

# NXT – September 27, 2017: There's the Name

## NXT

Date: September 27, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson, Mauro Ranallo

It's NXT bay-bay as Adam Cole is making his in-ring debut tonight against Sanity's Eric Young. While you can almost book the screwy finish from here, that doesn't mean it won't be entertaining along the way. Other than that we're starting to get ready for the next Takeover in Houston. Let's get to it.

William Regal opens the show by announcing a four way for the vacant Women's Title at Takeover: Houston. Kairi Sane is already in the match and in two weeks, we'll be having three qualifying matches for the other spots.

Opening sequence.

Here's a ticked off Sanity to open things up. They wrote the book on showing up to make their mark and all that matters is the chaos. Tonight, Young is taking Cole to the edge of Sanity.

### Lars Sullivan vs. Oney Lorcan

This should be hard hitting. Before the match, Lorcan says he doesn't like Sullivan coming in here like he owns the place. Lorcan gets run over to start but comes back with a dropkick. Sullivan easily shrugs it off though and sends Lorcan outside with ease. Back up and Sullivan gets sent outside again, where he catches Oney's over the top dive in midair like he's nothing.

Lars charges into an elbow in the corner so Lorcan hammers away, including some running European uppercuts. Those are shrugged off too though and one heck of a clothesline turns him inside out. The standing Boss Man Slam ends Lorcan at 2:54. This was a heck of a fight and Sullivan looked more like a monster than usual.

Lars goes after him again but Danny Burch pulls Oney out.

Ruby Riot is ready to face the Iconic Duo again but she is NOT friends with Nikki Cross.

#### Heavy Machinery vs. Demitrious Bronson/Patrick Scott

Scott and Knight start things off and I'll let you guess which one is tossed down. Knight lifts him up in a wristlock so it's off to Bronson, who gets run over with a double shoulder. Bronson gets in a good looking dropkick but dives into an overhead belly to belly. Otis even stops for a little dance and it's the Compactor for the double pin at 3:15.

**Rating:** D+. I like Heavy Machinery a lot as they're just a fun act. They don't come off as anything more than two big guys who can do impressive power stuff and there's no reason to try anything else. Not everything has to be some high concept and this is as entertaining as it can be for what it is.

Regal gave Johnny Gargano a rematch with Andrade Cien Almas in two weeks. He also has a special idea for Houston.

Roderick Strong is ready for his NXT Title shot next week. Drew McIntyre knows what he's in for. It may be business, but all business is personal. It's personal to him because he wants to be NXT Champion.

#### Liv Morgan vs. Vanessa Borne

Both of them say they'll be the next Women's Champion. Feeling out process to start until Liv gets two off a backslide. Vanessa's clothesline is avoided by a Matrix so Borne just slams her head into the mat a few times. A drop toehold sends Borne into the ropes and an enziguri makes things even worse for her. Back up and Borne lifts her up, only to get caught in a Codebreaker for the pin at 3:42.

**Rating:** D. As usual, Morgan makes sense on paper but she really isn't doing much for me. Then again I'm not sure how strong they're going to push her as there are far better options to go after the Women's Title. I could see her in the four way but she didn't really show me anything here. The same is true for Borne, who didn't stand

out in the Mae Young Classic either.

We look back at Velveteen Dream interrupting Aleister Black last week.

Black doesn't want to see someone acting like they're special in this age of individuality.

Video on Fabian Aichner from the Cruiserweight Classic.

#### Fabian Aichner vs. Kassius Ohno

Ohno cravates him to the mat but gets caught in an armbar. A big boot sends Aichner to the floor but he comes right back with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. One heck of a springboard dive to the floor takes Ohno down and there's the old NXT chant. The aggressive Aichner can't pick him up for a powerbomb (shocking) and Ohno grabs a small package for two. A powerslam drops Ohno but he avoids a double springboard moonsault. The Cyclone kick puts Aichner away at 4:49.

**Rating:** B. If he doesn't have one already, I'd be stunned if Aichner doesn't get a job out of this. He showed off a great mixture of power and speed here which isn't something that's done this impressively most of the time. Ohno getting the win makes sense but Aichner was definitely the star here.

Drew McIntyre is ready for Strong and whomever is next.

Video on Kairi Sane winning the Mae Young Classic.

#### Adam Cole vs. Eric Young

Cole's normally tiny arms are already starting to look bigger. Bobby Fish, Kyle O'Reilly and Sanity are all at ringside. Before the match, Cole asks how this place survived without him. You can feel the change in the air and the shock to the system is the three of them. Cole says they are undisputed and this is their era. So there's the name for the first time.

They stare at each other to start with Cole demanding that Young fight him. Young takes him down without too much effort and grabs a swinging neckbreaker. The guys get in a staredown on the floor

though and Cole gets in a cheap shot to take over. Cole's chinlock doesn't last long so he enziguris Young to the floor instead.

Another staredown on the outside lets Cole knee him in the back and we hit the second chinlock. That goes nowhere so Young fights up and hits another neckbreaker. The fight on the floor finally breaks out so Young dives onto them instead of dropping the top rope elbow. Back in and a running knee to the face ends Young at 5:35.

**Rating:** C. The ending was actually a bit of a surprise as it's far more of a clean finish than I was expecting. You had to give Cole the upper hand to end this one and him winning was the right call. Young didn't really lose clean anyway and it's not like this is heading anywhere other than a really big tag match, likely having Undisputed Era winning the Tag Team Titles at some point in there.

**Overall Rating:** B. The main event was actually one of the weaker matches on this show as the opener and Ohno vs. Aichner were both really entertaining. This was more about showing some of the new talents around here and setting up stuff for the future. They set up the NXT Title match next week as well, making this quite the use of an hour.

### Results

Lars Sullivan b. Oney Lorcan – Standing Boss Man Slam

Heavy Machinery b. Demitrious Bronson/Patrick Scott – Compactor

Liv Morgan b. Vanessa Borne – Codebreaker

Kassius Ohno b. Fabian Aichner – Cyclone kick

Adam Cole b. Eric Young – Running knee to the face

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# NXT – September 6, 2017: Depends on the Version

## **NXT**

Date: September 6, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson, Mauro Ranallo

There's a lot going on around NXT at the moment but the big story is the status of Asuka and the NXT Women's Title. While still undefeated, Asuka has suffered a broken collar bone, which would keep her on the shelf for a long time, though she'll be here tonight. Other than that we have Adam Cole, Bobby Fish and Kyle O'Reilly as the ROHNEW. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Hideo Itami losing at Takeover: Chicago and turning heel as a result. Kassius Ohno had been trying to calm him down for months but it eventually turned violent. Tonight they're squaring off in a No DQ match.

Opening sequence.

### Andrade Cien Almas vs. Cezar Bononi

Zelina Vega is on commentary and says she's known Almas for seven years. Their relationship seems to be business only at the moment. Bononi drives him into the corner, only to have Almas light him up with a chop. Vega takes credit for the aggression as Bononi comes back with a clothesline and dropkick. Not bad athleticism for someone his size. Almas gets in a knee to the back in the corner and the hammerlock DDT ends Bononi at 2:53.

We look back at Cole and company attacking Drew McIntyre last week

and William Regal chasing them off.

Regal says the trio knows this can't happen again and all fighting will take place in the ring.

An interviewer is standing outside Asuka's door when the Velveteen Dream comes up to say that he'll speak soon about someone who caught his eye in Brooklyn.

#### Lars Sullivan vs. ???/???/???

Sullivan doesn't want tagging and tosses all three of them around like they're something that is tossed around with ease. Two of them are thrown into each other in the corner for a splash and it's three straight standing Boss Man Slams for the pin at 1:18.

Post match No Way Jose comes out to say Sullivan messed up the conga line in Brooklyn and it's payback time. Sullivan beats him down too.

There's something odd here. On the live stream version of the show, this aired normally. On the on demand version though, about forty seconds into the match, we cut away to the clip that would follow the match. There's no mention of the end of the match or Jose's involvement and it just picks up like nothing happened. I've never seen that before.

Johnny Gargano says Brooklyn was amazing and the DIY shirt didn't change anything. He just lost focus. Riddick Moss and Tino Sabbatelli come in to say they broke up DIY at Full Sail. Gargano laughs it off and offers to fight one of them next week.

Video on Sonya DeVille.

We go to a clip of Sanity being laid out in the parking lot.

Sanity doesn't care about who these three are or think they are. The only thing that matters is chaos.

#### Zeda vs. Sonya DeVille

Zeda is from the Mae Young Classic. Sonya gets rolled up for an early one before easily taking her down. A slam sends Zeda bailing to the floor and a kick to the chest drops her back inside. That's enough for Sonya as a triangle choke ends Zeda at 1:42.

Earlier today, Regal was watching an in-ring workout at the Performance Center when Ruby Riot came in to ask for a handicap match against Billie Kay and Peyton Royce. Regal won't do that but if Ruby can find a partner, she can have a tag match.

#### Kassius Ohno vs. Hideo Itami

No DQ due to Itami hitting him low to break up their previous match. Ohno wastes no time in slamming him down and dropping a leg before kicking Itami in the head. Itami pops back up and backdrops him to the apron, followed by a ram into the post. Back in and Itami nails a running hesitation dropkick in the corner. It's already chair time with Itami holding it up to block the rolling elbow as we take a break.

Back with Itami slowly kicking him in the face and telling Ohno to bring it. Ohno kicks him in the face a bit harder, followed by a Shining Wizard. They're certainly liking the head strikes so far. The GTS doesn't work so Ohno BLASTS him with the elbow to knock Itami outside. Another forearm (Ohno: "HOW MUCH DOES THIS HURT???" ) sends Itami up the ramp but he suplexes Ohno right back down.

Itami hits another hesitation dropkick into the chair into Ohno's face for a near fall. The kickout makes Itami demand respect (From the chair perhaps?) but the GTS still won't work. Instead Ohno hits a heck of a low blow, followed by another rolling elbow for the pin at 12:21.

**Rating:** B-. This needed some more time and the ending really surprised me (not a bad thing). Ohno hasn't really gotten a big win in months now so this should revitalize him for a good while. They didn't do much with the stipulation until the ending, but that's what the story called for here. It was good, but certainly nothing great or with a big feeling.

Next week: RubyRiot/??? vs. Billie Kay/Peyton Royce and Pete Dunne defends the UK Title against Wolfgang.

Regal brings out Asuka for the big update. The fans cut her off with a THANK YOU ASUKA chant before she talks about all the great

superstars she's fought around here. She's grown so much around here and is grateful for NXT. Regal praises her for her efforts in NXT but says people have started to recognize her lack of competition. She is now in negotiations with both Raw and Smackdown, which draws a heck of a YES chant.

However, that means she's stepping down as Women's Champion. The locker room comes out to the stage to applaud her (Riot claps weirdly) and Asuka says NXT comes with her everywhere. Ember Moon comes to the ring for a big hug and here's HHH, flanked by a guy carrying flowers. He can carry Great Khali but not a bouquet?

They trade the title for the flowers and HHH announces her as the undefeated NXT Women's Champion at 523 days to end the show. I'm not sure what needs to be added here. She's dominated NXT and is going to be a big deal on the main roster too. I'm not wild on vacating titles but she deserves this and the injury was a perfect way out.

**Overall Rating:** B. Odd edit in the Sullivan match aside, this was a rather good show. The Asuka part was especially good and the main event was a nice brawl. I could have gone for another trio appearance but it's never been NXT's style to have the same acts week to week. Good show here and we'll get back to the big stuff later on.

### Results

Andrade Cien Almas b. Cezar Bononi – Hammerlock DDT

Lars Sullivan b. ???/???/??? – Side Slam

Sonya DeVille b. Zeda – Triangle choke

Kassius Ohno b. Hideo Itami – Rolling elbow

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# NXT – July 26, 2017: First Train To Brooklyn

## **NXT**

Date: July 26, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson

With less than a month to go before Takeover: Brooklyn III, it's time to start getting things ready for the biggest show of the year. We already have the NXT Title match set as Drew McIntyre will challenge Bobby Roode for the title but we need a bit more than that to fill out a card. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Ember Moon vs. Lei'D Tapa

Oh come on didn't I have to watch enough of Tapa in TNA? Tapa runs her over with a clothesline to start but Moon shrugs it off. Moon loads herself up for a superplex but spins around into a regular suplex of her own (Bad News Barrett used to use that move). The Eclipse puts Tapa away at 1:22.

Ember wants Asuka and promises to give her some real competition.

Aleister Black video.

### David Ramos/Timothy Bumpers vs. Authors of Pain

Non-title but hang on a second as Nikki Cross blocks the Authors' path. Cue Sanity in the ring to beat up the jobbers as the Authors and Paul Ellering look on. The Authors hit the ring and the fight is

on (Mauro: "LIKE DONKEY KONG!") with the champs cleaning house without too much effort. No match of course.

The Street Profits are coming.

We look at Cezar Bononi shocking Andrade Cien Almas. Last week, Almas attacked Bononi again at the behest of the now named Zolita Vega.

Earlier today, Vega threatened No Way Jose with Almas' wrath.

#### Velveteen Dream vs. Cezar Bononi

Dream pounds him down without much effort but gets kicked in the jaw and punched in the face. A Falcon Arrow gives Bononi two, only to have Dream come back with a Death Valley Bomb (a Death Valley Driver landing on the back instead of the head). The top rope elbow (Purple Rainmaker) for the pin at 1:39.

Post match Dream calls the NXT audience ugly and says their experience will have to wait.

General Manager William Regal officially makes Moon vs. Asuka for the title in Brooklyn.

Here's McIntyre to talk about his upcoming title match. There are four weeks until Brooklyn and that's not a lot of time. Drew doesn't have a backwards button because he only goes forward. When he was in WWE before, he was the Chosen One and expected to have everything handed to him. That's why he failed though. Once he was gone from WWE, it became clear to him that he had to be the hardest worker in the world. Now McIntyre looks at Roode and sees nothing but entitlement. This isn't Roode's NXT because it belongs to all of the people here. He wants everyone to stand up with him because WE ARE NXT.

Raul Mendoza is ready to face Johnny Gargano next week. Maybe we'll be talking about his rise instead of Gargano's return.

#### Kassius Ohno vs. Hideo Itami

Ohno takes him down by the arm to start and they hit the mat for some grappling. Itami shrugs off a chop so Ohno hammers away even

more, including a basement dropkick to the head. Ohno flips onto the apron but gets kicked in the chest, followed by a middle rope Fameasser. Back from a break with Itami dropping a knee for two and kicking him in the back with a sneer.

A chinlock set up a few more kicks to the chest and it's right back to the chinlockery. Itami dives into a chop though and Ohno runs through a kick, setting up a Shining Wizard. The cyclone boot and a backplash give Ohno two but Itami is right back with a suplex. The GTS doesn't work so Ohno kicks him in the jaw, only to have Itami kick him low for the DQ at 11:44.

**Rating:** C+. They beat the heck out of each other here and I dig the ending with Itami taking the cheater's way out and attacking Ohno when he thought he couldn't beat him. That's a great way to push his heel turn and makes him look like a changed man instead of someone willing to fight with honor. Ohno continues to be a fine upper midcard face who isn't going anywhere in the long term and there's nothing wrong with that.

Itami unloads on him with kicks post match and adds a trio of GTS's with the third landing on the steps.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was kind of an odd show as they had some big stuff announced but a lot of the show was spent on stuff that didn't seem to make the biggest difference. It wasn't bad by any means though and I'm kind of glad they didn't push things when they didn't need to be pushed. NXT has found the right balance of focus and not overdoing things and that's very helpful as we head towards Brooklyn. Two matches are official and I think you can figure out most of what else is coming without too much effort. Not bad with about a month to go.

### Results

Ember Moon b. Lei'D Tapa – Eclipse

Velveteen Dream b. Cezar Bononi – Purple Rainmaker

Kassius Ohno b. Hideo Itami via DQ when Itami kicked him low

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## **NXT – July 5, 2017: Strong vs. Style**

### **NXT**

Date: July 5, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Mauro Ranallo, Percy Watson

The title shows continue as we have the NXT Title on the line tonight. Bobby Roode has gotten far underneath the skin of Roderick Strong, including talking about Strong's wife. The title is up for grabs tonight with a ticked off Strong wanting both the title and a measure of revenge. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Strong and his family arrived earlier today.

### **Sanity vs. Kassius Ohno/Hideo Itami**

Alexander Wolfe and Killian Dain for Sanity here. Ohno blasts Wolfe into the corner to start and it's off to Itami for the kicks in the corner. Dain offers a distraction though and it's Wolfe snapping Itami across the top to take over as we take a break. Back with Itami still in trouble as Dain easily cuts the ring off to keep him

down. Itami comes back with kicks and Ohno is ready for the tag but Itami doesn't even go near him. Instead it's a Falcon Arrow to Wolfe but Ohno gets knocked outside by Dain. The GTS knocks Wolfe silly, only to have Dain crossbody Itami for the pin at 9:44.

**Rating:** C+. Fine storyline advancement here with Itami wanting to prove himself to continue making up for his loss to Roode. I can go for the long form story like this, though I'm not sure where it's going to end. Itami might get a future title shot but a heel turn seems to be in his way first. Well, after a match with Ohno of course.

Ember Moon is training for her comeback at the Performance Center when Ruby Riot interrupts the mini press conference (in the Performance Center mind you) to say she should get the title shot instead. Moon doesn't seem to mind.

We look back at the awesome Last Woman Standing match.

Video on Drew McIntyre.

Drew wants the winner of tonight's title match.

We look at DIY splitting.

Johnny Gargano is back next week.

Billie Kay and Peyton Royce were annoyed that Peyton was the only one to remember Billie's birthday when Andrade Cien Almas got into an argument with his unnamed female associate (Thea Trinidad).

Last week in an untelevised match, Bianca BelAir defeated Aliyah to qualify for the Mae Young Classic.

Video on Bobby Roode vs. Roderick Strong, which is the wealthy/powerful one vs. the family man who has worked to get here.

Strong has victory on his mind.

Roode says Strong is about to face reality.

NXT Title: Roderick Strong vs. Bobby Roode

Strong is challenging. Roode gets the better of an amateur exchange and does his GLORIOUS pose, earning himself a pair of dropkicks. A

half nelson backbreaker drops the champ and we take an early break. Back with Roode grabbing a Blockbuster and stomping away, only to take another backbreaker.

Roode bails to the floor again but sends Strong's knee into the steps to take over. It's time to really work on the knee in the Ric Flair style, including a kick to the knee to cut off a comeback. We come back from a second break and come back with Strong kicking out of a leglock and sending Roode into the buckle.

The Angle Slam and another backbreaker give Strong two but Roode is right back with a chop block to take over again. The knee is wrapped around the post but Strong catches him on the top and shoves the champ out to the floor in a crash. A quick Glorious DDT gets two on Roderick and you can feel the crowd getting into things again, mainly because they knew better than to buy one finisher as the pin.

Now it's Strong popping back up with knees to the face and a backbreaker for the pin....with Roode's foot underneath the ropes. That was a heck of a false finish with Strong all the way outside hugging his wife when he was told it wasn't over. Roode knocks him off the apron and hits a Glorious DDT on the floor (with a sneer at Strong's wife), followed by another inside to retain at 25:34.

**Rating:** B+. I've said this before and it's still true: Roode doesn't do anything flashy but he does everything so smoothly and simply that the style works. The leg work took away from Strong's backbreakers and the Sick Kick, throwing off his entire offense. Couple that with a false finish and Roode being the kind of jerk that glares at a man's wife before dumping him on his head and there's very little to complain about here. It seems that Drew is waiting for the title and that sounds like a great main event in Brooklyn. Strong is similar to Ohno back in May: a one off challenger who will go back into the midcard after a nice rub in the title scene.

Strong hugs his wife to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. This was a lot of setting things up for later and that's all fine considering we already have the Authors of Pain vs.

Heavy Machinery next week. The main event was over half of the show and that meant it had the time that it deserved. That's much better than the main shows where no matter what the main event is, it's rarely going to get more than fifteen minutes. Good show here with a really solid main event.

### Results

Sanity b. Kassius Ohno/Hideo Itami – Crossbody to Itami

Bobby Roode b. Roderick Strong – Glorious DDT

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# **NXT – June 28, 2017: One of the Hardest Things to do**

## **NXT**

Date: June 28, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Percy Watson, Nigel McGuinness

It's a new taping cycle here and that means a major change in the commentary team. This time around Mauro Ranallo has taken over the

lead play by play role which should help for tonight's main event. Tonight, Asuka defends her Women's Title against Nikki Cross in a Last Woman Standing match. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at the Women's Title match and how Cross is a different kind of challenger.

Opening sequence.

Nigel welcomes Mauro to the announcers' team and we preview the title match.

#### Velveteen Dream vs. Hoho Lun

Lun kicks and strikes away to start, earning himself a boot to the face. Dream easily powers him up for a Jackhammer and the top rope elbow puts Lun away at 1:54.

Asuka was arriving earlier today when Cross jumped her car. Security made the save but Asuka got out for the staredown. Why the car didn't keep going when Cross was no longer in front of it isn't clear.

We look back a few weeks at Hideo Itami attacking Oney Lorcan until Kassius Ohno made the save.

The Authors of Pain and Heavy Machinery are in William Regal's office where he makes a Tag Team Title match in two weeks.

#### Hideo Itami vs. Oney Lorcan

Lorcan knocks him into the corner at the bell....and Itami's nose is bleeding so badly that the match is stopped at 1:19, about 60 seconds of which was Itami being checked.

We recap Roderick Strong vs. Bobby Roode with some clips from Strong's bio videos from a few weeks back. Strong has a newborn son and wants the NXT Title to complete his family but Roode laughs off the idea of Strong moving up that fast because Strong isn't on his level. Roode then went a step further by making a bit of a pass at Strong's wife, officially sending Strong over the edge.

#### Hideo Itami vs. Oney Lorcan

Itami has his nose taped up and kicks Lorcan in the jaw at the bell.



A running knee to the back of the head knocks Lorcan even sillier and we take a break with Oney down on the floor. Back with Lorcan hitting his running European uppercuts and a Blockbuster gets two. The GTS is broken up and Itami snaps the throat across the top. Lorcan goes down holding his knee but the GTS finishes him off anyway at 6:45.

**Rating:** C. This was an entertaining fight with two of the stiffest workers in the promotion. I'm not sure if this was supposed to make Itami look like a face or a heel though as fighting through an injury is going to get you cheered but that GTS to an injured opponent was rather heelish. I'd assume the match would have gone the same way with or without the bloody nose though I'd assume the heel turn is still happening.

Post match Itami calls Ohno out...but here's Sanity to go after both of them. Itami is thrown outside (where he lands on Lorcan) as Alexander Wolfe and Killian Dain leave Ohno laying. Wolfe says we need to get rid of these false friendship and Eric Young knows how to do so.

#### Women's Title: Asuka vs. Nikki Cross

Asuka is defending and this is Last Woman Standing. Nikki gets beaten up against the ropes and out to the floor but Asuka's baseball slide gets caught in the ring skirt. She hammers on the champ and builds up a pile of chairs as we take a break. Back with Asuka not being able to suplex Nikki onto said pile but getting sent into the steps instead. Nikki goes into the steps again but Asuka sends her into them as well.

It's trashcan time and that means an ECW chant. Asuka puts the can over Nikki's head and kicks away, followed by a missile dropkick for good measure. They fight over a chair with Asuka being sent outside, only to have Nikki dive into a knee to the head. Another pile of chairs is stacked up in the ring and Nikki is slammed off the top onto the pile for a seven count.

We take another break and come back with Asuka kicking her in the chest, drawing laughter from Nikki. Cross grabs four straight

fisherman's neckbreakers (because she's a bit crazy and actually acts like it for a change) but Asuka is up at nine. Nikki grabs the belt but gets it kicked back into her own face.

She's up at eight and laughing even more before blocking a suplex to the floor. A powerbomb onto the pile of chairs on the floor gets nine on the champ. They stagger up the ramp with Asuka hitting the hip attack off the stage for nine. Nikki picks her up and hits a hanging swinging neckbreaker off the barricade for a sick thud. She's up at nine again and Nikki is looking crazier than usual. A spinning backfist sends Nikki staggering into the back and it's table time.

Nikki sets one up near the announcers' table and grabs a ladder to make things worse. They both climb the ladder and Asuka superplexes her through the announcers' table for a huge crash and the HOLY S\*\*\* chant. Nikki is DONE and Asuka beats the count at nine to retain at 26:00.

**Rating:** B+. It takes something special to know the ending to a match (if nothing else it's hard to believe that anyone other than Ember Moon is taking the title) and still get completely sucked into it. These two beat the heck out of each other in one of the longest women's matches in WWE history and it was all good stuff from start to finish. They kept building up to bigger and bigger spots until the last one finally put the psycho away. I had a blast with this one and it was a heck of a match. Check this out if you get the chance.

Medics come out to check on a smiling Nikki to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. The main event easily carries this as we wrap up the first ever week with women main eventing every WWE show. The rest of the show helped set up some stuff going forward and has me looking forward to the NXT Title match next week and the Tag Team Title match in two weeks. Add in Ember Moon likely getting ready to go after the title again and things are looking up for NXT again, especially when Strong is out of the way and you can have your pick of great challengers to go after Roode's title.

## Results

Velveteen Dream b. Hoho Lun – Top rope elbow

Hideo Itami vs. Oney Lorcan went to a no contest when Itami was injured

Hideo Itami b. Oney Lorcan – GTS

Asuka b. Nikki Cross – Superplex through the announcers' table

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# **NXT – June 21, 2017: That's Very Clubber Lang of Him**

## **NXT**

Date: June 27, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson

It's the last episode of a taping cycle and that means we have a major match to wrap things up as Aleister Black is facing Kassius Ohno in what could be one of the hardest hitting matches we've ever

seen in NXT. If nothing else Black needs to get a win over a bigger name instead of just beating nobodies time after time. Let's get to it.

Quick look at the main event.

Opening sequence.

Bobby Roode and Roderick Strong had a backstage altercation earlier today and we'll see it later.

#### Ember Moon vs. Peyton Royce

I rather enjoy Royce and Billie Kay's entrance but you can feel the pain coming from here. If nothing else I'm glad we get to hear Ember's awesome theme again. Ember sends her cowering into the corner to start and hits a running forearm to really take over. An early Eclipse attempt is broken up but Peyton can't hit a fisherman's superplex (that's a new one).

Instead she sends Ember shoulder first into the post and we take a break. Back with Peyton elbowing the bad shoulder like she should be doing. Ember fights up with the good arm but handsprings into a spinning kick to the face. A headscissors staggers Peyton but the threat of an Eclipse makes Billie pull her to the floor. Ember dives onto Kay to take her out and grabs a crucifix for two. Something like a Widow's Peak (without grabbing the chin) gives Royce two of her own but Ember sends her face first into the buckle. The Eclipse (still looks great) is enough to put Peyton away at 9:01.

**Rating:** C+. Despite Ember being out for several weeks, the Eclipse still feels like one of the deadliest finishers in NXT. They set up a perfect story with Asuka being worried about that one move and seeing it come back felt like a big moment. Instead of possibly finishing Asuka, that feels like the be all and end all for her reign if Ember can hit it. That's a great story and the roof is going to come off when she hits it on Asuka.

Hideo Itami comes up to Ohno to kind of apologize for his recent actions. Ohno understands and thinks they should be good to go, but Itami needs to stick on the good side.

### Ealy Brothers vs. Sanity

Eric Young and Alexander Wolfe this time. Gabriel and Wolfe start things off with the twin being taken down for an elbow drop from Young. Sanity stays on him with alternating beatings, including Wolfe letting Gabriel get close to his brother and then drag him right back. That's the kind of heel work I can always go for. A missed charge allows the hot tag off to Uriel, who cleans house for all of five seconds before getting caught in a belly to back suplex/middle rope neckbreaker combination for the pin at 3:21.

**Rating:** D+. Just a squash here and that's something Sanity could use at this point. They don't really have anything to do at this point so letting them squash a good looking team isn't the worst idea in the world. That's also a solid finisher which plays off of Young's wheelbarrow neckbreaker. Nice little piece of business here.

We look back at the end of last week's show with Asuka and Nikki Cross being left laying. Next week: Last Woman Standing.

Sonya Deville video.

### Rachel Evers vs. Sonya Deville

Sonya wastes no time and clotheslines Rachel down for a knee to the back. Another knee to the ribs sets up some kicks in the corner, followed by a quick bodyscissors. The fans get behind Rachel and her right hands but Sonya takes off the glove and pounds away at the ribs. A Kimura makes Rachel tap at 2:42. Another total squash though couldn't the finish have been something on the ribs, which were worked on all match?

Earlier today, Roode was in a photo shoot when Strong and his family showed up. Roode said Strong's wife could be with a real man any time she liked and Strong snapped as you might expect. It's quickly broken up with Roode saying Roderick can have a title shot anytime.

That anytime would be in two weeks on the 400<sup>th</sup> episode.

### Aleister Black vs. Kassius Ohno

Feeling out process to start with Ohno getting a quick takedown for

almost no effect. Black sits him on the top rope for about the same impact and it's back to the technical work. Ohno gets two off a rollup but gets caught in a front facelock. A hammerlock keeps Kassius in trouble but a rope grab gives us a clean break.

The threat of Black Mass sends Ohno outside and it's the moonsault into the meditation pose. Ohno tries to kick him from there so Black nips up with a knee to the face. Kassius knocks him hard to the floor and we take a break. Back with Ohno chopping away in the corner and dropping a backsplash for two. To really make this personal, Ohno sits down like Black, who doesn't take kindly to the disrespect.

Ohno pounds away again and asks if Black is good or evil. That's quite the perceptive question no? Somehow not crushed by the weight of that gut, Black pops up and slugs away, including a kick to the head for two. Another exchange of hard kicks gives Ohno two more as the BOTH THESE GUYS chant starts up. Since that worked so well, Black knees him in the head again for two more. A spinning bicycle kick (cool) gives Ohno two but a LOUD knee to Ohno's jaw staggers him again. Not that it matters as Ohno loads up the roaring elbow but walks into Black Mass for the pin at 16:47.

**Rating:** B+. Most matches have a distinct style to them and this one would be "hit each other in the face over and over again". I had a lot of fun watching this as they were beating the heck out of each other until one of them hit their big shot. It made both guys look especially tough, which is something we hadn't quite seen out of Black yet with all the short matches he's had so far.

**Overall Rating:** B. A return, two squashes, title matches announced for the next two weeks and one heck of a main event in the span of about 58 minutes. I'd certainly call that a success as it felt like an old version of NXT, which is one of the highest compliments I can give to a show. Really solid stuff here and hopefully they stick with this formula.

### Results

Ember Moon b. Peyton Royce – Eclipse

Sanity b. Ealy Brothers – Belly to back suplex/neckbreaker combination to Uriel

Sonya Deville b. Rachel Evers – Kimura

Aleister Black b. Kassius Ohno – Black Mass

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## **NXT – June 6, 2017: Good to Have You Back**

### **NXT**

Date: June 7, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Tom Phillips, Nigel McGuinness

Tonight is, in theory at least, all about Bobby Roode, who promised to show up for a Championship Celebration. Then again he said the same thing last week and had more important things to do. Teasing the crowd like that is far more effective of a heel tactic than a lot of them you'll see so it's not the worst idea. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick video for tonight's two big matches.

Opening sequence.

### Heavy Machinery vs. Victor Andrews/Lars Sullivan

We actually get an inset promo from the jobbers with Victor being worried about his partner but Lars saying he's got this. The huge Lars shoves Tucker into the corner to start and the shoulder blocks go nowhere. Knight actually gets taken down so it's off to the much smaller Andrews, who is quickly bearhugged. Tucker throws Andrews into another bearhug and a belly to belly. The double standing splash crushes Andrews again and the double fall away slam (the Compactor) is good for the pin at 3:54.

**Rating:** D+. Just a squash and there's nothing wrong with that.

Sullivan continues to look great and is likely ready to be pushed at almost any time. I'm almost sure Heavy Machinery will be facing the Authors of Pain next in what could actually be an entertaining power feud. I don't think they'd change the titles but it could be a lot of fun.

Heavy Machinery leaves so Sullivan annihilates Andrews, including an over the shoulder backbreaker. Fans to Sullivan: "SAY YOU'RE SORRY!"

We look back at No Way Jose returning to save Roderick Strong and Kassius Ohno from Sanity.

After the match, Killian Dain said no one was safe.

Here's Roderick Strong for a chat. Over the last year or so, he's been on quite the roller coaster (Was it the one at Wrestlemania?). Now he has a fiancé and a beautiful baby boy. Now all he needs is the NXT Title. It's no longer Roddy vs. the World because it's his family vs. the World. This brings out Bobby Roode to talk about what an emotional story that was. Strong has a lot going for him right now with a hot fiancé and a mostly normal boy.

Now Strong thinks he needs to move into the big house on the hill but it takes more than just asking for a title shot. Strong needs to stay in his lane and maybe one day they can take a picture together that he can show his kid. As for the title though, Strong just isn't man enough to win it. This was the first step on what feels like a



long road to a match and that's fine.

Nikki Cross wants Asuka next week and gets her next week in a triple threat elimination match, also involving Ruby Riot.

Video on the Authors of Pain.

#### Sarah Logan vs. Peyton Royce

Logan is also known as Sarah Bridges but more famous as Crazy Mary Dobson. Sarah takes her down by the arm to start but Billie Kay's cheering gets Peyton out of trouble. A good looking spinning kick drops Logan and it's off to a chinlock. Logan fights up and hits a hard headbutt but gets kicked again, setting up a fisherman's suplex to give Royce the pin at 3:44.

**Rating:** D+. Just a quick squash here as they continue to not have much for Dobson to do. Granted the same could be said for Royce and Kaye, who have been the same characters in the same place for a long time now. Granted they're still good in those roles so it's hard to complain about something that's working.

After losing to Cesar Bonani last week, Andrade Cien Almas went out on the town again. An NXT reporter asked him about the loss so one of his lady friends slapped him in the face.

#### Oney Lorcan vs. Hideo Itami

Hideo takes him up to the ropes and slaps Oney in the face to start before a kick to the chest gets two. Lorcan gets the same off his running Blockbuster, only to charge into a kick to the head. It's too early for the GTS as Lorcan slips out slaps the heck out of Itami over and over. They're so bad that Itami stumbles to the floor, allowing Oney to hit a flip dive off the top. Back in and Itami begs off but uses the distraction to kick Lorcan in the knee. More kicks set up three straight GTS's for no cover. Instead Kassius Ohno comes out to shove Itami down and it's a no contest at 6:40.

**Rating:** C+. A lot of that is due to Lorcan's slaps, which really did sound great. Lorcan is a heck of a tough jobber and can get a quick win if he's given the chance. I'm already liking Itami's heel character a lot more than his face stuff as the rapid fire kicks are

a good way to cut someone down. Maybe this was what he was needing the whole time, as it's not like anything else was working.

Video on Drew McIntyre.

Ember Moon wants the winner of next week's triple threat.

### No Way Jose vs. Killian Dain

The dancing doesn't get Jose very far to start but a top rope ax handle and big boot send Dain outside. Back from a break with Dain planting him with a slam to slow things down. We hit the neck crank for a bit before a Wasteland and backsplash crush Jose all over again. Jose fights back with some chops but makes the mistake of trying a fireman's carry. Dain misses a corner splash and eats a clothesline, followed by an impressive looking TKO. That's about it for the offense though as Dain comes back with a running dropkick to knock Jose into the corner, followed by the Ulster Plantation for the pin at 10:33.

**Rating:** C+. I know he's lost a lot of his fire but I still like Jose every time I see him. If you can get him away from the dead end dancing gimmick, he might be able to actually mean something one day. As he is he's the perfect choice for a house show opener but I'd like to see him do something else. Dain is a great monster and should be able to be a big deal when he's given the chance.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This was the NXT that I know and love. They had a bunch of things they needed to get done and as a result, a lot of stories were advanced. This show advanced several stories and had me wanting to see more from some of them. On top of that they hyped up next week's title match to keep us coming back for more. Good show here and it's nice to be able to say that about NXT more often.

### Results

Heavy Machinery b. Victor Andrews/Lars Sullivan – Compactor to Andrews

Peyton Royce b. Sarah Logan – Fisherman's suplex

Hideo Itami vs. Oney Lorcan went to a no contest when Kassius Ohno interfered

Killian Dain b. No Way Jose – Ulster Plantation

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## **NXT – May 31, 2017: Are They Always This Annoying?**

### **NXT**

Date: May 31, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Nigel McGuinness, Tom Phillips

We're back in Orlando for the first in a series of shows that isn't likely to build towards a Takeover. After last week's stand alone show from Chicago, tonight we're scheduled to see the Glorious Celebration from NXT Champion Bobby Roode, which will likely see a new challenger arise. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Tommaso Ciampa on crutches to a mixed reaction. He'd like Johnny Gargano to come out here right now but it turns out that

Gargano isn't here tonight. Tommaso asks if people would like to see Johnny replaced because he's been thinking about that idea a lot lately. Two days before Takeover: Chicago, he sustained an injury that was going to keep him out.

There was never any doubt that Ciampa was going to wrestle but in less than one day, fans were talking about dream partners for Gargano. It made Ciampa feel like an afterthought and that's not what he is. They fought together and lost, but during the match Ciampa felt something in his knee pop. He's been doing this for twelve years and knew that it was an injury instead of just being hurt.

Despite that though, he knew they had to keep fighting for the people. After the loss though, he knew that Gargano wanted to replace him just like the people did. The fans chant afterthought so Ciampa rips into the fans for ruining DIY. If Ciampa had to go away, Johnny Wrestling was going with him. Ciampa is going away for now but he's coming back more dangerous than he's ever been because he is professional wrestling. Really good promo here as Ciampa explained everything, even though he's likely out until next year with that knee injury.

Video on Danny Burch.

Bobby Roode says he won't be here tonight but promises to make his presence felt next week.

#### Danny Burch vs. Pete Dunne

Non-title. Dunne works on the arm to start but gets tripped down into a leglock. The fans are behind Dunne again because heels don't really exist in wrestling today. Burch snaps Dunne's fingers but can't get the Crossface. Instead Dunne slaps him in the face as we take a break. Back with Burch hitting a middle rope dropkick and one heck of a right hand gets two.

Burch headbutts him for two (SWEET! Dang this crowd is annoying me tonight.) but gets caught in the X Plex for two. It's too early for the Bitter End so Burch blasts him with a clothesline. Both guys are

down though and Dunne bails to the apron for a breather. Burch's hanging DDT gets two but he gets German suplexed into the corner. The Bitter End finishes Burch at 10:48.

**Rating:** B-. These British guys know how to have some great matches and this was another entertaining one. Burch looks like a grizzled veteran and a win over him, even though he loses quite a bit, feels somewhat important. Dunne getting TV time is a good thing right now as the win over Bate made him look like an even bigger star than he already did. Let him do stuff like this, if not winning a little more easily, and he'll feel bigger still.

Dunne brags about his win and says he's happy to not have to watch someone carry around his title any longer.

Velveteen Dream says the ambiance isn't right for an interview.

Video on the Authors of Pain.

#### Andrade Cien Almas vs. Cesar Bononi

Bononi is the huge guy who we saw a few weeks back. A dropkick sets up the early double knees in the corner as Cesar is rocked to start. Bononi gets in a few knees but something like an Eye of the Hurricane drops him again. One heck of a sliding kick to the face sets up the running slap in the corner but a suplex is countered into a small package to give Bononi the pin at 3:04.

**Rating:** D+. This is more about Almas losing but someone who looks like Bononi is going to get attention and a chance just because of his size. Hopefully we see a bit more of him in the future as he could have some potential. I'm still not sure where they're going with Almas but Regal yelling at him again should be entertaining. Almas seems to laugh it off.

Billie Kay and Peyton Royce are at the Performance Center and looking for something iconic when they run into Ember Moon. As they insult her, a trainer comes up with her medical release.

Asuka will defend the Women's Title against Nikki Cross and Ruby Riot in an elimination match in two weeks.

After losing to Roode, Hideo Itami snapped and wouldn't listen to Kassius Ohno. This felt heel turnish.

Earlier today, Itami and Ohno shook hands in the parking lot.

#### Sanity vs. Kassius Ohno/Roderick Strong

It's Young and Wolfe for Sanity here. Strong slugs away at Young to start and gets two off a half nelson backbreaker. Wolfe comes in and takes a running splash in the corner from Ohno. The first pump kick sends Wolfe into the apron and it's back to Young, who eats a kick as well.

Killian Dain trips Ohno up to take over though and the slow beating takes us to a break. Back with Ohno fighting out of Young's chinlock but getting taken down into another one from Wolfe. A kick to the face gives Wolfe two as the fans are split on if they want Roddy. Half of the crowd is disappointed then as he comes in off a hot tag and house is quickly cleaned.

An Angle Slam and faceplant get two on Wolfe but Young makes the save. The double teaming begins with Dain getting on the apron, only to have No Way Jose make his return for the save. Ohno forearms Wolfe down and the suplex backbreaker (End of Heartache) finishes Young at 13:42.

**Rating:** C. This should be the beginning of the end for Sanity, which didn't have that far to fall down in the first place. They could split up and be just fine on their own with Dain seemingly ready to break out as a major heel force. Speaking of breaking out, Strong is clearly the next challenger to Roode right? There's really no other option at the moment and there doesn't need to be.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I don't know if they're like this every week but the crowd was more annoying than I can ever remember here. They were cheering the heels, mostly booing the faces and doing that WAY too annoying "SWEET" after every near fall. It's one joke and much like TEN or WHAT it's going to get old in a hurry, meaning it's destined to go on for years.

As for the show itself, they advanced a few things and gave you

reason to come back later on. The wrestling was good enough but Roode looking like a jerk who doesn't have time to show up and address the fans is a solid heel idea. Then again the fans are going to sing every word of his song so it's not like anything he does matters.

### Results

Pete Dunne b. Danny Burch – Bitter End

Cesar Bononi b. Andrade Cien Almas – Small package

Roderick Strong/Kassius Ohno b. Sanity – End of Heartache to Young

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# **NXT – May 17, 2017: Watch Your Step**

## **NXT**

Date: May 17, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Nigel McGuinness, Tom Phillips

It's the go home show for Takeover: Chicago and that should mean a hard sell towards the show. The card currently has four matches, which is one below the norm for most of the Takeover specials. I'm not sure what to expect tonight but there's always the chance that the show can be a lot of fun. Let's get to it.

Bobby Roode arrived earlier today.

Opening sequence.

#### Drew McIntyre vs. Sean Maluta

Drew does his kneel in the corner until the bell for a good visual. Maluta gets driven into the corner to start but slaps Drew in the chest a few times. That just earns him an even harder chop, followed by a big throw across the ring. Maluta comes back with something like a middle rope Codebreaker for one, only to get thrown into the corner for some rapid fire right hands. Drew has a heck of a mouse under his right eye as he just knocks Maluta silly with a headbutt. The Claymore (or whatever it's called here) ends Sean at 3:22.

**Rating:** C. I'm a big McIntyre fan and he's looking even better here. The power game makes him look very different than he used to as he's throwing people around like they're not even there anymore. Add in the fact that he's that much taller than most of the other NXT talent and he really does come off like the complete package.

McIntyre isn't worried about having Wesley Blake's attention and challenges him to a match for next week.

We look back at Hideo Itami defeating Roderick Strong last week to become #1 contender. After the show went off the air, Sanity ran in to beat Strong down again. In the back, Strong told William Regal that he wanted Sanity.

Eric Young can't believe that Strong, who has a new baby, wants Sanity at Takeover. If Strong wants to lose everything, he's on.

We get a video package on Hideo Itami's NXT debut back in 2014. I never would have guessed it was that long ago. That shoulder injury really did take him out for a long time.

We run down the Takeover card.



Video on Tyler Bate defeating Pete Dunne to become the inaugural United Kingdom Champion and the build to their rematch.

The Velveteen Dream is coming.

Video of Itami at the big Wrestlemania XXXI weekend house show where he hit the first GTS. That's the moment where I had to get to an NXT show no matter what.

Strong vs. Young is confirmed for Takeover.

Earlier today, Asuka was in a car and wouldn't answer anything, saying "next question" until asking if the interview was over. She's kind of awesome as a heel, though she stops to take a picture with fans as she arrived at the arena. After she leaves them though, she doesn't seem pleased with what she had to do.

#### Lacey Evans vs. Sonya Deville

That would be Macey Estrella vs. Daria Barenato. Sonya doesn't waste time by hitting her in the face to start before throwing on a bodyscissors. The gloves come off and Sonya pounds the ribs with right hands. Lacey comes back with some shots to the face and a neckbreaker. Not that it matters as Sonya hits a standing Shining Wizard for the pin at 3:02.

**Rating:** D+. This was almost a squash and that's a good idea as they need to start restocking the shelves. Deville isn't the best thing in the world but the MMA style character should have a nice shelf life. Build her up to challenge a face champion and it should be a really easily told story.

We look at Itami putting Roode to sleep.

#### Kassius Ohno vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Ohno still looks ridiculous with the basketball jersey and trunks. Almas lays on the mat for an early rest before flipping over Kassius into a standoff. The threat of the elbow sends Almas outside but Kassius is fine with kicking him in the jaw. Almas gives him one of his own though and we take a break.

Back with Almas chopping him down in the corner and throwing on a

cross armbreaker over the ropes. A missile dropkick to the arm gets two but the kickout is switched into a Fujiwara armbar. The running knees in the corner stun Ohno but he blocks a slap and hits some bicycle kicks to get a breather.

Ohno misses a moonsault though and a Nightmare on Helm Street gives Almas two. The backflip kick to the head drops Kassius again and the double knees connect in the corner. A reverse tornado DDT of all things gives Almas two and it's time to be shocked. Back to back rolling elbows end Almas at 13:51.

**Rating:** B-. These two are solid upper midcarders around here but I can't really imagine either of them going any further than that. I'm curious about where the Almas story is going with all the losses as I hope they don't turn him face but it's going to be harder to be a serious heel with this bad of a record.

Last week Itami became #1 contender.

Here's Roode for the big closing speech. He got knocked out (while wearing a \$5000 suit) with a GTS and that's never going to happen again. This Saturday he'll be in his ring gear ready to go because that's what he does every single night. Itami keeps getting hurt and coming back and getting hurt and coming back. Roode didn't even know Itami was still employed here. Cue Itami but Regal and security hold him back. That only lasts so long though as Hideo charges in anyway and gets in a few shots. Security breaks it up but Itami gives one of them a GTS. Roode tries to charge in but gets put to sleep to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This was a bit of a step down from what I was expecting as it was almost all about the NXT and UK Title matches. The Tag Team Titles and Women's Title barely got any focus though they did manage to get in the Strong vs. Young match. I wasn't wild on this show but it was perfectly acceptable, which is better than you're getting on the main shows as of late.

### Results

Drew McIntyre b. Sean Maluta – Running kick to the face

Sonya Deville b. Lacey Evans – Standing Shining Wizard

Kassius Ohno b. Andrade Cien Almas – Rolling elbow

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## NXT – March 29, 2017: Big Guys Have More Fun

### NXT

Date: March 29, 2017

Location: University Area CDC Gymnasium, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Nigel McGuinness, Tom Phillips

It's the final show before Takeover: Orlando and that means most of the card is set, though you can probably guarantee one more match that we'll get to later. The show has been starting to look better in recent weeks though I'm not entirely sold yet. Tonight we'll have a Loser Leaves NXT match between Kassius Ohno and Elias Samson so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Akam vs. Johnny Gargano vs. Dash Wilder

Preview for Saturday's triple threat for the Tag Team Titles. Akam

goes after Wilder so Johnny jumps on the big man's back, because that's always worked so well over the years. Double teaming works a bit better though as Dawson dropkicks him to the floor before turning on Gargano almost immediately. Akam gets back in but he has to snarl at Scott Dawson for some attempted interference as we take a break.

Back with the Revival nowhere to be seen (apparently they just left instead of merely backing away before the break), leaving Akam to put Gargano in a torture rack. Johnny escapes and slugs away to limited avail before the slingshot spear is good for two. Unfortunately he decides to look away for a second and turns back into a boot to the face.

Johnny comes right back with three straight superkicks but Ra'zar pulls Gargano out at two. That earns Ciampa a beating on the floor and Johnny's slingshot DDT is caught in mid-air. One heck of a powerbomb plants Gargano but here's Dawson to grab Akam's leg. Naturally that means Wilder can slide back in and steal the pin on Gargano at 10:11.

**Rating:** C. The wrestling wasn't anything spectacular here but I love the booking. The Revival is smart enough to not try and go head to head with the Authors, as well as knowing better than to stay out there and waste energy before the title match. I can always go with smart wrestling and it worked very well here.

Video on Aleister Black vs. Andrade Cien Almas.

Heavy Machinery vs. Jonathan Ordegen/Mike Marshall

That would be Otis Dozovic and Tucker Knight as your standard big guy tag team, though they're not huge enough to make them immobile blobs. Tucker and I think Jonathan start things off and we're already in a bearhug. Otis tags himself in so Tucker throws Ordegen into another bearhug for a cool spot. Now it's Marshall being pulled in for a double shoulder and a double chest bump to send the jobbers outside.

Ordegen offers a distraction so Marshall can get in a shot from

behind on Knight, which pretty much wraps up the team's offense. Otis comes back in and cleans house with clotheslines and elbows, including one to put Jonathan back outside. Dozovic picks up Marshall for a slam but doesn't put him down, allowing Tucker to crash into Mike's back. Otis picks Knight up and slams him down onto Marshall for the pin at 3:37.

**Rating:** C+. I had a lot of fun with this one and Heavy Machinery worked well together out there. I'm not sure how far they can go but they're certainly good for stuff like this. They fought the Authors of Pain at a house show in January and it was rather entertaining so they can definitely hang with the bigger names.

We go to William Regal's office for the contract signing between Asuka and Ember Moon. Asuka snickers at Ember's name but Ember says Asuka has let the success go to her head. Ember signs and Asuka does the same with Moon saying she's been ready for a long time. Regal says good luck and we're done in maybe two minutes.

Long video on Bobby Roode vs. Shinsuke Nakamura. The video presents a battle for the future of NXT with Roode being out for himself while Nakamura does what the fans want. That's about as basic of a heel vs. face feud as you're going to get and that's just fine.

Paul Ellering and the Authors of Pain think DIY's fairy tale ends soon and the Revival just wants to be them.

Sanity vs. Ruby Riot/No Way Jose/Tye Dillinger/Roderick Strong is confirmed for Takeover.

#### Kassius Ohno vs. Elias Samson

Loser leaves NXT. They trade rollups to start before taking turns on the arm. Ohno gets the better of it, though sadly that means we have to look at his rather disturbing looking thighs. A backplash gets two on Samson but they head to the apron where Ohno is sent into the post for a big crash onto the steps.

Back from a break with Samson working on the injured back with some kicks and knees. He switches gears with a Crossface though and Ohno has to roll over three times before making the ropes. Ohno blasts

him in the jaw with some hard strikes, including a jumping knee to the face. A big boot gets two but a neckbreaker is countered into a backslide for two. Samson's swinging neckbreaker gets the same, only to have Ohno blast him with the discus forearm to get rid of Samson at 12:47.

**Rating:** C. The only word I can think of is eh. Ohno has never really done it for me in NXT and that continues here. The match was fine but absolutely nothing I'll remember in about an hour. It doesn't help that the story felt slapped together for the sake of getting Samson on to the main roster (I have no idea why as it's not like he's been a huge deal in NXT) and giving Ohno a win. That being said, while it accomplished those goals, it certainly wasn't exciting in the least.

Samson is dragged away by security but agrees to go quietly if he's given his guitar back. Ohno offers to hand it back before stomping on it instead. So to recap: Samson is a drifter who FINALLY found a home in NXT and is being forced to leave. On top of that, his most prized possession is destroyed in front of his eyes by the person who forced him out of NXT. Why am I supposed to boo him again?

One last Takeover promo wraps up the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This is a good example of a shot where the wrestling wasn't the point. Tonight helped build towards Takeover: Orlando with every match getting some focus and another match added to the card. It's a perfectly fine show and it accomplished everything it needed to do. This was fine for a go home show, though the main event still felt forced in, which isn't a good thing.

### Results

Dash Wilder b. Johnny Gargano and Akam – Powerbomb to Gargano

Heavy Machinery b. Jonathan Ordegen/Mike Marshall – Dozovic slammed Knight onto Marshall

Kassius Ohno b. Elias Samson – Discus forearm

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