Vaudevillains vs. Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder

Dawson and Wilder are defending and this is the Vaudevillains' rematch. Dawson starts on Gotch's leg to start but can't get very far, meaning it's off to English vs. Wilder. Aiden takes over for all of fifteen seconds before the champs go after his arm and take us to an early break. Back with Aiden in an armbar but he easily fights up and makes the hot tag to Gotch. Now it's the Vaudevillains taking over but Dawson trips up Gotch to stop the Whirling Dervish. Everything breaks down and the Shatter Machine to English retains the titles at 8:05.

**Rating:** C. These teams really don't have great chemistry together and a lot of that is due to the champs being the kind of guys that like to slow a match down. The Vaudevillains are a unique team as they don't have a particular style and that makes it hard to find interesting matchups for them. It's not bad, but these are really forgettable matches so it's probably best that they're done here.

Post match Enzo and Big Cass come out to beat up the champs for hurting Cass' leg a few weeks back.

Eva has taken over Regal's office because she needed a bigger place to get ready. Bayley is a swell girl but it's time for a woman to become champion. She knows the fans have her back too and there are a bunch of gifts waiting for the celebration. Nia Jax comes in with a present of her own.

We recap Asuka dismantling Dana Brooke at Takeover.

Someone whose face we can't see sings a song about needing liberators. Elias Sampson had a guitar a few months back so maybe it was him.

#### Dana Brooke vs. Asuka

Maybe not as Dana talks from the stage and Emma jumps Asuka from behind and puts her in the Emma Lock. No match.

Bayley understands why WWE wants Eva Marie to be the Women's Champion but there's one difference between them: Bayley is a wrestler. I know it wasn't meant to be one, but that was one of the best insults I've heard in a long time.

Sami Zayn is coming back.

#### Apollo Crews vs. Jesse Sorensen

This would be the former TNA guy Jesse Sorensen, who left because they didn't want him to wrestle any more after breaking his neck and decided to release him instead. Crews starts fast with a delayed vertical as the fans count the "time". Just to show off, Crews waves them on and holds Jesse up even longer. A big running clothesline sets up a throw into a

powerbomb (called an Alley Oop into a powerbomb) to end Jesse at 2:06. Total squash.

Crews accepts Baron Corbin's challenge for London.

Corbin says Crews is going to be the answer to a trivia question for doing one thing once. He's going down in London.

Charles Robinson has been sent to referee the main event.

#### Women's Title: Eva Marie vs. Bayley

Eva is challenging so let the nuclear heat (and wolf whistles) begin. Nia Jax is here with Eva to make sure things aren't fair. Robinson is the outside referee here so something might be afoot. They trade headlocks to start and a suplex gets two on Bayley, who comes right back with the Bayley to Belly for two as Jax pulls the referee out. Robinson comes in to count two on Bayley off a rollup and Jax adds a headbutt to keep Bayley in trouble.

Eva covers several times for two but Bayley takes her down with a running clothesline. Robinson breaks up the running elbow in the corner and Sliced Red gets a very close two. Another try at Sliced Red results in a ref bump and Eva goes up. Bayley stops her again though and, after dealing with Nia, grabs a super Bayley to Belly with another referee coming in for the count at 6:38.

**Rating:** B. This was one of the best done segments that NXT has done in a long time. It's just a six minute match and nothing great in terms of wrestling, but sweet goodness they nailed the story here. The idea of the fix being in had the fans freaking out on every near fall and going nuts when Bayley survived. Bayley is the most over thing in NXT since Sami Zayn and it's awesome to watch her mature into this hero instead of just being an underdog.

Nia Jax lays out Bayley post match and holds up the belt to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was a show that did a lot of good to set up the London show in three weeks while also throwing in two title matches with a really well done moment in the main event. Thankfully Cole wasn't the

star of the show and felt like a regular NXT commissioner. That's the key to this whole promotion: find the formula that works and keep plugging people in and out when necessary. It's worked for years and it's working here, which makes this the most consistent show around.

### Results

Scott Dawson'/Dash Wilder b. Vaudevillains – Shatter Machine to English

Apollo Crews b. Jesse Sorensen – Throw into a powerbomb

Bayley b. Eva Marie – Super Bayley to Belly

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# **NXT – November 18, 2015: Here She Comes To Ruin The Day**

### **NXT**

Date: November 18, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's another title defense this week as Bayley is already defending the

Women's Title against Alexa Bliss. This was expected to be one of the big Takeover matches so it should be interesting to see where they go for the title at the show in London. Eva Marie and Nia Jax are hanging around as well. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

#### Nia Jax vs. Carmella

Carmella goes right after her with forearms to the face but gets caught in a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. Nia: "Hi Carmella, how you doing?" A bearhug has Carmella in trouble but she counters with a quick guillotine choke. Some dropkicks stagger Jax but she counters a hurricanrana into a spinebuster, followed by the legdrop to put Carmella away at 2:48.

Alexa Bliss says her hands are fine from carrying around Bayley's Women's Title but now her ears are hurting from hearing about that Iron Man match. Yeah Bayley won now stop talking about it. It's her time now, but her rant is cut off by a referee who says Blake and Murphy will be banned from ringside.

#### Ascension vs. Jason Jordan/Chad Gable

Viktor and Gable start but all four quickly come in for a standoff. We settle down to Jordan vs. Konnor for the power battle. Jordan gets him into the corner and it's a series of rotating shoulders to Konnor's ribs, followed by a double northern lights suplex for two. Konnor comes right back by powering Gable into the corner for a bunch of hard stomps.

A chinlock keeps Gable in trouble but he fights up and backdrops Viktor to the floor, allowing for the tag off to Jordan. House is quickly cleaned and the straps come down for a suplex on Viktor. Everything breaks down and Viktor's middle rope knee gets two on Jason as Chad and Konnor fight on the floor. Gable drops Konnor with a flip dive off the apron and the Grand Amplitude (such an awesome name) puts Viktor away at 6:12.

**Rating:** B-. Gable and Jordan are getting close to that rocket push up the ladder and you can see a showdown in London for the Tag Team Titles. The

fans are eating them up and they can more than back it up in the ring. It's the idea of finding a hot act and running with it, which is one of the most important things a wrestling promotion can do.

Video on Bayley vs. Bliss, showcasing the basic difference in their personalities.

Bayley says keeping the title is just as hard as winning it in the first place. Tonight Bliss is learning a wrestling lesson from the last Horsewoman. Bliss is going to find out what it means to respect this title and Bayley herself.

#### Emma vs. Mary Kate

Mary Kate used to be known as Rosie Lottalove but has dropped probably 120lbs to get down to a much more reasonable look. She runs Emma over to start but Emma trips her up and stands on the hair. Some choking on the ropes and rams into the buckle have Mary Kate in more trouble and the Emma Lock is good for the submission at 3:12.

**Rating:** C-. This was your standard new Diva gets beaten up in a few minutes before she has a character or personality. It also helped set up Emma looking more dangerous but Asuka crushes her, likely on TV before London. I could see Emma and Dana vs. Asuka in a handicap match with Asuka pulling off the upset, assuming you still consider that an upset.

We recap Baron Corbin vs. Apollo Crews.

Corbin challenges Crews for a match at Takeover.

#### Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder vs. Corey Hollis/John Skylar

Non-title. The Vaudevillains will be getting their rematch next week. Hollis gets caught in the wrong corner to start and the champs go after his knee. Dawson takes him down with a dragon screw leg whip and it's off to Dawson to crank on the knee even more. There's a knee crusher and the champs pull on the leg to continue their Andersons style. Graves gets in a great line about Dawson and Wilder: "No flips, just fists." The third knee crusher of the match keeps Hollis in trouble but he kicks Dawson away and makes the tag to Skylar who walks right into the Shatter Machine

for the pin at 5:08.

**Rating:** D+. There's something so fun about watching these two rip someone's leg apart. It's a style that is going to work no matter what changes in wrestling because it's so simple but makes perfect sense. The ending was amusing too as Skylar was all fired up and didn't walk four steps before he got caught for the pin.

Dana Brooke interrupts an Asuka interview to challenge for a rematch. Asuka takes off her mask and gives a disturbing yes. The interviewer and Asuka leave and Emma comes in to be all evil about some plan they have.

Samoa Joe isn't here tonight because William Regal is worried that Finn Balor is going to screw up the London main event. Next week they sign the contract.

#### Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Bayley

Bayley is defending and the "HEY! WE WANT SOME BAYLEY!" chants start during the big match intros. Bayley throws her into the corner and stomps Bliss down to start, sending Bliss outside for a breather. A quick bulldog gets two for the champ and she cranks on Bliss' arms a bit. The fans try some dueling chants but Bliss' support isn't the strongest. They head outside with Bayley going face first into the apron as we take a break.

Back with Bliss working on the arm and the fans chanting B00/YAY with nothing really happening. Bliss starts going after the hand (which really should be better by now) but Bayley fights up with running ax handles. Alexa takes her right back down and moonsaults into double knees to the ribs. The Sparkle Splash is broken up with a powerslam for two but Bayley's arm is starting to give out again. The running elbows in the corner stagger Alexa until she comes out with a sunset flip for two. Frustration sets in for Bliss, allowing Bayley to grab the Bayley to Belly for the pin at 11:47.

**Rating:** C. This was better than I was expecting as Bliss didn't seem to have any chance of winning coming in. The arm work was fine for a story and the ending worked perfectly with Bayley staying calm and waiting for

Bliss to get frustrated to finish her. Good little match here and that's all it needed to be.

Post match here's Eva Marie and my goodness this crowd hates her. She has to tell them to stop booing over and over to get her challenge out. I can't wait to see how they word this on Total Divas to make Eva out to be some innocent victim. The title match seems to be next week, giving us a rare double title defense.

**Overall Rating:** B-. Another totally acceptable show with Bayley retaining the title in a big TV main event and a lot more stuff being set up for London. This is the NXT formula working to perfection and it still makes me want to see the big shows while giving me entertaining TV week to week. Good show here, but were you expecting anything else?

### Results

Nia Jax b. Carmella – Legdrop

Chad Gable/Jason Jordan b. Ascension – Grand Amplitude to Viktor

Emma b. Mary Kate – Emma Lock

Bayley b. Alexa Bliss – Bayley to Belly

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# NXT – November 11, 2015: The Groundwork

## NXT

Date: November 11, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

We're on the road to London at the moment and the big story is Samoa Joe turning on Finn Balor last week after Balor's title defense against Apollo Crews. This likely sets up the main event at the next Takeover, though there's a chance Crews and Baron Corbin could be added in to make it a four way. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of last week's show.

Opening sequence.

### Tye Dillinger vs. Baron Corbin

Never mind as Apollo Crews hits the ring and destroys Corbin, sending him running off. Crews shouts at Corbin to come back but he's long gone.

The announcers preview the rest of the show.

### Bayley/Hype Bros vs. Blake and Murphy/Alexa Bliss

Ryder and Murphy get us going but it's off to Bliss a few seconds in. Bayley is more than happy to come in and, after Alexa takes off her bracelet, the champ takes her down with a headlock. Fans: "SHE AIN'T HYPED! BAYLEY'S HYPED!" Bayley sends her into the corner for a running elbow but the threat of a Bayley to Belly sends Bliss out to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Mojo clotheslining Blake and bringing in Ryder as Graves psychoanalyzes his colleagues. Ryder gets caught in the wrong corner and stomped down, followed by a backbreaker as the fans continue to chant what sounds like "HEY WE WANT SOME BAYLEY!" Murphy's reverse chinlock

doesn't get very far so he drives Zack back into the corner for a slingshot hilo from Blake.

Back up and Zack dives over for the tag to Mojo, in his neon green gear (Byron: "SLIMER IS ON THE LOOSE!"). Everything breaks down and Bliss gets knocked to the floor but she grabs the title and runs off. Bayley is ticked off so she Bayley to Bellys Murphy and chases Bliss off. Hyperdrive puts Murphy away at 12:11.

**Rating:** C. I don't usually get annoyed with the NXT fans but that HEY WE WANT SOME BAYLEY chant was driving me crazy here. The match itself was just a formula match but it sets up Bliss vs. Bayley for the new champ's first fresh title match. Good enough here but most importantly it got the job done, which is where NXT shines.

Ascension accepts Gable and Jordan's challenge.

Nia Jax runs into Eva Marie and they walk off together.

#### Deonna vs. Nia Jax

No Eva in sight. A quick Samoan drop plants Deonna early on and we're already in the slow squash. Jax throws her into the corner and plants her with a release spinebuster. A legdrop puts Deonna away at 1:49.

Clip of Dash Wilder/Scott Dawson beating the Vaudevillains in the Dusty Classic to set up tonight's title match.

William Regal underwent successful neck surgery. No word on how long he's out.

Bayley is looking for Bliss and finds her Women's Title. Nia Jax jumps her from behind and scares Bliss off for trying to get the title. Jax looks at the title and drops it next to Bayley before leaving.

#### Tag Team Titles: Vaudevillains vs. Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder

Vaudevillains are defending. English and Dawson get things going but it's quickly off to Wilder with the champs taking over in the corner. Some kicks to the chest put Wilder down so it's off to Scott who gets caught

in an armbar. Wilder offers a distraction from the apron though and Dawson takes out the knee as we go to a break. Back with English's knee in trouble as Wilder cranks away. Dawson wraps it around the post because he wrestle like a modern day Anderson.

More shots to the leg set up a slingshot suplex (so he's an Anderson and Blanchard hybrid) for two. English's leg is wrapped around the post again but he pulls Dawson's face into the post, allowing for the hot tag to Gotch. Everything breaks down with Simon cleaning house, only to have English tag back in for no logical reason. Gotch is sent into the steps and English's knee is crushed the same way Cass' was a few weeks back. Wilder's reverse Figure Four gives us new champions at 12:00.

**Rating:** C+. This was an old school psychology driven match with the leg work being the story running throughout the whole thing. The Vaudevillains felt like transitional champions so this was a better idea than letting them hang around while the titles got weaker. Wilder and Dawson will have more opponents anyway and can lead to a showdown with Gable and Jordan.

The new champs can't believe it.

Bayley vs. Bliss for the title next week.

Here's Samoa Joe for his big explanation. When the Dusty Classic was announced, Finn Balor came to him and asked Joe to be his partner. They won that tournament and Joe wanted an NXT Title match. Now to Balor's credit, he agreed to the match but did nothing when Regal put him in the #1 contenders battle royal.

That lack of action drove Joe to do what he did last week because he doesn't deserve to wait for a title shot. The day he walked in to NXT he was owed a shot because he's Samoa Joe. This brings out Balor but the referees break it up. Joe says good choices and grabs the Koquina Clutch to choke Balor out. Joe holds up the title to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. This was a moving day show for NXT as they got a lot more stuff set up for down the road but it didn't really like anything big happened here, including a title change. The good thing about NXT

though is they're capable of taking something that doesn't feel huge and turning it into something bigger later. You can see most of the London show from here and it's going to be a fun night because NXT takes the time to set up their big shows instead of just throwing them together.

### Results

Bayley/Hype Bros b. Blake and Murphy/Alexa Bliss – Hyperdrive to Murphy

Nia Jax b. Deonna – Legdrop

Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder b. Vaudevillains – Reverse Figure Four to English

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# **NXT – November 4, 2015: NXT Is Really Neat**

## **NXT**

Date: November 4, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's a big show this week as Finn Balor is defending his NXT Title

against #1 contender Apollo Crews. NXT has spent the last few weeks building up Crews and giving us a person to care about but there aren't any real personal issues between the two other than the title itself. That could make for a good match but it might not be the most interesting. Let's get to it.

The opening video recaps Crews winning the battle royal and becoming #1 contender.

Opening sequence.

### Asuka vs. Cameron

This could be interesting. Fans: "ASUKA'S GONNA KILL YOU!" Cameron tries a slap to start but gets caught in a cross armbreaker for an early submission attempt. A running kick into the splits drops Asuka but she comes back with a hip attack and mocks Cameron's pose. Asuka grabs a Fujiwara armbar before just smashing Cameron in the face. Fans: "REST IN PEACE!" The Asuka Lock is good for the submission at 3:41.

**Rating:** D+. I kind of feel sorry for Cameron as she has a horrible character and there is no way she's going to be accepted no matter how good she gets in the ring. Some of the gymnastics and flexibility stuff worked for her here but the screeching makes people hate her more than anything. Asuka's path of destruction continues to be awesome and her facial expressions make the squashes that much more entertaining.

We recap Big Cass' leg injury from last week.

Dawson and Wilder laugh at Carmella for injuring her friends. They get their title shot next week and then they'll be the baddest guys in the room. Wilder even brings in a wheelchair as a gift for the Vaudevillains.

Chad Gable and Jason Jordan want to keep moving up the card and one day they'll be the world's greatest tag team. Jordan: "Whoa whoa whoa I told you about that." Their next idea is to wrestle the greatest tag team in NXT history. Gable: "We can't wrestle ourselves." This winds up being a challenge to the Ascension.

### Bull Dempsey vs. Angelo Dawkins

Dawkins has a Sawyer Fulton with him. The threat of a right hand makes Dawkins duck, allowing a knee lift to the head. Dawkins kicks him down and puts on a front facelock but Dempsey Bulls up. Bull punches one of the headbands off and a top rope seated senton gives Dempsey the pin at 2:53.

Fulton walks away from Dawkins post match.

The Vaudevillains are impressed with Dash and Dawson but they're ready to add their names to the pantheon of NXT greats. They sent the wheelchair rolling away. Simple promo here but it was fine.

Crews looks at the NXT Title.

Bayley has the Hype Bros as her partners against Alexa Bliss/Blake/Murphy for a six person tag next week.

#### Eva Marie vs. Marley

Marley is a blonde in half of a football jersey. Eva armdrags her down and dances to celebrate before starting on the arm. The fans debate if Eva is ratchet before she stops a comeback with a boot to the face. Fans: "WHAT WAS THAT???" Marley is on her hands and knees so Eva runs in for a very low downward spiral and the pin at 2:48. If that's her finisher, she's in an even worse place than I thought.

Dana Brooke and Emma respect Asuka but want to give her a better welcome to NXT. It's Emma's turn soon.

#### NXT Title: Apollo Crews vs. Finn Balor

Balor is defending and there's no Demon this time. We get a spotlight and a staredown for the big match intros. That's a really cool idea that I haven't seen before. Feeling out process to start with neither guy's headlock getting them anywhere. Back from a way too early break with Crews holding a headlock. Finn fights up and grabs a front facelock but Crews lifts him up into a delayed vertical suplex for two. Fans: "THAT'S TOO EASY!"

Off to something like a cobra clutch from the champ but Crews tries a

sunset flip. That's fine with Finn who rolls through and takes Apollo's face off with a basement dropkick. Crews kicks him back down and goes to the middle rope, only to take an enziguri to put him on the floor. Finn nails a BIG flip dive to take us to our second break. Back with Balor firing off some running chops in the corner, followed by a clothesline for two.

Crews shrugs it off again and hits a fall away slam into a Samoan drop for two more. The fans are still split as Apollo nails a jumping enziguri, only to get caught in the Sling Blade. There's the gorilla press but the moonsault hits knees. REVERSE BLOODY SUNDAY of all things gets two but the Coup de Grace misses. They trade kicks to the head and both guys are down until Baron Corbin runs in for the DQ at 15:09.

**Rating:** B. Give this a finish and it's a borderline classic. These guys beat each other up for fifteen minutes and the shots were getting bigger and bigger every time. I'm sure we'll see them fight again at some point and it's going to be one heck of a war whenever they do. Really good stuff here but the ending was the right call as you don't want either one losing.

Post match Corbin beats both guys down until Samoa Joe makes the save. Joe stars Corbin down but then takes Balor out to turn heel. Fans: "WHY JOE WHY?" A Muscle Buster lays Finn out and Joe holds up the title to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. Another week, another great use of an hour to advance a bunch of stories and give you a reason to come back next week. Balor needed a new top heel and Joe is going to be a great opponent when they probably fight in London. As usual, another good hour of wrestling TV this week as they set up matches and stories so smoothly that it's like one big, long story that just keeps going, which is so much better than the start and stop style that you get elsewhere.

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# NXT – September 23, 2015: Ladies Night

## NXT

Date: September 23, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's another night in the Dusty Classic as we're moving towards Takeover: Respect with the semi-finals and finals of the tournament as well as a thirty minute Iron Woman match for the Women's Title. Tonight is likely to be about the tournament and filling in the rest of the card for the show on October 7. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Eva Marie vs. Carmella

Oh this one could hurt. Carmella shoulders her into the corner to start and throws Eva to the floor so we can get a Moonwalk inside. Back in and Eva's suplex is booted out of the building as the announcers talk about Eva not being accepted for her improvements. A big boot drops Carmella for two (fans: "THAT'S A KICKOUT!") and we hit a bow and arrow hold. Fans: "ALL BOTCH EVERYTHING!" Carmella fights back and starts dancing around like Enzo before ramming Emma into the buckle for two. Eva comes back by throwing Carmella to the floor for a big crash and a countout win at 5:10.



**Rating:** D. So here's the thing: the story makes sense and yeah Eva is going to get a ton of heat when she probably takes the title from Bayley, but a lot of people, myself included, are going to get annoyed at sacrificing everything the women in NXT have built up for the sake of pushing someone because she's occasionally on a reality show that doesn't even draw a million people a week. Yeah that match that sold the Brooklyn show and was all successful and good, but now let's get rid of it for a woman getting on the job training to be the next Nikki Bella. That's life in WWE and it's something we just have to live with.

Nia Jax is still coming. Nothing has changed since Takeover.

Recap of the announcement of the Iron Woman match.

#### Tyler Breeze vs. Bull Dempsey

Their tag team was a failure and Bull is getting in better shape. Tyler uses the referee as a shield to start and is thrown around like a doll. Bull messes with the hair to really get under Breeze's skin, causing Tyler to send him out to the floor. Unlike Carmella though, Bull is able to get back in off a whip to the floor. Must be the Bull Fit. Fans: "BULL FIT WORKS!"

Back from a break with Tyler ripping at Bull's face before opting for a regular headlock. Graves: "Now going down into the trapezius. I learned my anatomy from Gorilla Monsoon." Bull throws him off and gets all fired up as Breeze punches him. Some left jabs drop Breeze but he's able to roll to the ropes before Bull can drop the headbutt. Bull goes up again for some reason, only to have Tyler pull him off for the pin with his feet on the ropes at 10:19.

**Rating:** C. Bull Fit is a nice idea but Breeze winning here was the right idea. Breeze has the potential to really go somewhere in NXT and winning matches and feuds like this are a good sign for him. Dempsey needs to drop some more weight but the fans are getting into the gimmick which is the most important sign.

Clips of the Texas tour.

William Regal brings out Japanese star Kana, whose Titantron video says Asuka. Regal pronounces the new name as "Aska" and asks if there's anything she'd like to say. Asuka says she's happy to be here and wants to be NXT Women's Champion. They sign the contract but here are Dana Brooke and Emma to interrupt. Regal chides them for their rudeness and it gets even worse as they mock Asuka's English. They're the ones who ran Charlotte and Becky Lynch off so Asuka better play nice. A dejected Asuka starts to leave but the fans chant her name. Asuka turns back and smiles before slowly leaving.

Tyler Breeze doesn't have much to say about his match with Apollo Crews at Takeover. Crews comes up and is far more excited about the match than Tyler is.

Feature on the Dusty Classic. Here are the updated brackets:

Samoa Joe/Finn Balor vs. Colin Cassidy/Enzo Amore

Dash/Dawson

Hype Bros vs. Chad Gable/Jason Jordan

Baron Corbin/Rhyno

The Hype Bros and Gable/Jordan are both ready for next week.

Tag Team Titles: Vaudevillains vs. Blake and Murphy

Vaudevillains are defending in the rematch from Takeover: Brooklyn. Gotch shoulders Blake down for two to start and here's Blue Pants to chase Alexa into the ring for a brawl. Both of them head to the back and English slaps a chinlock on Blake. Blake comes right back with a headlock of his own but Aiden armdrags both challengers down with ease. Murphy back suplexes English onto the apron and we take a break.

Back with English still in trouble off a kick to the face and a chinlock from Blake. Murphy's chinlock keeps the match slow until English comes back with a hard slap to the face. Gotch and Blake come in with Simon's screwy offense taking over. Everything breaks down and Blake gets his knees up to stop Aiden's middle rope senton. English gets two off a

rollup and sends Murphy to the floor, allowing Simon to come back in for the Whirling Dervish to retain at 12:17.

**Rating:** C-. That was certainly chinlocky. It was much more boring than bad though as there was almost no chance of the titles changing back here. I'm assuming the winners of the tournament, likely Gable/Jordan, are the next challengers, which makes more sense than anything else.

Enzo and Big Cass are thankful for everything Dusty did for them and want to win the tournament in his honor. They respect Balor and Joe as well, but respect goes out the window next week.

Balor and Joe say Cass and Enzo might be the realest guys in the room but they're the toughest guys on the block and you can't teach that.

**Overall Rating:** C. Not the worst show in the world here but it was much more about setting stuff up for later shows. The tournament is mostly set up now and we have a good chunk of Takeover set with the Iron Woman match guaranteed to take up thirty minutes and the tournament matches filling in most of the rest of the card. Fun enough show here but it was much more of a building episode than anything else.

### Results

Eva Marie b. Carmella via countout

Tyler Breeze b. Bull Dempsey – Pin with feet on the ropes

Vaudevillains b. Blake and Murphy – Whirling Dervish to Blake

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# NXT – September 2, 2015: One More For Dusty

## NXT

Date: September 2, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

The focus goes back on the tag teams tonight as we begin the Dusty Classic. This is a tag team tournament for a prize to be announced and with most of the participants to be announced as well. The idea is to have the past, present and future of NXT involved to honor the spirit of Dusty Rhodes. Let's get to it.

The opening video hypes up the tournament and talks about paying tribute to the Dream.

Opening sequence.

## Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Ascension vs. Rhyno/Baron Corbin

Rhyno runs Viktor over to start but Viktor rolls into a shoulder to put Rhyno down. Konor and Corbin come in but a quick double shoulder drops Baron. The double teaming doesn't last long though and Viktor is sent shoulder first into the post, allowing Rhyno to get some shots in. Back to Corbin as it seems the Ascension are the faces here. Konor gets the hot tag and cleans house on Baron before avoiding a Gore. Corbin breaks up the Fall of Man though and Rhyno Gores Konor for the pin at 5:39.

**Rating:** D. This was an awkward match with both teams looking a bit off. It's also very telling that the Ascension can't even get a win over a

thrown together team where the members don't even get along down in NXT. They've just died since they got called up to the main roster and WWE has no issues with it.

Neville and Solomon Crowe are in the tournament. They're both excited but Solomon freaks Neville out a bit.

Nia Jax is still coming.

#### Alexa Bliss vs. Blue Pants

Bliss takes Blue Pants down for a beating to start and throws her to the mat by the hair. Pants gets rammed into the buckle and a kick to the back sets up an armbar. Back up and Pants fires off some kicks and a northern lights suplex gets two. She misses a charge in the corner though and the Sparkle Splash gives Alexa the pin at 3:34.

**Rating:** C-. Total squash but that was exactly what it was supposed to be. Bliss is the evil mastermind and Blue Pants is nothing more than a cult favorite who can only win matches through interference. There's no point in having her win here when she just shows up for goofy appearances so everyone is fine.

Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa are in Regal's office when Tyler Breeze storms in. Tyler demands a spot in the tournament so Regal gives him Bull Dempsey to face Gargano and Ciampa next week.

Emma says the Divas Revolution isn't happening without her.

#### Apollo Crews vs. Martin Stone

Apollo starts fast with an armdrag but Stone clotheslines him down to take over. Off to a chinlock for a bit before Crews comes back with a standing enziguri. The gorilla press and standing moonsault put Stone away at 2:57. Crews looked good but he needs to do something besides just being all athletic and awesome.

Chad Gable and Jason Jordan say they'll get to write this tournament's history after winning the whole thing. Neville is flying too close to the sun and Crowe is going to be forgotten. Jordan finally says the

Ready Willing and Gable line. Gable is money.

Finn Balor is ready to defend his title in Texas, but first of all he's in the Dusty Classic. His partner, Samoa Joe, comes in and says he wants to win it all. Balor shakes his hand and says he's ready. So I guess Joe is going to be the next major challenger.

#### Eva Marie vs. Billie Kay

We get an Eva chant to start, which I don't buy as legit for a second. Eva fires off some shoulders in the corner and grabs a suplex for two. A seated abdominal stretch is countered by a small package but Eva comes back with a backplash (that's WAY too common a move these days) for two more. Kay makes a quick comeback with a clothesline and suplex for two of her own, but the interesting part is the fans booing Eva out of the building for kicking out. That was awesome in a way. Back up and Sliced Red #2 beats Kay at 3:45.

**Rating:** D. Eva is gorgeous and looks great in her gear, has awesome presence, but above all else, she's just not that good in the ring. If they try to push her as a star in the division, the heat is going to be out of this world. The NXT fans simply do not want her in their company and it's not surprising in the slightest.

The Hype Bros and Enzo/Cass argued over what part of New York to celebrate in after winning last week.

#### Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic: Solomon Crowe/Neville vs. Chad Gable/Jason Jordan

Gable takes Crowe to the mat to start and easily rolls him around into a backslide for two. Back up and Crowe counters a leapfrog into a flapjack (nice move) before it's off to Neville for a very nice welcome home reaction. Jordan takes Neville down to the mat with some nice amateur stuff but Neville flips out of a suplex and sends Jason to the floor as we take a break. Back with Jordan throwing Solomon down just like he did to Neville before a wicked overhead belly to belly drops Crowe again.

Gable comes back in and mocks Solomon, even having Jordan fan him off

while Crowe is on the floor. Jordan throws on a chinlock for a bit before Solomon adds a bow and arrow of his own. The hold is finally broken and Crowe dives over for the tag, allowing Neville to come in for his usual fast paced stuff.

Gable pulls Jason to the floor to break up the Red Arrow. That's fine with Neville as he dives on both of them with Crowe following with a dive of his own. Back in and Jordan catches Neville's next dive and throws him face first onto the mat. Crowe tags himself in and gets suplexed again, setting up the Grand Amplitude (the announcers don't know the name) for the pin at 12:48.

**Rating:** C+. Good match here and Crowe tagging himself in might lead to a heel turn for him, which probably won't save him but it's better than whatever it was he's been doing for the last few weeks. Neville really does come off as a star here and you can see what they're going for with the superhero idea.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I liked the show for the most part and they're making the tournament feel like a huge deal. That's exactly what something this important should be and I love the fact that they've made the whole promotion want to get involved with it. Good stuff here and what is hopefully the sign of good stuff to come.

### Results

Baron Corbin/Rhyno b. Ascension – Gore to Konor

Alexa Bliss b. Blue Pants – Sparkle Splash

Apollo Crews b. Martin Stone – Standing moonsault

Eva Marie b. Billie Kay – Sliced Red #2

Chad Gable/Jason Jordan b. Neville/Solomon Crowe – Grand Amplitude to Crowe

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# NXT – August 26, 2015: They Do Know It's On The Same Network Right?

## **NXT**

Date: August 26, 2015

Location: Barclays Center, New York City, New York

Commentators: Corey Graves, Rich Brennan

This is an interesting show as we have the matches that were taped prior to this past weekend's Takeover special. I can't imagine we'll see anything that gives away show results aside from highlights for the sake of the live crowd, meaning this could be a different looking show. This episode is also ninety minutes long. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Takeover, as you might expect.

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady/Hype Bros vs. Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder/Chad Gable/Jason Jordan

Enzo and Cass are over with the live crowd to put it mildly. They keep it simple this week though and just call their opponents sawft. Mojo drives Dash into the corner to start and hands it off to Ryder for a quick clothesline. The fans want Enzo but have to settle for Ryder's missile rope dropkick instead.



Now they get Enzo who does a little dance and punches Dawson in the face, setting up a big eight man staredown. Everything breaks down and the heels are sent to the floor for a HUGE dive from Enzo (with an assist from Cass) to take them down again. Back from a break with Jordan getting two on Enzo and the fans cheering for their diminutive hero. Gable bends the arm over the top rope before it's back to Dash to keep Amore in trouble.

The villains take turns on the arm and Gable monkey flips him into the corner to prevent a hot tag. Now the fans want Cass and a tornado DDT almost gives them what they want but it's Jordan breaking up the tag this time. Enzo sends him into the corner and NOW the hot tag brings in Cass. The big man comes in to clean house and it's time for the parade of finishers, capped off by the Rocket Launcher to pin Gable at 13:12.

**Rating:** C. Totally fine eight man here as the whole point was to get Enzo and Cass out there to fire up the crowd. That's the kind of act you always need to have on the card as they can set the pace for a show and keep everything hot. Enzo playing Ricky Morton is such a simple formula and it worked just fine here.

Regal hypes up the Dusty Classic when Neville comes in and asks for a spot in the field. The boss makes it happen.

After his title defense Saturday, Balor says he proved Japan wasn't a fluke. The future is now.

Video on Emma.

Video on Becky Lynch.

### Carmella vs. Eva Marie

Remember how much the fans liked Enzo and Cass? Reverse it here for Eva. The fans tell Eva that she can't wrestle as she shoulders Carmella down, only to take a bad looking dropkick. Some running forearms stagger Carmella again and a backsplash gets two. We hit the seated arm crank and Eva mocks Cass' chants. Carmella comes back with some Thesz presses but walks into a jawbreaker and the Kendrick gives Eva the pin at 4:12.

**Rating:** D. If Eva is supposed to be the next big thing in this division, they're in trouble. She was adequate in there but it's adequate in the Bellas' fashion: if she has time and can think about every move she makes she can look passable, but if anything goes slightly wrong, it looks like her head would explode. Also good luck on getting the fans to not boo her out of the building every week. It's forcing a peg into a hole in NXT and that's not a good idea.

Quick look at Liger beating Breeze.

Breeze says he has a bigger idea for Regal.

Dana Brooke (with her very nasal voice) and Emma are ready.

More Takeover clips.

Video on Dana Brooke.

Bayley vs. Sasha Banks clips.

Bayley can barely speak after her match so her family comes in to hug her.

Regal puts Rhyno and Baron Corbin in the Dusty Classic against the Ascension next week.

Kevin Owens promised to break Cesaro at Summerslam and won't talk about his loss.

#### Bull Dempsey vs. Elias Sampson

Dempsey has a new look, including a big robe which makes him look like Steve Williams in a way. Sampson on the other hand has a guitar and calls himself the drifter. Dempsey looks to have lost a few pounds. He headlocks Sampson down to a nice reaction but Elias punches him in the ribs to take over. A chinlock doesn't get him very far though as Bull Hulks Up and slugs away. Bull's top rope seated senton puts Sampson away at 4:34.

**Rating:** D+. This was little more than a way to showcase Bull's new look and style and it worked more than well enough. Bull as a face is going to

take some getting used to but at least the first match could have been worse. The finisher looks good if nothing else and you can't have too many characters to throw out there if you need one someday.

Samoa Joe say the win over Corbin was just the beginning and now he wants the title.

Nia Jax is coming.

Apollo Crews loved the energy out there.

Blake, Murphy and Bliss say they were robbed, not beaten. Bliss wants Blue Pants.

Video on Charlotte.

#### Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch vs. Emma vs. Dana Brooke

One fall to a finish. Emma and Brooke back into each other to start and are thrown to the floor, giving us Becky vs. Charlotte. It's a double dropkick into a double nipup before Becky takes her down with an armbar. The villains come back in to break it up as this is going to be one of those tag matches disguised as a four way for most of the match. Charlotte gets knocked outside to keep up the double teaming, including a hard slam into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Becky getting double teamed in the corner but Dana and Emma argue over who should get the cover. They actually don't fight but instead go after a different opponent each. The peace lasts all of ten seconds though as both of them go after Charlotte, leading to a brawl. Dana yells at Emma but they shake hands, only to have Dana take Emma's head off. Charlotte comes back in and chops away before DDTing Emma and Dana at the same time.

It's Becky sneaking in with a missile dropkick though and it's time to clean even more house. A series of suplexes get Becky two on Dana but Emma comes back with some Emma Sandwiches....for the pin on Becky at 12:38. That was a confusing ending as no one seemed ready for that to be the three. Even Emma looked up at the referee with a stunned look on her face.

**Rating:** C+. I liked the story here but the ending took so much out of this. Emma winning couldn't have been the original plan, at least not like that. I was really digging the idea here as it was a glorified tag match with some little twists to keep things interesting. Well done here and it's kind of good that Emma won to potentially move her up the card.

Charlotte and Becky put on their submissions to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. There was no need for this to be half an hour longer than a usual episode. The only reason it lasted that long was because we saw a highlight of every single thing that happened on Saturday. If you're watching NXT here, odds are you saw Saturday's show, so why would I need to see them all again? The wrestling was fine on the other hand, especially considering it was just a collection of dark matches. Back to normal next week and I'm sure things will be fine.

### Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady/Hype Bros b. Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder/Chad Gable/Jason Jordan – Rocket Launcher to Gable

Eva Marie b. Carmella – Kendrick

Bull Dempsey b. Elias Sampson – Top rope seated senton

Emma b. Dana Brooke, Charlotte and Becky Lynch – Emma Sandwich to Lynch

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# NXT – July 22, 2015: Let's Get To It

## NXT

Date: July 22, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton

We're officially on the way to the next Takeover in Brooklyn with an announced main event of new NXT Champion Finn Balor defending against former champion Kevin Owens. This makes for an interesting match as Owens has kind of outgrown NXT despite only being there about seven months so far. It should be interesting how they get to the show so let's get to it.

A quick opening video shows us Balor returning to Japan to win the title.

We open with the champ, holding the title in his hand instead of around his waist, which is something I've always been a fan of. After a quick YOU DESERVE IT chant, Balor talks about all the places he's wrestled and how hard of a decision it really was to come to NXT. However, the moment he was handed the NXT Title, he knew it was all worth it so he could hold this title up. As for Owens, yeah he's done a lot, but there's one thing he couldn't do: pin Finn Balor. He couldn't do it in Tokyo and he won't do it again in Brooklyn. This was a nice, to the point debut promo for the title reign and Balor looks like a star.

Eva Marie is very thankful for an opportunity tonight and is taking it so seriously. There's a misconception about her but she's ready to show what she has so open your eyes.

## Eva Marie vs. Cassie

First sign of trouble: Graves tells the other commentators to pick their

jaws up off the floor during Eva's entrance. The NXT girls' looks are almost never mentioned and it sets them apart from the Divas and it's the first thing mentioned about Eva. The LET'S GO EVA/EVA SUCKS chants start up almost immediately as Eva cranks on a wristlock followed by a decent suplex for two. We hit the armbar on the mat for a good while before Cassie kicks her in the face for two of her own. Eva grabs a quick Sliced Bread #2 for the pin at 3:52.

**Rating:** D+. Well, she didn't bomb. The problem though is that's the only standard Eva had to reach here. She didn't have to be anything great and while she could be good in the ring one day, there's always going to be a mark on her due to how she got into WWE. This could have been far worse, but it's like watching a Tough Enough rookie having their debut: after all this time, she's only up to average. It's a step up, but she had nowhere to go but up.

Tyler Breeze is in Regal's office and wants something good for Takeover.

#### Baron Corbin vs. ???

I don't even have time to look up the jobber's name before End of Days wraps this up in 12 seconds. I believe it was Jesus de Leon, who has appeared on a TNA One Night Only show and some indy shows.

#### Samoa Joe vs. Mike Rallis

Joe has new, far more sinister music which takes out the stupid upbeat sound of his original. That's one of my favorite things in NXT: they actually fix big problems like that instead of just waiting for fans to go numb to them. Mike goes right at Joe to start and pounds away with some forearms, only to have Joe stomp him into the corner. The Rock Bottom out of the corner sets up the Muscle Buster to end Rallis at 2:05.

Emma and Dana Brooke aren't worried about Bayley.

#### Bayley vs. Emma

This is about revenge after Emma broke Bayley's hand about two months ago. I know it's goofy and aimed at kids, but there is something so goofily innocent about Bayley that I can't help but smile every time she

does anything. I've said she's the purest face in wrestling right now and the more I see her the more right I think I am. Emma slaps her in the bad hand (still in a brace) to start and takes over for a few moments, only to have Bayley send Emma face first into the buckle a few times.

A bulldog gets two but Dana offers a distraction so Emma can post the bad hand. Emma pulls on the fingers so hard you would think she was trying to steal them (but I'm sure she meant to pay for them). She cranks on both arms for a choke but Bayley comes back with ax handles to the chest. A pull of the hair tie sets up a middle rope elbow to the jaw for two and the fans are right back with the BAYLEY chants. Dana tries to interfere again but gets ejected, setting up the Bayley to Belly (didn't it used to be the other way around?) for the pin at 5:37.

**Rating:** C-. This was about revenge and Bayley did exactly what she should have done here. Now, assuming this ends Bayley vs. Emma, there's almost no reason not to send Bayley after the Women's Title. It's been a very long time coming and the fans would erupt when she finally wins it. Bayley is as close to a female Sami Zayn as you can get and the win would be a great main event for a Takeover if they want to roll the dice.

Post match Bayley says she wants the title and wants to beat the best to get there. Therefore, she wants a match with Charlotte.

We get a clip of the NXT girls making their in ring debut at Battleground.

Charlotte is thankful for the opportunity when Dana Brooke comes in. Dana is tired of everyone getting a chance because of their last name when she has never gotten a single shot. Charlotte likes the sound of that and says Bayley can wait a week.

#### Vaudevillains vs. Angelo Dawkins/Sawyer Fulton

Gotch and Dawkins get things going but it's quickly off to Fulton to lay a beating down on Simon. Something like a Hart Attack with a dropkick instead of a running clothesline gets two on Gotch and it's off to an abdominal stretch. Gotch picks up his own boot and kicks Angelo in the face to escape (that's just cool) and makes the tag off to English. The

Whirling Dervish puts Dawkins away at 2:47.

Blake/Murphy/Alexa aren't impressed by the Vaudevillains and think Gotch and English are from the old days of 1999. The title match is next week and Bliss guarantees they retain the belts. That could open some doors for a new team at Takeover, such as some hometown boys.

It's time for Balor and Owens to sign the contract for Takeover with Regal moderating. He talks about the largest audience in NXT history but Owens comes out to cut him off. Before he can say or do anything though, here's Finn Balor to look like a star again, offering a very nice visual compared to Owens' brawler look. Balor goes to sign but Owens asks him how it feels to be champion. How does it feel to defend the title in the biggest main event in NXT history ("which takes place in BROOKLYN!")? And how does it feel to go in as the underdog.

Balor was exactly right earlier in the night when he talked about all the things Owens did, such as beating up Rusev, sending Neville out of NXT, crippling Sami Zayn twice and beating John Cena. All that was in his first six months, so now he gets to show the fans that Japan was just a fluke. Balor can't wait to make Owens eat those words and both guys sign. There goes the table and Regal gets punched in the face. Balor forearms Owens to the floor and dropkicks him for good measure to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I had a good time with this show and I was amazed by how fast it went by. This was about setting up Takeover as they have five weeks and most of the card isn't set already. The wrestling wasn't the point here and it covered a lot of the stuff it needed to get to. They'll be fine going forward and the Brooklyn crowd is going to help the show a lot. Fun, well done show this week.

### Results

Eva Marie b. Cassie – Sliced Bread #2

Baron Corbin b. Jesus de Leon – End of Days

Samoa Joe b. Mike Rallis – Muscle Buster

Bayley b. Emma – Bayley to Belly



Vaudevillains b. Angelo Dawkins/Sawyer Fulton – Whirling Dervish to Dawkins

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## **So This Paige vs. Bellas Storyline...**

Makes me think of some more fantasy booking. And again, this isn't anything revolutionary and isn't meant to be.

So the story is that the Divas on the main roster aren't willing to help Paige out against the Bellas. Therefore, Paige is in need of someone to help her out. Maybe she goes back to her roots. Back to where she started. Back down to NXT. Not for a fresh start or anything, but for reinforcements. Like.....Sasha Banks, Bayley, Charlotte and Becky Lynch.

I know you hear about these invasion storylines all the time, but in this case I dig the idea. Why not use this opportunity to bring some of them up and breathe some much needed life into that division? Is anyone going to miss Layla or Tamina

or Eva Marie or even Natalya? Bring in some fresh blood and cut some of these girls that never do anything.

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## 2014 Awards: Worst Wrestler of the Year

This is another fairly easy one.

It's Cameron and that's really all there is to it. I mean....she didn't know how covers worked. That's like not knowing that eating involves chewing and/or swallowing. People like Fandango and Adam Rose may be dull, but they're at least competent. I mean, Rose can get fans fired up and excited to start a house show and Fandango at least had the girls with him.

Then you have Cameron, who hasn't had a passable match since she debuted. She's there for the sake of a bad reality show and has a character that makes me want to turn off my TV. Even Eva Marie looks to have improved a little bit over the year. Yeah she's bad, but she can at least do a few things decently. Cameron has no talent other than a great looking smile,

but that's not enough to get her by.