

# NXT – May 10, 2017: Four Out of Five

## NXT

Date: May 10, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Tom Phillips, Nigel McGuinness

With ten days to go until Takeover: Chicago, it's time to crown a new #1 contender to the NXT Title. Tonight we have Hideo Itami facing Roderick Strong for the shot at Bobby Roode in Chicago. While this should seem like a foregone conclusion, Strong was built up quite well in the back to back video packages and looks good coming into the match. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at Strong vs. Itami, which is all that needs to be focused on.

Opening sequence.

### Aleister Black vs. Cesaro Bononi

The jobber is massive at probably 6'6 with a good look. A kick to the chest drops him with ease though and Black has a seat. More kicks set up a knee to the back and Black Mass puts Bononi away at 1:29. Great pop for the finish.

We look back at last week's battle royal with Asuka interfering and injuring Ember Moon. For the first time, Moon is officially ruled out, meaning it's going to be a triple threat.

Pete Dunne vs. Tyler Bate for the UK Title is also confirmed for Takeover.

Video on Dunne.

Video on Ruby Riot, including her growing up in Indiana. She has a lot of tattoos and they all tell a story. The end of the story: Ruby Riot on Women's Champion. No one has ever seen anyone like her and she's here to break the mold of the women's division. Does anyone

NOT break that mold?

Earlier today we had a sitdown interview with Nikki Cross but she couldn't sit still and refused to let a microphone be set up. She finally just grabbed the thing and said three, two, one action. Then she started messing with the boom mic while talking about Ruby. She wants to fight right now and wants her title too. This was rather disturbing in a good way.

Drew McIntyre is ready to take the NXT Title. Wesley Blake of all people comes in to say he deserves the shot. That seems to set up a match.

The Velveteen Dream is coming.

Here's DIY for a chat. They never had a fair rematch for the titles so it's high time they got their shot at the Authors of Pain. This brings out...Riddick Moss and Tino Sabbatelli? Really? They say the line starts behind them but DIY says Sabbatelli and Moss just crossed the line. The fight is on with DIY easily clearing the ring but here's a referee.

DIY vs. Riddick Moss/Tino Sabbatelli

Moss knees Ciampa down to start and it's off to Tino for a beating in the corner. The heels take turns stomping away until Sabbatelli grabs a chinlock. Ciampa throws him away though and the hot tag brings in Gargano to clean house. A kick to the head takes Moss down and the slingshot spear gets a rather delayed two (seemed like a slightly blown save). Gargano hits a dive to the floor and the Meet in the Middle ends Moss at 5:03.

**Rating:** C-. This was just a step above a squash with DIY looking like the polished team that they really are. Well done on bringing in Sabbatelli and Moss like this. They're way too young to win a match like this but they have to be brought to the main show again somehow and this was as good as anything else.

Post match Regal makes DIY vs. the Authors (who come out for the announcement) in a ladder match.

Kassius Ohno says he fell down against Bobby Roode and now he's in a

bigger building. You take down a skyscraper brick by brick but here's Andrade Cien Almas to call Ohno a perro. NO! DON'T TRY TO BE LIKE ALBERTO! Ohno reads him the riot act about squandering his opportunities and a match is made for next week.

Video on Tyler Bate.

Strong says this match is why he's here. His music starts playing so he has to leave.

Itami respects Strong but tonight, Roderick is going to go to sleep.

### Roderick Strong vs. Hideo Itami

The winner gets the shot at Roode at Takeover. Feeling out process to start with Itami working on an early headlock. The threat of a big kick sends Strong outside and we take a break. Back with Itami forearming him in the head and grabbing a chinlock that doesn't go anywhere. Strong gets in a shot to the ribs though and the first backbreaker gets two.

Strong starts in on the shoulder and another backbreaker gets the same. It's off to a bodyscissors with Strong cranking on the shoulder even more until they fall outside. Strong doesn't waste any time by tossing Itami back first onto the apron. Back from a second break with a double clothesline putting both guys down. Itami gets his tornado DDT onto the top rope and a top rope boot gets two.

Strong is right back with an Angle Slam for two (SWEET! I can't stand that chant.) of his own but takes too long going up, allowing Itami to grab a super Falcon Arrow for a very near fall. The slugout actually goes to Strong but Itami gets all fired up and hits some running kicks in the corner to knock Strong senseless. The GTS sends Itami to Chicago at 22:59.

**Rating:** B+. I'm not sure what the point was in having Strong built up over the last two weeks to have him lose here but it was in a heck of a match. These guys beat the heck out of each other with Itami taking it to a level that Strong couldn't reach to finally put him away. Itami winning was the pretty obvious conclusion after the issues with Roode and the match should be really solid.

Itami helps Strong to his feet to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. This show set up a lot of Takeover and that's a good thing with so little time beforehand. At the moment we have four matches announced with a fifth likely being set up next week (a four way between Strong, Black, Ohno and McIntyre for the #1 contendership would be a good option). They did a lot of advancing this week and that's where NXT shines, making this a good show.

### Results

Aleister Black b. Cesaro Bononi – Black Mass

DIY b. Riddick Moss/Tino Sabbatelli – Meet in the Middle to Moss

Hideo Itami b. Roderick Strong – GTS

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# **NXT – May 3, 2017: What Do You Get When You Cross A Ruby With A Moon?**

**NXT**

Date: May 3, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Tom Phillips, Nigel McGuinness

We're rapidly approaching Takeover: Chicago and that means we need to fill in a lot of the card. As luck would have it, a major development is going to take place tonight as we have a battle royal for the #1 contendership to the Women's Title. That leaves a lot of doors open for challengers, including a potential Ember Moon rematch. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

#### Killian Dain vs. Danny Burch

The monster Dain drives him into the corner and pulls him off the middle rope for a big crash. The backsplash connects and is greeted by a SHAVE YOUR BACK chant, followed by a series of elbow drops. Burch slugs away with a series of strikes but Dain flattens him with a running dropkick. The Ulster Plantation finishes Burch at 2:51.

The Velveteen Dream, whom I believe is Patrick Clark, is coming. The silhouette certainly looks like him.

#### Heavy Machinery vs. Ricardo Watts/Hector Kunsman

The jobbers make Rey Mysterio look huge. Dozovich runs Hector over to start and a double falling headbutt makes things even worse. Ricardo is dragged in and Machinery exchange chest bumps. Knight splashes both of them in the corner before Dozovich lifts them both at the same time for a double World's Strongest Slam and the double pin at 2:41.

Post match Heavy Machinery says they love to have a good time, meaning some carb shakes and trips to the buffet. When they step in the ring, they have a hunger for smashing bodies. The appetizers are over now and they want the main course: the Authors of Pain. Heavy Machinery is very much a case of "what you see is what you get" but they play their roles very well and that's what matters the most.

Bobby Roode talks to Kona Reeves before Reeves faces Hideo Itami.

DIY might not have Heavy Machinery's size but they're the former NXT Tag Team Champions. They love more competition but the line starts

behind them.

### Kona Reeves vs. Hideo Itami

Itami has ditched the entrance gear and just comes out in his regular trunks and boots. Reeves jumps him before the bell though and has the advantage once the match actually starts. Kona turns up the cockiness but Hideo pops to his feet and fires off the clotheslines and kicks. More kicks knock Kona down in the corner and the GTS puts him away at 2:08. That's an effective squash but I'm not sure a two minute match is the best way to get him back on his feet after an injury and so close to what's going to be a twenty plus minute title match.

Video on Drew McIntyre, including a look back at his initial WWE run.

It's part two of the mini documentary on Roderick Strong. This time we're at home with his pregnant fiance and they're getting things ready for the baby's arrival. He loves the idea of being called a father and a husband and now those things are about to be true. We get some clips of Strong's very early career from his days in IPW Hardcore Wrestling and then his time in the Performance Center.

Now we go back to the Ring of Honor days, which still messes with me just a little bit. He was there for thirteen years and then he got the call. With tears in his eyes, Strong says don't give up and everything will be ok. We wrap it up with Strong holding his newborn baby. This was another excellent package and made me think more of Strong (who I'm a fan of) than I have before, which is exactly the point. He hasn't made an impact yet (a match in Chicago would help) but that could change very quickly.

Roode is in William Regal's office and doesn't think much of the video. He also doesn't think Hideo should get the title shot yet because it could mess with the champ's face. Regal actually agrees and puts Itami in a #1 contenders match against Strong for next week. Strong comes in and has a staredown with Roode. I thought Roode vs. Itami was already set but I do like Itami having to earn the shot.

## Battle Royal

Lacey Evans, Billie Kay, Peyton Royce, Nikki Cross, Liv Morgan, Ruby Riot, Ember Moon, Aliyah, Bianca Blair, Candice LeRae, Kimberly Frankele, Rachel Evers, Sonya Deville, Victoria Gonzalez, Sara Bridges

The winner gets Asuka in Chicago. Evans is better known as Macey Estrella, Deville is the former Daria Berenato and a lot of these women are unknowns without entrances. LeRae is a heavy fan favorite and gets a LET'S GO CANDICE chant. Gonzalez, who has some size to her, goes after Royce and Kay to start but can't get rid of them. It's your usual battle royal brawling with teased eliminations that don't go anywhere.

We take a break and come back with Gonzalez having been eliminated at the hands of Royce and Kaye. Blair is out next, followed by Aliyah elbowing Evers out to a chorus of booing. Bridges, Evans and Deville go out in the span of five seconds and Riot eliminates Kimberly. We're down to LeRae, Royce, Kay, Cross, Riot, Morgan, Moon and Aliyah. Kay kicks Candice out, earning possibly the most heat of her career.

Cross dumps Aliyah and the fans are rather pleased. Come on, Aliyah isn't....ok maybe she is that bad. Nikki does the same to Morgan and the fans are pleased all over again. Moon superkicks Kay out and gets rid of Peyton a few seconds later, leaving us with Moon, Riot and Cross. Cross goes straight for Riot but Ember kicks her in the face. All three wind up in the corner with Moon kicking the other two away and hitting the Eclipse on Cross. That's not enough for an elimination so Ember heads up again, only to have Asuka come in....for a no contest at 14:46.

**Rating:** D+. I liked the way they set this up with the unknowns not lasting very long, which should be the case when they didn't have any realistic chance to win the title. Just let us get to the big names and go from there. The ending though....yeah I'm not sold on that, though if they're going to a four way, this is certainly a better option than a triple elimination at the end.

Asuka sends Moon HARD to the floor and head first into the barricade. Riot gets kicked in the head and Cross is dropped as well, leaving Asuka to shout that no one is ready for her. Asuka runs off as Moon is holding her shoulder on the floor. Regal comes out to announce the four way title match for Chicago to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. This is another good example of a show that wasn't about the wrestling. Tonight we set up a Takeover match, set up a #1 contenders match for the NXT Title, looked at Roderick Strong some more and established Heavy Machinery as potential Tag Team Title contenders. They don't have a lot of time between Orlando and Chicago so this is about as logical of a path as they have.

### Results

Killian Dain b. Danny Burch – Ulster Plantation

Heavy Machinery b. Ricardo Watts/Hector Kunsman – Double World's Strongest Slam

Hideo Itami b. Kona Reeves – GTS

A Battle Royal went to a no contest when Asuka interfered

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# Takeover: Orlando Preview

Last year, NXT held its first Takeover event during Wrestlemania weekend with the instant classic "Takeover: Dallas". The show stole the spotlight over Wrestlemania weekend and was pretty easily the best show of the four days, possibly even the year. Now it's time for round two and as luck would have it, NXT is in their own backyard, making this almost like a cross between a major house show and one of their biggest pay per views of the year. You don't hear something like that very often so let's get to it.

## Sanity vs. Tye Dillinger/Roderick Strong/No Way Jose/Ruby Riot

We'll start with the most recently added match as Sanity makes a rare appearance at full strength against the combined forces of Tye Dillinger/No Way Jose/Roderick Strong/Ruby Riot. This has been simmering for months now and as usual, it's a pretty simple idea. Sanity has gone after Dillinger and it was time to even the numbers up a bit as Dillinger was tired of all the beatings. His team came together over the next few weeks and now we have a full on match between the eight of them.

Very simply put, if Dillinger doesn't get the fall here (it doesn't matter who it's over but Young would be preferable), I have no idea what they're thinking. The fans are dying to explode for Dillinger and what better place is there than this Takeover? Sanity isn't the most interesting team in the world aside from having a really cool look. While they need the win, I think they can bounce back better. Dillinger has lost so many times already that I'm not sure how many more times he can bounce back from losing on the big stage. I really hope they don't screw this up as they're running out of time to capitalize on Dillinger's popularity.

## Aleister Black vs. Andrade Cien Almas

We'll move on to a pretty big debut with Black making his first in-ring appearance in NXT. He already had a match at the WWE United Kingdom Championship tournament under his Tommy End moniker but this

week is the first time we'll see his new gimmick. Almas has been on a roll lately with the heel character really starting to hit its stride. His match with Oney Lorcan last week was a major highlight and helped set him up for this match against Black.

That being said, this is another match where the winner should be obvious. NXT isn't going to put Black out there in his debut and have him lose so Almas has next to no chance. That being said, you could have made the same case last year about Sami Zayn vs. Shinsuke Nakamura and that turned out fine. I'm hoping that Black can go in the ring well enough to match his great vignettes though that's what got Almas in trouble for his debut. But yeah, Black wins here and does so handily.

### **Women's Title: Asuka vs. Ember Moon**

Asuka won the Women's Title about a year ago in Dallas and hasn't looked back since. She's completely steamrolled over everyone she's faced and it's almost impossible to imagine her losing a match. That's where the story has worked so well. It's pretty much been acknowledged that Ember Moon can't hang with Asuka all the way through a match but what she can do is hit the Eclipse, which has been built up as the most dangerous weapon the division has ever seen. It's almost reminiscent of Steve Austin vs. Shawn Michaels as all Austin had to do was catch Michaels once and it would be over. The question is can Moon get that far.

As logical as it would be to have Asuka lose here and go on to the main roster soon after, I'm really not sure that happens anymore. NXT has done a nearly flawless job of making Asuka feel unbeatable and that's still the feeling I have here. Moon should be the favorite and the place will go nuts if the Eclipse gives her the title, but I'm actually going with Asuka in my regular prediction almost guaranteed to be wrong. Moon is the best candidate to dethrone Asuka but I actually don't think she does.

### **Tag Team Titles: DIY vs. Revival vs. Authors of Pain**

I'm very rarely a fan of triple threats but this is a case where the story has been built precisely in this direction, which makes it

more than acceptable. Revival and DIY had some incredible matches against each other last year but now they've run into a wall with the champions, who run over everything in their path. Having the other teams band together to fight the Authors is interesting and could make for a very good story to the elimination tag, especially if one of the other teams gets to conquer them in the end.

I'll go with the Authors retaining here as DIY could easily be brought up to the Cruiserweight division while the Revival seem like perfect additions to the main roster tag divisions. The Authors are perfect choices to keep the titles until a new team is put together to slay them. I don't know who could fight DIY save for maybe Sanity, which doesn't seem like the most interesting thing in the world. We'll go with the titles being retained, which would make the most long terms sense.

#### **NXT Title: Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Bobby Roode**

We'll wrap it up with a rematch as Nakamura, this time on two good knees, tries to get the NXT Title back from Roode, who took it from him in a great match back at "Takeover: San Antonio." This time around Nakamura knows not to underestimate him, which could make for an interesting change of pace. Roode has looked great since winning the title while Nakamura has spent most of the time rehabbing his injured knee.

I think I'll go with the champions making a clean sweep as, much like the Revival, there's no need to put the title back on Nakamura. He's held it twice already and is more than ready to move up to the main stage. Just let Roode move on and feud with someone new (Dillinger for example) before losing the title at "Takeover: Brooklyn III". The match will be fun, though I'm curious as to how they could have Nakamura lose to Roode again without some sort of shenanigans, which you don't get too often in NXT.

Overall, the show looks good but not great. As is almost always the case, it's going to come down to the performances, which have a tendency to be outstanding. Let the wrestlers do their thing in a logical manner and everything will be fine. The crowd is going to

carry a lot of this and that's what arguably matters most at any given NXT show. Last year set a very high bar but I believe NXT can actually pull something like this off again.

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## **NXT – March 22, 2017: They Needed This**

### **NXT**

Date: March 22, 2017

Location: University Area CDC Gymnasium, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Nigel McGuinness, Tom Phillips

The main roster isn't the only place where we're getting ready for a major show. There are only two episodes of NXT left before Takeover: Orlando and that means we need to hammer out the rest of the card. While the three title matches are set, you need a lot more than that to make a full show. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Tye Dillinger/No Way Jose/Roderick Strong vs. Sanity.

Opening sequence.

## Oney Lorcan vs. Andrade Cien Almas

This is over Lorcan standing up to Almas for bullying Hoho Lun last week. Lorcan shoves him down to start and Almas takes an early break on the floor. Back in and Almas loses a strike off, sending him right back outside. A chase goes badly for Almas too as he can't get anything going so far.

Finally he's able to send Lorcan head first into the corner before a running slap to the face makes Oney even madder. Lorcan pops back up and knocks him to the floor, only to dive off the steps and into a slam. We come back from a break with Lorcan going hard into the buckle so Andrade can do that cocky grin of his. We hit the chinlock to trigger Lorcan's comeback, which includes a rather hard clothesline. A running Blockbuster is good for two but the half and half suplex is easily blocked.

One heck of a running European uppercut sends Almas outside and a big flip dive takes him down again. Four straight running charges in the corner set up the half and half for a VERY close two, which is pretty much going to do it for Oney's chances. Almas avoids a dive off the top and cartwheels into a kick to the back of the head, followed by a clothesline to turn Oney inside out for two. The announcers are selling the heck out of these shots and the kickouts. The running double knees in the corner knock Lorcan silly though and the hammerlock DDT puts him away at 13:52.

**Rating:** B+. I was late to the party on Almas but he's REALLY grown on me in recent weeks and I'm starting to see the star power that everyone said he had. Maybe it's the change in look or the hard heel turn but I'm really digging him of late and this match made him look like a star instead of a goon with a smile. Check this one out and keep Lorcan in mind as well since he more than carried his part of the match.

DIY has gone around the world and they're ready to show that all they need is a chance. They got one here in NXT and didn't get along with the Revival from the day they got here. That led them to Takeover: Toronto and the greatest night of their lives but here

comes the Authors of Pain to cue their dreams off again. DIY is a state of mind though and it's all about everyone who has been there for them over the years. They'll have their moment. This was a really solid promo from people you don't expect to hear them from.

Alistir Black video.

We look back at Ember Moon Eclipsing Billie Kay onto the injured list (if that was a work, Kay is a better actress than I thought).

#### Asuka vs. Priscilla Zumiga

Non-title. There's a good chance I heard the jobber's name but I'm pretty sure she's better known as Angel Rose. The bell rings and Asuka asks for a mic. She says this is for Ember Moon and takes Priscilla's head off with a kick. Zumiga makes the mistake of hitting Asuka and gets kicked in the head again. That's only good for two though as Asuka pulls up before the three. More hard strikes (Watson: "She might be trying to send a message to Moon!" Phillips: "You think?") set up the Asuka Lock for the submission at 2:56.

Post match Asuka screams in Japanese before saying "no Eclipse". They're doing a great job of selling the idea that Ember has one big shot but otherwise she probably can't hang with Asuka. That makes sense and is a great way to get the title off Asuka if she's moving up.

The Revival says their name isn't just a slogan. They've studied the best and of course they're better than the best, including Arn and Tully, the Midnight Express and the Hart Foundation. They might not do a bunch of flips but they're going to wind up on top of all their opponents. In Orlando, it's their fate to become the greatest team of all time and that's what they're going to do.

Next week it's Akum vs. Wilder vs. Gargano to preview the triple threat title match.

Long video on Bobby Roode vs. Shinsuke Nakamura. The idea is that it started last year when Nakamura made his debut and Roode showed up in the crowd, which was supposed to take the focus away from the in-ring action (not really but it's fine for a plot point). Then Roode

built himself up and surprised the champ by going after his knee. Nakamura went surfing and is ready for his rematch because he knows how to handle Roode.

No Way Jose, Tye Dillinger and Roderick Strong are ready for Sanity because they have a fair numbers game for once.

Heavy Machinery is coming next week.

Last week, Kassius Ohno said he didn't expect to start off his second NXT run with a loss. Cue Elias Samson to sing about Ohno never being a champion and doesn't belong here. Ohno doesn't take kindly to this and Samson leaves.

Almas is ready to face Black in his debut at Takeover.

### Sanity vs. No Way Jose/Tye Dillinger/Roderick Strong

Sanity is pulled outside to start and the brawl is on until Dillinger works on Wolfe's knee with a series of stomps. Wolfe and Dain are sent outside for a big dive from Strong and we take a break. Back with Jose catching Wolfe in a side slam and stopping Young with a raised elbow in the corner. Dain finally takes over on Jose and the double teaming begins, only to have Jose roll over and make the hot tag to Strong. They're certainly moving here.

Everything breaks down though and the match is thrown out at 11:03.

**Rating:** C. Nice brawl here but you had to expect this one to go on to Takeover. This story has been well done since the beginning and the thrown together trio more than held their own against Sanity. I'm actually not sure who wins in the blowoff match and that's a very good thing to have coming up.

The brawl keeps going after the bell with Dillinger stomping on Young until Nikki Cross jumps on his back. Cue the debuting Heidi Lovelace (not named on screen but the fans call her Ruby, as in her NXT name Ruby Riot) to take care of Cross, allowing the three guys to take out Dain to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** A-. Now that's more like it! This was exactly the kind of strong push that NXT needed as we head towards Takeover, which was kind of lacking on the way there. All four announced

matches got some time tonight (including Black vs. Almas, the latter of whom had a great match to build him up for the loss) and you can pencil in the eight person tag as well. Really solid stuff tonight and I want to see Takeover.

### Results

Andrade Cien Almas b. Oney Lorcan – Hammerlock DDT

Asuka b. Priscilla Zumiga – Asuka Lock

Sanity vs. Tye Dillinger/Roderick Strong/No Way Jose went to a double DQ when all six brawled

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# **NXT – February 8, 2017: Glorious Insanity**

## **NXT**

Date: February 8, 2017

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Percy Watson, Nigel McGuinness, Tom Phillips

Tonight is all about Bobby Roode and his GLORIOUS NXT Championship celebration. In other words it's probably time to find out who we're



going to be seeing as Roode's first challenger, likely at Takeover: Orlando. I'm really not sure who that's going to be as Shinsuke Nakamura is still down with a knee injury. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence, now prominently featuring Roode.

### Sanity vs. Bollywood Boyz

Dain and Wolfe for Sanity here with Harv getting shoved around to start. Gurv comes in and has the same issues dealing with the monster Dain. The Boyz try some dancing and get their heads taken off with a double clothesline. A double backsplash sets up a One Winged Angel (I'm thinking that's going to get its own name) for the pin on Gurv at 2:33.

Post match Nikki Cross demands Asuka but Eric Young cuts her off to say Tye Dillinger belongs to Sanity.

### Liv Morgan vs. Billie Kay

Billie gets taken down to start and Liv walks on her back, setting up a rollup for two. Kay grabs an armdrag and we hit the chinlock. Peyton tries to get on the apron for a distraction but Liv grabs a rollup for the pin at 3:40.

**Rating:** C-. Nothing to see here and I'm still not sure why I'm supposed to be interested in Morgan. She's just kind of there based on charisma and the in-ring work is only average at best. I'm hoping this doesn't mean the downfall of Billie and Peyton as they're still a great act but with the title being dominated, there's only so much they can do.

Tye Dillinger says Sanity hasn't humbled him and he won't join them. That brings Sanity in for the triple team but No Way Jose and Roderick Strong come in for the save.

William Regal announces a UK Title match next week with Tyler Bate defending against Trent Seven. Peyton and Billie come in and demand a match against Liv next week. Regal agrees and says Liv can pick her partner, which delights the Aussies because Morgan has no friends.

Shinsuke Nakamura's knee injury won't require surgery.

## Revival vs. Heavy Machinery

Machinery is Tucker Knight/Otis Dozovich. Knight shoulders Dash around a few times and bearhugs him over to the corner for the tag off to Otis. We hit another bearhug from Otis, who Percy describes as "Tugboat reincarnated." Dawson comes in and snaps off some jabs to the face but Dash is easily kicked off at two. It's off to a chinlock on Otis for a bit until the hot tag brings in Tucker. House is cleaned but Dawson makes a blind tag and DDT's Knight for the pin at 3:46.

**Rating:** C-. Nothing to see here other than a reminder that the Revival is still a thing in NXT. To be fair that's probably better for them as you could milk a little more out of them before calling them up to job to Cesaro and Sheamus. Heavy Machinery could be something down the road but for now they're fine as the intimidating team that everyone beats.

Post match Revival says they're the top guys around here and want a shot at the Authors of Pain at Takeover: Orlando. Cue the Authors so Revival bails, only to sneak back in and jump the champs.

Video on Tyler Bate.

Here's Roode for the celebration. Roode gets straight to the point with an I TOLD YOU SO. He's proven his greatness over and over already and that includes defeating Nakamura. That man defeated everyone he got in the ring with until he got in the ring with Bobby Roode. It was the most glorious moment in NXT history because now NXT has someone who looks like a champion is supposed to look. It's no longer WE ARE NXT because now it's his NXT.

Video on Trent Seven, who is from a cabin halfway up Mustache Mountain.

## Sanity vs. No Way Jose/Tye Dillinger/Roderick Strong

Sanity gets jumped in the aisle to start and we take a break before the opening bell. We come back joined in progress with Tye knocking Eric to the floor for a breather. It's off to Jose vs. Wolfe with No Way taking over before Eric gets taken into the wrong corner for his

efforts. Strong dropkicks Wolfe down but it's off to Dain so Sanity can take over.

Tye gets beaten into the corner and Nigel wonders how many times he has to take a beating until he's officially a 9. Dillinger easily escapes and the hot tag brings in Strong to clean house. Everything breaks down but Dain breaks up the Sick Kick, allowing Cross to get in a hurricanrana on Tye. Dain runs Strong over and Young gets the pin at 6:20.

**Rating:** C. This was fine but nothing all that great. Sanity getting a win is a good idea as the team hasn't really done much of note so far. Then again NXT isn't exactly a place for stables so it's not like there's a blueprint for how to pull this off. The trio was a good idea and I'm sure Dillinger vs. Sanity will keep going for a good while.

**Overall Rating:** C. This was a weird one with the last match being necessary to make the show run long enough but at the same time it made the show feel longer than it needed to be if that makes sense. In other words they would have been better off expanding some of the earlier matches and then having the Roode stuff close the show while leaving the six man for later. As it is the show feels a bit heavier than it needed to be but it was still entertaining enough. Not bad here but it needed some adjustments to really work.

### Results

Sanity b. Bollywood Boyz – One Winged Angel to Gurv

Liv Morgan b. Billie Kay – Rollup

Revival b. Heavy Machinery – DDT to Knight

Sanity b. No Way Jose/Roderick Strong/Tye Dillinger – Crossbody to Strong

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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.

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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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# **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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## **NXT – November 2, 2016: The Hot Tag To Toronto**

### **NXT**

Date: November 2, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

We're down to three shows before heading north to Toronto and that means it's time to start hammering out the rest of the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic. The quarterfinals begin tonight and we'll need to get down to the finals in the next three weeks. Some of the matches have been taped at house shows so it might be time to take a field trip. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We're going straight to San Jose, California for the first quarterfinal match.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic Quarterfinals: Roderick Strong/Austin Aries vs. TM61

So here's the thing: Austin Aries has a fractured orbital bone and is unable to compete so Austin suggests we have a singles match to determine who advances (assuming that's not made really obvious by the stipulations). Regal comes out to say that's cool with him and TM61 agrees.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic Quarterfinals: Roderick Strong vs. Shane Thorn

At least I don't have to remember which is which. Shane does a very complicated spin out of a wristlock before kicking Strong in the face. A standing moonsault gets two but Strong's first backbreaker puts Thorn down on the top turnbuckle as we take a break. Back with Thorn hitting a good looking dropkick to put both guys down. We hit an Australian uppercut train until another backbreaker gives Strong two. He really can hit those things from everywhere and he makes them look different enough to keep it fresh.

Strong tries a superplex but gets knocked down for Alberto Del Rio's top rope double stomp (Fans: "SI SI SI!"). A Falcon Arrow gets two on Strong, followed by a sitout powerbomb to bring Aries up to the apron. Strong kicks Miller down but walks into a small package to send TM61 to the final four at 10:45.

**Rating:** B-. This was just about all it needed to be with Thorn sending the team on, as you kind of had to know they would given Aries' injury. Strong continues to look good and this is more of a storyline loss than anything else. TM61 making a strong run in this tournament would do a lot for them as they haven't really set themselves apart yet so this could be their big moment.

Samoa Joe and Shinsuke Nakamura will sign the contract next week.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic Quarterfinals: DIY vs. Revival

Non-title. Actually hang on a second as Scott Dawson is on crutches.

Dawson has hurt everything in his knee and it would cripple a normal man (Dawson: "Like you two.") but a little rest will make a man like him just fine. Therefore, the Revival is sitting this one out and DIY can have a pass to the next round. I like this much better than A, wasting another edition of a great series and B, having either team lose a match. No match.

Gargano and Ciampa are ready for whoever they face next.

### Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic Quarterfinals: Rich Swann/No Way Jose vs. Authors of Pain

Back to San Jose. Akum and Jose start things off with No Way being driven straight into the corner. Some dancing sends the bull charging through the ropes and a big right hand actually staggers him a bit. Swann comes in for an assisted hurricanrana which really just annoys Akum. Instead it's off to Razar but Swann keeps the speed up with a dropkick to stagger him. For some reason Rich decides to dive onto both Authors at the same time but it takes Jose diving onto all three to put them down.

Back in and the beating begins with Akum throwing Rich into the corner for a running splash from Razar. Paul Ellering even gets in a little choking of his own on the bottom rope like the good old school manager he is. A spinning kick to Razar's face gives Rich a breather and an enziguri to Akum allows the hot tag to Jose (BIG pop for that). A TKO drops Akum for two but Razar sends Swann into the steps. The lack of a partner means Jose gets caught in the Last Chapter for the pin at 8:06.

**Rating:** C. The more I see of the Authors, the more I like them. They don't need to be anything more than a pair of big guys who can beat the heck out of people. More importantly though, they get in just enough trouble to make you believe they could be in danger before taking someone's head off. That leaves the opening of the right team being able to outlast them and then beat them, which makes them more interesting.

Video on Mickie James.

## Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic Quarterfinals: Sanity vs. TJ Perkins vs. Kota Ibushi

Wolfe and Ibushi start things off with a headlock slowing Kota down so much that it's off to TJ for the always broken up first kneebar. Fulton comes in and gets kneebarred as well with Wolfe's save not working. Back from a break with the cruiserweights starting up their dives until TJ gets pulled out of the air. A slam sends him onto Wolfe's knees and it's off to the chinlock.

That's switched up to a bearhug to keep Perkins in trouble for a big longer. A shot to the face allows the tag to Kota and it's time for the kicks. The Gold Star Bomb gets two on Wolfe but Eric Young and Nikki Cross get the referee's attention. A suplex/powerslam combo puts Kota away at 12:15.

**Rating:** C-. This didn't do much for me but I'm starting to dig Sanity a lot more than I ever expected to. Kota wasn't likely going to get very far in this thing due to his lack of a contract but at least the Full Sail fans got a nice treat by seeing him live. I like the idea of regular teams going forward though and that's what we have for the semifinals.

The final four:

Sanity

TM61

DIY

Authors of Pain

**Overall Rating:** C+. The wrestling was fine here and they moved through an entire round of the tournament in one night with some smart booking decisions. The rest of Toronto's card is mostly set so it's ok to dedicate a full show to one concept like this. I'm looking forward to the final four and that's a big step forward for a tournament that hadn't taken much shape yet.

### Results

Shane Thorn b. Roderick Strong – Small package



Authors of Pain b. Rich Swann/No Way Jose – Last Chapter to Jose  
Sanity b. Kota Ibushi/TJ Perkins – Suplex/powerslam combination to  
Ibushi

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# **NXT – October 19, 2016: I Love NXT and I Don't Know How Else To Say It**

## **NXT**

Date: October 19, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're getting closer to the second round of the Dusty Rhodes Tag  
Team Classic and it's also the start of a fresh taping cycle. The  
other interesting story is the return of Shinsuke Nakamura to go  
after Samoa Joe. It's fairly obvious that they'll be facing each  
other again in Toronto. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at Nakamura being laid out about a month  
ago but coming back last week to go after Samoa Joe.

Opening sequence.

## Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Rich Swann/No Way Jose vs. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak

It should be interesting to see this work so much better here than it would on Raw. Rich and Drew start things off as the fans aren't sure which good guy to cheer for. It's time for some fast flipping to start with Rich bouncing over Drew and handing it off to Jose for the big guy dancing. Nese comes in and eats a big flapjack (that sounds good) for two. Some quick kicks put Jose down for two but it's back to Rich for some kicks to the chest. They head outside and it's Nese superkicking (of course) Swann as we take a break.

Back with Gulak and Swann clotheslining each other for a double knockdown. That means a double tag off to Jose and Nese with the dancing one turning Tony inside out off a clothesline. Gulak gets thrown into the air and punched right in the jaw (better than most Superman Punches) for two with Nese making the save. The full nelson slam ends Gulak at 10:40.

**Rating:** C+. I've said it before and I'll say it again: Jose is WAY too talented for this dancing party guy gimmick. He looked even more like a star than usual here as he was towering over the other three and was able to show off with the power game. It really is amazing how much more interesting the cruiserweights are when they're in front of a crowd that actually wants to see them.

Rich and Jose are ready for the Authors of Pain, who better not look past them. Dancing ensues.

Quick discussion of Hideo Itami's injury, meaning he's out of the tournament.

We look back at Glorious Ten splitting up.

Tye Dillinger has requested and been granted a match against Bobby Roode in Toronto.

Austin Aries would rather talk about potassium instead of his surprise partner. The tournament isn't for everyone, such as Hideo Itami. Hideo is out because an MRI revealed he doesn't have a spine.

## Bobby Roode vs. Sean Maluta

Maluta actually grabs a rollup for an early two but Roode takes his head off with a clothesline. A hard whip into the corner makes it worse for Sean, followed by a spinebuster to break up his comeback. An implant DDT ends Sean at 3:07.

**Rating:** D+. Just a squash here, which is a good role for some of the lower level cruiserweights. We've seen what they can do in the tournament so these wins are more impressive than the ones you see over the run of the mill jobbers. Maluta has a good look and can be pushed if the need ever arrives, just like so many of the other people NXT has been using lately.

Roode laughs off Dillinger's complaints because Tye was the one who begged Roode to team up for the Dusty Classic. All Roode wanted to do was bring Tye up to a GLORIOUS level. After a line about Klingons, Tye comes out and clears the ring. The fans, who went nuts over Roode's entrance, give Tye a huge TEN chant.

Liv Morgan is in the back when Peyton Royce and Billie Kay jump her from behind. Morgan is dragged out to the stage and laid out again, leaving Kay and Royce to brag about how this is their division.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Austin Aries/??? vs. Tucker Knight/Otis Dozovic

Aries' mystery partner is.....the debuting Roderick Strong, who teamed with Aries to win the ROH Tag Team Titles as part of Generation Next. The announcers put Strong over hard, mentioning his matches against people like AJ Styles, Samoa Joe, Daniel Bryan and Kevin Owens. Otis throws Aries around to start before it's off to Tucker for some hard chops to Strong.

Everything breaks down and Aries has to break up a Vader Bomb from Otis. Aries and Strong start trying to chop down the massive Dozovic but he pretty easily suplexes them both at the same time. The hot tag brings in Knight for a double splash in the corner but he misses a charge and falls outside. Back in and the Sick Kick knocks Knight silly for the pin (ignore the shoulder being up at one) at 6:15.

**Rating:** B-. It's strange to see the smaller, faster guys as the

heels but this was a better match than I was expecting. Dozovic and Knight are two big power guys and I'm always entertained by seeing guys their size chopped down. Aries/Strong vs. TM61 should be a lot of fun, which is the cool part about tournaments like this one.

Andrade Cien Almas attacked Cedric Alexander over a lack of respect. Now it's time to take the respect for himself.

#### Nikki Cross vs. Danielle Kamella

Cross is just as crazy as she used to be and throws Danielle with a suplex. After biting and scratching herself, Nikki ends this with a fisherman's neckbreaker at 1:20. Total squash.

Nikki keeps beating on Danielle so the referee reverses the decision.

Here's Shinsuke Nakamura with a message for Samoa Joe. Nakamura confirms the rematch with Samoa Joe in Toronto because he'll beat Joe with no mercy. This brings out Patrick Clark, who wants the title shot for himself. Instead he gets a kick to the head, only to have Joe come out for the big staredown. Joe stays on the ramp while Clark eats Kinshasa to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. I had a really good time here as they covered almost everything that's likely to be taking place at Takeover: Toronto in less than an hour. We had good tag wrestling, a debut, story advancement and a hot ending. In other words, things you rarely get on Raw and/or Smackdown and in even less time. NXT knows how to turn on the jets whenever they need to and that's exactly what they've done again here.

#### Results

No Way Jose/Rich Swann b. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak – Full nelson slam to Gulak

Bobby Roode b. Sean Maluta – Implant DDT

Austin Aries/Roderick Strong b. Tucker Knight/Otis Dozovic – Sick Kick to Otis

Danielle Kamella b. Nikki Cross via referee's decision

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