

# NXT – August 9, 2017: And That's A Good Thing

## NXT

Date: August 9, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson, Mauro Ranallo

With just two shows to go before the biggest show of the year, it's time to really push home the main event and that's what we'll be doing this week. Tonight NXT Champion Bobby Roode will be in the ring with Drew McIntyre for a showdown, as well as getting ready for everything else we have on tap for Brooklyn. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Sanity through the crowd with Nikki Cross shouting about wanting the Authors of Pain to get out here. The Authors don't make them wait long but Eric Young makes his return and helps beat them down. Razar is tied to the barricade as Akum is destroyed.

Eventually Razar pulls the barricade to the ring but gets beaten down as well. Cross grabs the belts and Sanity leaves with them.

We look back at Ember Moon laying out Asuka with the Eclipse last week.

Video on the Street Profits, who debut tonight.

Billie Kay and Peyton Royce are going to explain how to do perfect makeup but stop to make fun of Ruby Riot instead.

## Metro Brothers vs. Street Profits

The Metro Brothers are a couple of greasers named Chris and JC. The Profits are NXT mainstays Montez Ford and Angelo Dawkins in another repackaging. Ford and Dawkins dance to the ring with Ford holding out a cup, presumably to ask for change. Angelo shoulders Chris down and hits a good looking armdrag before handing it off to Ford for a basement dropkick.

Back up and Ford flips over Chris' back, only to get taken into the wrong corner. The Metro dominance lasts all of five seconds until it's back to Dawkins for a spear. A Sky High into a frog splash gives Ford the pin on JC at 2:19. The Profits looked very crisp and have the charisma to back it up, at least so far.

We look at Hideo Itami trying to attack Aleister Black in the parking lot last week. They'll fight at Takeover.

General Manager William Regal brings out McIntyre and Roode for the face to face meeting. Roode comes out with a security team in his corner though as Roderick Strong is running around like a crazy man and we need to protect the big money match. Well to protect Roode that is because he's the big money. Roode talks about Drew feeling entitled to his shot but he's done everything he's set out to do.

This is Roode's NXT and the fans know that he's the one. Drew thinks Roode might have had the best year ever for an NXT Champion but there's one problem: Roode is kind of a jerk. That's just going to make taking the title from him all the sweeter though. This brings out Strong, to say that he's not done with Roode no matter what Regal says. Strong says this isn't about the NXT Title but rather Roode disrespecting Strong's family.

All Strong wants is one more fight with Roode and it doesn't even have to be for the title. Regal tries to calm him down but Roode says he'll fight Strong anytime with the title on the line...if Strong can beat Drew first. If Strong wins, he can fight Roode after Takeover, which will be Roode vs. McIntyre for the title no matter what. Drew agrees to the match next week and Regal eventually agrees.

Johnny Gargano was nervous last week but needs a match at Takeover so he can feel the rush of walking through the curtain in front of a Brooklyn crowd.

#### Oney Lorcan vs. Danny Burch

Rematch from when Lorcan beat him a few weeks back. They lock up to start as Mauro compares Burch's boxing career to Conor McGregor's.

Neither can get much of an advantage out of a lockup so Burch grabs a quickly broken cravate. Back up and Lorcan's leapfrog is countered into something like a flapjack, followed by some European uppercuts. Lorcan sends him hard into the corner though and we take a break.

Back with Burch still in trouble but blocking a running European uppercut with a raised boot. Burch can't hit the Tower of London so he settles for a release German suplex. A lariat gets two and now the Tower of London off the top rope gets two more. Lorcan comes right back with a running Blockbuster and tells Burch to hit him. A slugout goes to Lorcan but he can't get the half crab. He can get a regular Boston crab though, only to have Burch reverse into a cradle for the pin at 12:52.

**Rating:** C+. This was more of the hard hitting style that these two are capable of having. I wouldn't mind seeing these two team up after two good matches as it's not like either of them have anything else going on. Lorcan and Burch both have potential and if a team is what lets them get somewhere, so be it.

They shake hands post match.

#### No Way Jose vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Jose dances through the crowd to get to the ring. It worked so well for Adam Rose. Almas has Zelina Vega with him. Jose dances his way out of a waistlock and Almas has a breather on the floor. Back in and a flapjack drops Almas again and he's knocked to the floor for a second time. Vega yells at him this time and Almas responds by pulling Jose down by the afro. Jose gets stomped down in the corner and there are the running knees to the head. The hammerlock DDT ends Jose at 3:46.

**Rating:** D+. This was a win to get Andrade back on track as he basically squashed Jose. Having Vega as the driving force is fine as Almas could be a good choice for a heel but he's only going to do so much with the losing streak gimmick. This was a good sign, but he needs something a bit better than this going forward.

Post match Vega goes to commentary and says, in a very New York

accent, that she wants Almas on the grand stage. If Johnny Gargano still wants an opponent, they'll see him in Brooklyn.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was all about setting up Brooklyn, though I'm not quite sure I get the idea behind having Strong vs. McIntyre next week. It makes Roode look smart but if they're setting up Strong vs. Roode II, I'm not sure how that helps McIntyre. Odds are Drew goes over but otherwise, it's rather curious booking. Other than that though we had some good development for the rest of the card and Gargano vs. Almas being set up is a smart idea. Throw in the Street Profits looking good and this was a rather nice episode that did its job.

### Results

Street Profits b. Metro Brothers – Frog splash to JC

Danny Burch b. Oney Lorcan – Rollup

Andrade Cien Almas b. No Way Jose – Hammerlock DDT

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**KB's Review: Wrestling**

# Prospectus

Who might be the stars of the future? Here are eleven of them. Why eleven? Eh no reason.

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## NXT – August 2, 2017: Back To Black

### **NXT**

Date: August 2, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson

With just over two weeks to go to before Takeover: Brooklyn III, it's time to get some things moving. We already have a lot of the card set so now we can focus on building up what's already announced and set up some other stuff. Tonight the main focus seems to be on Aleister Black, who currently doesn't have a match for the big show. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Johnny Gargano vs. Raul Mendoza

Johnny comes out to the old DIY music and video but stops so they can both change to Gargano versions. Gargano takes him to the mat with a front facelock into a headlock but Mendoza nips up and gets two off a rollup. That earns Raul a superkick to the jaw and Johnny starts in on the arm. Mendoza gets in a dropkick for two of his own, only to miss a springboard and eat the spear through the ropes. Raul hits an enziguri and goes up but dives right into the modified

Crossface for the tap at 4:13.

**Rating:** C. Gargano looked good here and that's all he had to do in his first match after the DIY split. Ciampa vs. Gargano is going to be a headline match when it finally happens but you have to keep Gargano hot while he's out there on his own. Not a bad match here, though Mendoza was nothing special.

We look at last week's brawl between Sanity and the Authors of Pain. The title match is official for Brooklyn.

Paul Ellering says the Authors will write the chapter at Brooklyn. Until then though, be prepared because the monsters are real.

Here's Asuka with something to say. As usual, she keeps it very simple by saying she's beaten Ember Moon before and Ember isn't ready to face her again. Cue Moon, to say she knows that she's ready, just as Asuka knows. Asuka offers the handshake but slaps Ember instead. The fight is on with Ember getting in some right hands but eating a kick to the face. Asuka poses with the title...and turns right into the Eclipse to knock her cold. Ember won't pick up the title, saying she'll touch it when she earns it. Good segment here with Asuka putting the Eclipse over huge.

Bobby Roode talks about proving that he's a better man than Roderick Strong but of course Roderick wants to play the lottery again. As for Drew McIntyre, Bobby is more than willing to have a chat with him in the ring next week. Roode goes to leave when Strong charges in for a fight. William Regal and security break it up with Strong saying he'll do anything to face Roode. Regal says his hands are tied because the match is made.

The Street Profits are here next week.

Sonya Deville vs. Jenna Van Bimmel

Sonya offers to let the much bigger Jenna have some free shots but does some head faking to avoid them. A hard clothesline sets up some knees to the ribs have Jenna in trouble as this is looking squashish. Jenna hits a charge in the corner but gets pulled down into a triangle choke for the tap at 2:06.

Hideo Itami is tired of not being respected so he's not going to respect anyone. He rants in Japanese and ignores a need to go back to the arena. Instead he steals the mic and walks into the arena, saying he deserves respect. He doesn't care who's next but it's Aleister Black cutting him off. After the long entrance, Itami goes to leave but tries a sneak attack. That goes bad for him though Black Mass drops Itami with one shot. Black just sitting there staring at Itami's unconscious body is great stuff.

### Kyle O'Reilly vs. Aleister Black

This is Kyle's debut. Nigel: "HE'S HERE TOO!" Feeling out process to start and they fight over some grappling. Some striking doesn't last long and they go back to the grappling with Kyle not being able to get a triangle choke. A chinlock is countered into a hammerlock as Mauro is trying to get in every MMA reference he can.

Back up and a spinning legsweep into the sitting pose has Kyle in trouble as we take a break. It's not much better for Kyle when we come back as Aleister kicks him square in the chest for two. Black charges into a boot to the jaw though and Kyle snaps off some kicks of his own.

Kyle grabs a leglock on the mat and it's a slap off until Black finally gets out. Black blocks a cross armbreaker so Kyle settles for a hammerlock and knees to the arm. Back from a second break with Black telling Kyle to hit him and grabbing a snap suplex for two. Kyle snaps the throat across the top though and it's right back to another arm hold.

Black kicks him in the head to escape and gets two off a Lionsault press. A second attempt is blocked with a kick to the leg though and a big forearm to the back of the head gets two on Black. Aleister fires off more strikes but charges into a jumping knee. Not that it matters as Black Mass puts Kyle away at 22:56.

**Rating:** B+. I'm not big on the MMA style a lot of the time but this was very fun with both guys beating the heck out of each other for a long time. Black is one of the best built starts they've had in a good while as not only does he look cool but the finisher is as

devastating as they've had in a long time. Kyle looked solid as well and it's a very good debut, though I have a feeling the ReDRagon reunion is the way to go for both he and Bobby Fish.

**Overall Rating:** A-. You can tell NXT is starting to feel it as we head into the biggest show of the year. We had the Tag Team Title match confirmed tonight and you can probably pencil in Black vs. Itami as well as Gargano vs. someone. Add that to the already announced NXT and Women's Title matches and Brooklyn is looking good. Give us a hard sell on the NXT Title match and everything will be fine.

### Results

Johnny Gargano b. Raul Mendoza – Crossface

Sonya Deville b. Jenna Van Bimmel – Triangle choke

Aleister Black b. Kyle O'Reilly – Black Mass

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# **NXT – July 12, 2017:**



# Brooklyn Is That Way

## **NXT**

Date: July 12, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Percy Watson, Nigel McGuinness

Its another big night tonight as we have the NXT Tag Team Titles on the line with the Authors of Pain defending against Heavy Machinery. In addition to that we have Johnny Gargano making his big return to the show after Tommaso Ciampa turned on him at Takeover: Chicago. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of DIY splitting up.

### Aleister Black vs. Bobby Fish

Now that's a nice surprise as Fish makes his NXT debut. They trade wristlocks to start (with Mauro calling Fish Roderick Strong by mistake) until a kick to the ribs puts Fish down. Fish scores with some strikes of his own but Black shows him how it's done, knocking Fish outside before having a seat in the ring. Bobby sweeps his leg from the floor though and we take a break.

Back with Fish winning another striking battle and hitting a dragon screw legwhip. A half crab is broken up but Fish is right back with a rear naked choke. Black escapes and finally has enough of this, scoring with a kick to the ribs and a springboard moonsault to a standing fish. A jumping knee to the jaw sets up Black Mass to put Fish away at 11:08.

**Rating:** B. That's quite the debut for Fish, who got in a lot of offense here and looked dangerous to someone on Black's level. Black continues to look awesome as well with Black Mass becoming one of the best finishers around. It seems that he's moving up the ladder and I could see him near the NXT Title picture for Brooklyn.

We recap Kassius Ohno and Hideo Itami having even more issues last week.

Post match, Ohno said he was tired of Itami blaming everyone for his

problems since Chicago. Ohno is done talking.

The Street Profits are coming.

The Velveteen Dream was annoyed at an attempted interview.

#### Mae Young Classic Qualifying Match: Vanessa Borne vs. Jayme Hachey

Borne has been on NXT before under the name Danielle Kamela. Hachey has performed around the indies under the name Jayme Jameson. Jayme takes her down and works on the arm but Borne comes up with forearms to the face. Something like a spinning belly to back suplex with a leg hook puts Jayme away at 1:48. That really wasn't a good finisher.

Last week, Sanity attacked Drew McIntyre in the parking lot. Wolfe said that Drew's time is running out.

Bobby Roode is in William Regal's office with the boss talking about the new #1 contender. Roode actually takes charge and suggests Dain vs. McIntyre for the #1 contendership. Regal goes with it and makes the match for next week.

Here's Gargano for his return speech. Gargano has been thinking about what Ciampa did to him over and over and he just can't get it. He's ready to move forward though because he can't control what happened but he can control how he reacts to them. Takeover: Brooklyn is coming up and Johnny has to be on that show, though he seems a bit hesitant.

#### Tag Team Titles: Authors of Pain vs. Heavy Machinery

The Authors are defending. Otis and Razar go nose to nose to start with Otis going nowhere off a forearm. A standing body block actually drops Razar and it's time for a standoff. Back from a break with Akam holding Tucker in a cravate and sending him into the champs' corner. We hit the neck crank for a good while before it's back to Akam for a chinlock. Yeah it's slow but what were you expecting from these four?

Tucker finally gets in a hard clothesline for the break and the hot tag brings in Otis. Everything breaks down and a rather impressive overhead belly to belly sends Akam flying. Tucker's powerslam gets

two on Razar but Akam breaks up the Compactor. The Last Chapter ends Otis to retain the titles at 11:16.

**Rating:** C. The match had a long stretch in the middle that wasn't great but the rest was the power slugout that it needed to be. I don't think anyone was really buying Heavy Machinery as a major threat to the titles and there's nothing wrong with having them lose here. I'm not sure who is going to take the titles at this point but that could make for something interesting going forward.

Post match Sanity comes out to stare down the Authors. Pages of the Book of Dominance fall and Wolfe eats one to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I liked this show more than I was expecting to as they've started setting their sights on Takeover: Brooklyn and that's the biggest show of the year. There are stories going down that have my interest and the build should be a lot of fun. McIntyre getting into the title hunt is a good sign as he was ready for the main roster the day he debuted, meaning it would be a waste of time to not push him towards the title picture almost immediately. Throw in a heel vs. heel feud for the Tag Team Titles and we have some good stuff going on.

### Results

Aleister Black b. Bobby Fish – Black Mass

Vanessa Borne b. Jayme Hachey – Spinning belly to back suplex

Authors of Pain b. Heavy Machinery – Last Chapter to Dozovic

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# **New Column: Insert Your Own Witty Ciampa and Gargano Title Here**

I told you I'd do it.

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# **Cruiserweight Classic – September 14, 2016: Grand Finale**

## **Cruiserweight Classic**

Date: September 14, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Daniel Bryan, Mauro Ranallo

It's already the grand finale as we're live tonight for two hours. We have three tournament matches to go tonight and at least one other as Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa vs. two cruiserweights to be named tonight. There's always the chance that they'll add in another match, as well as the potential of something involving the Cruiserweight Title. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at the tournament, narrated by HHH.

Opening sequence.

The announcers talk about the show a bit.

Preview of the first semifinal match.

Video on all four semifinalists.

### Semifinals: Gran Metalik vs. Zack Sabre Jr.

Mexico vs. England. Metalik dropkicks him at the bell to put Zack on the floor for a flip dive. A springboard Swanton Bomb gets a VERY close two but Sabre ties him in the ropes for some kicks and knees to the back. Sabre starts in on the neck to slow things down and puts Metalik's head between his legs to crank on a leg.

Back up and Zack fires off more uppercuts but gets caught in a weird standing leglock until Sabre dives over to the ropes. Zack comes back with a dragon sleeper with his leg pulling Metalik's arm back as he stays on the neck. They fight over a double arm crank until Sabre just kicks him in the face. Metalik does the same and gets two off a running shooting star press. Both guys get near falls off some rollups until Metalik gets something like an octopus hold.

Sabre reverses into a guillotine which is reversed into a Boston crab which is reversed into a rollup for two on Sabre. A slugout goes to Sabre so Metalik takes his head off with a clothesline for two more. Sabre's running PK gets another near fall but Metalik kicks him in the face again. Something like an octopus hold has Metalik in more trouble but it breaks down so Metalik can survive. Sabre goes to the ropes but gets crotched and hurricanranaed down for a very close two. Metalik gets caught in a triangle until he flips over into a rollup for two more. Back up and a quick Metalik Driver eliminates Sabre at 13:14.

**Rating:** B. The ending surprised me a bit as Metalik has been pretty quiet throughout the whole tournament but is somehow in the finals. He's very much your standard luchador and that's the kind of wrestler who is always going to have a spot around here. Sabre might not be coming to WWE but he'll be a big star around the world with

the skills that he has.

William Regal comes out and gives Metalik a big medal for winning.

With the help of a translator, Metalik thanks the fans and says he's going to win the tournament.

Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa are out to prove something tonight against Noam Dar and Cedric Alexander. All that matters to them is a rematch with the Revival.

### Semifinals: Kota Ibushi vs. TJ Perkins

Japan vs. Philippines. Feeling out process to start with Perkins actually checking one of Ibushi's kicks. The fans are mostly split as Perkins works on an armbar but tries to pull Ibushi in for the kneebar. Ibushi sprints over to the ropes so Perkins gets him on the mat in a headscissors. A running kick to the chest drops Perkins and a springboard missile dropkick makes it even worse.

Ibushi tries a running springboard moonsault but gets kicked to the floor for a nasty looking crash. Back in and a double underhook crank stays on Ibushi's neck for a bit until a good looking dropkick hits Perkins in the mouth. Now the springboard moonsault to the floor works just fine and Ibushi follows up with a springboard missile dropkick. A running powerslam sets up a middle rope moonsault but Perkins gets the knees up.

The kneebar goes on and sends Ibushi over to the ropes for the save. Ibushi is right back with a snap German suplex for two and it's time for the hard kicks to Perkins' chest. TJ breaks up the middle rope German deadlift suplex and counters the Golden Star Bomb into a DDT. That's only good for two (Mauro: "CONJOINED TWINS CLOSE!") and it's off to the kneebar in the middle of the ring.

Ibushi flips out of that too and the Golden Star Bomb plants TJ for one of the hottest near falls I've seen in a long time. Perkins rolls away from a Phoenix splash but gets caught in a wheelbarrow slam driver. Yet another Golden Star Bomb attempt is countered into the kneebar and Perkins even leans up to pull back on the neck for the huge upset at 13:51.

**Rating:** A. I was losing my mind on those near falls and that just does not happen to me very often. Perkins is someone that I never saw much in but this match here more than won me over. He had a logical game plan here and he stuck with it until the ending while Ibushi was throwing everything he could. I had a blast with this match and it never stopped being a blast.

Perkins says he's won one and now he needs to win one more.

Sasha Banks, Bayley, Kalisto, Jack Gallagher and Rich Swann are in the crowd.

#### Noam Dar/Cedric Alexander vs. Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa

Just an exhibition match. After some handshakes all around, it's Alexander throwing Ciampa around in a bit of a surprise to start. It's quickly off to Gargano for a knee to Dar's jaw. They already tag off again so Cedric flip dives over the top to take Ciampa out. Everything breaks down and Gargano superkicks Dar before spearing Alexander through the ropes for two. A wicked Michinoku Driver gets two on Gargano and we settle down to Ciampa kneeing Dar in the face until Cedric springboards in with a clothesline.

Everything breaks down again and a series of clotheslines and superkicks puts all four down. Dar reverses a kick and grabs an ankle lock on Johnny, only to have Ciampa go all psycho while stomping to break up the hold. Dar dives onto Johnny and Alexander hits a very hard brainbuster for what looked like three but the referee says keep going. Gargano comes back in with his superkicks to both guys, setting up the running knee/superkick combo for the pin on Dar at 9:42.

**Rating:** B. Totally wild match here to give us a little change of pace from the tournament matches. These guys beat the heck out of each other and there were some great near falls even though there was little doubt that Gargano/Ciampa were going to win due to their upcoming match with the Revival. Still though, this was a very entertaining match and a good idea after the two great matches we saw earlier.

Regal talks about helping to put the tournament together and trying to find people who weren't as well known but could handle the rigors of this competition.

Corey Graves comes in to talk a bit as we fill in time before the main event.

We recap the semifinals.

Quick look at the trophy.

### Cruiserweight Classic Final: Gran Metalik vs. TJ Perkins

Mexico vs. Philippines. Wait a second though as HHH comes out to say this is going to be for the new Cruiserweight Title. That's quite the jump up though it was the only logical way to introduce the title.

### Cruiserweight Title: Gran Metalik vs. TJ Perkins

The title is vacant coming in of course. They trade some early rollups before Perkins grabs a modified octopus hold. Metalik rolls out and sends Perkins outside for a suicide dive with their heads crashing together. Back in and we hit a surfboard with Metalik's boot in TJ's back for extra pressure. Perkins gets over to the ropes and tries a suplex, only to have Metalik get a running start and hurricanrana Perkins off the apron for an awesome spot.

Metalik follows him out with a big springboard flip dive to keep Perkins in trouble. The running shooting star misses though and Perkins grabs the kneebar, sending Metalik over to the ropes again. A dropkick to the knee looks to set up the Metalik Driver but instead it's a DDT for two on Perkins.

The reverse Backstabber sets up another kneebar and Perkins pulls him back to the middle. He can't get the leg crossed though and Metalik counters into a rollup for a close two. The Metalik Driver plants Perkins but the knee gives out again and it's only good for two more. Perkins takes too long going up top and gets caught in a super Metalik Driver but that's reversed into a full on kneebar to make Metalik tap at 17:45.

**Rating:** A-. Just like before, Perkins won me over here. He really



has no business being in there with names like this and he's more than shown he belongs at the top of this division. I had a blast watching him through and you can add him to the list of names that TNA managed to screw up and let go over to WWE. Another great match here to cap off a great night.

Perkins is presented with the trophy and title but he needs to see someone about his chest, which is terribly, terribly bruised. He talks about how this trophy is for everyone and he can't believe he's here. Perkins celebrates to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** A+. You think this one needs an explanation? This tournament was absolutely incredible and one of the best displays of wrestling I've seen in a long time. For me, the whole thing works for how simple they kept things. This started two months ago yesterday and we're DONE. No three months of round robin before we get to the actual tournament, no waiting around with people who had no chance being teased and nothing that was ever boring.

This tournament flew by and was so much fun that I started looking forward to watching it every week. I don't think it's something that would work all the time but it's going to be a great addition to Raw for a match or two a week and that's all it needs to be. Excellent tournament and an outstanding finale.

### Results

Gran Metalik b. Zack Sabre Jr. – Metalik Driver

TJ Perkins b. Kota Ibushi – Kneebar

Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa b. Noam Dar/Cedric Alexander – Running knee/superkick combo to Dar

TJ Perkins b. Gran Metalik – Kneebar

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# Cruiserweight Classic – August 24, 2016: A Surprise

## Cruiserweight Classic

Date: August 24, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Daniel Bryan, Mauro Ranallo

We're wrapping up the second round tonight and after this show we'll have the final eight competitors. There are only three weeks left before the finale and it's hard to imagine that this isn't going to be around much longer. The wrestling has gotten even better as the tournament goes on, which really is amazing given where they started. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the tournament via a HHH voiceover as well as seeing the (really simple) trophy being unveiled.

Look back at last week's show.

Preview of tonight's three matches.

Opening sequence.

The announcers talk about last week and tonight.

Lince Dorado is here because it's all he's ever wanted to do and he's a hybrid wrestler.

Rich Swann says wrestling saved his life.

Second Round: Lince Dorado vs. Rich Swann

Puerto Rico vs. USA here. The goofy Swann gets his traditional ALL NIGHT LONG chant to start us off. They start fast with some nice early near falls and neither guy being able to pull off a

headscissors. Dorado keeps cutting off Rich's dancing so he can do an Alex Wright style dance.

Swann sends him outside and does some dancing of his own until a springboard missile dropkick knocks Rich outside as well. A HUGE dive from Dorado takes Swann down again but he comes right back with a neckbreaker. That means more dancing before he lifts Dorado up for a suplex but kneels down and bends Dorado over his neck for a hold. That's certainly new.

Unfortunately it can't last long due to the laws of physics so it's time to strike it out. Dorado blocks a top rope hurricanrana and they hit bicycle kicks at the same time for a double knock down. Back up and Dorado gets in a few kicks to take over until Rich gets two off a DDT. The standing 450 only hits Dorado's raised knees and Swann is planted with a reverse hurricanrana. Lince misses his shooting star press though and Swann's Phoenix Splash lands on Dorado's face to send him to the final eight at 8:15.

**Rating:** C+. Swann is an NXT guy and almost guaranteed to make a run in this thing and the lighthearted character is starting to grow on me. Not everything needs to be this big serious moment so throwing a dancing guy who can wrestle so well in there helps a lot. Good enough match here but nothing compared to some of the other stuff they've done.

We look at Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa losing to the Revival at Takeover.

Gargano, with Ciampa next to him, says he doesn't want to lose again.

Drew Gulak likes to hurt people.

Zack Sabre Jr. knows how to wrestle and can escape anything.

Drew Gulak vs. Zack Sabre Jr.

USA vs. England. Gulak won't shake hands to start and tries to take it to the mat early on. Drew actually gets the better of it with a straitjacket choke, only to have Zack take him to the mat and crank on both arms at the same time. The more aggressive Gulak chops him

in the corner and works on a double arm hold of his own. Sabre tells him to come on so Gulak slaps him in the face. Gulak's top rope clothesline is countered into a Fujiwara armbar but it's reversed into a Gory Special with Sabre's arms being bent so far backwards that they cross behind his back.

Sabre gets out and puts on an octopus hold which is quickly reversed into an ankle lock. Drew can't hang on to an electric chair so Sabre reverses into a Kimura with a bodyscissors. Gulak slams him down to escape until a penalty kick to the chest gets two for Zack. A slap to the face knocks Sabre silly but the dragon scissors is countered into rollup to pin Gulak at 8:28.

**Rating:** B. Now that's more like it as they were just countering everything and turning it into one hold after another until someone finally got caught. That's an important word as Gulak didn't so much get defeated as much as he got caught in the end. It's good to see Sabre get tested like this after looking so dominant in the first round. Good stuff here and really fun to watch.

Drew shakes hands after the match.

TJ Perkins is a high flier and one of the best in the world.

Johnny Gargano is one of the best in the world period and had a great match against Tommaso Ciampa to get to the second round.

### Second Round: TJ Perkins vs. Johnny Gargano

Philippines vs. USA. They're playing up the idea that Gargano is four days removed from Takeover so he might not be 100% coming in. Perkins takes him to the mat to start and grabs a Muta Lock for a bit. Back up and Gargano sends TJ outside for a suicide dive but his knee is banged up again. Perkins comes right back with that rocking horse hold of his, followed by a surfboard for good measure.

Gargano gets out of a headscissors and spears Perkins through the ropes for no cover. A big sitout powerbomb plants Johnny and we get a BOTH THESE GUYS chant. They head outside with Johnny hitting a running flip dive but his leg crashing into a table. Back in and they slug it out even more with Perkins hitting a springboard

dropkick to the face. A kneebar doesn't work as Gargano reverses into a modified crossface. Perkins is sent face first into the middle buckle with authority for two more and both guys are spent. TJ is smart enough to kick the leg out and roll into a kneebar for the submission at 12:18.

**Rating:** B. Now THAT is a surprise as Gargano was probably one of the major favorites to win this whole thing. I really like the storytelling here though as they set up the knee injury from a show that hadn't even taken place yet and tied it together here. Gargano giving up because of the knee makes sense and it made for a great story as a result. That kind of thing amazes me and they pulled it off really well here.

Here are the quarterfinal matchups:

Akira Tozawa

Gran Metalik

Zack Sabre Jr.

Noam Dar

Brian Kendrick

Kota Ibushi

TJ Perkins

Rich Swann

**Overall Rating:** B+. Another night of great wrestling with a huge surprise to wrap things up. Those last eight names should make for an amazing final three weeks and I'm really looking forward to whatever they have planned going forward. There's almost no way the next few rounds won't be great as this show has proven that they can pull off almost anything in the ring.

### Results

Rich Swann b. Lince Dorado – Phoenix Splash

Zack Sabre Jr. b. Drew Gulak – Rollup

TJ Perkins b. Johnny Gargano – Kneebar

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# NXT Takeover: Back To Brooklyn: That Crowd Man

## Takeover: Back to Brooklyn

Date: August 20, 2016

Location: Barclays Center, New York City, New York

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

This might be NXT's biggest show of the year, especially after last year's amazing double main event that really turned Bayley into a star. This year's main event could be even bigger with Samoa Joe defending the NXT Title against Shinsuke Nakamura and Bayley trying to get the Women's Title back against the monster champion Asuka. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at the opening of last year's show with HHH in the ring and the lights showing the huge crowd. That shot told you there was something different with this show and it was going to be something special.

Various people sit down for interviews, all looking a bit nervous. They all talk about where they were a year ago and how cool it is for them to move this far forward in such a short amount of time.

Almost everyone says they take over Brooklyn. Bayley: "Tonight, I take over Brooklyn. Again."

### Austin Aries vs. No Way Jose

Jose loves to have fun and Aries is serious. In the traditionally big NXT entrance, Jose comes out with a huge conga line around the ring. Aries hides in the corner to start and the very vocal crowd is all the way behind him. Jose accepts a left handshake but slaps Aries in the face. A BIG right hand knocks Aries outside and Jose follows with an ax handle off the apron. Aries finally gets an opening by dropping Jose throat first across the top rope but a few chops take him down again.

The Last Chancery out of nowhere has Jose in trouble but he crawls over for the break. Jose grabs a TKO for two, only to have Aries send him outside for the suicide dive. Back in and Aries' suplex is countered into something like a falcon arrow for a very close two. Jose punches him down again and is showing some great fire here. The running corner dropkick gets two for Aries and another Last Chancery makes Jose tap at 10:40.

**Rating:** B-. I think this is proof that Jose is just waiting on a serious gimmick to go somewhere. Jose felt like someone doing a serious version of a comedy gimmick and looked great here, including the more than good enough wrestling abilities. Aries needed this win a lot more though as he really hasn't done anything special since debuting way back in the spring.

Aries puts on another Last Chancery after the match but Hideo Itami comes out for the save and uses the GTS for the first time on NXT TV. That's a good idea as they both need a feud.

Ric Flair is here.

### Billie Kay vs. Ember Moon

This is Moon's debut. Ember starts fast and shows off some awesome agility with a headscissors and a hiptoss before showing off red eyes. A spinning cross body gets two for Moon but she gets caught in an Eat Defeat to give Billie two. Billie bends her over the shoulder

and chokes at the same time (picture a Gory Stretch but with a choke). Ember makes her comeback with a kick to the ribs and a butterfly suplex followed by a top rope Stunner (it looked better than it sounds) for the pin at 4:32.

**Rating:** C. I go back and forth on how much offense someone should get on a debuting wrestler here. You don't want it to be a squash but at the same time you want the newcomer to look like a threat. The eyes and the finisher looked great (though if that's botched, it's going to look HORRIBLE) and that's all that matters though. Moon could be the fresh blood that the division needs and that's a great thing going forward.

Earlier today, Bobby Roode insulted Brooklyn and said he was more Manhattan.

We recap Bobby Roode vs. Andrade Cien Almas, which basically means Roode debuted and needed a first victim.

#### Bobby Roode vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Roode's entrance gets the pop of the night and he comes out on a high podium which is lowered down to the stage. Oh and the entire crowd sings his entrance before starting a loud BOBBY ROODE chant. Poor Almas has to follow that and the lack of caring is just painful to see. Fans: "THIS IS GLORIOUS!" Roode takes him down a few times to start and the fans cheer him to no end with a GLORIOUS chant.

Almas finally gets to do something by knocking Roode to the floor and posing on the apron for a cute bit. That just earns him a crotching on the top though and we hit the chinlock. Back up and Almas dropkicks him off the top to set up a springboard corkscrew plancha. Almas has to backflip out of a German superplex but his Lionsault into a standing moonsault hits knees.

Andrade wins a slugout and kicks Roode into the corner to set up the running knee strike. Not that it matters as Roode kicks him in the face and scores with a spinebuster. A pumphandle slam (the Glorious Bomb, a good name for a not great move) puts Almas away at 10:28.

**Rating:** C+. I'll give Almas some credit here for trying to make



something out of a match where he had no chance. The fans only wanted to see Roode here and it was clear that this was his showcase instead of anything else. It's easy to imagine Roode or Aries as the next challenger to the NXT Title as it's not like there's a better option for a non-Takeover challenger.

We get a video of a riot and anarchy with the word SANITY spray painted on a wall.

HHH and the guys from Orange County Choppers unveil the Cruiserweight Classic trophy. It's a black column with a globe on top. Uh, yeah. The finals will be on September 14.

Tommaso Ciampa throws Johnny Gargano a Do It Yourself shirt. I guess that's their official name.

We recap Gargano/Ciampa vs. Revival. Gargano and Ciampa beat Revival and then Revival won the Tag Team Titles a few weeks later, meaning Gargano and Ciampa were the obvious first challengers.

Tag Team Titles: Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa vs. Revival

Dash and Dawson are defending. Dawson works on Ciampa's wrist to start but Tommaso sends him to the floor for a breather. Back in and the challengers take over with some double teaming (your heroes) until Gargano grabs an armbar. A chase sets up a four way staredown with the champs being knocked down to reset things a bit. The breather is short lived though as Gargano and Ciampa dive onto both of them to keep the champs in trouble.

Ciampa finally gets pulled into the wrong corner and Graves calls is clubberin. Wilder grabs a chinlock for a bit until Ciampa kicks both champs down. That's not enough for a tag though as Wilder is smart enough to pull Gargano off the apron. I love it when teams show thinking like that. We hit a bodyscissors on Ciampa with Dawson rubbing a forearm across his face. The referee doesn't see a tag to Gargano and the distracted referee also misses something like a Demolition Decapitator on Ciampa.

Dawson misses a charge into the post though and Dash crotches himself, allowing the hot tag to Gargano. Johnny cleans house and

spears Dawson through the ropes for a near fall. Some heel chicanery allows Dawson to grab a DDT (which works more because he got a pin with it recently) for two. It's back to Ciampa though and Dawson gets caught in the flip over armbar, only to have Dash dive in for the save.

Everything breaks down and Gargano breaks up a double suplex to let Ciampa get two more off a small package in the very hot near fall of the match. Ciampa knees Dawson in the head but the Shatter Machine is broken up, leaving Dash to take the knee/superkick combo for three but Dawson put the foot on the rope. That earns Dawson a superkick to the floor but he pulls Ciampa outside, allowing Dash to chop block Gargano. That middle rope stomp to the leg that got rid of Big Cass wrecks the knee even worse and a reverse Figure Four makes Johnny tap at 19:06.

**Rating:** A-. It's not quite their classic with American Alpha but the Revival is looking more and more like the best team in a long time every time they get in the ring. They just can't do anything wrong at this point which is even more important when you consider how basic they are. This leaves either TM61 or the Authors of Pain as the next challengers, assuming Gargano/Ciampa don't get a rematch due to the false finish. Great match.

Ciampa and Gargano get a standing ovation.

Sasha Banks, Becky Lynch and Charlotte are here.

We hear about the third official theme song for the show. I'm not even sure I get the idea of an official song for a show, let alone three for a show that isn't going to run two and a half hours.

We recap Asuka vs. Bayley in a rematch from their match in Dallas. Asuka was way too much for Bayley, despite Bayley dominating the first half of the match. It's taken some time to set up the rematch as Bayley wasn't ready to fight either mentally or physically. Tonight we're in the place where Bayley made magic once before and now she has to do it again.

Women's Title: Bayley vs. Asuka

Bayley is defending and there's a Hugger Section. You know that's killer spelled backwards (some of you might not get that one). Bayley expands the entrance this time with tube men at ringside, giving us a great surprised expression from the referee. The fans are split here as we're told Bayley's headband is from part of her gear at last year's Brooklyn show.

Bayley tries a rollup but dives into a knee to the face to send her outside. Back in and Asuka hip attacks her down, followed by more shots to the face. Asuka is hardly taking this seriously as she kicks Bayley in the face for another near fall. Bayley comes back with ten rams into the buckle though and a running knee drop gets two. The running hip attack is blocked for a change but Bayley misses a high crossbody.

Not that it matters as Bayley puts her in the Tree of Woe for a running elbow but Asuka grabs a Brock Lock of all things. An ankle lock makes things even worse for Bayley and Asuka fires off some kicks to the chest. Bayley goes with the Sting vs. Vader formula of telling the monster to hit her harder, earning herself a spinning backfist. A powerbomb doesn't quite work so Bayley switches to a Dominator (good save).

Asuka grabs the Asuka Lock out of nowhere but it's reversed into a Bayley to Belly for a very near fall. You could see Sasha and Becky jump to their feet on the counter. Back up and Bayley charges into the Asuka Lock in the middle of the ring but she flips over into a cover for two. That's fine with Asuka who kicks Bayley in the head to retain 14:10.

**Rating:** B. Good match here, assuming you can get by the referee telling them how much time they had left (happened in the previous match too) and telegraphing the finish. Asuka winning here makes sense and can we PLEASE send Bayley to the main roster already? There's nothing left for her to do down here and there's no reason to keep her down here, including helping to grow the division or whatever they've said for months now. Just let her go up there where they can have her babysit their "star" Eva Marie.

Asuka helps Bayley up and Bayley raises the champ's hand. Asuka leaves and Bayley gets the big THANK YOU chant which really feels like the sendoff. Bayley hugs her fellow Horsewomen before leaving.

We recap Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Samoa Joe. Nakamura debuted back in April and has taken the promotion by storm. Joe on the other hand is the NXT Champion and basically unbeatable. That sounds like a recipe for a big showdown. This gets the music video treatment.

Mick and Noelle Foley and Finn Balor are here.

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

Joe is defending and a violinist plays Nakamura to the ring. They go right at it to start with Joe taking it to the mat but Nakamura holds him off before Joe can get in anything major. Joe's headlock keeps Nakamura in trouble but he comes back with knees to the chest. Good Vibrations gets on Joe's nerves and they head outside for a chop out before barely making it back in.

Back in and Nakamura kicks him in the head, only to miss a knee drop on the apron to send the knee straight into the floor. That earns him a suicide elbow from the champ, followed by more heavy kicks and stomps to the ribs. We hit a dragon sleeper of all things as this really hasn't been the match I was expecting. It's not bad mind you but when you're expecting a knock down dragout fight and get a hard hitting match, it's a bit surprising.

Joe does the powerbomb into the Boston crab into the STF into the Crossface but Joe lets him up. Nakamura kicks the champ in the head and loads him onto the top rope for the running knee to the ribs. More knees to the head have Joe in trouble as we're getting into the hard hitting part now. The Rock Bottom out of the corner drops Nakamura but a middle rope kick to the chest puts the champ down again.

Nakamura grabs a triangle choke but can't get it on full, allowing Joe to reverse into a Cloverleaf. The Koquina Clutch goes on without the legs fully wrapped, allowing Nakamura to get to the ropes. The referee says go to the finish as Kinshasa is countered with a snap

powerslam. A quick Muscle Buster gets two, followed by Kinshasa for the same with Joe holding his face. The middle rope knee to the back sets up another Kinshasa for the pin and the title at 21:14.

**Rating:** A. Was there really another option here? This wasn't quite the war I was expecting but they nailed the ending and went with the best possible choice to wrap up the show. Nakamura taking the title and remaining undefeated makes sense to give the show a special feeling. Joe likely stays around for a well deserved rematch but he'll be on the main roster by the day after Wrestlemania at the very latest, if not in the Rumble.

Joe has to be helped up the ramp as Nakamura celebrates to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** A-. Somehow that's on the lower end of this series' spectrum. The main event and Tag Team Titles matches are both worth seeing and bring this one up into the realm of greatness though and that's what NXT is all about. Nothing on here is bad, they set up some stuff for the future and gave us some great wrestling to go with it. Above all else though is the crowd. They basically had the same attendance that Summerslam will have tomorrow and that's impressive no matter how you look at it. I would tell you to check this out but does anyone not watch these shows? Great stuff, as expected.

### Results

Austin Aries b. No Way Jose – Last Chancery

Ember Moon b. Billie Kay – Top rope Stunner

Bobby Roode b. Andrade Cien Almas – Glorious Bomb

Revival b. Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa – Reverse Figure Four to Gargano

Asuka b. Bayley – Kick to the head

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Samoa Joe – Kinshasa

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## **New Column: I'll Die Before I Dishonor Brooklyn By Going Back To Takeover Summerslam**

Three previews in one, meaning my fingers are rather tired.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-ill-die-before-i-dishonor-brooklyn-by-going-back-to-takeover-summerslam/>

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## **Cruiserweight Classic – August 3, 2016: Daniel Bryan's Man Crush**

### **Cruiserweight Classic**

Date: August 3, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Daniel Bryan, Mauro Ranallo

It's the final night of the first round as this tournament has been as well structured as anything WWE has produced in a long time. Tonight we'll have another four matches to complete the field of sixteen for the second round. It should be interesting to see which people get the star treatment this week as you can almost always see who WWE wants to push, meaning they might be a big deal in the upcoming Cruiserweight division. Let's get to it.

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

Preview of tonight's matches.

Opening sequence.

Corey Graves looks at the updated brackets.

Rich Swann says he won't take anyone lightly because people have spent years telling him he'll never make it.

Jason Lee of Hong Kong has been wrestling for eight years and wrestles with a kung fu style.

#### First Round: Rich Swann vs. Jason Lee

America vs. Hong Kong and dancing vs. nunchucks. They run the ropes to start with Swann diving over Lee and catching him with a dropkick for two. The fans are WAY behind Swann and chant ALL NIGHT LONG as he holds an armbar. I hope he does more than that tonight. Lee comes back with some very fast strikes and an enziguri for two. Swann knees him in the head and jumps to the top for a hurricanrana but Lee comes back with a DDT. La Majistral gets two for Jason as Bryan is amazed by Lee's speed. Swann comes right back with a kick to the head and a standing 450 gives him the pin at 3:49.

**Rating:** C+. Both guys looked good here but you knew they weren't going to give Jason the pin over an NXT guy. Swann is really over with the crowd already and that standing 450 looked cool. I know Lee isn't likely to go anywhere in WWE but it's cool to see people like him get a shot, even if it's a one off like this.

Gurv Sihra, brother of Harv from last week, grew up watching cruiserweight wrestling and he can't wait to represent India.

Noam Dar wants to represent Scotland.

#### First Round: Noam Dar vs. Gurv Sihra

Scotland vs. India. Dar starts fast with a dropkick to the knee but gets caught in a headlock. Sihra can't get in a backbreaker so Noam starts back in on the knee and dropkicks him in the side of the head as a bonus. Another dropkick in the corner gets two but Gurv comes back with a spinwheel kick for two, only to miss a top rope elbow due to wasting time on a handheld Bollywood camera (as in the old Hollywood Blonds taunt). Noam uses the crash to grab a kneebar for the tap at 5:23.

**Rating:** C. I wasn't as interested here but I can always go for something as simple as working on the knee from the start to set up a leg submission at the end. Noam looked a lot better here and Gurv really did look young out there. This wasn't much of a match but again it didn't overstay its welcome, which has been a great thing about this whole tournament.

Fabian Aichner wants to see what it's like to wrestle outside of Italy where there isn't much of a wrestling scene.

Jack Gallagher, in a suit, is a British gentleman.

#### First Round: Fabian Aichner vs. Jack Gallagher

Italy vs. England. Jack already has more of a character than almost anyone else in this tournament. Gallagher spins out of a wristlock to start and does it again nearly in slow motion, much to Daniel's delight. A very British toehold keeps Aichner in trouble but the much bigger Italian runs him over with a shoulder. Some loud chops set up a slightly botched springboard kick to the chest and we hit a chinlock.

A pinfall reversal sequence results in Gallagher charging into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. Aichner surprises everyone with a double springboard moonsault for two, only to have Jack come back with a guillotine choke. Gallagher gets lifted into a suplex but powerbombed down and the fans boo the heck out of Aichner for beating on Bryan's new man crush. A great looking running dropkick



knocks Fabian silly enough for the pin at 6:47.

**Rating:** B. Oh yeah this was a lot of fun. Gallagher is like the stereotypical British wrestler you would see in a video game but he's turned up to twelve or so. Bryan was gushing over him and I can't say I really blame him. Aichner was no slouch either and I really hope he gets another shot somewhere else.

The guys get a THANK YOU BOTH chant. Daniel: "I'm in love."

Video on Johnny Gargano vs. Tommaso Ciampa, who are best friends outside the ring but will fight as hard as they can to advance here. Gargano and Ciampa both say they'll win.

#### First Round: Johnny Gargano vs. Tommaso Ciampa

America vs. America here. They take a few seconds before shaking hands and it's Gargano with an armbar to start. A very loud elbow to the jaw knocks Johnny's head around and Tommaso mocks the "Johnny Wrestling" chants. Another hard elbow has Johnny in trouble and we get a C DUB C chant. Tommaso grabs what looks like White Noise but climbs the ropes instead of crashing down, allowing Johnny to slip out and superkick him through the legs.

A powerbomb brings Ciampa down and a suicide dive makes things even worse. Back in and they just kick each other in the head over and over, leaving Gargano looking rather shaken up. They chop it out on the apron and White Noise only gives Tommaso two. Johnny looks completely out of it and Ciampa can't bring himself to knee Gargano in the face.

The distraction lets Johnny get in a superkick but he walks into Project Ciampa (powerbomb into a Backstabber) for two. The stunned look on Ciampa's face is excellent. Some chops rock Johnny and a right hand just makes Ciampa angry. Ciampa loads up his armbar but Johnny counters into a crucifix for the surprise pin at 10:49.

**Rating:** B+. This was awesome stuff with some excellent selling from Gargano. They did a great job of making the evil Ciampa a little more human as he was afraid to hurt his friend and tag partner, only to get caught in a rollup at the end. These two are going to get a

Tag Team Title shot at Takeover: Brooklyn and with a match like this it's easy to see why. Really good stuff here and probably the match of the tournament so far.

Ciampa can't shake hands post match but comes back to hug Johnny.

Here are the updated brackets:

Akira Tozawa

Jack Gallagher

Tajiri

Gran Metalik

Drew Gulak

Zack Sabre Jr.

Noam Dar

Hoho Lun

Brian Kendrick

Tony Nese

Kota Ibushi

Cedric Alexander

TJ Perkins

Johnny Gargano

Lince Dorado

Rich Swann

**Overall Rating:** A-. I'm digging this show more and more every week and it's cool to see so many different styles involved. Somehow they keep things fresh every week and go through things fast enough that it doesn't get dull. This really does feel like something different and that makes for interesting shows every week. Things are going to get even better now that we have the first round out of the way and that's just cool.

Results

Rich Swann b. Jason Lee – Standing 450

Noam Dar b. Gurv Sihra – Kneebar

Jack Gallagher b. Fabian Aichner – Running corner dropkick

Johnny Gargano b. Tommaso Ciampa – Crucifix

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