

411mania.com Exclusive Review: NXT Takeover: R- Evolution: My Own Christmas Present

Back when things were different.

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NXT Takeover: R-Evolution: Yo Adrian! This Show Is Awesome!

NXT Takeover: R-Evolution

Date: December 11, 2014

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Alex Riley, Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

We're at the latest major show for NXT and the main event is a pick em at this point. We have Sami Zayn putting his NXT career on the line for one more shot at Adrian Neville's NXT Championship. Other than that we have Hideo Itami/Finn Balor teaming up to take on the Ascension and the debut of Kevin (Steen) Owens. The card is stacked so let's get to it.

The opening video focuses on the main event but also gets in a bit of Kevin Owens.

Kevin Owens vs. CJ Parker

Owens hits two straight running clotheslines in the corner at the bell and the Cannonball crushes Parker in less than fifteen seconds. He rips up Parker's My Fight Matters sign and hits a HUGE flip dive over the top to take Parker out. Back in and Owens hammers away, only to eat a boot to the jaw.

Parker misses a running backplash but the Third Eye gets a VERY close two. Back up and Owens no sells a charge in the corner and takes CJ's head off with a clothesline. Owens is bleeding from the eye as he picks up Parker for a kind of pumphandle shoulder breaker. He throws Parker up and powerbombs him in half for the pin at 3:22.

Rating: B. WHOA. Yeah the rating is high but this was one of the most impressive debuts I've seen in a very long time. Owens looked like a killer out there and just destroyed Parker. I even dug that they gave Parker some offense and a near fall to add some drama. Owens is the kind of insane guy that they haven't had in awhile and seemed a lot like what they were shooting for with Dean Ambrose. Excellent stuff.

Neville is ready.

Lucha Dragons video.

Tag Team Titles: Vaudevillains vs. Lucha Dragons

The Dragons are defending and beat the Vaudevillains in the #1 contenders tag team tournament a few months back to give the Vaudevillains a reason for revenge. Gotch and Cara get things going with a standing Lionsault getting two for the champ. A headscissors/armdrag combo takes both Vaudevillains down before it's off to Kalisto for a front facelock. Back to Sin for a dropkick as the fans are entirely behind the challengers. English comes in off a blind tag and low bridges Cara out to the floor. Fans: "THAT WAS MANLY!"

They head back inside with Gotch cranking on the neck before getting two off a crucifix. English sends him outside for a baseball slide, earning him a chant of his own. The villains keep taking turns on Cara with Aiden cranking on a chinlock. Sin finally pops up and flips over English to make the tag off to Kalisto. Things immediately speed up and everything

breaks down. The Dragons send them to the floor for a big double dive, only to have English shove Gotch out of the way to take the shot himself. Fans: "CHIVALRY!" Back in and the Salida Del Sol on Gotch retains the titles at 6:50.

Rating: C. The match was pretty standard but the ending was really a surprise as I would have bet on the Vaudevillians to pick up the belts here. That being said, it's not the worst idea in the world as the Vaudevillians are being turned face by the audience reactions alone so it's only a matter of time anyway. Still a surprise though.

Tye Dillinger vs. Baron Corbin

As usual the fans count the time of Corbin's match, ending at a far higher than usual 39 seconds with End of Days. The match was so short that I didn't have time to mention Bull Dempsey watching from ringside.

Sami is in the locker room and turns down Cass and Enzo's offer of milk. He looks over and sees Owens looking back at him. We can't hear anything said (if anything was) as we're listening to an inset interview from yesterday with Sami saying he's ready.

We recap Hideo Itami/Finn Balor vs. Ascension. Itami is a hotshot rookie and Ascension are bullies. Balor debuted to help Itami in his war and this is the showdown.

Hideo Itami/Finn Balor vs. Ascension

Balor has an insane entrance now with a pounding red light that sounds like a heartbeat, a ton of smoke and face paint that looks like a cross between Delirious, Great Muta and Ultimate Warrior. Ascension looks stunned as the fans are bowing to Finn. It's a brawl to start before the bell with Ascension getting pounded down in the corner. Stereo corner dropkicks send them out to the floor and we get the opening bell.

Itami dropkicks Viktor down to start and it's off to Finn for a slingshot stomp. Balor charges into a knee in the corner to change control and it's off to Konnor. Back to Itami who hammers away but eats a flapjack as Ascension keeps control. Viktor breaks up a hot tag attempt with a hard

elbow drop to the back for two. Off to a reverse chinlock followed by a fist to the head and yet another chinlock. Ascension keeps up the double beatdown as Viktor puts on another chinlock. Hideo finally kicks Konnor to the floor and dives for a tag, only to have Konnor knock Finn off the apron.

The hot tag comes a few seconds later and Finn cleans house with enziguris. Viktor avoids the top rope double stomp but eats a reverse Impaler. Konnor makes the save but Itami takes him to the floor, only to have to save Finn from an STO. Itami loads up GTS (his invention) and the fans go NUTS, but Konnor makes the save. Hideo breaks up the Fall of Man and the super team goes up for double foot stomps for the pin on Ascension at 11:45.

Rating: C+. This was better than I was expecting but the ending was never in doubt. I can't get over that ROAR for the GTS attempt though. It's a good sign that Itami can do more than kick because he really hasn't shown me much yet. Ascension is ready for WWE and has been for like a year, so this is probably their swan song.

Roman Reigns is in the back and says he's here to see an awesome main event. His goal is to be the first NXT alumni to become WWE World Heavyweight Champion, which creates some continuity issues as that would be Daniel Bryan. I know it's a different version of NXT but it's a bit confusing.

Ric Flair is here and gives Charlotte a hug for luck.

We recap Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks. They used to be friends but Charlotte won the Women's Title. Banks says that belongs to her and tonight is the showdown.

Women's Title: Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte

Sasha throws her modified Charlotte shirt (Charlotte: "Do it with some Flair!" Banks: "Do it like a Boss!") and the champ chases her to the ropes. They trade chops in the corner with Charlotte getting the better of it (of course) but Banks gets in a quick kick to the head to take over. She sends Charlotte hard into the steps for two back inside but

stops to yell at Little Naitch.

Banks drives her into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs before a double knee to the ribs has Charlotte in even more trouble. She mocks the strut though and Charlotte gets all fired up. The champ is so fired up that they mess up a spot, followed by a Backstabber into a double arm stretch from Banks. She pulls Charlotte down by the hair out of the corner and puts on a Figure Four neck lock, complete with a WOO. Charlotte finally lifts her up for an electric chair drop to put both girls down.

A series of forearms puts Banks down and a suplex into a neckbreaker gets two on Banks. Charlotte misses a charge though and falls out to the floor, setting up a pretty bad looking suicide dive from Sasha. They slug it out with Banks getting the better of it but eating a big spear to give Charlotte control again. She charges into a boot but counters the Bank Statement.

The Figure Four is countered into a small package for two and Banks gets two off a neckbreaker. A big suplex sends Banks flying and the fans think THIS IS WRESTLING. Charlotte tries a moonsault but has to land on her feet, only to flip forward for a backsplash for two as Banks gets her feet on the ropes. Sasha sends her hard face first into the middle buckle but Charlotte throws her off to block a superplex. A top rope Natural Selection is enough to retain the title at 12:06.

Rating: B. The Women's Title match has become a highlight on all these shows and Banks just had her best match ever by about a million miles. Much like Ascension, Charlotte has been ready for the next level for months now and really should be on Raw like tomorrow. Well Monday but you get the idea. Really solid match here and a great match that happened to have women in it rather than a good women's match if that makes sense.

Long recap of Zayn vs. Neville. The short version is Zayn has never won the big one but has to win the title here or leave NXT.

NXT Title: Sami Zayn vs. Adrian Neville

Neville is defending and they have over thirty five minutes for this.

After the big match intros, we're finally ready to go. Feeling out process to start with no one able to get an early advantage. Neville cranks on a wristlock but Sami takes over with one of his own. They head back to the mat with Adrian working on a hammerlock before grabbing a chinlock. The champ grabs an armbar and another OLE chant starts up.

Sami spins out and grabs a wristlock of his own but Neville flips over to land on his feet instead of on the mat. Adrian says bring it but gets caught in the armbar again. Neville flips into the corner again but walks into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker to give Sami his first real advantage. The champ rolls outside and takes the bouncing moonsault as Sami is in full control. Neville takes his time getting back in and gets rolled up for two. He sends Sami into the buckle to take over and a dropkick to the back of his head gets another near fall.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before a big uppercut gets two for Adrian. Neville drops a series of knees to the chest for two more and we hit another chinlock. A nice middle rope dropkick gets the same result and Neville is slowly getting frustrated. Neville kicks him in the face a few times but eats a hard clothesline and dropkick to give Sami an opening. Back to the floor but Adrian rolls back inside to avoid the dive and snaps off a hurricanrana to send Zayn to the floor. Sami does the exact same thing to avoid a dive and backdrops him to the floor, setting up the signature flip dive to take over again. Sweet sequence.

Back in again and the high cross body gets two for Sami. Neville tries to cartwheel at Sami but winds up on Neville's shoulders for a spinning Blue Thunder Bomb for two. Now the real pressure is starting to get to Sami but a jawbreaker brings him back to reality. A running boot to the face and a bridging German suplex get two for Neville and both guys are getting winded. Sami runs the corner but gets caught in a sitout powerbomb, landing HARD on the back of his head for two.

Back up and Neville fires off some hard forearms to the head but Sami gets right in his face and they slug it out until Zayn takes his head off with a clothesline. Neville takes him right back down with an enziguri out of the corner. Fans: "NO! NO! NO!" The Red Arrow hits knees and there's the Koji Clutch but Adrian gets his foot on the ropes, nearly

sending Sami to tears. Neville counters the suplex into the corner with a rollup but the referee gets bumped off the kickout.

He's back up quickly though but a loud superkick and a reverse hurricanrana (Sami landing on his head again) gets a VERY close two on Sami after he checked on the referee. Back up and Sami charges into a forearm but starts rolling Germans, capped off by a half nelson/chicken wing suplex. Neville bails before Sami can try the Helluva Kick but Sami follows him out for the dive through the ropes into the tornado DDT. Back in again and the Helluva Kick connects but the referee goes down again with Adrian possibly pulling him into the path of the kick.

Neville throws in the title belt but a big boot knocks him down. Sami looks at the belt and picks it up, drops some F Bombs, but can't bring himself to cheat. Neville grabs a rollup for two but walks into the exploder in the corner. The Helluva Kick connects and Sami FINALLY wins the title at 23:55.

Rating: A. Oh yeah it rocked. This was exactly what it should have been with Sami finally exorcising his demons and winning the belt. I loved that section near the end where he wanted to cheat but finally threw it down and won with what brought him to the dance. This was the outstanding showdown main event and exactly how they should have done it. Adrian comes off looking like a warrior who might have cheated (it wasn't clear) to try to keep the title. Great stuff here with some very close near falls and incredible drama.

You can hear the fans thanking Neville during the replay package.

The locker room comes out to celebrate and Owens hugs his friend. Even Pat Patterson is here to celebrate. Neville gets back up and stares Sami down. The new champ extends a hand but Neville kicks it away and pulls him in for a hug. Everyone clears out and Sami gets to do a victory dance. One more hug from Owens looks to end the show...BUT HE BLASTS SAMI WITH A RIGHT HAND AND POWERBOMBS HIM ON THE APRON! What a perfect fake out as everything looked finished and then they throw that curve.

Overall Rating: A. As usual, this show blew the roof off the place and continues to be the show I look forward to more than almost anything

else. The worst match on the show was a totally fine tag match and Owens was about a thousand times more awesome than I was expecting. Couple that with a Match of the Year candidate with the perfect ending and there's almost nothing bad here. Outstanding show and again worth checking out.

Results

Kevin Owens b. CJ Parker – Powerbomb

Lucha Dragons b. Vaudevillians – Salida Del Sol to Gotch

Baron Corbin b. Tye Dillinger – End of Days

Hideo Itami/Finn Balor b. Ascension – Double pin after top rope foot stomps

Charlotte b. Sasha Banks – Top rope Natural Selection

Sami Zayn b. Adrian Neville – Helluva Kick

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