

NXT – September 7, 2016: Well You See... What Happened Was...

NXT

Date: September 7, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

We're in an interesting place here as the next Takeover has been announced for November but the taping schedule hasn't caught up to the announcement yet. Therefore we're still in the fallout stage from Brooklyn, meaning we're likely going to see some stuff being set up for the next big TV show. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

TM61 vs. Tony Nese/Ariya Daivari

Thorn and Nese start things off with Tony doing a sweet drop down into a nip up to avoid a clothesline. Neither guy can do anything so it's off to Miller vs. Daivari for a change of pace. A jawbreaker sends Miller into the corner and Nese adds a dropkick to set up a big flip dive to the floor. Unfortunately he takes out his partner in the process, only to have Thorn dive over all of them, barely grazing his opponents.

Back in and Nese gets two off a running knee (I'm getting sick of running strikes. It seems everyone uses one of those these days.), followed by some stomping in the corner. We take a break and come back with the tag off to Miller as the crowd is really not interested so far. A high/low gets two on Nese but he comes right back with a superkick. Ariya gets two off a frog splash but walks into Thunder Valley for the pin at 10:30.

Rating: C. I really don't get the appeal of TM61 and the fans being that silent didn't do them any favors. They're really just two guys in trunks who can wrestle a good enough match but that's not good enough when we've had American Alpha, the Revival and Gargano/Ciampa tearing the house down every time they're in the ring. This was more about the cruiserweights though and they looked fine out there.

Earlier today, Asuka talked about the crowd being so excited in Brooklyn and how she now respects Bayley. Even though Bayley fought hard, Asuka fought harder and retained the title. Asuka has cleaned out the division and she defends the title for herself and Japan. She says something for her Japanese fans and says no one is ready for her.

Steve Cutler wants to know what Shinsuke Nakamura has sacrificed to get here. Cutler has sacrificed four years of his life to get this opportunity. People will respect him.

Ember Moon vs. Leah Von

Von is a blonde newcomer. Ember starts fast with a springboard spinning crossbody but gets taken down into a chinlock. That goes nowhere as Moon kicks her in the ribs, hits a flipping clothesline and finishes with the top rope Stunner (possibly called the Eclipse) at 2:45.

No Way Jose appreciated Bobby Roode's fashion sense and isn't changing for anyone.

Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa will get a match at the Cruiserweight Classic final and if they win they might get a Tag Team Title shot.

Austin Aries vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Almas has dropped the hat and suspenders. The fans are all over Almas to start and Aries gets them on his side with a dropkick to the face and a little rest in the corner. Almas comes back with a dropkick of his own and a good looking hurricanrana. Aries is just fine though as he shoves Almas off the top for a nasty crash as we take a break.

Back with Aries dropping a knee for a cocky cover before we hit the chinlock. Almas sends him crashing into the ropes and scores with a springboard dropkick. That just earns him the running dropkick in the corner but Aries misses a charge in the corner. The running knees miss (again with the running strike) and a powerbomb sets up the Last Chancery to make Almas tap at 11:48.

Rating: C-. I don't know what's with this show so far tonight but they're not clicking so far. Then again maybe it's just Almas being such an uninteresting character with a really basic offense that feels like the generic template you would get if you selected high

flier in a Smackdown vs. Raw game. Just turn him heel and let him be bitter so people don't have to be bored with him every time. Aries winning is fine and that's all that mattered here.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Steve Cutler

Non-title with Samoa Joe on commentary. They start slow with Nakamura not exactly treating Cutler like a serious threat. We're quickly into the corner for Good Vibrations before Nakamura starts in with the strikes. The reverse exploder sets up Kinshasa for the pin on Cutler at 3:21.

Rating: D+. Not much to say here because there wasn't much to it. Cutler could have been anyone in this spot and it would have been the same match as Nakamura dismantled him in just a few minutes. Joe vs. Nakamura II should be a lot of fun, especially if they're allowed to beat the heck out of each other for twenty minutes.

Joe walks away from commentary to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. I really wasn't feeling the show this week as two of the matches just kept going and the other two were too short to mean much. They're definitely in need of some energy but luckily this isn't Raw, where such a thing sounds impossible. Not a very good show this week but it certainly wasn't bad.

Results

TM61 b. Ariya Daivari/Tony Nese – Thunder Valley to Daivari

Ember Moon b. Leah Von – Eclipse

Austin Aries b. Andrade Cien Almas – Last Chancery

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Samoa Joe – Kinshasa

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New Column: I'll Die Before I Dishonor Brooklyn By Going Back To Takeover Summerslam

Three previews in one, meaning my fingers are rather tired.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-ill-die-before-i-dishonor-brooklyn-by-going-back-to-takeover-summerslam/>

NXT – August 17, 2016: This Is What They Do

NXT

Date: August 17, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's the go home show for Takeover: Back to Brooklyn and that means it's time for the big hard push towards New York. Odds are we'll be getting the big showdown between Samoa Joe and Shinsuke Nakamura, possibly with Nakamura getting taken down as payback for embarrassing Joe last week. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Hideo Itami vs. Mustafa Ali

Ali is from the Cruiserweight Classic. Itami starts fast with the strikes and sends him to the apron for a baseball slide. Back in and Ali takes him down for a chinlock followed by a kick to the head for two. Itami is tired of playing around though and starts firing off the strikes, capped off by the running knee for the pin at 3:20.

Rating: C. The silent assassin could work for Itami as it's better than watching him just not have much charisma. I do like the idea of bringing in the cruiserweights as NXT isn't going to treat them as worthless jobbers. Ali certainly wasn't squashed here and that makes all the difference in the world.

Video on Bobby Roode. Any excuse to hear GLORIOUS is worth it.

Video on Asuka vs. Bayley, which makes it feel like the ultimate rematch and challenge for Bayley after she was destroyed in Dallas. Asuka has gotten even more aggressive since winning the title and Bayley could be in way over her head on this one. Bayley said the underdog has become the champion before and she's going to do it again.

Music video with footage of Aries vs. No Way Jose, Roode vs. Almas and the Tag Team Title match.

William Regal is talking about how awesome Takeover is going to be when Billie Kay comes in and asks why she's not on the card. Regal agrees and gives her a match with newcomer Ember Moon. Simple and effective again.

Carmella/Liv Morgan/Nikki Glenncross vs. Alexa Bliss/Mandy Rose/Daria Berenato

Rose is from Tough Enough, Glenncross is from Scotland and Berenato is from New Jersey. You can tell Rose is glorified eye candy in the vein of the early days of Eva Marie. Graves: "Mandy Rose is only second to one person in my heart: Eva Marie." Berenato (a newcomer just like Glenncross) is dressed like a boxer. Ten seconds in and Graves is reaching Jerry Lawler levels of drooling over the women.

Bliss and Nikki start things off with a quick cross body putting Alexa down. The villains take a break on the floor and it's off to

Daria, who immediately takes her gloves off as we go to an early break. Back with Daria fighting out of Liv's chinlock before Bliss offers a distraction so the bad women can take over.

We hear about Daria's MMA training before it's off to Mandy with Graves losing his mind in the vein of Cole freaking out over Miz. A running knee puts Liv down before Daria comes back in for a kick to the chest. We hit the chinlock with a body vice and Daria even adds some trash talk. You don't see that enough.

Morgan enziguris Alexa down and the hot tag brings in Carmella to clean house. Carmella speeds things up with clotheslines and a hurricanrana to take Rose down for two. Everything breaks down and Mandy's rollup is countered into the Cone of Silence for the tap out at 11:35.

Rating: C+. This was a very nice surprise and a good hope for the future of the women's division. Rose is already a mile ahead of Eva Marie in the ring as she looked competent and comfortable with the basic things she was doing. Glenn Cross didn't get to show off all that much but Daria had a unique enough character to stand out immediately. Carmella and Bliss definitely looked ahead of the others and I'm sure they'll be fine on the main rosters with a little more time.

Regal tells security to keep Joe and Nakamura apart during their interview.

Ember Moon is coming.

We run down the card. I miss that happening on the main shows.

It's time for the sitdown interview with Joe and Nakamura. Both of them say they're excited to start before Joe says he doesn't like the lack of respect. Joe had to go through the entire roster for months to get a title shot but Nakamura beats Balor once and gets his shot. Bayley only had to ask for a rematch and Regal checked with Asuka to make sure it was ok. Nakamura says he's a calm man by definition, especially outside of the ring.

Joe says Nakamura came to his dojo for training earlier in his

career. Nakamura doesn't remember it being Joe's dojo and smiles a lot. Joe respects what Nakamura has done but maybe not Shinsuke himself. In answer to the same question, Nakamura leans forward and smiles a lot which gets Joe out of his chair. Regal has security break it up.

One last Takeover ad ends the show.

Overall Rating: B. This show had one goal and that was to make me care about Takeover more than I did coming in. They more than accomplished that task so anything else they do is a bonus. The wrestling was really an afterthought at this point and the fact that the women's tag worked as well as it did is a bonus. It's a really fast show and they covered all of Saturday's matches, albeit some a bit faster than others. Joe vs. Nakamura has the potential to be an absolute war and I'm looking forward to seeing it. Well done all around here and a great go home show.

Results

Hideo Itami b. Mustafa Ali – Running knee

Carmella/Nikki Glencross/Liv Morgan b. Daria Berenato/Alexa

Bliss/Mandy Rose – Cone of Silence to Rose

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NXT – August 10, 2016: Mission Accomplished Again

NXT

Date: August 10, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

With Takeover: Brooklyn just ten days away, it's time to start the final push towards the big show. In this case we have the contract signing between Bayley and the now evil Asuka for their Women's Title match as well as (more than likely at least) a showdown between Samoa Joe and Shinsuke Nakamura. Let's get to it.

A very happy Bobby Roode exits William Regal's office.

Opening sequence.

We open with the contract signing with both women coming to the ring and Regal moderating. Bayley talks about last year in Brooklyn being her dream but Dallas being her nightmare. She wasn't ready in Texas but now she's a different person and ready to take the title back. Asuka says Bayley isn't ready and offers a handshake but Bayley doesn't fall for it. They both sign and the champ offers another handshake but Bayley slaps it away and leaves. We're not done yet though as Bayley gets back in and does the big staredown.

Authors of Pain vs. Rob Ryzin/Adrian Nailz

The Authors don't have names yet so we'll say #1 throws Nailz into the corner. #2 comes in and tosses Ryzin around with ease. Stereo powerbombs set up the clothesline/legsweep combo for the pin at 1:20.

The beating continues post match but TM61 comes in for the brawl, only to get powerbombed as well.

Nakamura says he isn't hard to find and he'll find Joe when he wants to.

Andrade Cien Almas vs. Angelo Dawkins

I saw this match at a house show recently. Dawkins runs him over to start and we're in the chinlock after about a minute. Almas comes back with a kick into the corner and the running knees, followed by a hammerlock DDT for the pin on Dawkins at 2:20. The silence when Almas won is a really bad sign as he's just flopped so hard coming out of the gate.

Post match here's Bobby Roode to say that he's been to see William Regal and the two of them will be facing off in Brooklyn. Almas doesn't need to get a big head though because the people will be there to see Bobby Roode and Bobby Roode alone.

Austin Aries is explaining the health benefits of eating oranges to William Regal before saying he wants a match at Takeover because it's supposed to be special. Regal agrees and make Aries vs. No Way Jose.

Liv Morgan vs. Billie Kay

Kay takes it to the mat with an armbar to start but Morgan climbs up on her hands and spins into a headscissors to escape. A discus forearm puts Morgan right back down for two and we hit the chinlock. Back up and the big boot puts Morgan away at 3:12.

Rating: D+. Not much here but if Billie Kay is the next woman to be built up in NXT then so be it. They need a lot of fresh bodies down there right now to replace the ravaging from the Draft. Billie just getting presented as a big deal for two weeks has already done more for her than anything else in the last year so they're on the right path. It's a good sign that NXT can just flip a switch on someone and see results like this.

We look at Tommaso Ciampa vs. Johnny Gargano from last week in the Cruiserweight Classic.

Regal (we've seen a lot of him tonight) gives Ciampa and Gargano a Tag Team Title shot in Brooklyn.

Ember Moon is coming in Brooklyn. This time we can see a woman's eyes.

Tucker Knight/Patrick Clark vs. Tommaso Ciampa/Johnny Gargano

Gargano and Clark get things going with Johnny easily wrestling him to the mat. It's off to Knight to splash Ciampa in the corner before Gargano and Ciampa turn up the serious and kick the jobbers down. The running knee/superkick combination put Knight away at 3:13.

Rating: C. Gargano and Ciampa are on fire right now and I'm honestly not sure who is going to win in the title match. That's one of the best feelings you can have in wrestling: seeing both options as distinct possibilities because they're both on a roll and could get the win over the other. It's really hard to do but it's a blast when it's pulled off.

We look back at Hideo Itami's return match last week.

Mojo Rawley won't stand for being attacked by Samoa Joe and he's bringing the fight tonight. It's about getting even, not getting hyped.

Samoa Joe vs. Mojo Rawley

Non-title. Mojo goes right after Joe to start and actually succeeds with a headbutt. The champ pounds him down with the snap jabs to the jaw but Mojo still won't give up and knocks him into the corner again. Mojo charges into the Rock Bottom out of the corner though and the Koquina Clutch gives Joe the win at 4:35.

Rating: C+. That's probably it for Mojo and it's a shame that he finally got the whole aggressive things down in his last match here. Joe mauling anyone was the best option for him here and it makes him look like a monster who can absorb a beating and still win the match with little more than a sweat.

Post match Joe keeps the hold on until Nakamura comes down. Security holds Joe back so Nakamura puts his hand on Joe's face and then slaps him. Joe is barely controllable to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. I'm really starting to like these shows where they do the heavy lifting to get us to the next Takeover show. Almost every match got a little time tonight and three new matches were added to give us the meat of the card. I came into this show

with a fairly strong interest in Brooklyn and now I want it to be tomorrow. Mission accomplished, as usual.

Results

Authors of Pain b. Rob Ryzin/Adrian Nailz – Clothesline/Russian leg sweep combo to Nailz

Andrade Cien Almas b. Angelo Dawkins – Hammerlock DDT

Billie Kay b. Liv Morgan – Big Boot

Tommaso Ciampa/Johnny Gargano b. Tucker Knight/Patrick Clark – Superkick/running knee combo to Clark

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NXT – August 3, 2016: A Little Old And A Little New

NXT

Date: August 3, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're less than three weeks away from Takeover: Back To Brooklyn and a lot of the card seems to be set. Before we get there though, we have two big names back/returning tonight with Hideo Itami making his TV return after nearly a year and a half away and Bobby Roode

making his TV debut. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Hideo Itami vs. Sean Maluta

Maluta was in the Cruiserweight Classic so Zack Sabre Jr., Drew Gulak and Tony Nese are in the front row. Hideo shoulders him down to start and kicks Maluta in the back before casually kicking him in the face. Something like a middle rope Codebreaker gives Maluta a near fall and it's off to a bodyscissors. Itami comes right back up with his quick strikes to set up a hesitation dropkick in the corner. The running knee puts Sean away at 3:49.

Rating: C. Itami is the same guy he was back in the day and that's not the most thrilling person in the world. He has all the skills you could need but there's just not the kind of fire that's going to get me interested in seeing him come out. The barrage of strikes feels old hat now as there are so many people who do the same thing and that gets a bit tiresome. Still glad to have him back though as NXT really needs top names at the moment.

We look at the Authors of Pain beating American Alpha in Alpha's last match.

Revival says they're the best team in the world but here's TM61 to say the world is a big place. They've fought the best around the world so how about a title shot. Revival suggests that they go to the back of the line but here are Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa to say that their ticket says #1. Revival says the teams can figure it out amongst themselves.

Mojo Rawley vs. Chris Atkins

No time to talk as Samoa Joe comes in for the DQ at 23 seconds.

Joe says if Regal doesn't have to ask him who he's facing then he doesn't have to ask Regal when he can disrupt the show. Rawley tries to fight back and gets choked out with ease.

Bayley has been studying Asuka's matches and thinks she's ready. Asuka comes in to say not so fast.

Asuka vs. Aliyah

Bayley is on commentary but Asuka offers her a chair to sit down in the aisle. That's fine with Bayley but she would rather stand actually. Asuka cuts off Aliyah's early offense and nails a running hip attack. Aliyah gets up a boot to stop a charge but dives into a kick to the head for two with Asuka pulling her off the mat. The Asuka Lock ends the destruction at 2:30.

Bayley comes in to break things up and Asuka holds up the title.

We look back at Oney Lorcan beating Tye Dillinger in an upset last month.

Lorcan wasn't sure it was an upset but he knows the competition is going to get stronger. He needs to go back to his roots.

The universe is shifting vignette. It's for Ember Moon, who debuts at Takeover. That would be the recently signed Athena.

Here's Bobby Roode with his rather awesome theme song which keeps saying "GLORIOUS! I WILL DEFEND" in the chorus. Roode says the wait is over because he is NXT. A few months ago he was in Dallas for Wrestlemania weekend and he knew it was the place he needed to be. He was very lucky to be with those fans because they're just as much NXT as anyone else.

Roode is ready to take NXT to that next level but it needs him, just like everyone else here needs him. Now that NXT has found their new superstar, his face will be on billboards and TV campaigns so he can take the company to corporate America and Wall Street. Then this place will be filled with Presidents of Fortune 500 companies instead of people in cargo shorts and overly large shirts. He is a superstar from his watch to his socks because there has never been anyone like him. From now on NXT will be GLORIOUS. This was some combination of Rick Rude and Ric Flair and it was rather awesome.

TM61 vs. Revival

Non-title. Miller cranks on Dawson's wrist to start and a double shoulder gets two early on. Thorn keeps him on the mat with the wristlock but a hair pull gives Dawson some relief. A quick dropkick

hits Dawson in the face and we take a break. Back with Thorn's shoulder being worked over like only an old school tag team can. Dawson hits a dropkick to a downed Thorn for two more.

Dash almost does the dive into two boots but is fast enough to catch himself, only to get kicked into the corner. The hot tag brings in Miller as everything breaks down. A spinebuster gets two on Dawson and it's time for a chase, capped off by Dawson grabbing a DDT on Miller for the pin at 11:16.

Rating: C. I'm liking the Revival more and more every time they're out there while TM61 continues to look like a team that is just kind of there. This was a fairly decisive victory but to be fair it was too early for them to give the Revival much of a fight yet. It's pretty clear that Gargano and Ciampa are the next challengers and they certainly should be after that recent win over the champs.

Post match Revival brags about beating a bunch of teams but here are Gargano and Ciampa to pick up some of the names Revival just dropped. That means teams like the Hollywood Blonds, Kermit the Frog/Miss Piggy and Pikachu/Charizard. Fans: "POKEMON! POKEMON!" Gargano: "Serious question: have you caught them all?" The challenge is issued but Revival goes to leave, triggering the brawl. Wilder is taken down and Gargano counts his own three count to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The women and the tag division got some major boosts here which they were really needing as neither feud was really on fire heading into Brooklyn. The two big names showing up were a nice way to make the show feel important but it's all about Brooklyn at the moment and we can really get more into those two in the coming weeks. Another good show here as we're firmly getting ready for the big show.

Results

Hideo Itami b. Sean Maluta – Running knee

Mojo Rawley b. Chris Atkins via DQ when Samoa Joe interfered

Asuka b. Aliyah – Asuka Lock

Revival b. TM61 – DDT to Miller

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NXT – July 27, 2016: And They're Off

NXT

Date: July 27, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

Brooklyn is still on the horizon and it's time to start setting up more of the card. The big story coming off last week is Bayley defeating Nia Jax again to presumably become #1 contender the Women's Title. The other interesting thing should be seeing some of these people for the last time before they head up to the main roster. Let's get to it.

New opening sequence.

Earlier today, Blake and Murphy got in another argument over who carried the team. I thought we were pretty clear that it was Bliss.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Wesley Blake

This is the new Blake, meaning Blake with tassels on his boots. The fans sing Nakamura's song and Blake isn't sure what to think. Blake blows a kiss to Nakamura, who catches it and stomps on it to go....I guess bigger face? Good Vibrations has Blake in trouble but he comes

back with a clothesline and we hit a chinlock. For some reason Blake tries Good Vibrations, earning himself a kick to the face. The reverse exploder sets up Kinshasa for the pin on Blake at 4:30.

Rating: C-. This would be in the “what else were you expecting” category with Nakamura allowing Blake to get in some offense before finishing him without breaking much of a sweat. I’m not sure why they’re waiting to announce Nakamura vs. Samoa Joe for Brooklyn because it’s not exactly a surprise anymore.

I spoke too soon as here’s William Regal to announce Nakamura vs. Joe for the title at Takeover.

Billie Kay vs. Santana Garrett

Feeling out process to start with Billie working on an armbar. A dropkick puts Billie down but she forearmwrestles Santana in the back to take over again. The announcers keep talking about Billie’s recent Smackdown appearance going to her head as Garrett starts her comeback. It’s not much of a comeback though as Billie kicks her in the face for the pin at 3:07.

Rating: D. Nothing match but I like the idea of them trying to make new stars. I know “she was on the main roster once and it’s gone to her head” isn’t much but it’s not like the division can be picky right now. Garrett probably isn’t sticking around but she’s good for one off jobs like this.

We look at Bayley appearing at Battleground.

Bayley asks Regal for a title shot in Brooklyn and her request is granted pending Asuka’s approval. Why does he need Asuka’s approval and not Joe’s?

We get a promo for someone sitting in the moonlight with a voice saying the universe is shifting.

TM61 vs. Rob Ryzin/Adrian Nails

Miller and Nails start things off with Adrian being sent to the mat so Thorn can jump on his back. A standing moonsault/jumping fist drop combo suggests that this isn’t going to go long. Ryzin comes in to punch Thorn down in the corner but he misses a charge in the

corner, allowing the hot tag to Miller. Thunder Valley ends Nails at 3:07.

Rating: C-. Just a squash here which is becoming a recurring trend around here again. TM61 is probably getting the next title shot after Ciampa and Gargano, all of which should lead to some great matches with a lot of really solid action. TM61 has taken some time to grow on me but they're getting better.

Handshakes all around post match.

We look back at Austin Aries turning full heel on No Way Jose, who attacked Aries two weeks back.

Hideo Itami returns next week.

No Way Jose vs. Steve Cutler

I want to cheer for Cutler for the facial hair alone. We start with a good old fashioned dancing wristlock but Cutler makes the mistake of hitting Jose in the face to fire him up. Some right hands and a hiptoss set up the Baseball Punch, followed by a cobra clutch slam to end Cutler at 1:52.

Post match Jose says he wants Aries because all he was trying to do was show Austin how to have fun. There won't be any dancing next time because it's time for a whipping.

Buddy Murphy vs. Kota Ibushi

This is Ibushi's NXT debut. Some shoulders put Kota down to start but he gets in a nice dropkick and a kick to the chest to send Buddy outside. Back in and Murphy knees him in the back to set up a chinlock but the fans keep cheering away. Buddy gets a close two off some running knees (WAY too common of a move around here) but gets his head kicked into the fourth row.

A German suplex gives Ibushi two but he has to bail out of a moonsault. Murphy sends him face first into the middle buckle for two but makes the eternal mistake of putting a high flier on the top rope. Ibushi can't quite get a sunset bomb so he settles for a sitout powerbomb and the pin at 5:21.

Rating: B-. Who thought this would actually be good? On top of that who thought Ibushi would win with a powerbomb of all things? Ibushi looked good here as I think everyone expected. Murphy was a very nice surprise here though as there's actually potential there if they give him a gimmick and he gets a slightly better arsenal.

Joe feels disrespected about not being told of his title defense.

Bobby Roode debuts next week.

Here's Joe for a chat to close the show. Apparently he was just told about the title defense when he got here. So he didn't show up until about eight minutes left in the show? Champion's privilege I guess. Joe will NOT be defending the title against an undeserving contender like Nakamura. This brings out Regal to say oh yes you will defend that title against who I say you will but Joe still isn't happy.

Regal looks especially ticked off as Joe tells him that they can go to Regal's office and determine an opponent of whom Joe approves. Regal says fight Nakamura or the title is forfeited. That's enough for Joe and the match is on, assuming he doesn't take out Nakamura before Brooklyn. Cue Nakamura to make a telescope with his hands (because he can) and stare down Joe as we go off the air.

Overall Rating: B. This was one of NXT's specialties: moving a lot of things forward in a single night. In the span of fifty three minutes, we have three matches announced for Takeover and the debut of a big name. You really can tell when it's time for a major show as NXT turns it up to twelve as only they can. Good show here and it flew by, making things even better.

Results

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Wesley Blake – Kinshasa

Billie Kay b. Santana Garrett – Big Boot

TM61 b. Rob Ryzin/Adrian Nails – Thunder Valley to Nails

No Way Jose b. Steve Cutler – Cobra clutch slam

Kota Ibushi b. Buddy Murphy – Sitout powerbomb

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NXT – July 20, 2016: Those Final Shows

NXT

Date: July 20, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're heading towards Brooklyn and it's going to be a few weeks before we can really feel the differences from the Draft. There are three matches scheduled for tonight with the headliner of American Alpha vs. the Authors of Pain in the Authors' first match on the show. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about all three big matches tonight: American Alpha vs. Authors of Pain, Bayley vs. Nia Jax and Rhyno vs. Samoa Joe.

Opening sequence.

Rhyno vs. Samoa Joe

Non-title. I love the fact that Rhyno is the exact same guy he was back in ECW. There's something refreshing about having someone where you know exactly what you're going to get and nothing more. Rhyno runs him over with a shoulder to start but Joe comes back with his

corner charge and the enziguri. A hard whip across the ring puts Rhyno down again and it's off to the nerve hold. The backsplash misses and Rhyno gets in his belly to belly. Joe blocks a Gore with some palm strikes and the Koquina Clutch puts Rhyno away at 6:23.

Rating: C+. Two big and thick guys beating on each other for a few minutes with Joe winning off his submission move. Like I said, you know exactly what to expect from someone like Rhyno and that's exactly what you can get. The thing is he knows how to wrestle that style and make it work perfectly well.

Asuka would love to face either Bayley or Nia Jax.

We look at the NXT names being taken in the Draft.

American Alpha vs. Authors of Pain

The Authors jump them on the ramp and it's not clear if we're going to have a match. Back from a break with Alpha charging to the ring with a referee right behind them. The brawl is on and Alpha clears the ring as we're still waiting on names for the Authors. Jordan starts with the bearded one (we'll call him #1 though they're pretty much interchangeable) and hits the running shoulder in the corner and a double northern lights suplex gets one.

It's quickly off to #2 who catches a launched Gable in a bearhug so #1 can splash him from behind. #1 slaps on a bearhug but Chad quickly escapes and makes the hot tag off to Jordan for the house cleaning. A belly to back suplex gets one on #2 but Gable tags in again and runs over #2 before throwing him across the ring on a release suplex. The ankle lock has #1 in trouble and Jordan dives over the top to take out #2. Gable goes outside as well but gets swung into the LED board. Jordan is sent into the steps, leaving Gable to take the Russian legsweep/clothesline combo for the pin at 6:34.

Rating: B-. This was a good way to get rid of Alpha and let them go up to the main roster. Sure they went out on a loss but NXT was smart enough to not have it be clean. The Authors are another simple idea for a team but that doesn't mean it's an idea that can't work.

I liked the idea of Alpha being able to suplex these guys though as it prevents the match from being a squash, which makes it a lot more interesting.

Revival takes credit for the Authors' win because they softened Alpha up. Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa come in to say they've beaten Revival once and that the clock is ticking.

Austin Aries vs. Patrick Clark

Clark was on Tough Enough and I believe this is his TV debut. Aries gets caught in an early armbar but he forearm strikes Clark in the face and gives him a flip belly to back suplex. The Last Chancery is good for the submission at 1:53.

No Way Jose comes out and beats on Aries post match.

Bayley vs. Nia Jax

Nia throws her into the corner to start and grabs an armbar of all things. Bayley swings away but walks into Snake Eyes. Some elbows and shoulders to the ribs before Nia just throws her outside as we take a break. Back with Bayley's crossbody working as well as you would expect and Nia throwing her outside for nine.

Now it's Nia being sent outside where she misses a charge into the steps for a near countout of her own. Well if it's good enough for Bayley it's good enough for Nia. Back in and Bayley slips out of an electric chair and into a victory roll for two before Nia just plows over her. A Jackhammer of all things gets two more but Nia stops short before trying the legdrop. Instead Nia goes to the middle rope, only to get pulled down into a super Bayley To Belly for the pin at 13:36.

Rating: B-. These two work well together and this was another good one with Bayley knowing how to play the underdog. That being said, I don't think anyone really bought Nia as having much of a chance here. It's a formula that's always going to work but as is almost always the case, the more you do a match the less interesting it becomes.

Overall Rating: C+. You can really feel the Draft starting to take

its toll here as two of these matches have been effected by the people being called up. You have to think that the next few weeks, at least until Takeover, are going to be the final shows for a lot of these people and it's going to be a hard transition to fix things. Still good here though and that's what matters for now.

Results

Samoa Joe b. Rhyno – Koquina Clutch

Authors of Pain b. American Alpha – Russian legsweep/clothesline combination

Austin Aries b. Patrick Clark – Last Chancery

Bayley b. Nia Jax – Super Bayley To Belly

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NXT House Show – July 15, 2016

The wife and I took in the NXT house show in Highland Heights, Kentucky (ten minutes from downtown Cincinnati) on Friday night. I had wanted to go to one of these things for a long time and was almost more excited to see this than I was for Takeover: Dallas.

The arena held roughly 10,000 people but it was cut in half and the upper deck was tarped off, leaving only a few thousand seats. The place was just over half full as the floor seats were full but only

the back section (as in facing the screen) was anywhere near full. We were on the first row of our section (maybe three feet above the floor) with our tickets running about \$33 each so it's not like they were overly expensive.

Before the show we saw some WWE Top Ten videos and the fans were allowed to pick a classic NXT match with options of:

Seth Rollins vs. Jinder Mahal

Sami Zayn vs. Neville

Sasha Banks vs. Bayley

The latter won by a landslide though it was only a highlight package, which really did make sense as you don't want to get the crowd that fired up before the actual show starts.

No Way Jose vs. Hugo Knox

Knox is a very muscular British wrestler, meaning the fans were chanting various British swear words at him. Jose is a lot of fun live and a perfect choice to open the show. He did all of his baseball slide, including running around the ring and touching all of the buckles into a dropkick. A legdrop of all things put Knox away at 8:12 for a really fun opener that did everything it was supposed to. Knox was nothing great but he would be fine as a Chris Masters type midcarder.

Angelo Dawkins vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Dawkins is from Cincinnati, earning himself his only reaction ever. This was the exact same problem that Almas had in the Dillinger matches: putting him in a match where there was no way he was going to be the most over guy and it really dragged things down. Almas really isn't the most exciting guy in the world though he played a subtle heel here, as was his only option. Dawkins won with a Sky High at 5:26 and they hugged after. This was nothing but the fans reacted to Dawkins for being the hometown guy.

Bayley vs. Billie Kay

This was a change in the card (which was shown on an old school wrestling poster which seems to be a normal thing for NXT house shows and were selling very well) as it was originally going to be Bayley/Asuka vs. Kay/Alexa Bliss. Billie did her closest thing to sexy in NXT stuff to start but Bayley laughed at her and stole some

of her gear. Billie begged her not to so Bayley relented, only to point out to the crowd that Billie actually lost to Dana Brooke.

This started off as a comedy match with Bayley promising to hug her and then ambushing the referee with the hug instead. The match was your standard Bayley stuff with her having fun against the less talented Billie to start, getting beaten down and having her ribs worked over for a bit and then hitting the Bayley to Belly for the pin at 10:22. The fans LOVED Bayley and she received the pop of the night, save for maybe one name later. She's a total superstar down there though and I'm really scared that they're going to ruin her on the big shows.

Finn Balor vs. Bobby Roode

Roode's music is really awesome and one of the better songs they've done in a good while. Before the match, Roode called all of us fat out of shape losers and said he was going to be the new star of NXT. Even with all this stuff and insulting fans ala Ric Flair, the fans just would not hate him. Balor on the other hand was as revered as you would expect and we got a strong SEE YOU TUESDAY chant to start things off.

This was actually a pretty short match with Balor never being in any real danger. The Sling Blade and Coup de Grace finished Roode in about seven minutes and Balor took a bow before leaving. It's really clear that he's going and it's cool to see him getting a nice sendoff on the house show circuit after a great TV match.

Intermission.

Before we got back to the matches, the female host (who shared hosting duties with Tom Phillips for a very good pairing all night long) had a fan answer a question for a prize. The idea here was pretty simple: we saw a clip of something in WWE history and were given choices of what happened next. The clip was Vince walking down the hallway and getting into his car on Vince McMahon Appreciation Night and the next scene was him being blown up. One problem here: THE KID WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD!

As soon as the clip started you could hear the crowd gasping and almost panicking because an eight year old, as in someone who wasn't alive when this aired, was playing a game involving attempted murder. Oh and to make matters even better, the fourth option was "The Undertaker takes Vince McMahon to" a very dark and scary place

as the host put it, thankfully censoring the actual option.

So yes, since the WWE has NO OTHER CLIPS OF ANYTHING, an eight year old played a game involving seeing Vince McMahon blown up with the other option being Undertaker taking Vince to a place that had to be censored. This was so out of place and really felt like no one actually thought about it, which isn't something you expect from NXT, or anyone with a brain for that matter.

Hideo Itami vs. Beautiful Blonde Blake

This is Blake's new gimmick but there's really nothing different about him. If he hadn't been introduced under the new name, no one would have really noticed a difference. Blake also had a generic Titantron video with his name spinning around over a blue background, which is the same thing Dawkins and Knox had. They're not much but it's better than nothing. Itami got a pretty standard WELCOME BACK chant and is basically the same as when he left.

The match was comedy to start with Blake heading outside because he didn't like all the kicks and strikes. That didn't last long though as he called himself Black Belt Blake and tried to throw some kicks with a fairly obvious result. The fans got on Blake for his tasseled boots, saying that Bayley wanted her boots back. We also got a MURPHY'S BETTER/CENA SUCKS chant for a bit of a chuckle. Itami came back with his bunch of kicks and won with the shotgun kick at 10:07. This was longer than necessary and Itami still doesn't show much fire.

Women's Title: Asuka vs. Alexa Bliss

Alexa had her hair pulled back here for a new look. This was actually one of the best matches of the night as Bliss has gotten way better in recent months and actually had a good match here. Asuka showed some personality here by dancing a lot when Bliss tried to get too fancy. The Asuka Lock retained the title at 12:14. This might have been the second best match of the night.

NXT Title: Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

I'll give you two guesses who got the bigger pop than Bayley. Before the match Joe said he hated being here in Highland Heights and didn't like NXT having to lie about being in Cincinnati because that town sucks too. This wasn't going to be a title shot though because Nakamura beating Balor wasn't enough to earn himself a title shot.

As he was talking, the Revival ran in for the beatdown but American Alpha came out for the save. Nakamura wanted to make it a six man against Joe and.....Nakamura to Jordan: "What their names?"

Revival/Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura/American Alpha

This was exactly what you would expect with the good guys doing a big, fast paced cleaning of the ring to start with suplexes and strikes to set up a big pose for one of the loudest reactions of the night. Gable played Ricky Morton for a bit before Jordan did the same, setting up the hot tag to Nakamura. Everything broke down and Nakamura pinned Dash with Kinshasa at 14:00. This was a lot of fun but the crowd was starting to get a bit burned out. The winners all did Nakamura's pose by the ropes to end the show.

Overall this was a very fun night with NXT knowing exactly how to give the fans a fun night. The faces won every match and you got to see every big name (Austin Aries being the biggest name missing and he's hardly a main eventer) on the roster. With cheap tickets and not a bad seat in the house, this was definitely worth going to and really well organized for a much more fun feeling than a lot of WWE house shows. Check them out if they're ever near you, in case you actually need that advice.

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NXT – July 13, 2016: One

More Match

NXT

Date: July 13, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's a big show this week as we've finally reached the showdown between Finn Balor and Shinsuke Nakamura. This is another instance of NXT building up a match to be a huge deal and it's made things feel even bigger than they would have otherwise. It's likely that the winner will face Samoa Joe for the title in Brooklyn at the next Takeover. Let's get to it.

We open with a long video on Balor vs. Nakamura. They really are making this feel important.

Opening sequence.

One more thing I like that seems to be a normal thing around here: Corey Graves is introduced as a former Tag Team Champion. I know he's been around on commentary for a long time but that one line lets new viewers know he has some credibility. I'd love it if WWE acknowledged that with their announcers more often. JBL is mentioned as the longest reigning Smackdown Champion but Lawler's title reigns are almost never mentioned and he comes off as just an old guy making bad jokes instead of someone with a long history in wrestling.

Here's Samoa Joe for an opening chat. Like a lot of people tuning in tonight, he's here to see Balor vs. Nakamura. He finds it disrespectful that both of them seem to think whoever wins here will be a contender to his championship. Some people here think Balor will win and get his title back. Then some people think the King of Strong Style will overthrow the emperor. Joe (who is sweating buckets here) brought strong style to these shores though and will make the King bow. This brings out Rhyno to say he's ready to face the warrior but Joe walks away without a fight.

For next week:

Bayley vs. Nia Jax

American Alpha vs. Authors of Pain

Samoa Joe vs. Rhyno

Another Balor vs. Nakamura video with wrestlers talking about how big this is due to how big they were in Japan and how close they are in real life. HHH talks about how it would be disrespectful of either of them not to push their friend as hard as they can.

Finn Balor vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

No Demon for Balor. Actually none for Nakamura either but I thought that might be implied. Even the Big Match Intros get THIS IS AWESOME chants. They trade wristlocks to start until Balor takes it to the mat for a headlock and a BOTH THESE GUYS chant. Nakamura fights up and does the head on Balor's chest thing but Balor flips him around and gives him a Too Sweet on the head.

It's back to the headlock to keep Nakamura in check but he sends Balor to the corner. Finn jumps over the ropes to avoid a running kick but his enziguri is blocked for an enziguri from Shinsuke. Good Vibrations set up some running knees to the head and we take a break. Back with Balor getting smart by dropkicking the knee to take away Shinsuke's best weapon.

We hit a leg lock on the mat for a bit before it's time for the chops. Thankfully Balor goes right back to the knee by hanging it over the middle rope and stomping down onto it. More stomps to the knee have Nakamura screaming and it's off to another leglock. Shinsuke gets up and hits him in the ribs with the injured knee, followed by a spinning kick to the face for a breather.

The knee is suddenly fine enough for the running knee to Balor's ribs in the corner as selling isn't modern wrestling's strong suit. Balor gets in a running kick to the face though and we take another break. Back again with Balor putting on something like a shortarm scissors but on the knee, drawing even more screams before Nakamura can make it to the ropes. Shinsuke grabs a triangle choke but Balor

dives over and puts his foot on the rope for the break.

The reverse 1916 gets two and Balor is in shock. He's in so much shock that Nakamura gets in a quick Kinshasa to the back of the head for two more. Balor can't get the regular 1916 and it's time for the big slugout. Another shot to the knee has Nakamura in trouble but he kicks Finn in the head. That just earns him a Sling Blade but the Coup de Grace misses, setting up the Kinshasa for the pin at 25:14.

Rating: A-. This was exactly what was expected with two guys beating on each other for a long time. The knee work didn't really play into the ending but it made up the middle of the match and told a good story. As usual the winner wasn't the biggest shock but it's no real secret that Balor is probably bound for the main roster around Battleground at the latest. Above all else though, this felt like a major showdown and a passing of the torch which left Nakamura as the only logical option to face Joe in Brooklyn. Great match here and that's exactly what it was destined to be.

A lot of posing and replays takes us out.

Overall Rating: A+. That's really all you can give a show where they set up a match, announce two other matches that people have been waiting for and then spend half the show on a great match. If the card that is expected goes through for Brooklyn, it has the potential to be one of the best Takeovers to date, which really shouldn't be happening given how great some of them have been.

This was all about one match and that made it feel special. NXT has really grasped the concept of not not cramming too much stuff into one show, which is something so many other shows need to learn. They didn't try to put anything major other than this one match onto the show and anything else would have felt out of place here. Really good stuff and a great way for Balor to (presumably) go out.

Results

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Finn Balor – Kinshasa

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NXT Takeover: The End: Going Out On A High Note

NXT Takeover: The End

Date: June 8, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're back with a big show at Full Sail for the first time since last fall. It also might be the final show under the Takeover banner depending on which news source you believe. If nothing else it's likely to be the final match between Finn Balor and Samoa Joe for Joe's NXT Title inside a steel cage as the gimmick makes its debut in NXT. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at the beginnings of NXT with names like Seth Rollins, Paige and the Wyatt Family. Then it was the era of Sami Zayn, Adrian Neville, Kevin Owens and Sasha Banks. However, all things that have a beginning must come to an end. We look at Samoa Joe and Asuka winning their respective titles as the old THE END IS HERE theme plays. Tonight is the end of the beginning.

Tye Dillinger vs. Andrade Cien Almas

This is Almas' (formerly known as La Sombra in Mexico) debut. The

place goes NUTS for Dillinger's count to ten entrance and you would think he was a huge star based on the reception. Almas' entrance attire is all white, including suspenders and a hat with a feather but no mask. The white comes off to reveal some blue and white tights for a pretty basic look. So he's a male stripper?

Dillinger takes him down into a sunset flip and the fans are just going nuts for him. Almas sends him outside as the fans chant BETTER THAN ONE HUNDRED (as in ten is better than Cien, which is Spanish for one hundred). A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker (very popular move these days) gets two on Almas but he pops up to put Dillinger down.

Almas misses a moonsault as Tye rolls away, only to have Almas hit a standing moonsault for two instead. Andrade tries a headstand in the corner, only to have Dillinger superkick him down for two instead. Almas backflips into a double kick to the back before a bulldog puts Tye in the corner, setting up a double running knee in the corner for the pin at 5:18.

Rating: C+. This was uh....not that great. Dillinger completely stole Almas' debut here as the fans were COMPLETELY behind him and Almas didn't exactly do much to win them back. Almas was totally fine here but certainly nothing that blew me away. It's good enough but running knees in the corner isn't enough of a finisher for him and he'll need something much better.

We look back at American Alpha taking the Tag Team Titles from the Revival in a great match at Takeover: Dallas. This turned the Revival into a much more serious and aggressive team coming into the rematch here.

Tag Team Titles: Revival vs. American Alpha

Alpha is defending. Dawson and Gable start things off with Chad taking him to the mat but getting dropped with a shoulder block. It's quickly off to Jordan who hits that really high dropkick for two on Scott, drawing a JORDAN chant. Back in and it's a four way standoff with Alpha sending Revival at each other, only to have Dawson and Dash get behind the champs' backs for double belly to back suplexes.

Those are reversed as well and it's a double ankle lock to send Revival scurrying for the ropes. Back in and Alpha starts working on Dash's arm and the referee doesn't count a tag to Dawson. Not that it matters as the distraction lets Dash get in a cheap shot on Chad so the real tag can go through. That's fine with Gable who works on Dawson's arm, earning himself an uppercut to take it outside.

Everything breaks down again and Gable scores with a top rope double clotheslines, followed by a double dropkick to send Revival outside again. Back in and Chad tries a flying headscissors but gets caught in a hot shot to finally change control. They be clubberin in the corner for two on Gable and it's time for an armbar. Dawson gets two off a spinebuster and it's back to Dash for the armbar sequel.

Dash loads up something on top but gets pulled down into an armbar over the ropes. The hot tag is broken up by Dawson and a Trash Compactor (I haven't seen that in years. It's kind of like a delayed spinebuster from Dash with Dawson adding a top rope legdrop.) of all things for two on Gable. Not that it matters as Gable crawls through Revival's legs and makes the hot tag off to Jordan as house is cleaned.

The spear in the corner gets two on Wilder but a sunset flip/clothesline combo gets two with Dash spearing Gable down for good measure. Jordan grabs a backslide and tags out at the same time, allowing Gable to sneak in for a German suplex with Jordan adding a dropkick for two. The fans accurately call this awesome as Chad puts Dawson in an ankle lock, only to be kicked away into an uppercut from Dawson.

That and a rollup with trunks is only good for two so Revival loads up their powerbomb/top rope clothesline combo, only to have Gable reverse it with a belly to belly ala Rick Steiner back at Wrestlemania IX. Another quick tag brings in Jordan as everything breaks down but Grand Amplitude is broken up and the Shatter Machine gives Revival the titles back at 16:00. That's the first time anyone has ever held any title twice in NXT history.

Rating: A. This was an amazing athletic display and I was genuinely

surprised by the ending. That belly to belly to counter the clothesline was outstanding and really had me flashing back to the Steiner Brothers. Revival looked great here too and you can almost guarantee a rubber match between these two, maybe going 2/3 falls. Either that or Gargano/Ciampa get the title shot while Alpha heads up to the main roster. Whatever happens now, this was outstanding.

Alpha is getting a standing ovation when two big guys who look a lot alike hit the ring and destroy them with splashes in the corner. A swinging side slam/running boot to the head drops Gable and a Russian legsweep/running clothesline does the same to Jordan. As they stand dominant (and receive a WHO ARE YOU) chant, Paul Ellering of all people comes out to watch. Those two would be Sunny Dhinsa and Gzim Selmani, collectively known as the Authors of Pain and normally under masks.

Asuka is warming up when Bayley comes up to look at her.

We recap Austin Aries vs. Shinsuke Nakamura, which is built around Aries wanting to prove that he really is the best in the world. Simple story and that's all it needs to be.

Austin Aries vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Aries is coming in with taped up ribs. The fans are split but singing Nakamura's theme tilts it in his favor. They hit the mat to start and that's a standoff. It's back to the mat with Aries jumping out of a headscissors and both guys ducking kicks, leading to a staredown. Nakamura puts his hands on the bad ribs and tells Austin to bring it. The fans think Shinsuke is going to kill him as he starts firing off more knees to the ribs.

Nakamura does his shaky leg in the corner (Good Vibrations) but a third attempt is countered into a shinbreaker. Aries drives a knee into Nakamura's ribs but his slingshot hilo hits raised knees. For once it actually hurts the legs though and Aries kicks away at them to keep control. Off to a modified chinlock with a knee in the back as the fans sing the song again. Nakamura pops up and shrugs off the leg injuries to start firing off kicks. He really shouldn't be able to do that. A knee to the ribs in the corner has Aries in trouble

but he fights out of the reverse exploder suplex.

The knees to the head can't set up the Last Chancery so Aries discus forearms him out to the floor, followed by the suicide elbow. That's only good for two back inside as this is really starting to heat up. Aries goes up top but gets pulled into a triangle choke, only to make the ropes for the break. A release gordbuster looks to set up Kinshasa but Aries counters into another shinbreaker and throws on the Last Chancery.

As usual the hold can only stay on so long so Aries hits the running corner dropkick but he has to roll through the 450. Another running knee is blocked and Aries take him to the apron for a slugout with Nakamura scoring off an enziguri. Nakamura charges into a Death Valley Driver on the apron for a nine count but Aries screws himself over by missing a suicide dive and hitting the barricade. Back in and a middle rope Kinshasa sets up the real thing for the pin on Aries at 17:05.

Rating: A. The key there was Aries had Nakamura mostly beaten and then tried to go one step too far (in an effort to show how much better he was) and knocked himself out to set up the finish. It's another excellent match as Nakamura continues to be someone who can turn it up to about 17 on a scale to 10 but it wasn't quite as epic as the Zayn match. These two are both going to be fine though, especially if Nakamura learns to sell the leg injury. Aries could have done more with the ribs too but the announcers were speculating that they weren't even hurt in the first place.

We recap Asuka vs. Nia Jax, which is the basic giant vs. giant slayer story. Both of them beat Bayley up pretty badly but the question is whether Asuka's strikes can work on a monster like Jax.

Women's Title: Nia Jax vs. Asuka

Asuka is defending and is quickly headbutted, followed by a hair toss to send her flying across the ring. A modified Octopus Hold of all things has Nia in trouble but she reverses into a backbreaker for two. Nia rubs at the face but gets caught in a guillotine, only to reverse with a big old suplex for two. Nia has to spin out of an

armbar but gets caught in most of a triangle. It's on loosely enough that Nia can lift her up for a buckle bomb to escape.

The champ's back is bent around the post as this has been mostly one sided so far. Off to a bearhug but Asuka escapes and grabs a quick kneebar. A rope is grabbed so Nia plants her with a spinebuster, only to miss a legdrop. Asuka comes back with a quick middle rope dropkick and a running hip attack for two. The powerbomb gets two on Asuka but she grabs an armbar to start a TAP chant. Nia powers out of that as well but gets kicked in the head three times in a row. A running kick/knee to the head retains Asuka's title at 9:09.

Rating: B. They had a story here with Asuka just coming at Nia over and over until she finally got somewhere but they're running a bit of a risk by having Nia lose two big matches in a row. There's more than enough time for her to rebuild but you have to assume Bayley gets the next title shot, possibly setting up a triple threat for the title. Nia looked more aggressive here and that's where she needs to go, though she needs to get the title sooner than later.

Earlier today, William Regal was talking about the show when Bobby Roode walked past him. Regal immediately left to talk to him.

The cage is lowered.

We recap Finn Balor vs. Samoa Joe. Balor beat Joe twice at previous Takeovers but lost the title to him at a house show. Tonight is the final match between the two and it's being held in the first ever steel cage match in NXT history.

Neville is here.

NXT Title: Samoa Joe vs. Finn Balor

In a cage with Joe defending. Balor is the Demon again and comes out from behind a piece of cage, which he shoves over and crawls across for a really cool visual. Pinfall, submission or escape to win here. Joe goes straight for the door to start but it's barely even worth trying that early. The fans are behind Balor as he raises his boots to stop a charging Joe in the corner. A hard shot to Joe's head lets Balor try a climb but Joe quickly pulls him back to the mat.

It's time to go into the cage for the first time with Balor tasting the steel. Joe kicks him in the face but it's too early to escape. An enziguri almost lets Balor escape but a German suplex drops him for two instead. Joe chops him to make everyone go WOO but he misses a charge and gets caught between the ropes and the cage. Balor hits a string of running strikes but can't get over the top.

Instead Finn kicks him square in the jaw, only to have Joe fall on the ropes to crotch Balor down. The Muscle Buster is countered and they strike it out to put both guys down. Back up and Balor heads for the top, only to have to come down with a Sling Blade for two. A second Sling Blade gets two more but Joe pulls him out of the corner and gets two of his own off the Muscle Buster.

Joe shouts that he's going to end Balor but Finn sends him into the cage a few times, followed by a third Sling Blade. A quick Coup de Grace gets two and Joe grabs the Koquina Clutch. Balor tries to flip out of the corner onto Joe but the hold is broken, meaning Finn has to settle for most of a standing double stomp. Balor gets his legs over the top of the cage but Joe pulls his head down and hits a middle rope Muscle Buster to retain the title at 16:07.

Rating: A-. I was expecting a bit more out of the finish but I'm surprised by the fact that Joe won off a clean pin. It's a huge win for him as the Demon has never been beaten before. Again you have to think that Balor is heading to the main roster now and Joe should be soon behind him, but this was all about Joe and that's a good thing for the long term future of NXT because whoever beats Joe is a huge star.

Balor has to be helped out to end the show.

Overall Rating: A+. When sixty percent of your show is an A- or better, I don't know how much better you can get. The only thing missing here was some of the atmosphere and energy that existed down in Dallas but that's hardly anything to take away. There were three excellent matches here that are worth checking out plus one very good and another that was just good, earning itself worst match of the night honors. This didn't have the hype coming in but it was

another amazing night of NXT.

Results

Andrade Cien Almas b. Tye Dillinger – Running double knees in the corner

Revival b. American Alpha – Shatter Machine to Jordan

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Austin Aries – Kinshasa

Asuka b. Nia Jax – Running knee to the head

Samoa Joe b. Finn Balor – Super Muscle Buster

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