

NXT Takeover: San Antonio Preview

It's that time again as NXT will be taking over another Saturday night before we get to one of the Big Four pay per views. Unfortunately this show hasn't had the best build in the world and a lot of that is due to a combination of the talent being taken up to the main roster and the two weeks spent on international shows that could have been used on the build towards the matches. Today we're going to look at the build towards "Takeover: San Antonio" and see if it looks better on paper than it's looked on "NXT" TV.

Eric Young vs. Tye Dillinger

This feud has served two purposes: showing that Dillinger has a reason to still be in NXT and giving Sanity's leader his first major feud. The stable has the potential to be something special and Dillinger's TEN gimmick is getting over like almost nothing has in a very long time. The fans just want to cheer for the guy and he's more than made up for it in the ring. He's no Sami Zayn or anyone near that level but he's doing enough to make it work.

That being said, there's no reason for Young to lose here. I could easily see Dillinger moving up to the main roster for the Royal Rumble alone while Sanity with Young at the helm could dominate NXT for a good while going forward. Young wins here as he's the only logical option along with deserving it (that was much easier to say than it should have been).

Andrade Cien Almas vs. Roderick Strong

I always forget that Strong is even in NXT as he just hasn't done all that much yet. Almas is in a similar place as he's barely established himself in the promotion. His in ring stuff hasn't done much to impress me and I'm still not sure why I'm supposed to care about him (though his heel work has been better than his face run). Strong is entertaining though and I've always been a fan of the guy.

I'm actually going to go with Strong in what could be considered an upset. Strong is a talented guy and can go with anyone in the ring but neither guy really has a strong personality. Both of them need something to do but I'd rather see Strong knock that smile off of Almas' face than anything else and that's enough to give him the nod here. I have next to no confidence in it but I'll go with Strong.

Tag Team Titles: DIY vs. Authors of Pain

Now this is where things get a little hazy. DIY is on a roll at this point and is one of the best teams I've seen in a long time. However, the Authors of Pain have been treated as nearly unstoppable monsters and the logical move would be to see them steamroll the champions for the titles. At the same time though, I can't imagine DIY losing the belts that they spent so much time winning.

I see this one going along the lines of Sting vs. Vader in 1992: the Authors of Pain destroy the champs and then get disqualified or counted out for going a bit too hard. DIY will probably drop the belts to them later on but I don't think it happens just yet. They did too much great stuff against the Revival to lose them to a team like the Authors of Pain, at least this early on.

Women's Title: Asuka vs. Peyton Royce vs. Billie Kay vs. Nikki Cross

This one depends on where you think the title is going after the match as we get closer to the big Wrestlemania weekend show. Asuka has been running through the division for almost a year now and the only real idea is to have the three challengers in one match instead of lining them up one at a time.

That being said, I still think Asuka runs through them all with a fall on one of the Aussies. There's no reason to have her go over Cross yet but I could easily see the big showdown between Asuka and Ember Moon at the big show in Orlando. They could throw in a big curve ball and have the Aussies basically be the NXT version of Laycool but again, I just don't see it happening. Asuka retains.

NXT Title: Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Bobby Roode

The more I think about this match, the more confused I really am

about the whole thing. NXT has managed to book a match where it's hard to imagine either of them actually losing here. Roode has been built up as the big star but Nakamura is Nakamura, as in someone who requires a small cannon to finally put down. On paper this should be a squash it's hard to not buy into Roode's schtick.

At the end of the day though, I think it's going to be Nakamura retaining the title and setting up a showdown with.....well I have no idea actually (Kassius Ohno maybe?) but I don't think Roode wins here. He's the kind of guy who could get his heat back in the span of about five minutes so Nakamura goes over here after a match which far exceeds expectations.

I think I've talked myself into being excited over this show. If there's a single promotion that can make me believe they can pull off what feels like a lackluster card, NXT is the one. I'm not sure it's going to work but I'm more than willing to give the show a chance. If they can get most of the matches right and hit the ground running heading into Orlando, everything will be fine.

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NXT – January 25, 2017: Trouble Brewing

NXT

Date: January 25, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

It's the go home show for Takeover: San Antonio and that means we're in for the final push towards a card that isn't the strongest in the world. However, that seems to be where NXT shines. They just know how to turn something that might not look the best into something that's a lot of fun. Tonight's focus seems to be on the Women's Title match so let's get to it.

Ember Moon vs. Liv Morgan

They start faster than expected with some small packages getting two each. Morgan misses a charge into the corner though and Moon blasts her in the face with a jumping knee. It's off to a Crossface until Morgan fights up and gets a bulldog. A guillotine choke has Moon in more trouble than she's ever been in...so she throws Morgan over the top for a big crash. The Eclipse is good for the pin at 4:00.

Rating: C-. I've seen worse but I'm really getting behind the idea of Moon vs. Asuka in Orlando over Wrestlemania weekend. Moon has been treated like an unstoppable force and that's the more than anyone else has been able to do in the division. Better match than I was expecting here and that's encouraging for Morgan.

Andrade Cien Almas is in the back when Roderick Strong says he's ready to go right now. Almas beats him down without much effort.

Long video on DIY vs. Authors of Pain.

No Way Jose vs. Kona Reeves

Jose dances out of a waistlock to start and the threat of a right hand sends Reeves into the corner. Reeves suckers him in with the offer of a dance and hammers away, setting up a Samoan drop for two.

Some surfing on Jose's back doesn't really do much, allowing him to come back with a series of right hands. A pop up right hand finishes Reeves at 4:04.

Rating: D+. Not much to see here as the combination of somewhat goofy gimmicks didn't do a lot of good. You had a dancer against a surfer here and since this isn't GLOW, I'm not sure that's the best idea. Reeves hasn't shown me much and while Jose is one of my favorites on the roster, he needs something better than this.

Post match Elias Samson comes out with a song but Jose suggests something else and sings YOUR SONG SUCKS to the beat of his theme song. Samson gets punched in the face.

Chris Atkins vs. Eric Young

I've heard Atkins' music (something about putting your hands up if you're scared to fly) somewhere before but I can't place it. A Sanity distraction lets Young jump him from behind and the beating is on in a hurry. Young chokes in the corner and drops a middle rope elbow to the back. The wheelbarrow neckbreaker ends Atkins at 1:54.

Young shouts about choices and Damo crushes Atkins again.

We look at the Revival destroying Shane Thorn's knee. Thorn had surgery earlier this week and will be out seven to nine months. I love that WWE seems to be bringing back the idea of crediting someone with injuring wrestlers. Thorn was going to be out no matter what so let Revival get some heat on it instead of just letting Thorn go on the shelf and be forgotten.

Video on Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Bobby Roode.

William Regal is here to keep an eye on the four way interview to hype up the Women's Title match. Billie Kay and Peyton Royce come out first and say you know what the two of them can do. Asuka has already taken a beating and Nikki is just crazy so there's no way both of them are losing. Nikki doesn't say anything and it's Asuka coming out for the big showdown with Cross. The Aussies jump them from behind and that goes as well as you would expect. Security is easily dispatched and Asuka kicks Nikki in the head. Security pulls

Asuka to the floor and Cross dives on the pile. Billie and Peyton look terrified to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. They pushed the card as much as they could but I'm not sure it's enough. There isn't one match on the card that seems like it could carry the rest of the show and I'm not sure there's a way around the fact that the challengers all seem to have no chance. I've seen longer shots but I don't really buy anyone as having a chance against Asuka and Roode doesn't seem likely to win the title. Stranger things have happened and I'll never doubt Takeover's ability to surprise me but this is a long shot. They did what they could this week but I'm not convinced just yet.

Results

Ember Moon b. Liv Morgan – Eclipse

No Way Jose b. Kona Reeves – Pop Up Right Hand

Eric Young b. Chris Atkins – Wheelbarrow neckbreaker

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NXT House Show – January

13, 2017: Shaking Hands with Champions

I took in the NXT house show last night at the Broadbent Arena in Louisville, Kentucky. The arena holds 6,600 people but part of it was tarped off and the entire back section of the bleacher seats weren't sold. The floor seats however were completely full and gave the show a good feeling as the area around the ring was packed. Let's get to it.

After a regular opening video and the Star Spangled Banner, the ring announcer started an NXT chant and we were ready to go.

1. Gran Metalik b. Noam Dar – Metalik Driver (8:30)

This was pretty standard stuff with Dar working the arm and the leg at various times. The fans chanted WHERE'S ALICIA over and over during the match. Metalik did some flips and kicks before hitting the namesake driver for the pin. Pretty standard opener. C.

2. Ember Moon b. Mandy Rose – Eclipse (9:03)

The fans booed Rose's entrance until she actually came out and then it was mainly gasping. I've seen a lot of wrestling in my day and the only female wrestler near her level is Maria Kanellis. Basically imagine Eva Marie if she could actually wrestle a competent match. Rose did the standard DON'T HIT ME IN THE FACE bit and took over for a bit before a bunch of strikes and the Eclipse wrapped it up. That finisher looked great in person too. D+.

DIY did a quick promo talking about Sanity and about how Ciampa used to live in Louisville. When they win tonight they're going to get some horses and celebrate all night long. Gargano: "HORSES???"

3. Authors of Pain b. Heavy Machinery – Final Chapter (7:28)

A fan got to do the intro in a cute bit. Heavy Machinery is Tucker Knight/Otis Dozovic and they're some good sized guys. This was your standard power match with Otis getting to show off a bit. It was nothing out of the ordinary but I had a good time with it as I can go for four big guys hitting each other really hard. C.

4. Elias Samson b. Oney Lorcan – Swinging neckbreaker (7:45)

Samson did his song about wanting to hit all of us in the face.

Lorcan grabbed the mic and asked if any of us wanted to see him beat Samson all over Louisville. There wasn't much to this and it was probably the worst match of the night. Samson stopped in the middle to sing a song so Lorcan grabbed the guitar and threatened to break it. When the referee took it away, Samson got in the neckbreaker for the pin. D.

5. Women's Title: Asuka b. Peyton Royce – Asuka Lock (9:15)

Billie Kay was out with Royce. This was better than expected with Billie getting in a distraction so Peyton could take over. The Aussies are getting better at their offense and looking more like bullies. Asuka Hulked Up, took out Billie and Asuka Locked Peyton to retain. C+.

Intermission.

6. Tag Team Titles: DIY b. Sanity (Alexander Wolfe/Killian Dain) (12:38)

This was the match of the night so far with DIY the champs doing a bit of comedy with the monster Dain (formerly Big Damo). Sanity tried to interfere and Nikki Cross was ejected. Dain powerbombed Ciampa onto Wolfe's raised knees for a near fall but the knee/superkick combo finished Wolfe to retain. B-.

Eric Young yelled at the rest of Sanity and issued an open challenge.

7. Eric Young b. Patrick Clark

While this was an open challenge, Clark was already listed as facing Young on the official poster. No one knew who Clark was when he came out but the match wound up being fine. Clark wasn't the most interesting in the world though and it held the match back a lot. Sanity came out for interference and Young won with the wheelbarrow neckbreaker. Clark was beaten down post match and no one came out for the save. C+.

8. Shinsuke Nakamura/Roderick Strong b. Samoa Joe/Bobby Roode (18:34)

Definitely the match of the night and Nakamura's pop was probably stronger than any other two combined. The fans didn't seem to know who Strong was and Roode got one heck of a pop of his own. This was your standard main event tag with everyone getting their stuff in. Roode vs. Nakamura was entertaining with Roode doing basic stuff and

then getting freaked out when Nakamura would do his flashy stuff. Nakamura finished Joe with the Kinshasa and posed a lot to end the show. B+.

The special part came after the show. I had parked around back and walked out where I saw a bus. Putting two and two together, I went over and saw the entire roster come out of the arena. I got a handshake from Gargano, Ciampa and Nakamura, all of whom were taking pictures with kids. They all came off as incredibly nice and polite before getting on the bus. Heavy Machinery was talking to fans on the other side of the crowd. Most of the wrestlers waved with Roode completely ignoring us (as he should have done) and Joe doing his hand pose and sporting a big ice pack on his knee.

Overall it was a fun night despite having a pretty toned down card. The ticket was only \$22 with floor seats going for \$75, meaning it was far from an expensive night. I had a good time and meeting the champions was a major highlight. Check out the NXT house shows if you can as it's a lot of fun for a cheap price.

NXT – January 11, 2017: Asuka Cries

NXT

Date: January 11, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

We're back to Full Sail and that means it's time to hit the gas on the road towards San Antonio. The NXT Title match is already set up but now it's time to set up the Tag Team Title match. We know that the Authors of Pain are waiting on the champions but the question is who will be defending against them. That's what we'll find out tonight as the Revival gets their rematch against DIY. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of DIY vs. Revival, as you probably expected.
Opening sequence.

Earlier today, Billie Kay and Peyton Royce attacked Asuka in the back. I'm sure their destruction will be quick and imminent.

Billie Kay/Peyton Royce vs. Sarah Bridges/Macy Evans

Peyton offers an early distraction so Billie can run Evans over from behind. The Aussies take turns beating on her until a hot tag brings Bridges in for the hope spot. That lasts all of about fifteen seconds as Bridges gets double teamed, setting up the bulldog onto Billie's knee for the pin at 2:06.

Post match the Aussies get the mic and are told that Asuka will kill them. Cue Asuka, who is beaten down again, only to have Nikki Cross come in for the save. With Kay and Royce taken out, Cross kicks Asuka in the face to leave the champ laying.

Sanity says they're taking over and it starts with Cross becoming the new Women's Champion. Big Damo watches from the shadows.

Elias Samson vs. Jonathan Cruz

Before the match, Samson sings about being around forever. With Graves ripping on Samson for general annoyances, Elias drives Cruz into the corner but gets rolled up for one. A clothesline drops Samson and that's about it for Cruz's offense as he gets his ribs bent around the post. Samson knees him in the ear (ow) and kicks him in the jaw, setting up the neckbreaker for the pin at 3:25.

Rating: D. Total squash here and Samson is starting to look better. The gimmick works very well but Samson is one of those guys who just doesn't click for some reason. He's got the look and the character but the in ring work really isn't all that great. Squashing people will keep him fresh in the audience's minds though and that's a good thing at the moment.

We take another look at DIY vs. Revival.

Andrade Cien Almas vs. Oney Lorcan

Almas now has pyro for his entrance. This is a rematch from Osaka

where Lorcan won in an upset. Lorcan shoves him off a headlock but Almas just poses on the mat like the jerk that he is. A hard shot to the chest puts Andrade on the floor so Lorcan hits a Blockbuster off the apron. Back in and a clothesline cuts Oney off for the first time, setting up a slap to the face. Lorcan elbows him right back though and an Alabama Slam into the corner staggers Almas even more. Not that it matters as Almas does his pose on the ropes to buy himself some time, setting up the hammerlock DDT to put Lorcan away at 5:00.

Rating: C-. I still just don't get it with Almas. He's MUCH better as a heel than his disaster of a face run but that's not really saying much. Lorcan is an interesting case but his name and lack of much of a character hold him back. Their Osaka match was a lot better but that's probably due to them having five minutes this time as opposed to over double that in Japan.

Almas says this will be his year.

Another look at the Toronto match.

In a sitdown interview, Shinsuke Nakamura says he's proud of being NXT Champion after a very hard series against Samoa Joe. That brings him to Bobby Roode, who he calls one of the best wrestlers in the world. Despite not being willing to appear on camera, Roode has a gift for Nakamura: Roode's ticket for last year's Takeover: Dallas, when Nakamura made his in ring debut.

Tag Team Titles: Revival vs. DIY

DIY is defending and the winners face the Authors of Pain in San Antonio. Gargano and Dawson get things going with Scott getting caught in an atomic drop. The champs come in and knock Dash and Dawson outside for an early break. Back with Gargano working on Dawson's arm as Graves plays cheerleader for the challengers.

Wilder makes one of those always great blind tags and the chop block puts Gargano down. That means it's time to pick apart a limb and the leg is wrapped around the post. Gargano gets tied in the Tree of Woe and they be clubberin on that knee. Johnny is sent outside and

Revival is way too happy with a potential countout. Dash goes to get him but gets posted for his efforts, only to have Dawson tackle Gargano to break up a hot tag attempt.

Back from another break with the leg work continuing via a half crab. Ever the cocky heel, Dash slaps Johnny in the face and gets caught with an enziguri, allowing the hot tag to Ciampa. With a PSYCHO KILLER chant rolling, Ciampa cleans house with running knees and German suplexes. A hard knee to Dash's head gets two but Dawson just BLASTS Ciampa with a clothesline. Something like a Hart Attack is broken up with a superkick and Ciampa grabs the armbar.

Dawson gets smart by shoving Gargano onto them for the save in a great false finish. Gargano breaks out of an attempted leglock and suicide dives onto Dawson. Dash gets floored as well and it's back to Ciampa who walks into a DDT for another two. The champs unload with strikes and the running knee/superkick to both Dawson and Wilder (who were hugging) at the same time retain the titles at 21:02.

Rating: B+. Somehow that might be the worst match these four have ever had together. Some teams just have outstanding chemistry and that's what these guys have. They just work so well together and that's something you either have or you don't. This was another brutal match and I'm curious to see what DIY can do with the Authors in San Antonio.

Speaking of the Authors, they run in and beat the champs down.

Regal makes DIY vs. the Authors for San Antonio. Wasn't that already announced? Also, next week it's Nakamura and Roode having a contract signing, which certainly was announced earlier in the night. Regal is almost done but Asuka comes in and demands to face Cross, Kay and Royce at Takeover to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This was all about the main event and given how awesome that was, the rest of the show being this average wasn't going to bring it down. I'm curious about where they're going with that Roode ticket as that story needs to be more emotion based because not many people are going to buy Roode hanging in a slugout

with Nakamura. Good show here, as expected.

Results

Billie Kay/Peyton Royce b. Sarah Bridges/Macy Evans – Bulldog onto a knee

Elias Samson b. Jonathan Cruz – Neckbreaker

Andrade Cien Almas b. Oney Lorcan – Hammerlock DDT

DIY b. Revival – Running knee/superkick

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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 – December 21, 2016: One For Texas

NXT

Date: December 21, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

It's time to start the build towards "Takeover: San Antonio" as we have a four way elimination match to crown a new #1 contender.

Tonight it's Bobby Roode vs. Andrade Cien Almas vs. Tye Dillinger vs. Roderick Strong for the shot at Shinsuke Nakamura in January.

We've also got Daria Berenato vs. Billie Kay in a revenge match.

Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Billie Kay vs. Daria Berenato

Berenato, an MMA style fighter, was betrayed by Kay and Peyton Royce a few weeks back and wants revenge. Peyton offers an early distraction from the floor so Billy can suplex Daria for two. Something like a spear puts Billie down and there go the gloves so Daria can punch a bit harder. Another Peyton offers another distraction and the big boot ends Daria at 2:25.

Post match Peyton and Billie challenge Asuka for a fight.

Authors of Pain vs. Anthony Bowens/Johnny Vandal

Total and complete squash with the Authors throwing the jobbers all over the place. Bowens is powerbombed onto Vandal and their heads collide, giving Bowens a bad concussion. The match is stopped due to the injury at 1:05.

Ellering says they want the titles and don't care who they have to beat.

We look back at the opening match.

Asuka says Royce and Kay aren't competition. Nikki Cross is shown looking on with a smile.

Long package of videos on all four participants in the elimination match. None of them like each other all that much.

Roderick Strong vs. Andrade Cien Almas vs. Tye Dillinger vs. Bobby Roode

Elimination rules and the winner gets the title shot in San Antonio. Roode bails to the floor to start but Strong follows him out for some chops with Dillinger following to help with the beatdown. Almas takes Strong back in for a VERY loud chop and a dropkick as we take an early break.

Back with Almas still in control and slapping Dillinger in the face. Almas tries to moonsault onto Strong and Dillinger but only hits Tye's knees, sending him out to the floor. That leaves Roode to clothesline Tye and Roderick at the same time but Strong grabs a quick backbreaker for two. Roode's neckbreaker gets the same on

Strong and Bobby knocks Almas to the floor again. Roderick comes back with a dive to take all three out and we go to a second break. Back with Roode's rollup being called off due to feet on the ropes. A release gordbuster sends Roode flying and Strong follows up with a running knee in the corner. Everyone heads to the corner for the four man Tower of Doom with Dillinger getting the best of it and small packaging Almas for two. Andrade comes back with the running knees in the corner but the Sick Kick gets rid of Almas at 17:17. Strong staggers into the Tyebreaker and is out at 18:43.

We're down to Roode vs. Dillinger for the title shot and the fans are WAY into Tye. Dillinger wins the slugout and stomps him down in the corner. Roode's attempt to bring in a chair goes badly as well as Tye superkicks him down for two. The Tyebreaker is broken up and Roode snaps off his spinebuster. The Glorious Bomb is reversed into the Tyebreaker for a VERY close two and the fans lose it on the kickout. Roode escapes a superplex attempt and the Glorious DDT sends him to San Antonio at 24:21.

Rating: B. This was really just a long coronation for Roode, who was the only real option to face Nakamura at this point. You might be able to consider Dillinger but the other two are nowhere near ready for something like that. I like the elimination rules as it's not just a fluke pin setting up a major title shot. Good match here but not the highest level of drama.

Replays and posing end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Really, this was the main event and anything else. That means a short match and a squash, which isn't the most interesting stuff in the world. Now, the stuff they presented did set up some stuff for the future, which is where NXT shines. It's not a great show by any stretch but there's a main event in San Antonio and we have a good idea of where the rest of the card is going.

Results

Billie Kay b. Daria Berenato – Big Boot

Authors of Pain b. Anthony Bowens/Johnny Vandal via referee stoppage
Bobby Roode b. Tye Dillinger, Andrade Cien Almas and Roderick Strong
last eliminating Dillinger

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new book, KB's Complete Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews
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Got My Takeover: Orlando Ticket

I'll be in the upper deck again but I'm going.

On top of that I'll be taking in the Wrestlecon Supershow
and Rev Pro from England. I'll probably be adding a few
more shows as this is going to be the biggest wrestling
weekend I've ever done.

As always, and I do mean always, thank you all for helping
me get here. The site has been doing so well lately
between the ad revenue, the e-books and doing the news
coverage over at Wrestlingrumors.net that I'm at a
financial point I never thought was possible. I'm far from
rich but I'm at the point where this I'm making a living

watching and writing about professional wrestling. Every time something like this happens and I can just grab my wallet and pay for something I love to do because of what you all have allowed me to do, I feel like my head is about to fall off.

I started trying to make money off of this in March 2013 and made a grand total of \$30 that month. To be here now and in this place is something I never, ever thought possible. I know I say this a lot but you have no idea how grateful I am to all of you who come here so often, be it to agree with me, tell me I'm an idiot or just talk to me about wrestling. I make a living doing this now and it's because you all have been so helpful to me. You have no idea how much happiness you've given me and I can never thank you all enough.

KB

NXT – December 14, 2016: Reading is the Better Option

NXT

Date: December 14, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

It's another interesting night as we have the four matches to set up the fatal fourway match to determine a #1 contender to the NXT Title. Other than that though we're heading down to Australia to see what should be the final match between Shinsuke Nakamura and Samoa

Joe for the NXT Title. As a bonus, it's inside a steel cage. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at the Nakamura vs. Joe rivalry with both title changes to set up tonight's final match.

The cage is lowered and we're starting in a big way.

NXT Title: Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

From Melbourne, Australia. Nakamura is defending and it's pinfall/submission/escape. The champ takes him down by the leg and wins an early strike exchange. A knee drop sets up Good Vibrations in the corner but Joe comes back by sending him into the cage. Back from an early break with Nakamura in even more trouble until a spinning kick to the head drops Joe.

Kinshasa is countered with a powerslam and it's off to a standing Koquina Clutch. Shinsuke flips back to escape and the sliding knee to the head has Joe reeling. It's too early to escape though and Joe loads up the super MuscleBuster, which is countered into a powerbomb to keep Joe down. Nakamura has the chance to walk out but opts for Kinshasa instead. A second Kinshasa retains the title at 12:56.

Rating: B-. I'm sure the full match was a lot more entertaining than this but it was a good way to wrap things up between them. There's really no reason to keep Joe off the main roster at this point so just let him go on up like he should have done already. There wasn't much doubt in this one and there's nothing wrong with that.

We look back at Peyton Royce and Billie Kay walking out on Daria Barenato a few weeks back.

The Aussies laugh at Daria until she comes up to demand a fight with one of them next week.

#1 Contenders Tournament First Round: Tye Dillinger vs. Eric Young

Still no Sawyer Fulton with Sanity. Young goes right after him to start but gets clotheslined down for his efforts. Left hands in the corner (ten of them of course) have Eric in even more trouble. The Tyebreaker is loaded up but Nikki Cross comes in for the DQ at 1:20.

Tye fights off Sanity until Damo comes in to lay him out.

#1 Contenders Tournament First Round: No Way Jose vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Jose grabs a headlock to start before slapping on an airplane spin to take us back in time while still having some fun. The announcers try to get Gravy over as a nickname for Corey as Jose knocks Almas down a few more times. A pop up right hand gets two but Almas kicks him in the face and hits his arm trap DDT for the pin at 3:54.

Rating: D+. I'm still not getting the appeal of Almas but I'm getting the appeal of Jose. A guy his size with that much charisma should be a guarantee for a spot in this company but I'd like to see them do something with him instead of just having him float around. Almas still doesn't do much for me but having him as a heel is instantly an improvement.

#1 Contenders Tournament First Round: Roderick Strong vs. Elias Samson

Before the match Samson sings a song I can't quite understand. Samson kicks him in the ribs to start as we hear about Strong's abilities with a backbreaker. It's already off to the Tree of Woe for some upside down choking followed by a chinlock. Strong comes right back with a running dropkick followed by a fireman's carry gutbuster. The Sick Kick ends Samson at 3:17.

Rating: C-. No time for anything here but Samson is in need of a partner of some sort. He's really not enough in the ring to make anything of himself but the guitar playing character is more than enough to go somewhere. Strong is a case of what you see being what you get though I had almost forgotten he was even part of the roster. To be fair though he's the kind of guy you can give a quick push and make something of him without too much effort.

Billie Kay vs. Daria Barenato next week.

#1 Contenders Tournament First Round: Oney Lorcan vs. Bobby Roode

Guess who the fans are behind here. They trade arm work to start with Roode taking him to the mat and riding Oney a bit, much to the

crowd's delight. Roode stops to pose so Lorcan gives him a running uppercut to the jaw. We actually get an ONEY chant until Roode knocks him off the top and onto the ropes. Oney gets two off a backslide and starts speeding things up with a running elbow in the corner. A running Blockbuster gets two but the regular version misses and Roode grabs a spinebuster. The inverted DDT sends Roode to the fourway at 7:16.

Rating: C-. Well duh. You have to assume Roode is getting the title shot in San Antonio and that's best for everyone involved. Lorcan is fine for a jobber to the stars but there's only so much you can do with a name like Oney. Graves made this even better by losing his mind about Roode on commentary, which is exactly what someone like him should be doing.

The fourway is Roode vs. Dillinger vs. Almas vs. Strong.

Overall Rating: C. This was a show with one goal and while it accomplished that, it wasn't the most interesting in the world. The wrestling either didn't have time to go anywhere or wasn't all that great in the first place. Roode should be a lock to win next week and I like the idea of him winning a few matches to get there. Not a bad show here but one you really should just read the results for instead of watching in full.

Results

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Samoa Joe – Kinshasa

Tye Dillinger b. Eric Young via DQ when Nikki Cross interfered

Andrade Cien Almas b. No Way Jose – Arm trap DDT

Roderick Strong b. Elias Samson – Sick Kick

Bobby Roode b. Oney Lorcan – Inverted DDT

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Daily News Update – December 14, 2016

Chris Hero Returning to NXT. December 12, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/chris-hero-returning-to-nxt/>

Ratings Up For “Saturday Night Live” Featuring John Cena. December 12, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/ratings-saturday-night-live-featuring-john-cena/>

Former WWE Wrestler Stops Robbery. December 12, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/former-wwe-wrestler-stops-attempted-robbery/>

Cody Rhodes Debuting at “Wrestle Kingdom” Against Former NXT Star. December 12, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/cody-rhodes-debuting-wrestle-kingdom-former-nxt-star/>

WWE Announces Cruiserweight Title Match for “Roadblock 2016”. December 12, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/wwe-announces-cruiserweight-title-match-roadblock-2016/>

Former X-Division Champion Finishes Up with TNA. December 13, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/former-x-division-champion-finishes-tna/>

Bray Wyatt Responds to Broken Matt Hardy’s Open Challenge. December 13, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/bray-wyatt-responds-broken-matt-hardys-op>

[en-challenge/](#)

Roman Reigns Needs to Drop the US Title Immediately. December 13, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/roman-reigns-needs-drop-us-title-immediately/>

See How Samoa Joe Reacts to TNA Chants. December 13, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/see-samoa-joe-reacts-tna-chants/>

“Monday Night Raw” Ratings Down, Worst Week Since October. December 13, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/monday-night-raw-ratings-worst-week-since-october/>

Zack Ryder Injured at “Smackdown Live”. December 14, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/zack-ryder-injured-smackdown-live/>