

# Monday Night Raw – January 20, 2020: Dear Goodness Help Me I'm Starting To Like This



IMG Credit: WWE

## Monday Night Raw

Date: January 20, 2020

Location: Intrust Bank Arena, Wichita, Kansas

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Jerry Lawler

There's no football to contend with tonight and it's the go home show for the Royal Rumble, meaning it's time to take the exit for the Road to Wrestlemania. The big story coming out of last week was Buddy Murphy joining forces with Seth Rollins and the AOP, meaning it's fallout time. Other than that, we have a ladder match for the US Title with Andrade defending against Rey Mysterio. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

Here are Seth Rollins, the AOP and Buddy Murphy to open things up. Rollins says that all of this has happened because of the fans driving him to do this. Last week though, they needed the help of someone and we see a clip of Murphy joining them to beat down Big

Show/Samoa Joe/Kevin Owens. Rollins says this is predestination and this is your time to decide. Everyone in the back needs to choose a side because you're with them or against them.

Cue Kevin Owens and Samoa Joe, with Owens talking about how Big Show will be back soon but for now, it's time to fight. Rollins says we can fight but at a proper time in a proper place. Joe thinks he sees a Monday night Messiah in the ring but he hears a lawyered up a\*\*hat. Rollins says come get some, so Joe brings out their backup: that would be the Viking Raiders (the only option they had and a good one) so the fight is on. House is cleaned in a hurry with Rollins and company bailing.

Video on Rey Mysterio vs. Andrade.

Rollins isn't happy, so tonight it's Rollins/Murphy challenging for the Tag Team Titles.

#### United States Title: Andrade vs. Rey Mysterio

Mysterio is challenging in a ladder match and we get Big Match Intros. They both drop to the floor for a ladder to start but Rey head fakes him and dropkicks a ladder into Andrade instead. A hurricanrana off the apron is countered into a swing into the barricade though and it's Andrade throwing the first ladder inside. Rey blocks a superplex onto the ladder though and sends Andrade down hard onto it instead as we take a break.

Back with Mysterio backdropping Andrade onto the floor, setting up a top rope seated senton to take him down again. Mysterio sends him back inside and knocks him to the floor again, meaning it's time for a big ladder (makes sense for Rey) but Andrade makes the save and bridges a ladder into the standing one. A superbomb onto the bridged ladder has Rey screaming in pain and we take a break.

Back with the big ladder in the middle and two ladder bridged through it and into the corners. Andrade gets sent to the floor so Rey can climb, only to have Andrade get back up. Andrade loads up a Gory Bomb on top of the ladder but Rey reverses into a sunset bomb. The problem is that he can't hold on and they both fall onto the

ladder for a very nasty crash.

Rey is right back up with a 619 to put him on the floor and there's the climb. That's still not enough for Rey to pull it down as Andrade moves the ladder...so Rey drops down into what was supposed to be a hurricanrana but was more just Rey landing on him. Andrade is backdropped to the floor but this time Zelina is waiting on top, meaning she can slap Rey back down. The hammerlock DDT THROUGH THE LADDER finishes Rey and Andrade pulls the title down to retain at 18:45.

**Rating:** B+. Some of those spots were as intense as I've seen in awhile and I liked the ending with Zelina costing Rey the title. This should allow Mysterio to move on to something else and the best thing is that now Andrade is beefed up with a win in a major feud under his belt. That would be the United States belt, which could do some good things for him as well. I mean it probably won't because that's what not how WWE uses them but you can always hope.

Post match Vega pulls back the floor mat for the hammerlock DDT onto the concrete but someone in a Rey Mysterio mask makes the save. It's Humberto Carrillo (not exactly hard to tell) and Andrade bails.

Martin Luther King Jr. video.

Aleister Black b. ???

Black Mass in eight seconds. With that destruction out of the way, it should be noted that Joseph mentioned that the winner of the Rumble can pick his champion to face again.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman for a chat. Heyman talks about being a soothsayer with his spoilers but that shouldn't be a surprise because he's talking about Brock Lesnar. The fans aren't happy but Heyman tells them not to be that harsh on themselves. Heyman explains the concept of the Royal Rumble: Brock starts, throws out someone, throws out the next person, throws out the next person, and so on until the end.

See, Brock doesn't think there is anyone backstage willing to challenge him at Wrestlemania so he isn't going to let anyone.

Heyman doesn't like the booing and asks the fans who they think they are to boo Lesnar. Who could possibly challenge Brock Lesnar?

Heyman: "Name one! Don't worry! We'll wait!"

Cue Ricochet (Heyman: "ARE YOU KIDDING ME?") to say Heyman talks a lot about how important it is for Brock to enter #1. A lot of people are afraid, but Ricochet isn't one of them. Heyman thinks that means Ricochet must have been educated in Wichita, because Brock is a hungry champion and Ricochet is lunch meat.

Ricochet is staying right here because he has a chance to fight at the Royal Rumble and could go to Wrestlemania. He's not scared and gets in the ring and asks if Brock is scared. Brock drops him with one kick to the ribs and says he's not scared. For some reason Brock and Heyman leave near the announcers' table instead of through the main entrance.

Randy Orton is ready for the Rumble and tonight, he's ready for Drew McIntyre, who isn't on his level.

#### Randy Orton vs. Drew McIntyre

McIntyre runs him over with a shoulder to start and Orton needs a breather on the floor. McIntyre follows and whips Randy into various things, only to have the Claymore hit the timekeeper. Back from a break with McIntyre chopping away but Orton wins a strike off and, with a Hulk Hogan hand to the ear, drops McIntyre with a hanging DDT. An overhead belly to belly and a vertical suplex plant Orton right back but he counters the Claymore into a powerslam for two.

Orton one ups McIntyre's suplexes with a top rope superplex, only to roll outside instead of covering. Cue the OC to jump McIntyre but he fights back until a chop block takes him down. Orton makes the save with a chair and we'll say the match was thrown out (because people not in the match running in and attacking one person isn't a DQ anymore) at 11:50.

**Rating:** C. I liked what we got but I really hope the ending doesn't set up some tag match later tonight. Orton and McIntyre are both people to watch in the Rumble, which isn't entirely set in stone

this year. I don't think they'll win, but it's nice to have a more open field with wrestlers talking about how important a win would be to them.

Post match Orton makes the save with a chair and says something we can't hear to McIntyre. Drew nods...and gets hit with the RK0. Orton leaves so Drew grabs a mic and calls him by his full name. He says get him a mic that works and throws that one down before saying that he should have Claymored Orton. That one was on him and now he knows why it's the RK0 out of nowhere. It won't happen again though because on Sunday because Drew is going to kick his head off and win the Royal Rumble.

Charlotte says she's ready to win the Rumble, even as Becky Lynch pops up next to her.

### Becky Lynch vs. Kairi Sane

Non-title. Before the match, Becky says Asuka did a favor last week when she sprayed mist in Becky's eyes. Maybe Asuka should be the one doubting her and maybe that's why Asuka won't face her head on. Yeah Asuka won last year, but then Becky went on to make history around the world, while Asuka went onto YouTube to make soup. On Sunday, Becky collects her last debt because Asuka can't beat her anymore.

Sane mocks Becky to start and it's an Asuka distraction so Sane can take out the knee. Another shot to the same knee sends us to an early break. Back with Asuka sitting on the post as Sane grabs a chinlock. Becky jawbreaks her way to freedom and starts the comeback with some clotheslines.

Another distraction lets Sane hit a forearm but Becky grabs a reverse DDT, setting up the middle rope legdrop for two. The Disarm-Her is blocked and Sane grabs a bridging rollup for two of her own. Becky's suplex is countered into a DDT for another near fall but Becky is right back up. This time she knocks Asuka down and hits the Bexploder on Sane. A kick to the face sets up the Disarm-Her to make Sane tap at 9:02.

**Rating:** C. The match was fine but what got my attention more here

was the camera angle looking different. They had to pan out a bit to show Asuka and it gave the match a different feeling. Raw and Smackdown are shot the same way and it's cool to see something a little different every now and then. I know there are only so many ways to shoot a wrestling match and make it look good, but changing things up every now and then is nice.

Post match Asuka hits a Shining Wizard and grabs the Asuka Lock before kicking Becky in the head to leave her laying.

Rocky Johnson tribute video. They put some effort in this one.

Asuka and Sane are asked about their cheating and if this is the kind of champion they want to be known as. They rant in Japanese until Asuka says Becky won't be ready for her on Sunday.

Tag Team Titles: Viking Raiders vs. Seth Rollins/Buddy Murphy

The Raiders are defending and the AOP, Kevin Owens and Samoa Joe are all at ringside. Murphy tags himself in to start with Erik and Seth gives him a hug. That means a running knee from Erik and everything breaks down in a hurry, with the four outside brawling into the crowd to leave the match on its own as we take a break.

Back with Rollins hammering on Erik in the corner but Erik sends Murphy outside. Ivar gets pulled off the apron though and it's a knee to Erik's face. Rollins drops a frog splash for two but Erik is back with a knee to the face of his own. The diving tag brings in Ivar to clean house but Rollins breaks up the Viking Experience. The champs put them on the floor for the double suicide dives, followed by the Viking Experience to Murphy back inside.

Rollins makes the save so Ivar kicks him in the face. Murphy is back up and gets kicked in the corner, setting up a double superbomb out of said corner for two. Now it's Ivar coming back in for the double handspring elbow. The hot tag brings in Erik but Murphy knees him in the head, allowing Rollins to hit a Stomp onto the apron to give Murphy the pin at 11:05.

**Rating:** B-. They had some drama here but there was no option other than giving Murphy and Rollins the win here. You can't put a new

team together like that one week and then have them lose in their first match. Giving them some silver is a good idea and while they might not have them very long, it's the right way to go at the moment.

Post break Rollins is rather happy and says that this is Murphy moving in the right direction. We'll see that again on Sunday when Rollins wins the Royal Rumble for the second year in a row.

Now it's time for the Monday After The Weekend Update with the Street Profits. Montez Ford makes fun of Paul Heyman and Angelo Dawkins talks about how sick he is of reboots, though he changes his mind upon seeing a picture of the Miz and John Morrison. As for the Royal Rumble, we get a special report from R-Truth...who talks about the city of Houston instead of talking FROM Houston. Dawkins: "Brock Lesnar is entering the Royal Rumble at #1 but R-Truth is entering at 4:20."

Finally, in regards to Otis and Mandy Rose, here's what Mandy has to look forward to after Netflix and chill: that would be a video of Otis stripping and gyrating to Val Venis' music. This is something that could EASILY be a weekly YouTube/Network show instead of an infrequent Raw segment.

#### Erick Rowan vs. Matt Hardy

Rowan starts fast and hits a splash before sending Matt over the top. A big boot knocks him off the apron so Rowan goes to the crate, only to get bitten on the hand. Rowan slams it onto the steps and then crushes Matt with a running crossbody. The Iron Claw finishes Matt at 2:08.

We recap the Rusev/Lana/Bobby Lashley/Liv Morgan story, starting with the wedding.

Owens and Joe aren't worried about Seth being in the Rumble because they'll enter as well. Joe will go through Owens if he needs to though.

The Singh Brothers fail to steal the 24/7 Title from Mojo Rawley, who beats them up instead.

Here are Lashley and Lana for the main event, but first Lana needs to declare Rusev Day canceled. Lashley has to cover her ears from all of the booing as Lana talks about how it's not their fault they're pathetic losers. Lana wants a THANK YOU BOBBY/THANK YOU LANA chant because they have shared their love.

#### Rusev/Liv Morgan vs. Bobby Lashley/Lana

Liv chases Lana around on the floor to start but gets caught as they come back inside. Lana whips her into the corner and gets two off a snap suplex. Liv is right back up though and it's a double tag to bring in the men. It's Rusev cleaning house but he pauses before running Lana off the apron. Lashley's spinning Big Ending gets two with Liv making the save. Rusev is thrown outside so Liv hits an enziguri on Lashley. Lana breaks up the jumping superkick though and Lashley spears Rusev down for the pin at 4:21.

**Rating:** D. So that ends the feud right? Other than the nightmare inducing idea of Lana vs. Liv in a singles match, I have no idea what else there could be in the whole thing. Lashley has now pinned Rusev three times in a row in singles matches and a tag match. I'm not sure what reason there could be to continue things but I'm sure WWE will figure something out. The match felt like it was supposed to be earlier in the show and they had to cram it in before TV time ran out, which might be better given how it went.

Side note: I think we can officially say we're never hearing about the Lana/Liv stuff again and I can't say I'm surprised. They pulled the plug on the Sasha Banks/Bayley idea almost immediately and that seems to be the case again here. It's what WWE does: they'll introduce something that could be interesting and then pull back on it because it might be too controversial. I don't think if it would have been good, but either do it or don't set it up.

**Overall Rating:** B-. Rather bad (but quick) main event aside, I liked what we got here. They're setting up the pay per view very well and we could be in for a good show on Sunday. Rollins and company are getting somewhere and a lot of that has to do with the feeling that some people are getting elevated. At some point you need some fresh



blood involved and getting Samoa Joe and Buddy Murphy into the mix is a nice change of pace. I'm not sure how well it's going to go as we get towards Wrestlemania season, but it's working for now.

### Results

Andrade b. Rey Mysterio – Andrade pulled down the title

Aleister Black b. ??? – Black Mass

Randy Orton vs. Drew McIntyre went to a no contest when OC interfered

Becky Lynch b. Kairi Sane – Disarm-Her

Seth Rollins/Buddy Murphy b. Viking Raiders – Stomp to Erik

Erick Rowan b. Matt Hardy – Iron Claw

Bobby Lashley/Lana b. Rusev/Liv Morgan – Spear to Rusev

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**Main Event – January 2,  
2020: Please Be The New  
Kind**



IMG Credit: WWE

### **Main Event**

Date: January 2, 2020

Location: XL Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Mickie James

It's a new year and...yeah nothing is going to change around here is it? That's just how things work around Main Event and that is going to be the case almost every single week. The last few weeks without the matches were rather nice and unfortunately I don't think that's going to be the case going forward. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

#### Chelsea Green vs. Sarah Logan

Logan goes straight for the armbars so Green forearm her in the face. A kick to the ribs puts Green on the floor and a headbutt knocks her silly back inside. Green grabs a side slam and puts on a camel clutch, followed by a running dropkick to the side of the head. That's fine with Logan, who BLASTS her with some forearms and gets two off a bridging suplex. Running knees in the corner get the same on Green, who pulls Logan face first into the middle buckle. An Unprettier gives Green the pin at 5:24.

**Rating:** C. That was a rather snappy little match and the two of them looked solid out there. Green is brand new and it's cool to see her putting in this kind of effort so early on. I'm not sure if she was the top choice to jump up to the main roster with so little time in NXT but she has shown she is good enough to hang at this level.

From Smackdown.

#### The Miz vs. Daniel Bryan vs. King Corbin

The winner gets Wyatt at the Rumble, though Cole calls Bryan the Fiend as we get things started. Miz and Bryan kick away at Corbin to start so he bails to the floor, leaving Miz to roll Bryan up at one. Bryan posts Miz on the floor and hits the big running knee off the apron, only to get sent over the barricade by Corbin (with Bryan seeming to hurt his knee). The chokebreaker drops Miz as well and it's Corbin completely dominating early on. Back in and the Reality Check drops Corbin, setting up the running corner dropkicks. Corbin runs both of them over though and we take a break.

We come back with Miz and Bryan trading near falls until Miz sends him outside. Miz fires off the kicks to Corbin in the corner, including some to the leg to set up the Figure Four. Bryan comes in with the headbutt for the save and gets two, as Miz looks on in shock for a cool visual. The hold is turned over so Bryan grabs the LeBell Lock on Corbin in a combination you don't often see.

With that broken up, the End of Days gets two on Miz as Corbin has to make a save. There's the running knee to Corbin but Zigler runs in for the superkick to give Corbin two as Reigns makes the save. Reigns knocks Corbin over the barricade and we take another break. We come back with Corbin and Reigns gone, leaving Miz to hit the running corner clothesline.

Bryan gets taken up top and it's a super shinbreaker (that's a new one) to work on the knee. A Codebreaker to the knee drops Bryan again and a DDT to the other leg has Bryan in more trouble. Bryan grabs a quick cross armbreaker but Miz bites his hand to break up the LeBell Lock. The running knee is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale for two so Miz goes right back to the Figure Four. That's reversed as well and Bryan slaps on the LeBell Lock for the tap at 20:18.

**Rating:** C+. They went with some different stuff here and of course we can't beat Corbin because the show needs his head or whatever they want to call it. At least they got to the right result and we can move on to the big Fiend vs. Bryan rematch. That being said, oh come on with starting with the triple threat, going to a singles match and then doing a triple threat which turned into a singles. You think they might be overdoing it a bit there?

Post match Bray pops up on screen to say Bryan is about to have all kinds of fun. See, HE isn't done with Bryan so Bray wants to know if

Bryan will let him in. Bryan: "YES!"

Video on the AOP and Seth Rollins' path of destruction.

From Raw.

Here's an annoyed Kevin Owens to get things going. Owens gets right to the point and promises fireworks for what happened last week. We see a clip of Seth Rollins and the AOP laying out Samoa Joe last week. Owens promises to take one of them out with him because he saw someone he respects get taken out.

That would be Rey Mysterio, and it made him sick to see Mysterio get beaten down a few weeks back. The beatdown is why Andrade defeated Mysterio for the United States Title and we see a clip of the title change. Cue Rollins and the AOP to say this wasn't Seth's decision. He was forced into this roll and now the AOP will enforce his will.

The fight is on with Owens getting crushed in the corner, only to have Samoa Joe come down for the save. Joe beats up the AOP and chokes Rollins but AOP comes back in. Owens makes the next save with some chair shots to the back as security comes down to break it up. Owens hits a bit flip dive onto the three of them plus security, with Joe joining in.

Here's what's coming on next week's Raw.

#### No Way Jose vs. Mojo Rawley

This is becoming the new Dana Brooke vs. Sarah Logan. Rawley actually gets promo time (!) saying that of course Jose is partying because he does it every day. Here in Hartford, nothing is changing because the people aren't smart enough to understand what he's talking about. Instead, Mojo will just embarrass Jose again.

Jose hammers away in the corner to start and it's an armdrag into a dropkick to put Mojo on the floor. Back from a break with Mojo hitting a flapjack and firing off the shoulders in the corner. Jose fights back again and hits a high crossbody for two, only to get Pounced straight back down. A Backstabber gives Jose two more but Mojo crotches him on top. The running punch finishes Jose at 10:04.

**Rating:** C. These two have fought each other so many times that it doesn't mean anything anymore, despite their matches being pretty watchable. Neither is going to be getting anywhere anytime soon and that has to be setting in for them. At least they're still trying, which is a good sign for both of them, though I don't know what kind

of a future they have.

From Raw to wrap it up.

It's wedding time...with a big cake in the corner. Lashley in a sleeveless, shirtless tuxedo but Lana on the other hand is in a VERY short wedding dress and seems rather enthralled. The minister gives the big intro about how great marriage is and how it leads to personal growth. Lana does NOT want a baby though, because it would turn her into someone ugly like the fans. She insists that the minister read the script, so he asks Lashley if he's REALLY sure.

They get to read their own vows but Lana screeches about the fans chanting RUSEV DAY and how they're trying to make this day anyone but her. Lana tells Lashley about how awesome she is and starts her own LANA DAY chant. She's so happy that she wants to jump on him right now...and so she does.

With that broken up, Lana hands Lashley the vows she wrote for him. Lashley reads the very complimentary statements about Lana but has to pause for the WHAT chants. Those don't sit well with Lana, who spells her name because it's WHO, not WHAT. He finally wraps it up, with the minister saying that was different. The ring statements go on so long that Lana says "ok we've got it, thank you."

Now we get to the part the minister really dreads and he asks if anyone has reason why they shouldn't be married. This brings out an unidentified man who says that he's Lana's first husband. They got married when she was 18 and then she left him for Rusev, just like she'll leave Lashley for someone else. Lashley chokeslams him so the minister asks again, which draws out Lashley's first wife (Minister: "WHO ARE YOU???"), who Lana didn't seem to know about. Lana beats her up so we ask one more time...and here's Liv Morgan.

She talks about how she was a lost soul earlier this year but the love of her life brought her to where she needed to be. How could they do this to her? Lashley insists he never laid a finger on her (Minister: "OH COME ON!"), but Liv is talking about Lana. That finally gives the fans something to care about and Liv is near tears, only to be driven into the corner.

A flower pot to the head starts the catfight as Lashley isn't sure what to do. They're taken to the floor but Lana gets back in so we can try this one more time. Cue Rusev out of the cake and the fight is on again, with Liv getting back in as the wedding set is

destroyed. Lana gets sent into the cake but manages to slap Rusev to end the show.

This was REALLY long at nearly thirty minutes, including an eleven minute overrun. The Liv stuff is at least a twist, but it took so long to get here (both tonight and for the last three months) that it didn't have much of an impact. This could have been worse, but they needed to cut out a lot of the same stuff going on over and over again.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Better show than usual here as the two matches surprised me in a good way each. The wedding is what matters the most here though as it was the big angle to end the year. That being said, the thing gets a little better each time I see it, putting it dangerously in the realm of watchable. This gives me no extra confidence for next week, but it's nice to have a decent week like this one.

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# Smackdown – November 21, 2017: Really Shane? Really? Shane?

## **Smackdown**

Date: November 21, 2017

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

So the battle between brands is over and now it's time to find out where we go from here. In theory we go towards Clash of the Champions in just shy of a month, which could mean multiple things. AJ Styles is likely going to have to deal with Jinder Mahal again, though the title match won't be taking place tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Sunday's main event.

Here's Shane McMahon to get things going. They were so close on Sunday and, despite what his sister wants to say, Smackdown proved that they're nothing but the best show. The Smackdown roster gives it their all every night and he's proud of them all. Save for two that is, meaning Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn.

Shane has them come out here and Owens immediately calls Shane drunk with power. Sami wants to know whether it's harder for Shane to keep coming up with excuses for his failures or just admitting that he's wrong. They would have beaten the Shield or even won a 5-2 handicap match or beaten Brock Lesnar. Shane says he's the Commissioner and the two of them have no respect for anyone. He teases firing them but Owens says that would be stupid as they're both future Hall of Famers.

Shane loads up the firing but gets cut off by Daniel Bryan. Sami starts getting fired up but Daniel tells him to be quiet. Everyone in the back hates Sami and Kevin's guts, to the point where Bryan had to send Randy Orton home before he tried to kill them. Tonight, the two of them will be facing New Day in a lumberjack match.

So to recap: yes, we are just supposed to go with the fact that Shane put himself in the match and assume that he really was the best option. I have no idea why we're supposed to go with that other than Shane is a former fan favorite but if you disagree with whatever he says, you're apparently a heel. Oh and Smackdown is totally equal to Raw, even though it lost on Sunday. Such is life in WWE.

### Jey Uso vs. Shelton Benjamin

Shelton lets him out of the corner to start, only to climb the ropes for a knee to the face, knocking Jey outside. Back from an early break with Shelton working on a chinlock until Jey fights up with a Samoan drop. Gable offers a distraction so Shelton can get two off a rollup, only to have Jey score with a superkick for the same. The Superfly Splash misses though and it's Paydirt to give Shelton the pin at 7:07.

**Rating:** C-. You might as well just pencil in the Tag Team Title match at Clash of the Champions and that's fine. It's not like there are many other teams to challenge for the belts unless they hot shot the Bludgeon Brothers up to the title scene in a hurry. Not bad or anything but they need a little more time to get somewhere, especially with such a simple booking idea.

Sami and Kevin try to get help from Baron Corbin and Bobby Roode, both of whom shoot them down. Roode promises both of them a receipt.

Naomi is getting her makeup done when NXT's Ruby Riot comes up. She's with Liv Morgan and Sarah Logan, all of whom beat the heck out of Naomi. Becky Lynch comes in for the save and gets beaten down as well.

The bosses are in the back with Shane praising Bryan's decisions tonight because he can fire Sami and Kevin whenever he wants. Shane leaves to go watch the show at his hotel.

### Hype Bros vs. Bludgeon Brothers

It's Luke Harper and Erick Rowan with big Thor style hammers. Rowan runs Ryder over to start and knocks him outside. Harper gets in a hard clothesline and sends him into the steps, leaving Rawley alone. A double spinebuster puts Mojo away at 1:24. Total squash.

Natalya applauds Charlotte for winning the title last week and beating Alexa Bliss on Sunday. I mean, Natalya's cat could beat Bliss but tonight she'll give Ric Flair something to really cry about.

Video on Brock Lesnar vs. AJ Styles from Sunday.



Here's Styles for a chat, but first we see a post-match video from Paul Heyman, saying Styles is the best in-ring performer he's ever seen. AJ wishes he could celebrate with all the fans but it didn't go as well as he thought it would. He'd love to face Lesnar again though because in the sequel, Rocky wins.

That brings him to Jinder Mahal, who says he's taking the title back tonight. AJ takes off the jacket and the belt, saying come get it. Mahal pops up on screen to say it's his time instead of AJ's. If Mahal had faces Brock, he would be hailed as the Beastmaster. AJ says bring it on because Mahal should be well rested after not doing anything on Sunday. Mahal will take his rematch at Clash of Champions. Cue the Singh Brothers from behind to jump AJ, who cleans house without any trouble.

Sami and Kevin recruit Aiden English and Rusev, who don't say no.

#### Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Natalya

Charlotte is defending after having won last week. Natalya jumps at her to start but gets elbowed in the jaw. That earns her a face first toss into the middle buckle and we take a break. Back with Natalya getting two off a Batista Bomb and grabbing the Sharpshooter. Charlotte makes the rope for the break but Natalya is right back on her with right hands. A whip into the corner lets Charlotte try the moonsault, only to land on the knees. The spear connects but here are Logan, Riot and Morgan to jump Natalya for the DQ at 6:43.

**Rating:** C+. They were rolling until the interference here with Natalya showing more fire than she has in a long time. Charlotte looked like she was in a fight and that's not something you see from her too often. I can go for the trio interfering, though I would have liked to see Charlotte get the win first.

Charlotte gets beaten down as well as the trio poses.

Daniel Bryan has no comment on the trio attacking. Sami and Kevin come up and threaten him with repercussions if he fires them.

#### New Day vs. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens

Lumberjack match and New Day comes out with some pancakes. Woods is on the floor here as Owens and Big E. get things going. Kevin knocks Kofi outside early on and the lumberjacks let him back in without any issue. Sami comes in so Kofi leapfrogs him into a back elbow for one. Back up and Kofi is sent outside again and for the second time, no one touches him.

Sami goes to get him this time and gets pummeled, sending him running up the aisle. No one is letting that happen though and Sami gets carried back to the ring. We take a break and come back with Owens taking the Unicorn Stampede. Owens knocks Kofi into the corner though and stomps away as Saxton says the lumberjacks are like sharks who can't wait to get their hands on Owens and Sami. Graves: "Sharks don't have hands Saxton."

Sami comes in and mocks New Day's dancing claps before stomping away. Owens' backsplash hits Kofi's knees though and the hot tag brings in Big E. The Big Ending doesn't work on Sami so it's back to Kofi for his high crossbody. Everything breaks down with Sami being sent outside, triggering the brawl between the lumberjacks. They all come in and the referee doesn't call for the DQ, leaving Sami to roll Kofi up for the pin at 11:50.

**Rating:** C. This was much more about everything else going on than the match itself and that's fine. Sami and Kevin winning makes sense and it's not like New Day is hurt by a fluke pin after all the issues with the lumberjacks (or a recent match with Shield). It's storyline advancement and there's nothing wrong with that.

Post break the lumberjacks leave with Kofi diving onto Rusev and English. Sami takes the Midnight Hour to leave him laying.

In the back, Owens gets on his knees in front of Bryan, begging him not to fire them. Bryan was never going to do that because he recognizes their talent. Next week, Owens goes one on one with Orton.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was a back to normal show without much in the way of major developments. AJ is still champion, Mahal is still in way over his head and saying the same things he always says,

Owens and Sami are still right in that they were better options than Shane at Survivor Series and Shane is still a face for reasons that I don't possibly comprehend. The debuts and returns were nice though and gives the show some much needed fresh blood. Good enough show, though nothing of note really happened.

### Results

Shelton Benjamin b. Jey Uso – Paydirt

Bludgeon Brothers b. Hype Bros – Double spinebuster to Rawley

Natalya b. Charlotte via DQ when Sarah Logan, Ruby Riot and Liv Morgan interfered

Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens b. New Day – Rollup to Kingston

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# **NXT – October 11, 2017: Something About How NXT Is Good**

## **NXT**

Date: October 11, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson, Mauro Ranallo

It's another pretty big show this week as we have a Takeover: Brooklyn rematch with Johnny Gargano vs. Andrade Cien Almas. The other big story continues to be Sanity vs. the Undisputed Era with Drew McIntyre watching over the whole thing. Roderick Strong is the other factor, as the Undisputed Era seems interested in adding him to their ranks. Let's get to it.

We open with a look at Asuka vacating the Women's Title and the process to crown a new #1 contender.

Opening sequence.

### Peyton Royce vs. Liv Morgan vs. Nikki Cross

The winner is in the Women's Title four way at Takeover. Cross and Morgan yell at Royce to start and a double clothesline puts her on the floor. Nikki immediately goes after Morgan with a sleeper on her back but it's quickly broken. Royce is back in to yell at Morgan before kicking her down without too much effort. A modified Tarantula has Morgan in more trouble but Cross makes the save by pulling Royce out to the floor in a nasty looking crash. All three are back in now and it's Cross beating the heck out of both of them.

A crossbody takes Royce and Morgan down and a neckbreaker gets two on Morgan. Peyton throws Nikki down for a second but she takes too long trying for a superplex on Morgan, setting up the Tower of Doom. Cue the Undisputed Era of all people with Taynara Conti from the Mae Young Classic. She comes to the ring to trip Cross, though it doesn't really do much damage. Cross neckbreakers both Royce and Morgan but Conti pulls her out at two. The chase is on and Royce catches Cross in the fisherman's suplex for the pin at 7:16.

**Rating:** B-. I'm a bit surprised and I like the twist they threw in there. That being said, I'd be shocked if Cross didn't wind up in the title match somehow. She's one of the biggest stars the division has left and it could be interesting to put the title on someone as crazy as she is. The Undisputed Era potentially adding a female member is interesting and makes the team feel even bigger.

### Lio Rush vs. Velveteen Dream

Rush slaps him in the face to start and is way too quick for Dream to catch up with. A pair of kicks to the head rocks Dream but he gets sent hard into the corner. Dream beats him down and keeps telling Rush to say his name. Rush spins around into a tornado DDT but gets caught in a Death Valley Driver. The Purple Rainmaker puts Rush away at 2:46. Rush looked good while he had the chance but this was WAY too short to be any kind of a showcase for him.

We look back at Lars Sullivan destroying Oney Lorcan two weeks ago.

### Lars Sullivan vs. Danny Burch

Burch gets right in Lars' face and gets in a shot to the face, only to take a knee to the ribs to cut him off in a hurry. Lars runs him over with a shoulder and a delayed vertical suplex, followed by a clothesline to cut Burch off. The standing Boss Man Slam is good enough to put Burch away at 2:59.

We look back at the end of last week's title match with Drew McIntyre successfully defending against Roderick Strong. After the match they shook hands but the Undisputed Era spoke to Strong on the stage.

### Street Profits vs. Damien Smith/Marcos Espada

The Profits are really starting to grow on me. Ford shouts a lot and gyrates at Smith to start things off. The Profits waste no time in hitting the World's Greatest Tag Team's (or the Beverly Brothers' for you older fans) jump over the back onto your opponent's back spot but Ford heads outside to bark. Dawkins splashes Smith in the corner and it's a spinebuster into the frog splash for the pin at 53 seconds. Well that worked.

The Profits celebrate in the crowd.

Next week: Ember Moon vs. Ruby Riot vs. Sonya DeVille in a Women's Title qualifying match.

Also next week: Sanity vs. Undisputed Era in a six man tag.

### Johnny Gargano vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Takeover: Brooklyn rematch. Feeling out process to start as the announcers discuss what the name Johnny Wrestling means. I'd think it was pretty self explanatory but that's never stopped WWE before. Gargano grabs a front facelock so slow Almas down but they roll up to a standoff. An elbow and a shoulder have Johnny in some early trouble and Almas has a breather in the ropes.

It's WAY too early for the Gargano Escape as Almas is too close to the ropes. Back in and a dropkick gives Gargano a cover but not even a one count, which you don't see that often. We take a break and come back with Almas grabbing an armbar over the top rope and kicking Gargano in the side of the head for a rather cocky two. Johnny is right back with a DDT on the arm and it's off to a slugout. A tornado Flatliner of all things drops Almas but the spear through the ropes is caught.

Johnny sends him outside though and there's the suicide dive. Back in and Gargano kicks him in the head but his reverse tornado DDT is countered into something like an Iconoclasm for two. An arm trap German suplex gives Almas the same but the second armbar over the ropes is broken up with some kicks to the back. Another slugout sees Gargano get two off a superkick and it's time to go up.

Almas shoves the referee into the ropes for a crotching but Johnny isn't about to take a super hammerlock DDT. Instead it's a clothesline off the top and a lawn dart to send Almas into the corner. The Gargano Escape goes on but Vega takes off her jacket to reveal the DIY shirt. The distraction lets Almas get to the ropes and Gargano goes to yell at Vega. A pinfall reversal sequence goes nowhere but Gargano is sent into the corner for the double knees to the back of the head twice in a row. The hammerlock DDT ends Gargano at 16:48.

**Rating:** B. I'm really curious about where this Gargano story is going as they have something with him not being able to get past the DIY stuff. They can fill in a lot of time until Ciampa is back for the big showdown and Gargano can pretty much lose everything until we get to that point.

**Overall Rating:** B+. Five matches in less than an hour is a rather impressive performance and yet I'm not even surprised they were able to pull it off. Anymore you're lucky to get two on any given Raw or Smackdown and yet NXT manages to pack more in and feel more entertaining at the same time. It's another good show this week as a lot of the stories have me wondering where they're going next, which is the polar opposite of the main roster right now. Good stuff, as usual.

### Results

Peyton Royce b. Liv Morgan and Nikki Cross – Fisherman's suplex to Cross

Velveteen Dream b. Lio Rush – Purple Rainmaker

Lars Sullivan b. Danny Burch – Standing Boss Man Slam

Street Profits b. Damien Smith/Marcos Espada – Frog splash to Smith

Andrade Cien Almas b. Johnny Gargano – Hammerlock DDT

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# **NXT – April 19, 2017: Ten**

# The Hard Way

## NXT

Date: April 19, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

We're back to Full Sail with a major match to wrap up someone's time in NXT. This week we have Tye Dillinger's NXT farewell as he steps inside a steel cage with Eric Young. Dillinger has already moved up to the main roster so it's his last chance to get a major win in NXT. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's NXT Champion Bobby Roode to get things going. It's a momentous occasion as he's made back to back Wrestlemania weekends GLORIOUS. This year he sold out the Amway Center with 15,000 people seeing the biggest box office superstar in the business today. The future of NXT is in his control and the transformation of Bobby Roode's NXT was completed.

Last week he saw Shinsuke Nakamura's farewell and thought it was pathetic. There was no Roode on stage to say goodbye to him because he didn't want to listen to Nakamura's garbage. Nakamura had to run away from NXT after the beatings that Roode gave him so everyone can either get on the Roode train or get out. Cue the returning Hideo Itami to slap Roode in the face. Bobby takes his jacket off and starts talking trash, only to walk into the GTS. Itami straightens his tie and holds up the title. Hideo is fine for a quick challenger and as sad as this sounds, it's probably better to get him in the title match before he's hurt again.

Tyler Bate and Jack Gallagher have a very polite discussion about their upcoming UK Title match.

Roode is still getting up after the break.

Earlier today, Andrade Cien Almas interrupted Drew McIntyre during his workout and challenged him for next week.



### Andrade Cien Almas vs. Danny Burch

Burch sends him into the ropes but Almas hangs on and shouts a bit. A belly to back sends Almas down again but he gets in a hard clothesline to take over. The double knees in the corner set up the hammerlock DDT for the pin on Burch at 2:57. Basically a squash.

Video on Asuka, who is still completely dominant. Some people, including Ember Moon and Ruby Riot, might see some weaknesses though.

Long recap of Eric Young vs. Tye Dillinger. Tye lost to Eric a few months ago but refused to join Sanity. This set off a major feud with Tye finding a bunch of friends to help him fight. Sanity won in Orlando but tonight it's one on one in a cage for the final blowoff.

### Liv Morgan/Aliyah vs. Billie Kay/Peyton Royce

Billie and Liv get things going with nothing happening for a good while until Liv grabs a sunset flip and rolls Billie around in a circle for some near falls. Aliyah comes in for a middle rope legdrop, only to eat a discus forearm. It's off to Peyton for a spinning kick to the face and what looked to be a three count. Aliyah grabs a sunset flip with Liv dropkicking Billie away so Aliyah can get the pin at 3:14.

**Rating:** D. I'm really not sure what to make of this half of the women's division. The bullying story is fine enough but it doesn't feel like it's going anywhere. Peyton and Billie are a great duo but there isn't much for them to do with Asuka on top of the division. Aliyah and Liv really don't do anything for me and I think NXT is starting to agree.

Almas vs. McIntyre is official for next week.

### Eric Young vs. Tye Dillinger

In a cage and Young sends Sanity to the back. Tye pulls him inside and hammers away to start but can't hit a very early Tyebreaker. Eric gets a toss into the cage and Tye is in trouble as we take a break. Back with Young getting two off a middle rope forearm to the back of Tye's neck.

Tye's right hands don't get him very far as Young powerbombs him out of the corner for two. It's too early to escape though as Young gets tossed off the top, sending us to another break. Back again with Young catching Tye on top and throwing him down again. One heck of a top rope elbow drop gets a very delayed two but Eric can't follow up.

Eric is busted open but takes too long to go after Tye, who grabs a Tyebreaker to put both guys down. Dillinger goes for the door but here's Sanity to slam it shut. Roderick Strong, Kassius Ohno and Ruby Riot run out for the save (so much for No Way Jose) but Dain runs both them and the referee over. Killian gets inside so Tye dives off the top to take out both Young and Dain before crawling out for the win at 23:06.

**Rating:** B-. This was more long than good but the problem is still very obvious: the ten gimmick is far more over than Tye, who just isn't all that interesting. Dillinger is fine but he's really just average in the ring. I'm sure he'll do well on the main roster with the TEN thing, though I'm not sure how long he's going to last. The cage match was exactly what it needed to be though with Dillinger defeating Young once and for all, giving him a big win to go out on. He hasn't had that in NXT and now it's a signature moment for him. Good match but nothing remarkable.

Dillinger locks Sanity inside the cage and celebrates to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. Good show here as they had the big match to go with setting up some stuff going forward. The women's tag was short and Royce/Kay are entertaining enough to make it an easy sit which Almas got a win to regain some credibility. Roode vs. Itami is a good choice for the title match in Chicago and the show was a fast way to help set all these things up going forward.

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# NXT – February 22, 2017: The Wrestling Version

## **NXT**

Date: February 22, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Percy Watson, Nigel McGuinness

We're getting closer and closer to Orlando as we're...well we're still in Orlando but it's not the big show yet. Tonight's big deal is a triple threat match for the #1 contendership to the Women's Title as Asuka is in need of some more competition. It's hard to say what else we've got coming up around here and that's a good thing as you could be in for a good surprise. Let's get to it.

In Memory of George Steele.

Quick video on the triple threat.

Opening sequence.

Liv Morgan vs. Peyton Royce vs. Ember Moon

#1 contenders match and Morgan is in Space Jam Tune Squad inspired gear. Moon gets sent to the floor to start and Morgan does a Matrix move to avoid the a spinning kick. The two of them head outside and Ember hits a dive over the top to take Morgan down. We take an early break and come back with Morgan taking Peyton's long legged choke in

the corner.

Peyton sends her to the apron and puts on something like a full nelson with her legs before letting it go to put Ember back on the floor. Morgan comes back with an ankle scissors out of the corner for one but can't follow up because it's just an ankle scissors. The real comeback starts with a kick in the corner and a bulldog, finally drawing Ember in for the save.

A headscissors puts Moon right back outside though and it's time for a superplex. Peyton isn't fast enough though as Ember sneaks in to make it a Tower of Doom and all three are down. Moon loads up the Eclipse but Billie Kay takes it instead of Morgan, leaving Peyton to knee Ember in the face. A fisherman's suplex to Morgan is good for the pin and the title shot at 11:54.

**Rating:** C+. That's really the only option as Morgan has already been destroyed by Asuka and I'd assume they're keeping Moon for a big showdown. The idea here was to keep Moon on the floor because otherwise it would have been her dominating the other two and slipping on a banana peel to lose in the end. Royce winning is the right call though I can't imagine that title shot comes before Takeover.

Video on Pete Dunne and Mark Andrews.

Kassius Ohno is coming back.

Shinsuke Nakamura is healing up.

Mark Andrews vs. Pete Dunne

Rematch from the tournament where Dunne beat Andrews. Dunne goes straight for the fingers to start and then rips at the nose like a true heel. Andrews pops back up and sends him to the floor for a moonsault armdrag to take over. A second attempt doesn't work though and Dunne forearms him in the jaw, followed by stomping the fingers onto the steps.

We take a break and come back with Andrews flipping Dunne over and grabbing a springboard hurricanrana. Dunne is ready for the shooting star though and forearms Andrews out of the air. The X Plex gets two

but Andrews gets out of the Bitter End. A reverse hurricanrana of all things puts Dunne down again. Another Bitter End is reversed into a small package for two and the X Plex is countered into the Stundog Millionaire. Dunne gets the knees up on the shooting star though and the Bitter End wraps Andrews up at 13:52.

**Rating:** B+. This was very good stuff and the wrestling was enough to overcome the lack of a story coming in. In theory this sets up Dunne as the first real challenger to Bate but it's not clear if anyone from outside the UK can challenge for the UK Title. You can also add Andrews to the list of people TNA screwed up horribly.

Kay and Royce are ready to take the Women's Title back to Australia. Patrick Clark is in action next week.

Tye Dillinger is ready for Sanity, no matter what they throw at him.

#### No Way Jose vs. Bobby Roode

Non-title and Roode's entrance is reaching Undertaker lengths. Roode takes him to the mat to start and slaps the afro a bit. Back up and it's dance time with a clothesline freaking Roode out a bit. The big spinebuster plants Jose again though and we take a break. Back with Roode striking the pose and grabbing a chinlock. Jose makes his comeback and cleans house with chops and a cobra clutch slam. The big right hand puts Roode on the floor but he comes back in and hits the Glorious DDT for the pin at 10:39.

**Rating:** C+. This was the kind of match that Roode needed. Jose is going to be fine with a loss to the champ and Roode gets a win over someone with some credibility. That being said, the credibility isn't going to last all that long if he never wins a match anytime soon. Good enough though and a third solid match on a good show.

Post match Roode goes after the knee until Kassius Ohno makes a big return for the save. Roode asks who Ohno is so Kassius talks about how he's been around the world. Now Ohno wants what Roode has, so Bobby is willing to put the title on the line right now. Roode gets in a cheap shot and starts in on the knee, only to get knocked out to the floor for his efforts. Ohno poses to end the show. Ohno got a

strong reaction (not quite Nakamura but still a star level reception) and that's a good thing as he's likely going to be in the title scene very soon.

**Overall Rating:** A-. This was the pure wrestling show with almost no storyline development but three strong matches in the span of an hour. Sometimes you just need a long show with a lot of good wrestling and that's what took place here. I had a good time with this and it went by fast, especially with the big angle to end the show. NXT needed a show like this and it worked very well.

### Results

Peyton Royce b. Ember Moon and Liv Morgan – Fisherman's suplex to Morgan

Pete Dunne b. Mark Andrews – Bitter End

Bobby Roode b. No Way Jose – Glorious DDT

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# **NXT – February 15, 2017:**

# The NXT Special

## NXT

Date: February 15, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson

We've got two big matches for tonight with a title on the line.

First up it's the Aussie women Billie Kay and Peyton Royce teaming up to face Liv Morgan and a mystery partner. We'll cap it off with Tyler Bate making his first defense of the WWE UK Title against the debuting Trent Seven. Let's get to it.

Quick look at Bate vs. Seven.

Opening sequence.

### Authors of Pain vs. Garrison Spears/Lance Anoa'i

Non-title and Lance is Samu's son. It's total domination with stereo Death Valley Drivers putting the jobbers into the corner. The Final Chapter ends Spears at 1:20.

The jobbers get a Super Collider post match.

Video on Tyler Bate.

### Billie Kay/Peyton Royce vs. Liv Morgan/Ember Moon

Kind of an obvious pick. Moon spins away from Billie to start and the Aussie is already looking shaken. Billie is smart enough to twist away and get in a kick to the ribs, only to get tossed down with a suplex. The hot tag brings in Morgan to a very limited reaction (that's hard to do in NXT) for the house cleaning. An STO gets two on Peyton as everything breaks down. Moon gets sent outside and Billie knees Morgan in the side of the head for the pin at 3:18.

**Rating:** C-. I'm still confused by Morgan as they seem to want her to be the new big star of the division but keep having her do jobs in the bigger matches like this one. It's also interesting that they didn't have Moon get the pin here as it's pretty clear that she's going to be the next challenger for Asuka's title and she wasn't

exactly the star of the match here.

We look back at Sanity telling Tye Dillinger that he belongs to the team and then beating him down later in the night. No Way Jose and Roderick Strong made the save.

Strong and Jose don't like bullies and respect Dillinger enough to give him a hand.

Here's DIY with something to say. They realized their dream in Toronto but that dream became a nightmare in San Antonio. They've never fought anyone like the Authors of Pain but they saw doubt in their eyes. No matter how much they're beaten down they'll never quit fighting so it's time for a rematch. Cue Paul Ellering to say the match can take place in two weeks. DIY doesn't want to wait but here's the Revival to beat them down, only to have the Authors chase them off.

Video on Trent Seven.

Video on Kassius Ohno, who returns soon.

General Manager William Regal announces a #1 contenders triple threat match for next week between Peyton Royce, Ember Moon and Liv Morgan.

UK Title: Tyler Bate vs. Trent Seven

Bate is defending. They start slowly with both guys having a clean break and offering a twirl of the others mustache. Bate bounces off the much bigger Seven until Trent runs him over with a much harder version. Nigel starts talking about cricket and gets in a few jabs at Watson (not that difficult) as the slow beating continues while taking us to a break.

Back with Trent getting two off a backslide and Bate giving us that great scared face in the corner. Tyler finally gets going and knocks Trent outside for a good looking dive over the top. Back in and the Seven Stars Lariat is broken up so Tyler grabs the airplane spin. Since it's just an airplane spin though, Trent pops up and gets in a powerbomb for two. A half crab (not a great one though) has Bate in trouble but the hold doesn't last that long.



It's time for rights and left (Bop and Bam if you haven't been formally introduced) but Seven just blasts him with the Seven Star Lariat for two. You know, if it hardly ever finishes anyone, it's not really a finisher. Trent takes his sweet time going up and gets caught in a super exploder suplex for two. Bate gets all fired up and hits the rolling kick to the head, followed by the Tyler Driver '97 for the pin at 15:39.

**Rating:** B. I'm not really feeling Seven yet but I'm digging the heck out of Bate the more I see him. The fact that the guy is just nineteen years old is mind blowing as the guy looks like he's been doing this for years, despite also looking like he's about fourteen years old. These matches don't really have stories but they're knocking the heck out of the work, which is all they can really do at this point.

They shake hands post match.

**Overall Rating:** B-. Kind of a middle of the road show this week as we're still getting ready for the bigger stories but it was still entertaining enough. The show breezed by and that makes for a very easy fifty minute show, especially with a strong main event. They also made sure to announce stuff for the future, which is still one of their greatest strengths. It's never "what does someone have in store" but rather "this is what you're going to get". That's a very key difference and incredibly important.

### Results

Authors of Pain b. Garrison Spears/Lance Anoa'i – Final Chapter to Spears

Peyton Royce/Billie Kay b. Ember Moon/Liv Morgan – Knee to Morgan's head

Tyler Bate b. Trent Seven – Tyler Driver '97

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# **NXT – January 4, 2017: With a Lot of Hitting Him in the Face**

## **NXT**

Date: January 4, 2017

Location: Margaret Court Arena, Melbourne, Australia

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're back with another special show as it's another two hour house show, this time from Australia. Again we've seen most of the main event but just like last week, we should get to see more than we already got a few weeks back. Other than that, almost none of this matters aside from having good matches. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Revival vs. Tino Sabbatelli/Riddick Moss

Dawson and Moss start things off as the fans are rather into this early on. That goes nowhere so it's off to Tino vs. Wilder as the slow pace continues. Tino slams Dash so Moss can get two off an elbow drop. Moss fights off Revival as Tino just stands there and lets the double teaming ensue.

Riddick can't fight them off forever though and the top guys (Graves: "THEY'RE STILL TOP GUYS!") take over as you might expect. An elbow finally misses and the diving tag brings in Tino for the house cleaning. Wilder pulls Sabbatelli to the floor though and Moss

grabs a rollup for two. Back in and the Shatter Machine puts Moss away at 11:00.

**Rating:** C. This was a long squash, which makes for some uninteresting matches on house shows. Revival were almost the faces here, which made for a really awkward match. It's certainly not bad or anything but this is such a strange style for NXT, which is so based on building up to matches instead of one offs like this one.

#### Elias Samson/Bobby Roode vs. Tye Dillinger/Buddy Murphy

Samson gets annoyed at the fans cutting off his singing until Roode cuts him off again for a much more popular entrance. Murphy is the home country boy here with Graves saying it's so Murphy can know someone likes him. Roode starts with Murphy but lets Elias know he's got an eye on the other Canadian.

We hit the posing early on with Graves suggesting that Phillips and Murphy go box kangaroos together. A kick to the face gives Murphy two as the fans chant TEN. It's off to Dillinger but Roode bails before any contact is made. With the DRIFT AWAY chants rolling, Samson works on the arm and gets the ten treatment. A slingshot splash gets two and, according to Phillips, kangaroos can't hop backwards.

Roode is dragged in but Tye beats both of them up anyway, only to be taken down by a knee to the back. The fans still don't like Samson and call him some very rude names before switching to a GLORIOUS chant. For some reason Roode won't rain down right hands in the corner so it's an a superkick to set up the double tag. Murphy comes in and cleans house, including a bad looking hurricanrana to Roode. A better looking flip dive takes him out, leaving Dillinger to hit the Tyebreaker to put Samson away at 11:19.

**Rating:** C+. This was a bit more my style with a standard tag formula and wrestlers that the fans were actually interested in. Also, as expected, NXT isn't about to give us Dillinger and Roode being involved in a fall, as they shouldn't here. That's still a big enough feud for one more TV match so why waste it here?

#### Liv Morgan vs. Billie Kay vs. Ember Moon

As expected, Kay is the big crowd favorite but bails to the floor so the other two can slug it out. Well as much slugging as Morgan is going to do. Billie tries to steal a pin but gets caught in that

rolling sunset flip to give Morgan some near falls. A double bulldog puts Kay and Moon down so Liv covers one but gets kicked out onto the other over and over in a clever spot.

Back up and Billie hits Eat Defeat for two on Moon, followed by an armbar into a suplex. The fans want to know if Billie will be their girl (she's no Bayley) but settle for Liv getting superkicked off the apron. Moon kicks Billie in the face again and all three are knocked out to the floor. Back in and Kay gets double kicked but Liv breaks up the Eclipse. Instead, Billie powerbombs Liv off the top and walks into the Eclipse to give Moon the pin at 8:28.

**Rating:** C+. Another totally fine match here as Moon gets to look strong again. I could easily see Moon getting her shot at the title over Wrestlemania weekend though I'm not sure if that's a big enough title match for Asuka. You know, assuming Nikki Cross doesn't take the title from her in San Antonio.

#### Tag Team Titles: DIY vs. TM61

TM61 is challenging and it's Ciampa and Thorn trading near falls to start. That earns a quick handshake and the fans are VERY pleased so far. Miller and Gargano come in and it's one heck of a right hand to send Johnny into the corner. A very delayed vertical suplex gets two on Gargano so it's back to Ciampa for some arm cranking. Thorn gets two off a falcon's arrow and we take a break.

Back with Ciampa breaking up a handspring elbow and bringing Gargano back in. Johnny grabs a sunset flip but leans forward and pulls on Thorn's neck for a weird looking submission hold. That goes nowhere so Thorn dropkicks Ciampa so it can be back to Miller for the house cleaning. Johnny's spear through the ropes cuts him off for another near fall. A tornado DDT/enziguri combo gives Gargano two more but Thorn powerbombs his own partner to set up a Tower of Doom on Ciampa.

Clever spot and Gargano shoving Miller into the pin for the save made it better. Project Ciampa gives us another near fall and the fans are WAY into the Aussies. Miller and Gargano slug it out in the middle of the ring with Johnny getting the better of it. Thorn is knocked to the floor and the running knee/superkick combo retains the titles at 18:18.

**Rating:** B. DIY really can do no wrong at this point and that's always going to be entertaining. I'm still worried about the match

against the Authors of Pain but at least we had one heck of a pair of matches on these international tours. TM61 is still good but they're several steps behind the champs and Revival, which kind of leaves them out in the cold.

We get the big post match show of respect.

Recap of Nakamura vs. Joe.

NXT Title: Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Samoa Joe

Nakamura is defending and this is inside a cage. The champ takes him down by the leg to start but they grapple up against the ropes with neither being able to get much of an advantage. Joe gets taken into the corner for Good Vibrations so he sends Nakamura hard into the cage to even things up.

The corner enziguri gets two and we take an early break. Back with Joe kicking him in the face again and dropping an elbow for two. A weak LET'S GO CENA/CENA SUCKS chant is quickly booed down as Joe slowly beats on the champ. We hit the neck crank for a bit before Nakamura fights back up with the running kick to the face. Joe gets in his own kick but misses the backsplash to put both guys down for a bit.

It's Joe up first with his rotating submissions but Nakamura slips out of the Crossface. Instead Joe sends him into the cage a few more times and we take a second break. Back with Nakamura hitting more knees to the head and lifting Joe for a big German suplex. Kinshasa is countered with a powerslam and the Koquina Clutch doesn't last long. Nakamura knees him in the head again for two and BLASTS Joe with a top rope Kinshasa. Back to back regular versions retain the title at 26:15.

**Rating:** B+. Again, the clipped version of this from a few weeks ago is almost unfair as it only showed about thirteen minutes instead of over twice that long. This was a good way to definitively put Nakamura over Joe for good and let both guys move on to something else. It really wouldn't surprise me if that means the main roster for Joe so at least he went out on a high note.

Replays wrap it up.

**Overall Rating:** B-. I actually had a bit more fun watching this one than last week's as the matches felt a little more important, possibly due to a full time team challenging DIY instead of a

makeshift pairing. It's still a good show but I'm really looking forward to getting back to the regular show instead of these specials where there's no storyline development. The wrestling has been fine but I need a bit more than that.

### Results

Revival b. Tino Sabbatelli/Riddick Moss – Shatter Machine to Moss  
Tye Dillinger/Buddy Murphy b. Bobby Roode/Elias Samson – Tyebreaker to Samson

Ember Moon b. Billie Kay and Liv Morgan – Eclipse to Kay

DIY b. TM61 – Running knee/superkick combination to Miller

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Samoa Joe – Kinshasa

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# **NXT – December 28, 2016: A First For NXT**

## **NXT**

Date: December 28, 2016

Location: Edion Arena, Osaka, Japan

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

It's a special week in NXT as we're closing out the year with a house show taped over in Japan earlier this month. The main event is

Shinsuke Nakamura challenging Samoa Joe for the title in a match we saw a few weeks back. This is also a two hour show, meaning the matches won't have to be as clipped. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick video on Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura.

Opening sequence.

#### Oney Lorcan vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Almas wears a mask during his entrance and has no interest in a pre-match handshake. We hear about Almas defeating Nakamura for the IWGP Intercontinental Title a few years back which is almost unthinkable given their statuses in NXT. Almas' headlock doesn't go anywhere so he does the lay on the ropes spot before getting caught in a Lorcan headlock. We talk about the crowd being more silent than usual as Almas takes him down into a chinlock.

Back up and Lorcan hits a running corner clothesline before popping in a few shots to the face. Something like a standing backflip into a reverse DDT (I believe Tetsuya Naito uses the same) gets two on Lorcan but he comes right back with an inverted exploder. Almas sends him into the corner again with the running double knees getting two despite a foot on the ropes. The hammerlock DDT is broken up and Lorcan takes him to the top for a German superplex (with Almas flipping over in the air) and the pin at 10:06.

**Rating:** C. It's a decent match of two lower level guys hitting each other a lot but that's not the most interesting thing in the world. Above that though, this is making me wonder why this is a full two hour show. I really didn't need to see this match getting ten minutes though there are worse ways to spend a Wednesday night.

#### Aliyah/Liv Morgan vs. Peyton Royce/Billie Kay

Billie gives Liv a quick fireman's carry to start as Corey goes into his usual anti-New Jersey rant. Morgan grabs a sunset flip and rolls Kay around the ring for a few two counts but both of them seem a bit dizzy. Aliyah comes in and gets caught in the wrong corner for some very long legged choking.

The Australians work on Aliyah's back and keep pulling her away from

the hot tag. We hit the chinlock for a bit as the beating continues. Liv gets knocked off the apron, which Graves refers to as an insurance policy. Aliyah finally flips out of a double suplex and brings Morgan back in to clean house with a bulldog. An STO gets two on Billie but a blind tag allows Peyton to send Liv face first into Billie's knee for the pin at 8:29.

**Rating:** D+. This was far less interesting than it should have been and a lot of that was due to the length. It felt like they were stretching the match out to fill in time, which isn't what you want to do on a show that already feels longer than it should be. I can appreciate the idea of trying to build up Kay and Royce as the top heels in the division but I'm having a really hard time buying either of them as a threat to Asuka.

#### Tag Team Titles: DIY vs. Akira Tozawa/Tajiri

DIY is defending and this time we get the handshake. Gargano and Tozawa start things off and this time the fans are a bit more into it. The fans seem split as both guys miss big kicks and bring in their respective partners. Tajiri sprays some mist as Graves questions his fandom with DIY in the ring.

The feeling out process continues with the mist having fallen on Tajiri's back. Ciampa wins a battle of the shoulder blocks but a headlock into a headscissor sequence takes us back to a stalemate. They're almost completely even in the first five minutes. Ciampa starts in on Tozawa's arm but gets taken down for some Tajiri kicks to put the champions in trouble for the first time.

Back from a break with Ciampa telling Tozawa to kick him harder. They take turns sticking their chests out for chops until Tozawa hits him behind the ear to take over. A gutbuster puts Ciampa down but he breaks up a tag to Tajiri as the formula changes a bit. Tozawa kicks him before bringing Tajiri back in for the REAL kicks to the chest. Everything breaks down and Tozawa hits some suicide dives to put the champs in trouble. It doesn't last long though as Gargano hits the spear through the ropes for a close two.

The Tarantula sets up a missed Buzzsaw Kick before it's back to



Tozawa for a forearm slugout. Ciampa comes back in for the rolling German suplexes, only to get caught in a snap German suplex from Tozawa. That's enough for Ciampa who kicks the heck out of Tozawa and hits Project Ciampa for two with Tajiri breaking it up. A blind tag brings Gargano back in for the running knee/superkick combination for the pin on Tozawa at 21:04.

**Rating:** B. Now that's a bit more like it. They went a bit long but this was FAR better than anything else on the show so far. Tozawa is really impressive and Tajiri still has it despite being in his mid-40s. I liked this a lot more than I was expecting to as DIY can do no wrong at the moment. I'm not sure that's going to extend to the Authors of Pain though and that scares me.

DIY bows to the challengers post match.

#### Women's Title: Nia Jax vs. Asuka

Asuka is defending and we're in her hometown. Jax shrugs off the strikes to start and headbutts the champ into the corner. That earns her an Octopus Hold followed by a guillotine with the announcers bringing up Jax's issues with that hold. Asuka gets thrown into the corner and we take an early break.

Back with Jax tossing Asuka around even more with a release slam getting two. A sidewalk slam gets the same and another comeback is cut off in a hurry, quieting the crowd all over again. Nia drops her with a clothesline as the announcers talk about how bringing the NXT Women's Title to Raw would be a huge deal for Jax's career.

As odd as it sounds, they're absolutely right as the title is probably more valuable than the Smackdown Women's Title and just a few steps behind the Raw counterpart. Some kicks set up a kneebar on Nia but she stands up for the easy break. A hip attack knocks Nia off the apron but Asuka is easily thrown into the apron to put her in trouble again.

The big leg sends Asuka outside again and the announcers aren't sure if Nia is familiar enough with the rules. I get what they're going for but she knows that you have to get a pin in the ring. She's not

Kamala guys. Back in and Asuka unloads on her with the strike, followed by a cross armbreaker. Asuka jumps on Nia's back for a sleeper but gets countered into a hard powerbomb for two. Back up and Asuka actually gets her up for a German suplex, followed by one heck of a kick to the jaw to retain the title at 18:52.

**Rating:** B-. This was a cross between Nia vs. Asuka I and either Nia vs. Bayley match, which means it's pretty entertaining stuff. The idea of Asuka having to be pushed to the limit was a good story though at some point Nia needs to find something other than being too confident and getting beaten as a result.

We're in Melbourne next week and hopefully it's not another two hour show.

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

Nakamura is challenging. They trade some kicks to the legs to start and Nakamura does his arm waving bit to mess with Joe's head. That's enough for Joe to take a breather on the floor and we take a break. Back with Joe taking it outside and chopping Nakamura to his knees. The corner enziguri drops Nakamura again and it's time to go after the knees. A spinwheel kick to the leg sets up a leglock and Nakamura is in trouble.

Joe grabs a kneebar for a bit until Nakamura makes the ropes, setting up a big kick to the champ's head. The running knee to the ribs in the corner gets two, followed by Joe's big boot getting the same. We take another break and come back with Joe holding the STF, which is transitioned into the Crossface. Nakamura finally gets to the ropes but can't hook a cross armbreaker. He can however get a triangle choke, sending Joe's legs into the rope for a break of his own.

It's too early for Kinshasa though as Joe powerslams him out of the air for two. Joe can't hook the Muscle Buster so he switches to the Koquina Clutch, only to settle for a hard German suplex instead. An enziguri sends Nakamura outside but he gets out of the Rock Bottom onto the steps that put him out of action for so long earlier this year. The running knee to the back of the neck drops Joe but he's

too big for Nakamura to hold up in a fireman's carry. That's fine with Nakamura as he hits the middle rope knee, followed by Kinshasa for the pin and the title at 26:28.

**Rating:** B+. This was a lot better than the version shown before, which only gave us 10:45 of the match. Nakamura fighting back to win in his home country was the right way to end the show and it felt like a big deal on a big stage. Joe should be ready to head up to the main roster as there's nothing left for him to do in NXT.

A lot of posing ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. The problem here is the length. This easily could have been trimmed down by half an hour or so (edit some of the matches or just cut off the first two) and it would have been much better as a result. It really felt unnecessary to last this long and not much was gained as a result. I'm not going to think of this show again and that's not something I like thinking on a long NXT show. Totally watchable show but trim it down to make it that much better.

### Results

Oney Lorcan b. Andrade Cien Almas – German superplex

Billie Kay/Peyton Royce b. Liv Morgan/Aliyah – Bulldog onto Kay's knee

DIY b. Akira Tozawa/Tajiri – Running knee/superkick combination

Asuka b. Nia Jax – Kick to the head

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Samoa Joe – Kinshasa

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# NXT – November 23, 2016: Thank You NXT

## **NXT**

Date: November 23, 2016

Location: Air Canada Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

This is a special episode as we're past Takeover: Toronto and since there hasn't been time for a full taping, this show was filmed before Saturday's show, meaning this is again in a huge arena. Things changed a lot in Toronto as two titles changed hands, including the NXT Title. Let's get to it.

We open with the long recap of Saturday's show.

Opening sequence.

### Rich Swann vs. Kona Reeves

My goodness Swann gets an amazing reaction, easily stronger than anything the cruiserweights have gotten on Raw so far. Kona is aggressive to start and gets two off a pop up Samoan drop. Swann gets whipped hard into the corner and Reeves stops for a big, evil grin. He's certainly got the facials down. The offense doesn't last long though as Rich comes right back with a running kick to the face and the standing 450....but here's Sanity for the no contest at 4:30, nearly a minute and a half of which was the team's entrance.

**Rating:** D+. The match doesn't matter because this is all about Swann's entrance. You really can see how much better the cruiserweights are received at a show like this where they might be treated as a featured attraction instead of some people who happen

to appear on the show. It gives me some hope for 205 Live, but if they do the show after Smackdown is taped, the show is dead in the water.

Swann fights back but gets taken down by the numbers as a big EY chant breaks out. Eric Young says this generation is going to be remembered because Sanity is going to take. It's amazing how much easier it is to deal with Young when he doesn't talk much.

Post break, No Way Jose is out to check on his partner and calls out Young for a fight right now. The rest of the team surrounds the ring and the brawl is on with no referee or bell. A right hand has Young in trouble and the rest of Sanity comes in for the beatdown.

Video on the finals of the Dusty Classic.

The Authors of Pain are ready for Chapter Three, which will be explained in time.

Peyton Royce and Billie Kay recruit Daria Berenato for the six woman tag. They're ready to make the world prettier when Daria rearranges some faces.

Video on Bobby Roode vs. Tye Dillinger.

Tye says he might have taken a step back with the loss but the people still supported him so he'll be back.

Long video on DIY vs. Revival. Sami Zayn vs. Shinsuke Nakamura was the clubhouse leader for match of the year but it's going to be a very, very close race. I'm not sure which is in the lead at the moment but it's a tossup at worst.

DIY says this win is an answer to every time they've been told no.

Video on Asuka vs. Mickie James.

Mickie is in tears over how amazing that was and calls Asuka incredible.

Video on Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura.

Nakamura wants a rematch as soon as possible.

Liv Morgan/Aliyah/Ember Moon vs. Peyton Royce/Billie Kay/Daria

## Berenato

Aliyah is the hometown girl and Berenato is the tough boxer/fighter. Billie and Liv start things off and an early headscissors takes Kay down. Aliyah comes in and Corey wants to know what's up with people listing their area code. I'm with Graves for a change. Daria comes in and takes Aliyah down as we take an early break. Back with Aliyah still in trouble until an enziguri gets her out of trouble. Moon comes in off the hot tag and cleans house as everything breaks down. Billie kicks Moon in the face but the Aussies tell Daria to take care of the rest. As soon as Daria turns around, the Eclipse wraps things up at 8:41.

**Rating:** C-. This was fine and it's very clear that Morgan is just a way to get the Aussies and Moon over as bigger deals, which is really all you can expect from her. The match was fine enough and that Eclipse is going to be the big weapon to give Asuka a run for her money. This was fine for a filler show main event and that's all it was.

BREAKING NEWS: Nakamura vs. Joe for the title in two weeks from Osaka, Japan.

**Overall Rating:** D+. These are always hard to grade as nothing on here mattered but it wasn't disguised as anything important. This was just a filler show until we get to the next tapings and that's perfectly fine. I had a good enough time with it and the show flew by with all the recap videos. Joe vs. Nakamura III should be a blast and even if Nakamura doesn't get the title back there, you can almost guarantee one more match in San Antonio. That's enough to be thankful for so Happy Thanksgiving everyone.

## Results

Rich Swann vs. Kona Reeves went to a no contest when Sanity interfered

Liv Morgan/Aliyah/Ember Moon b. Peyton Royce/Billie Kay/Daria Berenato – Eclipse to Berenato

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