

# Quick Live Thoughts From NXT Stand & Deliver

Took in NXT (not Takeover) Stand & Deliver and it was actually a pretty solid show.

The place was EMPTY with about 45 minutes before the start but it filled in very nicely. There were thousands of people there and the non-hard camera side was mostly full. The upper deck was tarped but the middle sections (which are small) had people. The hard camera side was mostly tarped with some sections open.

Kickoff Show: Women's Tag Team Titles: Toxic Attraction vs. Raquel Gonzalez/Dakota Kai

The Kickoff Show match was nothing worth seeing, but the title change did pop the crowd. Wendy Choo was her usual annoying self but that is kind of the point...I hope. The big thing I noticed here was how everything felt choreographed. It came off like the women were doing their carefully planned out routines with everything laid out well in advance. It's very noticeable and that's not a great thing.

North American Title: Ladder Match

Of all the wild, multi person ladder matches I've seen, this was the most recent. What is there to say? There were a bunch of people flying around doing their spots and Cameron Grimes won. Other than Grayson Waller's big crash or maybe breaking a ladder apart, I'm not going to remember any of this in a few days. That's how ladder matches work these days and it doesn't really mean much. Grime winning was the right move though and I'm glad he got it.

Tommaso Ciampa vs. Tony D'Angelo

This was a bit sad to see happen but D'Angelo going over makes sense. Ciampa has done everything there is to do in NXT and while I'm not sure if he's going to the main roster or leaving, it was an emotional sendoff.

The HHH cameo was awesome, but it was a little weird when he left and Ciampa was standing there in front of HHH's Titantron with Motorhead playing.

#### Tag Team Titles: Imperium(c) vs. MSK vs. Creed Brothers

I really didn't care to see this match, but it is nice to have the tag division getting somewhere again for a change. It isn't the glory days, but it feels like there are teams fighting over the belts and that is more than has been seen as of late. If this leads to MSK being revealed as the team that attacked the Creeds and sets up a bit title match, everything should be fine. The Creeds are coming though and I don't think that's a secret.

#### Women's Title: Mandy Rose(c) vs. Cora Jade vs. Io Shirai vs. Kay Lee Ray

Rose retained and I'm ok with that. Simply put, Rose isn't some ring general who can steal a show every night, but she's also FAR from some disaster who needs to be led through a match step by step. She gets a reaction from the fans and that is more than a lot of people are going to be able to say in NXT, or anywhere else these days. Yes the Toxic Attraction dominance is a little old, but Rose is the star of the team and I'm fine with her keeping the belt for a while longer.

#### Gunther vs. LA Knight

This was probably the second biggest layup of the show, as Gunther isn't losing to someone like Knight. I like Knight, but he was out of his league here with a monster like Gunther. Odds are Gunther is moving into the title picture soon, as there isn't anything else for him to do at the moment. It was cool to see Gunther in person, but we didn't get the crazy loud chop for some reason.

#### NXT Title: Dolph Ziggler(c) vs. Bron Breaker

Then there's this and...yowza. I would have bet money on Breaker winning here but they did a good enough job of shocking the heck out of me. Breaker not winning means he's either already on his way to the main roster, or he'll be getting the title soon. Either way, I was shocked by

the result, but while Breakker was nervous and botched a bit, he was having a good match here. Ziggler deserves credit for that and that's why he's in NXT.

Oh and the Hudson/Pirota vs. Lumis/Hartwell deal was as dumb as you knew it would be.

### Overall Thoughts

There might not have been a classic and this is by no means Takeover, but they have done a heck of a job of turning NXT into something watchable. The characters are established and you can see what WWE wants to do with them. This wasn't a great show, but it was an entertaining show and a nice warmup for later tonight. If that's what NXT is going to be, I can live with it going forward, as this was an enjoyable enough afternoon.

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## **Quick Notes From Monday Night Raw**

Still in New Orleans so still behind on doing the reviews, but still able to do some live reports. This time around we had the big event show with everything going at a hundred miles an

hour and a ridiculous amount of returns, debuts and surprises. That can make for a fun show and I had a pretty good time. Let's get to it.

Since there's so much to cover, this is chronological instead of in any order of importance or interest.

Also, the sellout line was COMPLETELY bogus as there was a good chunk of empty seats on the hard camera side. I was opposite the hard camera in the upper deck and at least four seats in the row in front of me stayed empty all night. There were also empty floor seats easily seen.

Stephanie McMahon opened the show and egads this was great. I can live with Stephanie being all stuck up when she comes across as in on the joke and that's what we got here. Rousey coming out and going from smile to death stare was outstanding and I wanted to see her break the other arm. This was EXACTLY what it needed to be and should get rid of Stephanie, at least for the time being.

Ember Moon debuted in a pretty expected move. It's the right way to go about things with her as there's nothing left for her in NXT. The Eclipse is still an outstanding finisher and pinning Alexa Bliss, who was Women's Champion 24 hours earlier, was a promising start. I'm not sure why she and Nia are now friends, but Ember coming up is a good thing.

Now we go down the other road with Braun Strowman and Nicholas vacating the Tag Team Titles. Why? Because Nicholas is in fourth grade of course! That got a great laugh and so did Nicholas promising to come back to give someone THESE HANDS when he's done with school. However, it seems that the whole point of this is to crown new champions in Saudi Arabia and if we just have to do the title change one night and vacate it the next, so be it. This got on my nerves far more than Nicholas appearing in the first place and comes off like WAY too much work for what they got out of it.

No Way Jose debuted and won a match in about thirty seconds with a conga line before and after the match. I've always been a fan of the guy and he's the perfect house show opener for years to come.

The Bar is getting their shot at the Tag Team Titles in Saudi Arabia and their opponents are being determined with a mini tournament. The Revival made the finals by beating the Good Brothers and that's all there is to say here. It's the right call and hopefully the Revival can pick up some steam. I mean, they won't, but it's nice for a week.

Seth Rollins came out and got a great reaction to BURN IT DOWN. Finn Balor interrupted and asked for a title shot, which Rollins granted at a future date. It was Miz's turn as he came out and said he wanted his rematch at Backlash. Rollins said it was on and a handicap match was teased but Jeff Hardy returned to even things up. That's a VERY good idea as there's no need to have him do the Broken stuff. You don't know how long he has left so put him out there and see what he can do in a last singles run. The six man is set for later.

Sasha Banks and Bayley are still arguing and have a match next week. There's no much to this but I think Bayley turns.

In a great moment, Paige announced her retirement from in-ring competition due to her injuries. You had to know this was coming but it was very fitting that she did it in the same arena and on the same show that she made her main roster debut. I was there for both moments and it was sad to see her go, but this needs to be done. She got a THIS IS YOUR HOUSE chant and left her t-shirt in the ring for one of the better retirement speeches I've seen in a good while.

Elias came out for a song, got an insanely positive reaction, insulted the crowd, and was then mauled by a returning Bobby Lashley. This was another expected debut and one that was also very effective, even if his big move was a delayed suplex.

Lashley still looks like a million bucks and he's learned the character stuff in his time away. He could be a big deal for a few years and that's always a positive.

Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens tried to get jobs but Angle says he's not just giving it out. In the line of the weekend, Angle said he's heard TNA is hiring. If TNA has ever been mentioned on the main shows, the moment escapes me. Anyway they can wrestle each other tonight and the winner gets a contract.

The Authors of Pain debuted and slaughtered Heath Slater and Rhyno. After the match they walked away from Paul Ellering, which doesn't surprise me. Unless he's going to come back with another team (not sure who that could be), he might just not want to be on the road every week. We'll see if he's back but it's not like they really need him.

A solemn Roman Reigns came out and talked about taking a beating last night. In what sounded like he was accusing Lesnar of shooting on him or at least going off script, Reigns said that no one would look at him when he got to the building yesterday and Lesnar shocked everyone by re-signing with WWE. It didn't make a lot of sense and came out of left field to say something like that and I'm not sure I want to know where it's going. Anyway, Samoa Joe returned, called Reigns out for losing again, and promised to choke him out at Backlash. Joe was great here, showing off the serious emotion that he does so well.

Matt Hardy and Bray Wyatt won the other semifinal match over Titus Worldwide and will face the Revival for the title shot next week. Again, not much to say here as it was exactly what it should have been.

Sami and Owens went to a double countout when neither could get to their feet after a superplex. Therefore, no one gets the contract. Now this one interests me as they're either going to go barnstorming on both shows until someone hires

them or do something else. I'd love to see them even go to NXT for a month or two, just to see what happens.

In a funny moment, the Hardys and Wyatt talked in the Woken style about what they've been up to with Bray saying that he feels WONDERFUL since Sister Abigail was vanquished. Aside from there being a reason for his face turn, the highlight was the camera panning over to a confused Balor and Rollins. That's the kind of comedy that works in wrestling: pointing out that while what is being said makes sense in the wrestling world, to an outsider, these are crazy people talking about crazy things. See also Dr. Shelby with Kane and Daniel Bryan.

The trio of midcard superheroes defeated the Miztourage in a match that was everything you would have expected it to be. Post match it was a parade of finishers to end the show. There was no dark match but Rollins called for the fans to throw their beach balls into the ring and a mini party broke out.

Overall, tonight's show felt like a post Wrestlemania show, but it also felt like they were rushing to get through it. How much stuff tonight was just a way to set up the Saudi Arabia show and Backlash? I know you have to do some of those things, but this felt like they were trying to move as fast as they could, likely so the fans couldn't take over the show again.

That being said, this show was PACKED with stuff happening, including returns, debuts and matches being set up all over the place. I did like what we got, but there was so much of it that it's going to take some time to process. On top of all that, there's the Superstar Shakeup next week, meaning all of this could be completely meaningless. It's still a fun night though and while there wasn't one big moment, there were several important moments, making it feel like a special night.

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# Survivor Series 2012 Quick Thoughts

I haven't gotten to watch the show yet but I'm hoping to have that up by Wednesday at the latest. From what I can tell, the show was as dull as I expected it to be. Sheamus vs. Show is happening again apparently, Ryback of course gets screwed out of the title, and the newly face Miz loses. What in the world was the point of turning him in the first place? Second of all, why were Foley and Ziggler feuding at all? Other than that, there's nothing at all going on with this show that I can tell and it was a way to fill in time until we get to the Rumble. That's what drives me crazy about WWE right now: this stuff is all just filling in time until we get to Rock winning the title from Punk. They're putting the ceiling on the world title picture and that's just flat out stupid. Fired up about Ryback? WELL SCREW YOU! Because Punk has to hold the title for over a year before he faces Rock because for some reason we're supposed to care more that way.

All in all, Survivor Series seems to suck. I'm shocked.