

Wrestling Wars Podcast

Episode 16

I'm back....eventually. I join NorCal about ten minutes in to talk about TNA's latest woes, ROH, the Beast in the East and Battleground. Plus Dimension X.

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwp-16-we-start-off-with-a-solo-effort-that-turns-into-a-kb-run-in-we-cover-beast-in-the-east-battleground-mock-tna-even-a-roh-segment/>

NXT – June 24, 2015: In Which Mojo Rawley And Sami Zayn Sit On A Couch

NXT

Date: June 24, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

We're getting closer to the big July 4th showdown for the title and that means Finn Balor needs to rack up a few wins. Up first we have the second half of the big sitdown interview with Balor, which is likely focusing on his time in New Japan Pro Wrestling. Other than that we might get some fallout from Joe vs. Owens from last week. Let's get to it.

We open with the roster on the stage and HHH talking about the loss of Dusty Rhodes. Dusty was family to everyone on this stage because he

thought they were his kids. HHH, barely able to keep his voice together, asks for a moment of silence as the bell rings ten times.

Opening sequence.

Here's Hideo Itami for his first comments since being injured. He acknowledges that he'll be out another 3-4 months due to his shoulder injury but promises to come back and win the NXT Title. This brings out Kevin Owens, who is glad Itami will be in Japan for the July 4 show, but it's cute to hear Itami imply that Owens won't be leaving Japan as NXT Champion. Owens slips up on the word delusional but makes up for it by saying he sounds like Itami trying to speak English.

However, there are two things Kevin wants to make clear. First of all, he didn't hurt Itami because if he did, there's no chance Itami would be standing there. The other reason is because Owens wants an apology for Itami implying that Owens attacked him. Itami calls him a terrible human being, so Owens thinks that if he's going to be accused of hurting Itami, he might as well do it. Kevin comes to the ring but Balor comes out for the save, only to have Rhyno jump Balor and knock him off the stage.

Balor vs. Rhyno later tonight.

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Jason Jordan/Sylvester LeFort

The entrance sounds a bit faster this week but Enzo makes up for it by saying he sees two mushrooms from Mario's world in the ring: they're about to get flattened. Cassady's part didn't sound very smooth but he got the lines out well enough. I had been wondering what happened to LeFort. Colin puts Sylvester down to start and slams Enzo down on top of him for two, only to have Jordan tag himself in and catch Enzo in a slam. LeFort's cobra clutch doesn't get him very far so it's quickly off to Jordan, who gets rolled up for the pin at 2:32.

After last week's main event, Joe talks about hearing the people chant LET THEM FIGHT. He got the fight he wanted but he didn't get the fight he wanted (not a typo) because Owens is still walking. Joe wants Owens again.

Dana Brooke vs. Cassie

Brooke has Emma in her corner and Cassie is K.C. Cassidy. A quick rollup gets two on Brooke and a headscissors puts her down again. That's enough for Dana as she throws Cassie down and gets two off a slam. Dana cranks on an arm and leg at the same time while advising Cassie to tap. Cassie comes back with something like a Thesz press and some clotheslines but Dana Whiplashes her off the top for the pin at 3:36.

Rating: D+. This wasn't quite a squash as Cassie got to show some spunk, which means she'll probably be pushed as something more serious when she gets some more ring time. Brooke is still definitely a work in progress, but if there's one thing NXT has shown it can do, it's take their girls and improve improve them about ten fold overnight.

Charlotte isn't worried about Dana.

It's time for part two of Balor's sitdown interview, which starts with some clips of Sami Zayn hanging out at his house. Balor likes to put jigsaw puzzles together (amen brother) and still plays with Legos while watching old pay per views. Suddenly I'm digging the heck out of this guy.

NXT head trainer Matt Bloom (actually called that here instead of Jason Albert) talks about meeting Fergal Devitt in Japan about eight years ago. We get some pictures of them hanging out over the years, including Bloom pulling Devitt's pants down as they posed for a picture. Bloom explains the concept of a young boy and we see some stills and videos of Fergal's time in new Japan. Prince Devitt was someone obsessed with trying to master the Japanese style and he felt more like Prince than Fergal over there.

Then WWE came calling right around the annual Tokyo Dome show and Fergal wasn't sure if he could do it or not. He had to try though because there was nothing left for him to prove in Japan so here he is, with Sami Zayn and Mojo Rawley sitting on his couch in the background. He calls it an incredible journey but it's still continuing. Next week: the NXT days.

Bull Dempsey has been trying to get in better shape without much success.

This is shown through a series of Instagram shots of Dempsey falling asleep while trying to train. So he's narcoleptic instead of just fat?

Hype Bros vs. Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins

That would of course be Rawley and Zack Ryder. You know what? Why not? It's not like Ryder has ANYTHING better to do. Mojo runs Dawkins over to start and it's off to Ryder for a nice dropkick to Fulton. Back to Rawley for HAMMER TIME, allowing the amateur guys to take over with the old Benjamin jumping over Haas' back onto Mojo's back spot. A backdrop ends Angelo's offense and it's off to Ryder for all his usual stuff. The Broski Boot gets two and everything breaks down. Rawley holds Dawkins up for a middle rope Rough Ryder and the pin at 4:00.

Rating: C-. Ryder and Rawley have a weird chemistry together and I've always been a fan of Zack so it's cool to see him do something other than losing to Rusev in 45 seconds. Fulton, Dawkins and Jordan seem like the perfect choice for a stable along with Chad Gable but for some reason the Shoot Nation stable was called off. They're still fine for roles like this though and you can easily rally them together later.

Eva Marie wants a match but Regal needs proof that she has more than charm.

Finn Balor vs. Rhyno

Kevin Owens comes out and shoves Byron away from his chair to do commentary. Balor takes it to Rhyno to start and slugs him down in the corner. Rhyno gets sent out to the floor as Owens denies attacking Itami again. A big flip dive puts Rhyno down again and gets two back inside. Owens promises to win on July 4, even though he doesn't know what it is. "I'm Canadian so it doesn't mean anything to me. Independence Day? Will Smith? Good movie."

Rhyno gets in his first offense with a spinebuster and puts on a bearhug. Owens has completely taken over commentary by ripping on Brennan, because Kevin doesn't believe that Brennan has talked to anyone on the roster. "I've seen them running away from you." Owens now has his arm around Saxton and has pulled Byron's head onto his shoulder. We take a break and

come back with Balor fighting out of a second bearhug.

Owens is annoyed at all the questions Brennan is asking him as Balor gets two off a dropkick to the side of the head. That earns him a northern lights suplex but Balor staggers him with a Pele Kick. The Coup de Grace is loaded up but Owens comes down for a distraction, allowing Rhyno to hit the belly to belly. The Gore is countered by a kick to the face though and the Sling Blade sets up the Coup de Grace for the pin at 11:40.

Rating: C+. This was fine. The idea behind Rhyno is that he's intense enough to lose every big match he's in, beat some jobbers, and then come back for another loss to make someone look good. There's awesome value in that and it's something you can never have enough of. Balor vs. Owens is going to be awesome, especially if the demon shows up.

Owens comes in and double teams Balor until Samoa Joe comes in for the save, likely setting up a tag match next week.

Overall Rating: C. Not their best show this week but they did a good job of setting up Balor vs. Owens in less than two weeks. Other than that they have enough feuds and stories going on to set up a big non-Takeover show before we get to the REALLY big stuff down the line. Good effort this week, even though it was mainly a placeholder outside of the main story.

Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady b. Jason Jordan/Sylvester LeFort – Rollup to Jordan

Dana Brooke b. Cassie – Whiplash

Hype Bros b. Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins – Middle rope Rough Ryder to Dawkins

Finn Balor b. Rhyno – Coup de Grace

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book of Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume III at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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New WWE DVD Survey

It's another of those surveys that WWE sends out to gauge interest in potential DVD projects. These can offer some compelling ideas so let's take a look at what might be on WWE's schedule.

ECW's Top 50 Craziest Moments

Yeah sure. As you probably know, ECW isn't my thing and they certainly had some insane moments, but I'm really over hearing about how great they were. There's definitely a market for it, but as a full on DVD? I'm not sure, but like I said, I'm not the target demographic.

Dudley Boyz Bio

I'd watch it. The Dudleys are one of the most successful tag teams of all time and giving them a full on three hour documentary and a quality match selection would definitely be worth the time. Just limit the Hardys/Edge and Christian matches to like two each. There are other teams out there.

The Best of 1996: 20 Years Later

This could be interesting as it's not quite the Attitude Era and there really is some great stuff in there. However, I'll turn it off (ok now I won't) if it turns into another "the NWO was awesome but we were going to

have DX and we were never worried about it" show. Focus on something new instead.

Wrestlemania III

Sold. The behind the scenes stuff is always interesting and it's the biggest show of all time, meaning there have to be a ton of stories. Hearing WWE talking about the attendance question could be interesting. In case you're wondering, I say it's 93,173 for a few reasons.

1. The 80,000 limit or whatever you hear IS FOR FOOTBALL. A football field is 360 feet by about 160 feet. A WWF ring was at most 20ft by 20ft. Why this is never brought up isn't clear.

2. It's the official number. Just like the official line is that Undertaker and Kane are brothers, that Hulk Hogan is 6'8 and that Andre was 525lbs. Wrestling lies. Why this is supposed to be different isn't clear either.

3. What difference does it make? It's a lot of people.

Rivalries: Taz vs. Sabu

Again, this would be fine and hasn't been touched on enough, but it's not for me.

New Generation

Haven't there been enough Bret and Shawn DVDs already?

True Story of the Royal Rumble

Yep. I don't think this really needs any more explanation.

Rivalries: Eric Bischoff vs. Vince McMahon

We did a 20 part documentary on the Network about this already and I really, really do not need to hear about it ever again. The interviews could be entertaining but I'm totally over this entire subject. It was almost 20 years ago and it's over. Let it die already.

Hardcore

This would be a look back at the Hardcore Title years. This could be incredibly entertaining if they kept it short and went completely over the top serious with it. Get Foley and Road Dogg to do commentary and break down the psychology behind hitting someone with a cookie sheet or just rip on Al Snow for a full match. That could be hysterical.

Countdown

As in a collection of the Network series. I think you can figure this one out for yourself. Bring this series back to as it's a very easy way to kill an hour.

Unreleased Match Compilation

The names listed are Michaels, Austin, Undertaker and Rock. I'd be all over those four as there are some really fun matches in there, as long as it's not just a bunch of PPV matches that I've seen a bunch of times before.

Rivalries

Again, it's a Network series.

Podcasts

On DVD? Why?

Wrestlemania Rewind

You might be noticing a pattern here. However, why haven't we gotten Summerslam/Royal Rumble/Survivor Series Rewind? There's a ton of stuff in there for different series.

Shane McMahon

This would be short and entertaining, but at the same time it would get repetitive since most of the matches are street fight style.

Best of NXT

Oh yeah. There's a ton of great stuff in the old days of NXT (the Full Sail years that is) that people have forgotten about. However, it might be better to put that kind of thing in a different form. Like an e-book. In July.

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NXT – June 17, 2015: Who Is Fergal Devitt?

NXT

Date: June 17, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Rich Brennan

It's a big week here in NXT as last week saw Samoa Joe challenging Kevin Owens to a title shot but getting turned down because he hasn't racked up enough wins yet. Fair point said Commissioner William Regal, so it's a non-title match tonight instead. This is probably just filler until we get to July 4 in Japan but NXT filler is still good stuff. Let's get to it.

As you would expect, this show is dedicated to the American Dream Dusty Rhodes.

We open with the Dusty tribute video, which is still awesome stuff.

Opening sequence.

Blake/Murphy/Alexa Bliss vs. Carmella/Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady

Enzo's speech this week is about Star Wars but he keeps it short. Carmella wants a piece of Alexa Bliss, and Cass is nice enough to spell out the one word that describes Blake, Murphy and Bliss. There's a new ring announcer who sounds like he has no idea who any of these people are. He has a good, deep voice though. The fans think Blake and Murphy look stupid but switch to BONAFIDE STUD/CERTIFIED G.

Blake and his headlock slow Enzo down to start before a shoulder puts him on the mat. With nothing else working, Enzo opts to dance and hits a very unique cross body where he doesn't actually jump but takes Blake down anyway. Everything breaks down and the Long Island guys (and Carmella) clean house.

Back from a break with Enzo slugging Blake down but getting dropped from behind by Murphy. We hit the headlock on the mat for a good while before Cass gets dropped off the apron. Enzo avoids a charge in the corner though and makes the tag off to Carmella, meaning Alexa has to come in. Carmella dominates in a hurry as everything breaks down again. Cass plants Blake with the side slam, setting up the Rocket Launcher for the pin at 10:22.

Rating: C-. This was fine, but there's a major point that caught my eye here. Since turning heel, Alexa has been wearing more revealing attire and Carmella was wearing even less than usual tonight. However, other than Enzo calling Carmella hot during the entrance, their looks or attire are never addressed. The lack of comments from Lawler or the girls ripping on each other for their appearances and just fighting because they hate each other. I love that about NXT and it continues to show how lame and behind the times the Divas division really is.

Stills of Cena vs. Owens II and the aftermath.

Joe is here to deal with Kevin Owens but more than that he's here because he wants to wrestle in places that are cutting edge. That explains the departure from TNA as I doubt they could even cut paper. As for Owens, his running away last week told Joe that he didn't want to fight. Tonight though, the NXT World Champion (that's a new one) is getting what he deserves.

We get the first part of a look at Finn Balor, mainly due to a sitdown interview. First question: who is Fergal Devitt? Balor talks about growing up in Ireland and how his dad built his way up from a cleaner to a train engineer in a cool story. One day a show called Superstars came on his TV and he was instantly hooked. We get some really cool clips of him in some tiny independents as well as Insane Championship Wrestling (Scotland) and Revolution Pro Wrestling UK.

Becky Lynch cries talking about how Fergal (her word) opened a wrestling school in Ireland and got her into the business as a result. She lied about her age to get into the school and so that Fergal might ask her out, which apparently he did. There are some really cool pictures of the two of them going through school and starting their careers, including stuff like being in the ring or just listening to music together so you could tell they were close.

There are clips from Insane Championship Wrestling with him in the demon paint where the announcers praise him for being amazing. Next up was New Japan but he said he's be back to Ireland. This was about eight minutes long and totally awesome as it made me care about Balor more than I even have before. Part two is next week.

Charlotte vs. K.C. Cassidy

A headscissors takes Cassidy down to start but she comes back with a quick rollup for two. That goes nowhere as Charlotte kicks her in the face and chokes with the boot when asking the referee about the speed of the count. Charlotte's cravate doesn't work very well as K.C. comes back with a cross body for two, only to have her eat a spear (good selling too). The Figure Eight makes Cassidy tap at 3:50.

Rating: D+. Just a squash here to remind us that Charlotte is awesome before she gets back into it with Barrett and Emma for the big feud. That spear looked good and could be a good power finisher for her as Charlotte is tall and strong enough to make it work well. Cassidy has potential but is clearly not that experienced.

Dana Brooke says she's misunderstood because she's a current fitness competitor who isn't scared one of Charlotte. She's replacing Charlotte because she's the total diva and not using her family name to get into NXT. I have no idea what Carmella was looking at that was just a foot or so off camera but it made her look really weird. She makes up for it just a bit by coming back to pat Devon on the head.

Kevin Owens vs. Samoa Joe

Non-title. The crowd going silent when Joe's music changes tells you all you need to know about how horrible it really is. Owens bails to the floor to start but Joe goes right after him and gets in the champ's face. Back in and the fans already think this is awesome. Not so fast kids. Owens: "THE CHAMP IS HERE!" That earns him a right hand to the face and a big chop to the head as Joe gets in the first offense.

A back elbow drops Kevin again as the fans are quieter than you would expect. The corner enziguri sets up the Facewash and the big running boot to the face to send Owens outside for a break. Back with Joe missing a charge in the corner, allowing Owens to hit a Cannonball, almost out of desperation. A chinlock keeps Joe in trouble and the second version slows things down even more. Fans: "HEADLOCK CITY!" It's a chinlock but points for creativity.

The hold is finally broken and Joe drops his own backsplash for two. Something like a running enziguri gets the same on the champ but he fights out of the Muscle Buster. They fight to the floor but Owens can't powerbomb the baron of the buffet. The referee gets shoved down and that's a DQ at 14:39.

Rating: C-. This was more of an angle than a match but that chinlock in the middle killed everything they had going. I have a feeling they'll move on to Balor vs. Owens for now before Joe gets his big title match,

or maybe just a non-title match against Owens instead. Fun power brawl while it lasted, but that chinlock went on way too long. It was much more of a preview than a showdown.

They do the big brawl with security not being able to hold them back post match. Owens shouts that the champ is here to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. It was another of those setting the future shows, which are often some of the best episodes NXT puts out. The Tag Team Title rematch is set, Charlotte looked dominant and Brooke is ready to fight her, there's a reason for Joe vs. Owens II and you top it off with the really awesome Balor video. That's quite an impressive use of 53 minutes as you have four stories set up, which could cover a month of upcoming TV. It's back to efficient for NXT and that's what they do best.

Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady/Carmella b. Blake/Murphy/Alexa Bliss – Rocket Launcher to Blake

Charlotte b. K.C. Cassidy – Figure Eight

Kevin Owens vs. Samoa Joe went to a double DQ when they both shoved the referee

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So This Paige vs. Bellas Storyline...

Makes me think of some more fantasy booking. And again, this isn't anything revolutionary and isn't meant to be.

So the story is that the Divas on the main roster aren't willing to help Paige out against the Bellas. Therefore, Paige is in need of someone to help her out. Maybe she goes back to her roots. Back to where she started. Back down to NXT. Not for a fresh start or anything, but for reinforcements. Like.....Sasha Banks, Bayley, Charlotte and Becky Lynch.

I know you hear about these invasion storylines all the time, but in this case I dig the idea. Why not use this opportunity to bring some of them up and breathe some much needed life into that division? Is anyone going to miss Layla or Tamina or Eva Marie or even Natalya? Bring in some fresh blood and cut some of these girls that never do anything.

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NXT – June 10, 2015: Oh How I've Missed You

NXT

Date: June 10, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton

The big story tonight is the in ring debut of Samoa Joe, who debuted a few weeks back and has had some intense staredowns with NXT Champion Kevin Owens. It should be interesting to see who Joe's first victim is, because it's fairly clear that he's coming for Owens and the title. Right now though, Finn Balor is the #1 contender and will be facing Owens for the title in Tokyo on July 4. Let's get to it.

The opening video is all about Joe debuting in NXT and setting his sights on the title.

Opening sequence.

Zack Ryder/Mojo Rawley vs. Mike Rallis/Elias Samson

Ryder is WAY over here and the fans even seem happy to see Rawley. Mojo shoves Rallis down, slams Samson, but then stop, HAMMER TIME. Ryder comes in and takes some shoulders in the ribs, only to raise his knees in the corner to stop a charge. The middle rope dropkick sets up the Broski Boot but Samson offers a distraction to take over.

We hit the chinlock but a GET HYPED chant brings Ryder to his feet for the hot tag to Rawley. Mojo cleans house with some very fast paced offense, including a big running punch and capped off by a middle rope Hart Attack with the Rough Ryder instead of the clothesline for the pin on Samson at 3:55.

Rating: C. I've always liked Ryder and this was a good sign for him. A

lot of guys could use a recharge down in NXT and Ryder is probably at the top of that list. He clearly still has a following as the fans were all over him. Rawley was doing exactly what he should have done all along here: cleaned house and never looked back. One of his biggest problems was getting beaten up until the last 45 seconds of the match for a big comeback. Guys like him should hardly ever be on defense and the reaction was a lot better as a result.

Finn Balor promo with his voice talking about how everyone has two sides. Shots of the demon paint keep appearing until "FINN BALOR ARRIVES – July 4 in Tokyo" comes on screen. Oh that's going to be amazing.

Dana Brooke video. She's the Total Diva.

Emma vs. Blue Pants

SHE'S BAAAAACK! Big Cass' Price Is Right entrance music got one of the loudest reactions in recent weeks. The fans are smart enough to know that it's Blue Pants' birthday. Emma jumps her to start, making her the most hated woman in the promotion. A dropkick gets two and we hit the bow and arrow on Blue Pants. Fans: "BLUE PANTS ROCKS!" Blue Pants gets some rollups for two but it's back to the chinlock. Emma drops an elbow to the back of the head for two more but Blue Pants comes back with some kicks to the head. Blue Pants gets going but Emma trips her down and the Emma Lock gets the submission at 4:40.

Rating: D+. Here's the key thing about Blue Pants: she isn't used that often. They could bring her in more often for some loud reactions, but they would eventually die down because Blue Pants is so beloved due to being a special attraction. If this were the main roster, she would be in five segments a night and people would get sick of her in two weeks. This common sense stuff is addictive.

Enzo, Cass and Carmella say that Blake/Murphy/Bliss wouldn't last one week in the Hunger Games and if they grew up where they're from, it would be time to go live with Uncle Phil. Six person tag next week.

Tyler Breeze vs. Bull Dempsey

Dempsey knees him in the head to start and we're quickly in a chinlock. Fans: "BULL IS GORGEOUS/NO HE'S NOT!" Back up and the standing splash sets up the top rope headbutt but Breeze rolls away before the jump. Breeze gets him in a chance around the ring and Bull keeps getting winded. Fans: "CARDIO! CARDIO!" Breeze laps Bull, throws him inside and gives him a Beauty Shot for the pin at 2:49. Tyler is basically a face now due to all of his hard work and string of good matches.

We look back at Becky Lynch's standing ovation after losing to Sasha Banks. Brennan's nickname for her: The Lass Kicker. As much as I hate myself for this, I kind of dig that name.

Becky Lynch vs. Jesse McKay

Becky has a very high energy entrance now, complete with smoke along the entrance. The fans are responding to it and it's easy to see why. McKay used to wrestle in Shimmer under the same name. Jesse gets in a kick to the ribs to start, followed by another to the face. An armbar has Becky in some trouble but she comes back with a hammerlock suplex and some legdrops. "BETTER THAN HOGAN!" Let's not get crazy here. Something like a torture rack Samoan drop sets up the armbar (Rich: "The Disgusted Armbar!" Graves: "The WHAT?") for the submission at 4:16.

Rating: D+. I really wasn't feeling this one as Jesse got in way too much offense in what should have been a Becky showcase match. McKay was good enough in there though and could be something interesting if she's allowed to develop like the rest of the girls down here have done. This was too much like an old Mojo Rawley match though: awesome entrance, next to no offense until the very end.

Regal announces that Owens will be on commentary for Joe's match but Bull Dempsey comes in eating a bag of Doritos. He blames his loss on a lack of sleep. Regal gets serious and tells Dempsey to get his act together. The boss leaves so Dempsey pulls an open Snickers out of his singlet. Well they had to do something new with Dempsey so this works well enough.

Jason Jordan says he has another partner when Chad Gable comes in, saying it should be him. "I'm ready, willing and Gable. See what I did there?" Jason says no but Gable adds his name to Jordan's locker.

Baron Corbin vs. Angelo Dawkins

Corbin throws him around to start and walks him around the ring before a slam. A bulldog attempt is countered by a huge clothesline and End of Days gives Baron the pin at 2:29.

Samoa Joe vs. Scott Dawson

Owens is on commentary and Joe's music still sucks. He does however look a bit more toned. Fans: "PLEASE DON'T DIE!" How nice of them to be worried about Joe's safety. They trade armbars to start until Joe takes it up a notch with a back elbow to the face. Owens: "Wow a back elbow! I've got a mean back elbow." The release Rock Bottom out of the corner sets up the Muscle Buster for the pin on Dawson at 3:45.

Rating: C. Total squash here and it did exactly what it was supposed to do. Owens is great on commentary as the guy trying to cut into Joe's hype and this was a very fun use of about five minutes. Joe's physique looked about as good as you can fairly expect. The guy is never going to look like John Cena and it's unfair to expect him to, but he looked fine here.

During the replays, Kevin offers to get Brennan a Joe shirt from the merchandise table. Owens goes to leave but Joe calls him to the ring. Kevin won't get in because he's a good man who won't drop Joe after his first match. Joe is a rookie here in NXT and one win isn't enough for an NXT Title match. Cue Regal who agrees with Owens. Joe hasn't earned a title shot, but he's earned the right to a non-title fight against Owens next week.

Overall Rating: B-. Matches made for the future, six matches, some amusing promos, two in ring debuts and a new character for Dempsey. How in the world can they get all that inside an hour and have almost no filler? This was the efficient NXT that flies by every week because it's very well put together. Couple that with an energetic crowd and you have one heck of a fun show.

Results

Zack Ryder/Mojo Rawley b. Elias Samson/Mike Rallis – Middle rope Rough

Ryder to Samson

Emma b. Blue Pants – Emma Lock

Tyler Breeze b. Bull Dempsey – Beauty Shot

Becky Lynch b. Jesse McKay – Disgoosted Armbar

Baron Corbin b. Angelo Dawkins – End of Days

Samoa Joe b. Scott Dawson – Muscle Buster

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Thought of the Day: I Wish I Hadn't Called This

I was looking back at an old NXT review from December 11, 2013. Here's my take on Ascension back then.

There's really no one left for Ascension to beat in NXT but they would die on the main roster. The skills are there, but can you imagine Cole trying to talk about these guys? They would be buried by the commentary so badly that they'd be lucky to get a win over Los Matadores.

Have they even beaten Los Matadores? I don't believe so.

WWE Airing Fourth of July Tokyo Show On WWE Network

And the card is STACKED. This might be better than Payback.

- * Lucha Dragons vs. Los Matadores
- * **Divas Title Match:** Nikki Bella vs. Paige vs. Naomi
- * **Tag Team Title Match:** New Day vs. Tyson Kidd & Cesaro (this may have to be changed due to Tyson Kidd's injury)
- * Chris Jericho vs. Neville
- * Brock Lesnar vs. Kofi Kingston
- * John Cena & Dolph Ziggler vs. Kane & King Barrett
- * **NXT Title Match:** Champion Kevin Owens vs. Fin Balor

This should rock, though I wouldn't be surprised if they changed Lesnar's opponent to Jericho.

On top of that, how awesome is the Network? WWE can just throw this kind of thing on there as a special with no clearance or anything like that. They're doing it because they can and we get a cool show. That's so awesome.

NXT – June 3, 2015: Recharging

NXT

Date: June 3, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

This is an interesting time for NXT as one of their biggest stories isn't taking place on NXT. Instead, NXT Champion Kevin Owens has been called up to the main roster and even defeated John Cena clean on pay per view in his debut match. It doesn't help that he's feuding with a bunch of people here in NXT as well. Let's get to it.

The opening video is all about Owens beating Cena at Elimination Chamber.

General Manager William Regal has an announcement tonight.

Tyler Breeze vs. Adam Rose

Fans: "WE WANT KRUGER!" Rose takes him into the corner to start and nails some loud chops, followed by a headlock takeover: rest hold. Back up and Breeze nails a great dropkick to put Rose on the floor. That goes nowhere as Rose backdrops him to the floor and we take a break.

Back with Rose putting on a sleeper for a good while until Breeze fights out and kicks him in the chest. Breeze, wrestling like a face here, nails some running forearms in the corner but gets caught in a spinebuster, which Rose transitions into a Boston crab for a nice spot. Breeze crawls over to the ropes and comes back with the Beauty Shot for the pin at 12:01.

Rating: C+. Breeze is one of those characters who is going to be turned face just due to how well he works in the ring and there isn't much NXT can do to stop it. This was a much better match than I was expecting, especially considering Rose is way past his expiration date at this point.

Solomon Crowe is glad Joe was there last week and promises to be back and better than ever.

Dana Brooke has been at the Arnold Classic and will be back soon.

Eva Marie is brought to the stage for a chat and MY GOODNESS the fans do not want to see her. The YOU CAN'T WRESTLE chants stop her cold but she says she'll wait. Eva was at Takeover to watch the great women's wrestling and that's why she's here now. She wants to compete with the best and they're right here in NXT. I know she's been training more, but she has a huge hill to overcome to get anywhere.

Regal's announcement is that on the big 4th of July show with Brock Lesnar in action, Balor will challenge Kevin Owens for the NXT Title in Japan, and it will air live on the WWE Network. Oh man that could be awesome if they air the whole show but it sounds like just the NXT Title match.

Carmella vs. Alexa Bliss

Carmella goes right at her with three straight takedowns and right hands every time. Bliss manages to drop her face first onto the buckle for two before cranking on a cravate. Back up and Carmella hits some running forearms, only to get caught in a rollup with a hand grabbing the ropes to give Bliss the pin at 3:34.

Rating: D+. This is where NXT's logical booking shines. It's clear that they're setting up a six person tag and what better way to set it up than to have the girls getting there for a bit? Bliss has transitioned into this new role perfectly and the character change is so jarring that it works very well.

Rhyno says he's back to go after the top contender in Finn Balor. Tonight he's a Gore away from being one step closer to being NXT Champion.

Video on Sami Zayn's shoulder surgery, which fixed a torn rotator cuff.

Vaudevillains vs. Jason Jordan/Marcus Louis

I had been wondering what happened to Louis. The crazy Louis starts with

Gotch as the fans are very happy to have the Vaudevillains back. It's quickly off to English for a manly knee to the ribs (Fans: "THAT WAS MANLY!") but Jordan comes in for a suplex to take over. We hit the reverse chinlock on English to slow things down. Louis tags himself in, much to Jordan's annoyance, and puts on a chinlock of his own. English fights up and makes the hot tag to Gotch for a quick Whirling Dervish and the pin on Marcus at 5:16.

Rating: D+. So the Vaudevillains seem to be faces as well. That's not the worst idea in the world as you can put them against Blake and Murphy when Enzo and Cass are done with them. That's one of the places where NXT shines: they set something up for when the current feud is done and they can transition right into the new feud. I miss that kind of well done and planned out booking. The match was nothing special and was mostly spent in a chinlock. I'm assuming Jordan will go partner hunting for the next few weeks.

Video on Sasha Banks being all Bossy.

Finn Balor is ready for Rhyno.

Finn Balor vs. Rhyno

Feeling out process to start until Rhyno just runs Balor over with a shoulder. Rhyno goes up top but gets kicked out to the floor as we take an early break. Back with Rhyno putting on a body scissors to slow Balor down. Rhyno mocks Balor's signature pose before putting on a chinlock.

That goes nowhere as Finn comes back with a middle rope forearm but the reverse lifting DDT is countered into a spinebuster for two. Frustration is setting in for Rhyno and the Pele makes it even worse. The Sling Blade connects but the Coup de Grace misses. The Gore misses as well though and Balor grabs a quick rollup for the surprise pin at 12:10.

Rating: C+. I liked this better than I was expecting to with Balor being able to adapt to Rhyno's simple yet effective power style. That's the perk of having someone like Rhyno around: he can work well with anyone and you can easily build him back up by having him squash jobbers, only to lose again to someone like Balor. Nice little match here.

Rhyno Gores Balor on the stage to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This show would best be summed up as recharging. You have the Vaudevillains returning and Breeze acting more like a face, along with setting up some feuds for the future. This is something you come to expect from NXT as they hit Takeover, have a week off, and then start getting back on track to the middle of the road feuds. Owens vs. Balor in Tokyo should be awesome and the fans are going to eat it up.

Results

Tyler Breeze b. Adam Rose – Beauty Shot

Alexa Bliss b. Carmella – Rollup while holding the ropes

Vaudevillains b. Jason Jordan/Marcus Louis – Whirling Dervish to Louis

Finn Balor b. Rhyno – Rollup

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NXT – May 27, 2015: A Bit

More Stoppable

NXT

Date: May 27, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Rich Brennan

It's the week after Takeover: Unstoppable and the main story seems to be Kevin Owens fights everyone at once. After challenging John Cena on Raw, sending Sami Zayn away to get shoulder surgery, possibly putting Hideo Itami on the shelf, attacking Commissioner William Regal and getting a new #1 contender with Samoa Joe, Owens now has to deal with the debuting Samoa Joe. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week, complete with a quick interview with Joe where he says he's coming for the title.

Opening sequence.

Sami Zayn's music opens the show but we get Kevin Owens instead. He was going to issue an NXT Title Open Challenge, but he isn't insecure enough to have to defend his title against anyone every week. The fans sing JOHN CENA SUCKS, but Owens finds it odd that they never say that about Sami Zayn and he sucks too. We won't be seeing Sami again anyway because Owens did exactly what he said he would do at Takeover. The only reason he did that was so he could keep the NXT Title and keep providing for his family, because that's what a good man does.

Another thing a good man did was to let Samoa Joe live last week. A lot of people have said that Joe is gonna kill him, but that's as ridiculous as the colors of John Cena's merchandise. If Joe ever steps in the same ring as Owens again, he'll drop Joe just like that. Speaking of dropping people, that's what he's going to do at Elimination Chamber when he shows John Cena that the champ is here.

This brings out General Manager William Regal, who says Owens is walking a thin line. Owens says Regal put his hands on Owens first, which Regal considers the only reason Owens still works here. Regal lists off all the

people who have been taken out on a stretcher since Owens arrived, but Kevin denies being behind Itami's injury. Also, Sami's injuries are on Sami for asking for it and on Regal for making the match.

This brings out....Solomon Crowe? Solomon heard Owens talking about how he isn't going to fight anyone unless they earn it and that means Kevin is scared. Kevin thinks Solomon has just earned an opportunity, so Regal makes the match. That means you can add Solomon to the list of people he's sent out of here on a stretcher ("Riley, Sami, Sami, Sami, and now him.").

Look back at Hideo's arm injury last week.

Hideo says he's had surgery and when he comes back, there will be no stopping him.

We get an interview from last week with Zack Ryder, who was interrupted by Mojo Rawley, who freaked Zack out a little bit.

Emma vs. Bayley

Emma is flanked by Dana Brooke. Bayley gets stomped down in the corner to start and Emma cranks on an armbar, only to have Bayley throw her to the mat and just pound away with right hands. A kick to the face gets two near falls for Emma as the fans are of course completely behind Bayley. Emma throws her down by the hair a few times and grabs a leg drag, followed by the Emma Lock for the clean submission at 4:13.

Rating: D+. This was a glorified squash for Emma, which isn't something you often see in this division. Emma being more aggressive is a good change of character for her, but I'm not sure where Bayley goes from here. She's so ridiculously over that it's kind of a strange choice to have her lose like this.

Charlotte comes out for the post match save but gets beaten down as well.

Recap of Baron Corbin beating Rhino last week.

Baron was being interviewed after his win last week when Rhino came up and said they should do it again soon.

We see Becky Lynch's career retrospective from last week with new footage of her match with Sasha last week.

Elias Samson/Mike Rallis vs. Blake/Murphy

Non-title and Alexa Bliss is with the champs. Blake and Rallis get things going with Mike taking a quick beating. It's off to Murphy for a slingshot hilo and a chinlock as the champs continue to dismantle Rallis. Mike finally rolls over for a hot tag, bringing in Elias for some dropkicks. That lasts all of ten seconds before the running brainbuster into the frog splash is enough for the pin on Samson at 3:15.

Rating: D+. Another squash here to establish the new trio. The new look works very, very well for Bliss and she's very fitting as a woman who looks down on everyone around her. Blake and Murphy are good in these roles but I'm really not sure how far they can go after they lose the belts.

Samson takes a Sparkle Splash for some insult to injury.

Post break, Bliss says she gravitated to the team because they're all winners. Compare this to Carmella, who is famous for being from a garbage dump like Long Island. Next week, that's where Bliss is sending her.

Tye Dillinger vs. Finn Balor

Dillinger scores with a quick elbow to the face but Balor smiles at him. Some choking with a boot in the corner has some more effect on Finn and we hit the chinlock. Balor comes back with a running forearm and basement dropkick, followed by the Sling Blade. The Coup de Grace completes the squash for Finn at 2:45.

Jason Jordan says he's found the perfect partner when Chad Gable comes up, saying it has to be him. Gable lists off his qualifications but Jordan says he already has a partner. He also says the wrong name so Gable throws him a towel with his name on it.

Kevin Owens vs. Solomon Crowe

Non-title. Owens bails to the floor so Solomon goes after him, only to

eat some right hands to the face. Back in and Owens throws him outside again and we take a break. We come back with Owens putting on a chinlock. That gets boring in a hurry so Owens just hammers him down and tosses Solomon back to the floor. The pop-up powerbomb finally ends Crowe at 9:24.

Rating: D+. Another dull squash but did anyone expect anything else? There was no need for this to be anything other than Owens crushing Crowe and it's not like you lose anything. Crowe is the definition of a guy who is just there and not doing a thing despite being a fairly big signing back in the day. Nothing to see here.

Owens loads up the apron powerbomb but Samoa Joe comes out big staredown, sending Kevin running to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This just wasn't very good. It's a big fallout show from Takeover, but unfortunately that meant little more than airing clips from the show and having the winners in squash matches. It wasn't the worst because not a lot happened, but this was one of the flatter shows they've done in a long time. Things should pick up when they start the big stories again soon.

Results

Emma b. Bayley – Emma Lock

Blake/Murphy b. Elias Samson/Mike Rallis – Frog splash to Samson

Finn Balor b. Tye Dillinger – Coup de Grace

Kevin Owens b. Solomon Crowe – Pop up powerbomb

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