

NXT – November 4, 2015: NXT Is Really Neat

NXT

Date: November 4, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's a big show this week as Finn Balor is defending his NXT Title against #1 contender Apollo Crews. NXT has spent the last few weeks building up Crews and giving us a person to care about but there aren't any real personal issues between the two other than the title itself. That could make for a good match but it might not be the most interesting. Let's get to it.

The opening video recaps Crews winning the battle royal and becoming #1 contender.

Opening sequence.

Asuka vs. Cameron

This could be interesting. Fans: "ASUKA'S GONNA KILL YOU!" Cameron tries a slap to start but gets caught in a cross armbreaker for an early submission attempt. A running kick into the splits drops Asuka but she comes back with a hip attack and mocks Cameron's pose. Asuka grabs a Fujiwara armbar before just smashing Cameron in the face. Fans: "REST IN PEACE!" The Asuka Lock is good for the submission at 3:41.

Rating: D+. I kind of feel sorry for Cameron as she has a horrible character and there is no way she's going to be accepted no matter how good she gets in the ring. Some of the gymnastics and flexibility stuff worked for her here but the screeching makes people hate her more than anything. Asuka's path of destruction continues to be awesome and her facial expressions make the squashes that much more entertaining.

We recap Big Cass' leg injury from last week.

Dawson and Wilder laugh at Carmella for injuring her friends. They get their title shot next week and then they'll be the baddest guys in the room. Wilder even brings in a wheelchair as a gift for the Vaudevillains.

Chad Gable and Jason Jordan want to keep moving up the card and one day they'll be the world's greatest tag team. Jordan: "Whoa whoa whoa I told you about that." Their next idea is to wrestle the greatest tag team in NXT history. Gable: "We can't wrestle ourselves." This winds up being a challenge to the Ascension.

Bull Dempsey vs. Angelo Dawkins

Dawkins has a Sawyer Fulton with him. The threat of a right hand makes Dawkins duck, allowing a knee lift to the head. Dawkins kicks him down and puts on a front facelock but Dempsey Bulls up. Bull punches one of the headbands off and a top rope seated senton gives Dempsey the pin at 2:53.

Fulton walks away from Dawkins post match.

The Vaudevillains are impressed with Dash and Dawson but they're ready to add their names to the pantheon of NXT greats. They sent the wheelchair rolling away. Simple promo here but it was fine.

Crews looks at the NXT Title.

Bayley has the Hype Bros as her partners against Alexa Bliss/Blake/Murphy for a six person tag next week.

Eva Marie vs. Marley

Marley is a blonde in half of a football jersey. Eva armdrags her down and dances to celebrate before starting on the arm. The fans debate if Eva is ratchet before she stops a comeback with a boot to the face. Fans: "WHAT WAS THAT???" Marley is on her hands and knees so Eva runs in for a very low downward spiral and the pin at 2:48. If that's her finisher, she's in an even worse place than I thought.

Dana Brooke and Emma respect Asuka but want to give her a better welcome to NXT. It's Emma's turn soon.

NXT Title: Apollo Crews vs. Finn Balor

Balor is defending and there's no Demon this time. We get a spotlight and a staredown for the big match intros. That's a really cool idea that I haven't seen before. Feeling out process to start with neither guy's headlock getting them anywhere. Back from a way too early break with Crews holding a headlock. Finn fights up and grabs a front facelock but Crews lifts him up into a delayed vertical suplex for two. Fans: "THAT'S TOO EASY!"

Off to something like a cobra clutch from the champ but Crews tries a sunset flip. That's fine with Finn who rolls through and takes Apollo's face off with a basement dropkick. Crews kicks him back down and goes to the middle rope, only to take an enziguri to put him on the floor. Finn nails a BIG flip dive to take us to our second break. Back with Balor firing off some running chops in the corner, followed by a clothesline for two.

Crews shrugs it off again and hits a fall away slam into a Samoan drop for two more. The fans are still split as Apollo nails a jumping enziguri, only to get caught in the Sling Blade. There's the gorilla press but the moonsault hits knees. REVERSE BLOODY SUNDAY of all things gets two but the Coup de Grace misses. They trade kicks to the head and both guys are down until Baron Corbin runs in for the DQ at 15:09.

Rating: B. Give this a finish and it's a borderline classic. These guys beat each other up for fifteen minutes and the shots were getting bigger and bigger every time. I'm sure we'll see them fight again at some point and it's going to be one heck of a war whenever they do. Really good stuff here but the ending was the right call as you don't want either one losing.

Post match Corbin beats both guys down until Samoa Joe makes the save. Joe stars Corbin down but then takes Balor out to turn heel. Fans: "WHY JOE WHY?" A Muscle Buster lays Finn out and Joe holds up the title to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Another week, another great use of an hour to advance a bunch of stories and give you a reason to come back next week. Balor

needed a new top heel and Joe is going to be a great opponent when they probably fight in London. As usual, another good hour of wrestling TV this week as they set up matches and stories so smoothly that it's like one big, long story that just keeps going, which is so much better than the start and stop style that you get elsewhere.

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NXT – October 14, 2015: One For Less Than The Price Of Five

NXT

Date: October 14, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're past Takeover: Respect now and the question is who comes after Finn Balor's NXT Title next. In theory it's Samoa Joe, who teamed with Balor to win the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic last week. Other than that we're going to find out who is next to go after Bayley now that Sasha Banks is likely gone. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Takeover: Respect. What an awesome show.

Opening sequence.

Here's Bayley to get things going but she has to stop for a MATCH OF THE YEAR chant. Last week's show was amazing from top to bottom, especially the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic because Dusty had such an impact on this place. The main event was her dream come true because it took the Divas Revolution to a whole new level. That's true. Not only did they have stupid tagline and Twitter hashtags, some of them might have even been trending. You know that means they've made it.

They want women's wrestling to be respected but here are Alexa Bliss with Blake and Murphy to interrupt. The fans actually give Alexa the WHAT treatment and I really hope that doesn't become a thing down here. Bliss talks about how awesome Bayley is and how proud she should be of what she accomplished. The future for the women of NXT has no limit and she's happy to share it with Bayley.

Bliss takes the title and says they won't be sharing this. She didn't write letters to herself when she was ten, but she wants the title too. Bayley isn't worthy of being champion and it's going to be a lot easier when Bliss takes it from her. For real. Well at least it's not Eva Marie.

Last week, Regal congratulated Balor and Joe on winning the tournament. Joe gets right to the point: he's undefeated since he arrived and would like a title shot. Balor would love to give him a shot but Regal says it's not that simple and makes a battle royal for the #1 contendership. Joe isn't happy but Regal isn't budging.

Tye Dillinger, Apollo Crews and Rhyno all say they'll win the battle royal.

Breast cancer is bad.

Vaudevillains vs. Angelo Dawkins/Sawyer Fulton

Non-title. English spins around to take over on Dawkins' arm as Graves goes on about how weird the Vaudevillains are. A Fulton distraction lets Angelo get in a shot to the face and it's off to Sawyer for some big

shots in the corner. Angelo talks some loud trash as Fulton hooks a quick chinlock. A missed charge in the corner allows for the tag off to Gotch, who the fans find manly. Gotch suplexes Dawkins down and knocks off one of his headbands (don't worry he has a second), setting up the Whirling Dervish to pin Dawkins at 3:14.

Rating: D+. Nothing match here but it was little more than a way to remind the fans that Vaudevillains are in fact a thing. They haven't gotten a lot of focus lately but I have a feeling that Gable and Jordan will be more than enough of a challenge for them going forward. The Mechanics, who beat them in the Dusty Classic, are going to be around too.

Speaking of which, the Mechanics bring up the tournament match and think it means they're the #1 contenders. However, they've been dealt the cards of Enzo and Cass, who will learn their lesson soon enough.

Clip of Asuka destroying Dana Brooke.

Dana was getting looked at when Asuka came up to laugh at her. She stared Emma down as well with that creepy smile. I like Asuka more and more every time as she's almost eery at times.

Evie vs. Nia Jax

Nia Jax has some size to her, looking to be about the same level as Havok. The fans do the Baron Corbin counting and Nia shoves Evie into the corner. We hit an early bearhug followed by a splash in the corner. Fans: "JUST STAY DOWN!" Evie fires off some kicks but a release Rock Bottom ends her at 2:12. So we have Bayley, Asuka, Nia, Bliss, Brooke/Emma and the new jobbers who could easily be elevated. The division is already being rebuilt and it's already looking good.

Package on the praise for the Iron Man match.

Tyler Breeze and Baron Corbin say they'll win.

Eva Marie is in Paris for some me time.

Battle Royal

Tommaso Ciampa, Johnny Gargano, Tye Dillinger, Colin Cassady, Enzo Amore, Danny Burch, Elias Sampson, Mojo Rawley, Blake, Murphy, Rhino, Tyler Breeze, Scott Dawson, Dash Wilder, Bull Dempsey, Baron Corbin, Apollo Crews, Samoa Joe, Zack Ryder, Steve Cutler, Riddick Moss

I think that's everyone but I can't find a complete list anywhere. Only Rhino, Corbin and Joe get entrances. A group of guys go after Joe to start and they get him to the apron but he punches his way back to safety. Everyone brawls with everyone as there's too much to call early on. Gargano hides in the corner and ties himself around the ropes. Steve Cutler is the first elimination after three minutes.

Burch and Sampson are put out as well with Gargano following them. All four were put out by Crews in quite the display. Back from a break with no one having been eliminated during the break. Enzo and Blake have to save themselves but both stay in. Cass throws Moss out but the Mechanics get rid of him, only to have Enzo dump both of them at once. Dillinger eliminates Enzo but gets beaten up and tossed by Dempsey. Rhino saves Corbin and eliminates Bull to get us down to ten.

We've got Ciampa, Ryder, Breeze, Joe, Crews, Blake, Murphy, Corbin, Rawley and Rhino still left. Corbin dumps Rawley as the fans are behind Breeze. Things start to slow down and Breeze has to survive a double team from Blake and Murphy. Corbin eliminates Ryder and then turns on Rhino to get rid of him as well. We take another break and come back with Blake, Murphy, Crews, Joe, Corbin and Breeze as Ciampa was put out during the break.

Joe dumps out Blake and Murphy at the same time before blocking the Supermodel Kick and erupting on Breeze. A running boot eliminates Tyler and it's down to three. Corbin throws Joe to the apron and Breeze pulls him out to get us down to Crews vs. Corbin. Fans: "THANK YOU TYLER!" That's a very interesting result.

They drive each other into the corner and the fans are entirely behind Crews. A spinebuster plants Apollo but Corbin gets frustrated when Crews stays on the apron. Apollo starts his comeback but the moonsault hits knees. Crews comes back with a series of kicks to the head though and a

clothesline eliminates Corbin for the win at 23:12.

Rating: C+. Battle royals are always tricky to grade but this was more than entertaining enough. They flew through some of the eliminations here but the result is a good way to give us a new #1 contender and challenger for the title. There are only so many ways to run a battle royal and this was about as good as it was going to get.

Overall Rating: B+. In 58 minutes, we have a new #1 contender to the Women's Title, Tag Team Titles and NXT Title, as well as a new feud between Joe and Breeze and an awesome debut for Nia Jax. As usual, NXT knows how to use its time better than any other wrestling show I've ever seen as they got everything accomplished in less than an hour with almost no time wasted. Another really good show this week and it flew by. Why can't WWE do in five hours what NXT can do in one?

Results

Vaudevillains b. Angelo Dawkins/Sawyer Fulton – Whirling Dervish to Dawkins

Nia Jax b. Evie – Release Rock Bottom

Apollo Crews won a battle royal last eliminating Baron Corbin

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NXT – April 15, 2015: Can I Marry This Show?

NXT

Date: April 15, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

NXT is back home tonight after last week's show took us to Axxess weekend. Things are starting to get back to normal around here and there are some interesting stories at the moment. Kevin Owens needs a new opponent for the NXT Title, Blake and Murphy are on a collision course with Enzo and Cass, Dana Brooke debuts tonight and we have Sami Zayn vs. Rhyno. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

CJ Parker vs. Solomon Crowe

I'm pretty sure this is Parker's last appearance. The fans are behind Crowe as Parker hammers on him in the corner. I love that Crowe has said he wants to be NXT Champion. Even if that's not a realistic option (at least not yet), it's what a wrestler in NXT should want to be. Crowe takes Parker down in the corner and threatens a charge, sending Parker out to the floor. He settles for a suicide dive and Parker is in pain on the ramp.

Back in and Crowe charges into a pair of boots in the corner to put him down for the first time. A backsplash gets two for CJ and we hit the chinlock, completely with a few LET'S GO CJ chants. Crowe fights up with some right hands but gets turned inside out by a clothesline. A side kick gets a near fall on Solomon but another backsplash hits feet. Crowe goes up for a splash onto the leg, setting up an old Brock Lock (bending Parker's knee around his neck) for the submission at 5:09.

Rating: C-. I'm not sold on Crowe yet but I like the idea of him using a submission instead of a pin. He's built a bit like Taz and it's kind of hard to buy him throwing punches and coming off the top as a result. This worked well enough though as he wrestled a scrappy style and found an opening to win. I'd like to see more development from him though as there's something in that hacker character. If this is Parker's last appearance, I'm going to miss him. You need jobbers like him who are over with the fans no matter how many times he loses.

Post match, Crowe says the show is just beginning.

Baron Corbin vs. Steve Cutler

I had been wondering what happened to Corbin. He was one of the hottest things on the show and then he was jobbing in a highlight package. Cutler eats an early clothesline but gets his days ended at 25 seconds.

Sami Zayn isn't surprised that he still has a target on his back. Kevin Owens used him to get to the top but Rhyno isn't going to do the same.

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins

Carmella is back and still loathed by the fans. Enzo says he has a spectacular vernacular and the Michael Jordan of Jargon. Cass says they are who they say they are and they aren't gonna fake it. Blake and Murphy have something they want so they're just gonna take it. Enzo grabs a headlock on Fulton to start and takes him down for a walk over his back. Fulton gets hold of Enzo's wrist though and hooks a fireman's carry takeover. That's fine with Enzo who brings in Big Cass for a beating.

It's quickly back to Enzo but Fulton crotches him on top. Cue Blake and Murphy with flowers for Carmella, who seems impressed despite the NO chants from the fans. Back inside, Fulton goes old school with an abdominal stretch to Enzo. He's too close to the ropes though and Amore escapes, followed by a Downward Spiral Stunner to get a breather. The hot tag brings in Cass to clean house with the East River Crossing, setting up a Rocket Launcher to pin Dawkins at 3:48.

Rating: C. This is one of the things that I love about NXT: they take a

really basic idea for a feud like this one but execute it well enough with characters that the crowd cares about that it's easy to get into. There's nothing revolutionary here but the fans love Cass and Enzo so they're easy underdog challengers. Carmella turning heel seems to be the next step, but maybe the champs are just using her and both teams dump her?

Cass and Enzo aren't happy with Carmella taking the flowers.

Alex Riley says he isn't going away that easily. Not after all those years of fighting for every inch, because Owens has painted a bullseye on his back for the rest of his career. He has nowhere else to go, so he'll be waiting for Owens in the ring next week.

Blue Pants vs. Dana Brooke

Blue Pants has a recorded version of Cass' da-da-duh da-da entrance and is introduced from the clearance aisle. The fans still love her too and it's one of those things that can only work here in NXT. Brooke is a former bodybuilder with a decent rock song for her entrance. She shoves Blue Pants down and hammers in some slow right hands.

The fans don't seem to like Dana, but it might have something to do with her being billed as the Total Diva. Graves sounds like he has a big crush on her for a bit of flavor. Brooke sends Blue Pants into the corner and stands on her head to choke Pants with her boot. Blue Pants comes back with some jobber offense but walks into a forearm, setting up a Whiplash for the pin at 2:04. Total squash.

Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch vs. Bayley in a #1 contenders match next week.

Sami Zayn vs. Rhino

Sami dodges a bit to start but gets caught with a right hand to the face. A headlock works a bit better for Zayn until Rhino shoves him away and shoulders him out to the floor. The fans are split about 60/40 in Sami's favor but the Rhino cheers are certainly there. Back in and Sami grabs a headscissors to send Rhino outside for a second. It just seems to make Rhino angrier though so he pounds Sami into the corner and chokes with

the boot.

A stiff SHUT UP to the fans get the cheers more in Sami's favor (at least they're obedient) and Rhyno chokes on the ropes. Sami comes back with forearms and a dropkick but Rhyno takes his head off with a clothesline. Back from a break with Sami fighting out of a chinlock and bobbing and weaving to stay in a slugout. That's fine until Rhyno plants him with a spinebuster for two.

Sami can barely get to his feet as Rhyno hits him with a running shoulder in the corner. Fans: "BETTER THAN ROMAN!/NO IT'S NOT!" With the wrestling not working, Sami gets up and starts firing off right hands before the Blue Thunder Bomb gets a close two. Rhyno catches the high cross body and muscles Sami up into a TKO for a near fall of his own.

Barely on his feet, Sami slaps Rhyno in the face, earning him a bunch of right hands to the head. Rhyno goes up for some reason and gets punched in the jaw, knocking him down to the floor. There's the big flip dive from Sami but Rhyno throws him down with a belly to belly inside. The Gore misses though and the Helluva Kick gives Sami the come from behind win at 15:16.

Rating: B. They had the right idea here by having Sami get a warmup for Owens by facing someone who wrestles a very similar style and with a similar body type. Sami is back to form here and the fans are going to be ready for his rematch. That being said, hats off to Rhyno here, who hasn't been around the big leagues in a while but he put on a solid performance here. Getting veterans here who can put over people like Zayn while still looking good in the ring is invaluable for a place like NXT, or any wrestling organization actually.

Overall Rating: C+. This was back to form for NXT as they have a solid show with a good main event and story advancement coupled with some quick matches to help fill things out. The key to this show is that it doesn't do a lot of stupid things that drag the product down. They let the wrestling do the talking and the stories tell themselves naturally. In other words, they don't shove things down your throat and beat you over the head with them. Those key differences are why NXT work so well and I

hope they don't change anytime soon.

Results

Solomon Crowe b. CJ Parker – Brock Lock

Baron Corbin b. Steve Cutler – End of Days

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady b. Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins – Rocket Launcher to Dawkins

Dana Brooke b. Blue Pants – Whiplash

Sami Zayn b. Rhyno – Helluva Kick

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