

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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