

New Column: Breaking Up Is Hard To Do

Looking at some of the potential perils of the new Brand Split.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-breaking-up-is-hard-to-do/>

NXT – May 25, 2016: A Surprise You Would Expect

NXT

Date: May 25, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're two weeks out from Takeover and after last week, most of the card is set. The big story is the announcement of the first ever steel cage match around these parts as NXT Champion Samoa Joe is defending against former champion Finn Balor. Other than that it looks like we'll be getting Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Austin Aries as well. Let's get to it.

William Regal tells us that Bayley is injured and unable to face Asuka for the Women's Title. Therefore tonight there will be a triple threat for the #1 contendership between Nia Jax, Alexa Bliss and Carmella.

Opening sequence.

Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa vs. TM61

TM61 is the recently signed The Mighty Don't Kneel, comprised of Shane

Thorn and Nick Miller. In a quick pre-match inset promo, TM61 says they're here for the titles because they're mighty and don't kneel. Miller and Ciampa hit the mat to start before it's off to Thorn, who gyrates and sticks his chest out as he walks around. Gargano gets pulled down in the corner for a double wishbone as things settle down a bit. Johnny crawls through Nick's legs for the hot tag, only to have Ciampa eat a double elbow to the jaw. TM61 actually stands tall as we go to a break.

Back with Miller holding Ciampa in a headlock until an elbow to the jaw allows Gargano to get the tag and spear Miller through the ropes. Thorn comes in but gets caught in something like an Anaconda Vice with Gargano using his legs as a crucifix. Ciampa is back in and elbows Thorn again, only to eat a dropkick for the tag off to Miller. Nick comes in and starts cleaning house, capped off by a delayed backdrop into a neckbreaker from Thorn. Gargano dives onto Miller, leaving Thorn to take the knee to the head/superkick combo for the pin at 13:13.

Rating: B. This was a different kind of tag match with all four working hard and far less of a formula as all four are faces for a change. TM61 looked very polished here and should be ready for a big push once they get in a few wins over teams like the Hype Bros and the Revival. Really solid, long match here and that's how you debut a team like this.

Gargano and Ciampa applaud TM61.

Video on Samoa Joe winning the title and his new found aggression.

Bayley is upset that she can't compete when Nia Jax comes in to say that she's broken Bayley, who will never be the same again. Carmella runs in to defend her friend but Nia laughs it off. Alexa Bliss comes in and gets the same treatment.

Andrade "Cien" Almas takes off his mask while watching old lucha libre.

Here's Austin Aries with something to say. Aries is tired of hearing people talk about how someone is the best. You're only the best until someone better comes along, so he's always called himself great. But how do you define greatness? Maybe by proving your talent over ten years? Or

by having great matches everywhere you go? Or by being a champion in every promotion you've ever been? See, he's done all those things but he's tired of being overlooked. The fans chant for Nakamura but Aries wants a shot at the winner of the cage match. There go the lights and here comes Nakamura.

Shinsuke starts in Japanese then corrects himself because Aries doesn't understand. Nakamura: "You don't speak Japanese?" Aries: "I don't understand you." Nakamura: "Yeah me either." Shinsuke says the title isn't coming to greatness because it's coming to the King of Strong Style. Cue Regal, which draws a TAKEOVER chant. The match is made though nothing is mentioned about being #1 contender.

American Alpha is ready for the Revival because there's more to wrestling than punching people in the face. It doesn't matter if it's in Dallas or at Full Sail, they'll be ready, willing and Gable.

No Way Jose vs. Jonathan Ortagun

Jose dances out of a waistlock to start and it's already time for an airplane spin, which goes both ways for a little extra fun. A clothesline in the corner just annoys Jose and things get serious, including an atomic drop and the baseball punch. The cobra clutch slam gives Jose the pin at 3:21.

Rating: D+. Jose is fun but he's basically a new version of Adam Rose. If they keep him in that style of a character everything will be fine, but given WWE's track record with characters like him, I really wouldn't give him a great chance long term. The dancing is fun though and he serves his purpose just fine.

Jose dances with the announcers post match.

Video on Finn Balor, who wants the title back.

Asuka doesn't care who she faces at Takeover because she will defeat them.

Carmella vs. Nia Jax vs. Alexa Bliss

For the #1 contendership at Takeover. Bayley hugs Carmella before her entrance. Nia has a new entrance where the camera cuts to an extreme closeup of her eyes before she starts walking. Bliss bails to the floor to start so Carmella, the fan favorite, tries and fails at a headlock. Alexa's attempt at coming in off the top goes horribly as Nia is waiting on her and it's time for a break.

Back with Carmella headscissoring Nia into the post, which brings Alexa back in to slam Carmella's head off the mat for two. Bliss yells a lot and knocks Nia outside, followed by a Vader Bomb for two. The backflip into the knees to the chest get two on Carmella and Bliss drives two knees into Nia for good measure. The Sparkle Splash gets two on Jax with Bliss making the save. Nia has had enough of this being in trouble and gets up to shove both of them down like they're nothing.

The blondes send a charging Nia out to the floor but Carmella's dive is easily caught by the monster. Bliss makes the save though and it's Carmella diving onto Nia again with a lot more success this time. Back in and Carmella snapmares Bliss into the corner for the Bronco Buster. The leg crossface brings Nia back in for the save, only to have Carmella get two off a middle rope Thesz press. Graves actually says he's never seen that before. Nia breaks up the Bronco Buster though and drops the leg on Carmella for the pin at 12:30.

Rating: B. This was MUCH better than I was expecting as you can really see the long strides that Carmella has made in her abilities. She's certainly the most complete performer of these three as you have Bliss and Jax as more role players (Bliss as the calculating one who steals shots where she can and Jax as the monster), which are fine for both of them. This was a lot of fun though and a far better match than I would have thought.

Post match Asuka comes out to stare Nia down. The champ comes down to the ring and Nia threatens to drop her where she stands to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. In less than an hour, NXT has hyped up the two matches already set for Takeover and added two more, including a title match. This upcoming show doesn't have the best buzz around it, but if

there's one thing NXT is great at it's making you believe that something is a lot better than it probably should be. This show did a great job of building that show and making me want to see it, which is exactly what they were shooting for here.

Results

Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa b. TM61 – Running knee/superkick to Thorn

No Way Jose b. Jonathan Ortagun – Cobra clutch slam

Nia Jax b. Carmella and Alexa Bliss – Legdrop to Carmella

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And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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New Column: The Two Man Midcard Exodus

As promised, thoughts on Ryback and Cody Rhodes leaving. Also note that this was written before the announcement of the new Brand Split, which would change a lot of what I say in here.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-the-two-man-midcard-exodus/>

New E-Book: NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II

I think it's safe to say that you've heard a thing or two about NXT. Over the last few years the promotion, originally designed as little more than a dumping ground for the young talent brought into the company, has become the hottest promotion in the world. The weekly TV show has become a highlight and must see for most wrestling fans as new talent from all over the world shows up, almost making it an independent all-star promotion under the WWE banner. This isn't even starting to look at the live specials on the WWE Network.

In this book, I'll be taking a look at over one hundred and thirty NXT shows, including every live special they've aired to date. This ranges from the first live special in February 2014 with Arrival and goes all the way through Takeover: Dallas with every episode of the TV show included in between. I'll be including play by play and analysis as we take a look at what helped make NXT the hottest thing in the world of professional wrestling. Also, all of the live specials have been redone with new reviews.

The book is the longest I've ever put together at over 580 pages on a Kindle and sells for \$3.99 or the equivalent in other currencies. In case you don't have a Kindle, there are plenty of **FREE** apps you can get from Amazon for pretty much any electronic device, all of which are available at this [link](#).

You can pick up the book from Amazon [here](#).

From the UK Amazon [here](#).

From the Canadian Amazon [here](#).

Or if you're in another country with its own Amazon page, just search "NXT Full Sail II" and it should be the first thing to come up.

Also you can still get any of my previous books on the WWE Championship, the Intercontinental Championship, Monday Night Raw from 1997, 1998 and 2001, Monday Nitro from 1995-1998, In Your House, Summerslam, Starrcade, ECW Pay Per Views, Royal Rumble, Saturday Night's Main Event, the WWF and WCW pay per views from 1998, Wrestlemania and Clash of the Champions at my author's page [here](#).

I hope you like it and shoot me any questions you might have.

KB

NXT – May 18, 2016: She Hurt Bayley

NXT

Date: May 18, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're three weeks away from Takeover and the main event has been announced as Samoa Joe defending the NXT Title against Finn Balor, but this time it's going to be taking place inside a steel cage. That's never been done before in NXT and it should be interesting to see how NXT builds up to such a match. Let's get to it.

We open with a video on Nia Jax vs. Bayley from London last year with Nia saying she would destroy Bayley in a rematch, which takes place tonight.

Opening sequence.

Blake and Murphy vs. Austin Aries/???

Aries has a mystery partner after Blake and Murphy interrupted him last week. The partner is.....Shinsuke Nakamura. Alexa Bliss is certainly not

happy with this development. Blake and Murphy aren't sure who should start so Aries dropkicks Murphy in the corner for an early two. It's off to Nakamura for the shaky choke in the corner (which Tom calls Good Vibrations) before he puts Murphy on his knees for a slingshot elbow from Aries. Shinsuke actually stares Blake off the apron before suplexing Murphy down. Aries reaches over for the tag but Nakamura intentionally doesn't tag, setting up Kinshasa to end Murphy at 2:47.

Post match Alexa walks out on the team. Murphy walks out on Blake.

Bayley says she isn't going to let Nia Jax bully her way into whatever she wants because it's going to be a repeat of London. After that, it's time to get the Women's Title back.

Video on Asuka with a band playing a song. You don't see that too often.

No Way Jose talks about how much he loves smiling and how much energy he has. Some people might not like him but it's time for a fiesta. He's here to fight, but first it's time for some dancing.

Carmella misses Enzo and Cass but wants to be Women's Champion.

Carmella vs. Peyton Royce

Peyton is definitely one of the more sexualized women around here as she does a very slow crawl over the ropes to get inside. Carmella is actually taken down to start for some elbows into the neck. We hit an early chinlock before Peyton sweeps the leg to keep control. Two Amigos into a PerfectPlex gets two on Carmella but a few elbows and a Thesz press take Peyton down. A hurricanrana sets up the Bronco Buster and the leg crossface makes Peyton tap at 3:36.

Rating: D+. Royce was fine here but I'm not sure how much Carmella is going to do other than win low level matches and then get squashed by Asuka or Nia. It's a good sign that they're setting up some fresh competition though as the division was really depleted over the last few months.

Clip of Finn Balor and Samoa Joe getting in a huge brawl at a house show on Saturday with the locker room having to break it up.

General Manager William Regal has made their match a steel cage match and we see the contract signing with both of them saying it ends at Takeover.

Blake and Murphy beg Alexa to take them back but she says it's going to be easier to win the Women's Title without 470lbs of weight on her back.

Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa vs. Rob Ryzin/Danny Burch

Gargano and Burch start things off as the fans chant TERRA-RYZIN. That's the most interesting part of the beginning as it's quickly off to Burch vs. Ciampa, one of whom is dubbed a "psycho killer". Burch runs him over with a clothesline for two before Ciampa shrugs off both jobbers' offense. Gargano comes in with some clotheslines of his own and slingshots through the ropes for a spear. A running knee from Ciampa and a superkick from Gargano put Ryzin away at 5:00.

Rating: C. I liked this more than I thought I would as Gargano and Ciampa are carving out a very nice little niche for themselves in the tag division. I'm not really a fan of either guy but it's cool to see a new team getting somewhere and setting themselves up as potential challengers for American Alpha down the line.

Speaking of American Alpha, Regal say they'll be facing the Revival at Takeover.

Bayley vs. Nia Jax

Nia easily shoves her away to start so Bayley gets on Na's back for a choke. Bayley gets thrown around with ease with almost none of her offense having any effect. A few whips into the corner have Bayley reeling and she goes chest first into the middle turnbuckle as we take a break.

Back with Nia holding her in a reverse chinlock before going after Bayley's arm. Off to a cobra clutch on Bayley, followed by a clothesline to the back of the head for two. Nia switches it up into an arm trap bearhug, only to have Bayley escape and avoid a charge in the corner.

Some kicks to the legs and another dodged charge sends Nia outside, followed by a hurricanrana off the apron. Back in and the Bayley to Belly

doesn't work so she settles for a DDT instead. Bayley grabs the guillotine but Nia shoves her off and Bayley comes up with a bad limp. The legdrop onto the leg sets up the regular legdrop for the pin on Bayley at 16:17.

Rating: B-. This was a weird one with Bayley being completely squashed. I'm not sure where they're going with Bayley and the leg injury as it seems like something that they want to use to take her off TV, but maybe it's to build her up for a big comeback to get back in the title hunt. It was also lacking all the drama of the London match and that really was the first match's strong suit. Still though, pretty good here.

Bayley's leg is checked on to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a show to set up a bunch of stuff for later and there's nothing wrong with that. Aries vs. Nakamura has the potential to be a blast and will finally give Nakamura an actual feud against a top level star. The rest of the show was nothing great but the wrestling was watchable and set up some stories for later on. In other words, it's NXT doing what a wrestling company is supposed to do, just like always.

Results

Austin Aries/Shinsuke Nakamura b. Blake and Murphy – Kinshasa to Murphy

Carmella b. Peyton Royce – Leg crossface

Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa b. Danny Burch/Rob Ryzin – Running knee/superkick combination to Ryzin

Nia Jax b. Bayley – Legdrop

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NXT – May 11, 2016: This Is How They Do It

NXT

Date: May 11, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

Finn Balor is back tonight and it's already time for him to go after his NXT Title again. Balor lost the belt a few weeks back at a house show to new champion Samoa Joe, meaning Finn's target should be obvious. Other than that it's time to really hit the gas on building towards the next Takeover which is scheduled for about a month from now. Let's get to it.

We open with a video on Finn Balor, talking about how the title is his obsession before the loss to Joe. I believe this aired last week as well. Balor may have lost the title but it's time to embrace the demon inside.

Here's Finn to open things up. After a THANK YOU FINN chant, Balor thanks the fans and talks about how the matches with Joe could have gone either way but he won the first two. Before he can talk about what happened in the third match, Elias Samson comes out to sing about Balor's masquerade being exposed. Samson says Finn is nothing without the title so Balor kicks him in the head to put Elias outside. The guitar goes flying but thankfully Samson makes the save. Jeff Jarrett is somewhere groaning at the guitar not being destroyed.

Last week, Eric Young called himself a world class maniac who is so glad to finally be here in NXT.

Balor wants Samson tonight.

American Alpha vs. Corey Hollis/John Skyler

Non-title. Chad takes Skyler to the mat to start and we get the Kurt Angle themed chant. Hollis comes in and gets headlocked down as well before we hit the seated armbar. It's off to Jordan who easily throws Hollis into the air for a face first crash onto the mat. A double hiptoss puts Hollis down and there's a double dropkick for Skyler as this is completely one sided so far.

Hollis finally realizes that he can cheat and the jobbers take over on Gable for the first time. Skyler drops a knee for two and we hit the chinlock. That works for all of five seconds before it's off to Jordan as house is cleaned. Cue the Revival on the ramp for a distraction but Grand Amplitude puts Hollis away at 5:10.

Rating: C-. This was a nearly complete squash and that's all it needed to be. Alpha is so far ahead of everyone else right now that it wouldn't make sense to have them do anything but squash other teams. Revival vs. Alpha II should be a really solid brawl though and it would help to have something like No DQ involved. A regular match would be fine too though.

Shinsuke Nakamura is asked what he thinks about Alex Riley's rage. Nakamura starts shaking, like he has rage you see.

Alex Riley vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Riley had been calling himself the white lion down in NXT, at least until he got released a few weeks after this. Riley goes right after him to start like he's a guy about to be released going after one of the top stars in the promotion. Nakamura misses a knee though and Riley hammers away, earning himself a string of knees and forearms to the ribs and face. The running knee in the corner sets up the inverted exploder suplex, followed by Kinshasa to put Riley away at 2:38.

Austin Aries is in William Regal's office to say he wants to prove he's the best. Blake and Murphy come in to talk about being disrespected. Aries: "You don't even have the decency to bring Alexa Bliss with you?" Bliss comes in and yelling ensues so Regal makes Blake/Murphy vs. Aries/a partner of his choice next week. Aries pulls out his phone and implies he

knows someone.

Alexa Bliss vs. Rachel Ellering

That would be Paul's daughter. Bliss starts on the arm by bouncing it off the mat and working on an armbar. A forearm gets two on Rachel and it's back to the armbar. The comeback goes nowhere as Bliss does the psycho eyes choke to set up the Sparkle Splash for the pin at 3:52.

Rating: D. They're doing a good job of setting up Bliss as the midcard heel though I can't imagine her ever being a real threat to someone like Asuka. Ellering was really just there and didn't show anything outside of being competent in the ring. Then again that's been the case several times before, but she's a long way behind Tessa Blanchard in terms of potential.

Bayley says she's getting ready for her rematch when Nia Jax interrupts. She learned from the loss to Bayley but it's clear that Bayley has learned nothing from losing the title. A challenge for a rematch is issued and Bayley says she can choke Nia out again. This was a really awkward, and likely WAY too scripted, exchange.

Bayley vs. Nia is official for next week.

Finn Balor vs. Elias Samson

Just regular Finn here and his shoulder is taped up. Feeling out process to start until Balor knocks him to the floor and takes us to a break. Back with Balor holding an armbar and the fans saying it NEEDS MORE COWBELL. Samson fires off some forearms but Balor just blasts him in the face a few times. Some running chops in the corner put Samson on the floor for a baseball slide. The Sling Blade sets up 1916 for the pin on Samson at 7:47.

Rating: C-. This was fine and did exactly what it was supposed to do. In theory this sets up another Balor vs. Joe match but I'm really not needing to see them fight for a third time out of four total major matchups. This is also where Samson is a good player. He's not going to be a top heel anytime soon but those songs are enough to get the fans

hating him every week and then he can take a beating and make someone else look good. That's an important role to have and Samson is as good of an option as they have for it at the moment.

Balor says he wants his rematch for the title because it belongs to him. Now he's possessed like a demon stalking his prey so here's Samoa Joe to interrupt. Before it can get physical, Regal comes out to make Balor vs. Joe III for Takeover on June 8. That's really rare for NXT as they almost never have feuds go on this long. Joe yells a lot so Balor dives over the top to take him out.

Overall Rating: C+. They're finally starting to set up some stuff for the next Takeover, which is a good thing even though I'm not wild on the main event they're going with. However, this was a step up over last week's show and they're setting up some stuff for the future, which is where NXT shines best. Aries' partner could be interesting and you don't know what they might pull off for that.

Results

American Alpha b. Corey Hollis/John Skyler – Grand Amplitude to Hollis

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Alex Riley – Kinshasa

Alexa Bliss b. Rachel Ellering – Sparkle Splash

Finn Balor b. Elias Samson – 1916

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NXT – April 27, 2016: The Superstars Formula

NXT

Date: April 27, 2016

Location: Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's a big night around here as we're going to take a quick field trip up to Lowell, Massachusetts where Finn Balor lost the NXT Title to Samoa Joe. We'll be looking at at least part of the match tonight, which is a really cool thing that NXT can do. When is the last time you even heard WWE reference a house show other than the European tour? Let's get to it.

We're told about the title change right off the bat. Why hide it at this point?

Asuka vs. Eva Marie

Non-title. The fans tell Eva that she can't wrestle as we hit the stall button to start. The fans are actually split on Eva as they trade headlocks and armbars. Asuka blasts Eva in the face and rolls forward for a little dancing followed by the hip attack. A Fujiwara armbar sends Eva straight to the ropes and another hip attack sends her out to the floor. Graves thinks it's starting to unravel as Nia Jax comes out to check on Eva.

Back from a break with Eva mostly missing a running boot to put Asuka down. We hit the double arm crank for a bit before a hard shot to the face keeps Asuka in trouble. Another arm crank slows things down even more until Asuka pops up with a middle rope dropkick. A second dropkick has Eva in trouble and it's time for the kicks to the chest. Eva tries to send her into the corner but eats a spinning kick to the face for the pin at 12:55.

Rating: C-. Eva was WAY better than usual here but it should be noted that she was doing very basic stuff for the most part. Still though, the fact that she didn't have a major botch is a step up and it's definitely one of her best performances yet. Also Graves deserves some credit here as he was channeling Bobby Heenan hard here by praising the heel throughout the match. That adds so much and everything worked well here.

We see some clips of Samoa Joe winning the title last week with the Muscle Buster. They only showed about thirty seconds total.

Joe says his win was inevitable and no more words are needed.

Revival vs. Matt Lee/Jeff Parker

Parker and Lee are both really skinny and I believe used to team as 3.0 in Chikara. The 3.0 on their tights would seem to support that theory. We'll say Parker is easily taken down and pounded in the corner as Lee shouts that he is respecting the rules by not interfering. Lee then starts a DEFENSE chant as Parker is dropped ribs first into Dawson's knee for two. It's off to Lee as the fans chant DEFENSE as well. The Shatter Machine puts Lee away at 3:12.

Rating: C. You could tell there was something to Lee and Parker after those chants. They were both entertaining and it was clear that they had some experience. Unfortunately they didn't have any kind of a look and are almost completely interchangeable. It was a total squash though and I could get behind the new aggressive Revival, though I don't know how much steam it would have.

Post match Dawson says they're the best and want their titles back.

Hype Bros vs. Blake and Murphy

No Alexa here so the interest is already down. The fans want to know where she is too as Mojo scares Blake into the corner to start. Mojo gets down in a three point stance and declares that neither Blake nor Murphy are in fact hyped. Ryder comes in for two off a neckbreaker and a double facebuster to take both villains down. Blake starts in on the leg before it's off to Murphy for a shot to the head. It doesn't seem to do that

well though as Ryder slips over to the corner for a tag off to Mojo. House is cleaned and the Hype Ryder puts Blake away at 4:48.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here but how far have Blake and Murphy fallen in the last few months? When you're putting over the Hype Bros, it might be time to reconsider your career choices. I don't think Rawley and Ryder are going anywhere other than a midcard tag spot and there's nothing wrong with that, at least as long as the fans still dig them.

Post match the Revival comes back out and jumps the Hype Bros.

Carmella vs. Aliyah

Aliyah was in a battle royal recently but is probably most well known from Breaking Ground. Carmella snapmares her to start but Aliyah takes over with a seated full nelson. A middle rope leg gets two and this is almost all Aliyah so far. Carmella comes back with a hurricanrana out of the corner and a Bronco Buster, followed by the leg crossface to make Aliyah tap at 3:19.

Rating: C. Aliyah was a very nice surprise here and Carmella looked fine. I know they're not exactly the new Horsewomen but it's really cool to see the division being rebuilt with a fresh cast of characters. Bliss and Blanchard looked awesome recently and these two would be a nice addition as well. Good little match here.

Elias Samson says he'll show that he's the drifter and will prove to Nakamura that he never should have drifted into NXT.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Elias Samson

Nakamura takes him to the ropes to start and holds Samson in place with his head. A knee drop sets up the shaky boot in the corner, only to have Elias explode out with a clothesline. Samson gets two off a suplex and we hit the chinlock. That's fine with Nakamura who kicks Samson in the head, setting up the running knee in the corner. Kinshasa puts Samson away quick at 4:24.

Rating: C. They're doing a really good job of setting up Nakamura as the new star of the roster, which is a really good idea given the possible

departure of Finn Balor and having someone like Samoa Joe as champion. Samson is fine in his role and I'm kind of glad they didn't push him too hard yet as he's better as a jobber to the stars for the moment.

Overall Rating: B. I had a really good time with this show as they kept things moving all night long and got a lot of acts out there. It's going to be interesting to see where things go at the next TV tapings but leave it to NXT to figure out a way to move the top story along while still being on the Dallas tapings. They nailed this episode though, which says a lot when none of the matches amounted to anything special.

Results

Asuka b. Eva Marie – Spinning kick to the face

Revival b. Matt Lee/Jeff Parker – Shatter Machine to Lee

Hype Bros b. Blake and Murphy – Hype Ryder to Blake

Carmella b. Aliyah – Leg crossface

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Elias Samson – Kinshasa

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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NXT – April 13, 2016: They've Still Got It

NXT

Date: April 13, 2016

Location: Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

We're back to normal now after Takeover: Dallas but we'll be seeing some the action from Wrestlemania Axxess where about four weeks of shows were taped. This is going to include some TV debuts and potentially the fallout from the big show, though there's a good chance a lot of that will be included in backstage segments. Let's get to it.

Commissioner William Regal runs down some of tonight's big events, including Shinsuke Nakamura's TV debut.

Opening sequence.

The camera is a little different here as the hard camera is opposite the entrance. Other than that it looks like a regular setup, despite Axxess taking place just a few feet away.

Austin Aries vs. Angelo Dawkins

The fans are behind Aries here of course. Dawkins quickly takes off his headband but gets taken to the mat and ridden a bit. A hard shoulder puts the much smaller Aries down but he snaps off some armdrags to take over. Dawkins throws him down and stomps away before slapping on a front facelock. This sets up a lot of yelling about Dawkins' Island, the meaning of which I'm sure will be covered later. Back up and Dawkins misses a charge in the corner, allowing Aries to start in with those hard forearms. The neckbreaker over the middle rope sets up a roaring elbow for the pin on Dawkins at 4:15.

Rating: C-. Standard debut here and there's nothing wrong with that. Aries looked fine here and beat up a jobber that we've seen before,

though none of that really matters as we're still waiting to see his next big match. Given that Corbin is gone, maybe he could challenge Balor as there's no point in seeing Balor vs. Joe III.

Samoa Joe says nothing has changed and now he wants Apollo Crews next week.

No Way Jose is coming next week.

Alexa Bliss vs. Tessa Blanchard

Tessa is of course the daughter of Tully. Bliss takes her down to the mat to start but gets kned in the face for two. Back up and Alexa drops her again, allowing Bliss to stand on her back for Graves calls a Tony Hawk. We hit the cravate for a bit before Bliss loads up a slap. Tessa blocks it though and shouts I DON'T THINK SO in a Stephanie style screech. Alexa is done with this though and grabs Blanchard by the throat while giving us the best crazy eyes I've seen since Edge retired. A shove Tessa down and a standing moonsault into knees to the chest gives Alexa the pin at 3:52.

Rating: C+. Bliss' best match ever and a lot of it is due to those eyes. I know she gets a lot of compliments for her looks but that was one of the best visuals I've seen in a very long time. At the same time though, Tessa clearly has that it factor and knows what she's doing in the ring. Give her some experience and a bit of a character and she's ready to be one of the top women in NXT. Really nice surprise here and I'm very pleased.

Finn Balor is ready for any challenger as the new #1 contender. He'll be sticking around for Nakamura's in ring debut. That's really the only option right now but it still seems a little soon.

Tommaso Ciampa/Johnny Gargano vs. Vaudevillains

Gargano armdrags Gotch into an armbar to start before it's quickly off to Ciampa who takes English's head off for two. Everything breaks down for a bit and Gargano gets double teamed on the floor to give the Vaudevillains their first real advantage. Gotch works on the arm and tags in English,

who comes in between the bottom and middle rope. I've never seen a male wrestler come in that way unless he was injured.

Gargano knees Gotch off the apron and quickly crawls over to Tommaso for the hot tag. A hanging downward spiral (think Randy Orton) gets two on English but Gotch makes a blind tag to come in. The rollup doesn't work though and the flip over armbar makes Simon tap at 5:03 in a big upset.

Rating: C+. This picked up near the end but above that it was a big surprise. You really don't expect a main roster team (and they were acknowledged as such) to lose to a team that hasn't had a ton of success even in NXT. Still though, well done on a clean win and maybe Ciampa and Gargano are going to be the next challengers.

Tye Dillinger says Nakamura is great but tonight Nakamura is competing against him, not the other way around. Tonight Nakamura is being sent back to Japan. Dillinger leaves but comes back to give interviewer Rich Brennan a 3.

Baron Corbin vs. Tucker Knight

Corbin takes him into the corner for some right hands to start but Knight gets in a nice dropkick and a Thesz press. Back up and End of Days puts Knight away at 1:57. Nothing to see here.

American Alpha stood in the empty convention center wearing their new titles earlier today when Enzo and Cass showed up to praise the new champions. They'd also like a match, which doesn't even need to be for the titles. Jordan and Gable seem to agree with the idea.

Bayley vs. Liv Morgan

Wristlocks are exchanged to start as the fans sing the HEY WE WANT SOME BAYLEY song. Morgan does a Matrix move to avoid a clothesline, only to get elbowed in the back. The fans think Bayley is going to hug her but Morgan grabs an ankle scissors to take over. A bulldog sets up a monkey flip, only to have Bayley counter a whip into the Bayley to Belly for the pin at 3:24.

Rating: C-. Just a quick match to get Bayley back on her feet but Morgan

looked good out there at the same time. It's clear that they're planting the seeds for the next batch of women and with Sara Del Ray coaching them, there's little doubt that they'll all work out. Remember how nothing Bayley and Sasha were back in the day and then look at where they were just a year or so later.

Post match Bayley says she was beaten by a better woman but the fans make her want to keep standing and be champion again.

Tye Dillinger vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

The chants are almost split to start but Nakamura's fans cut off Tye's with a HE'S ELEVEN chant. Tye armdrags him down and holds up the ten fingers, which fascinate Nakamura for some reason. He even asks the referee about it but Tye tells him to bring it, which you just don't do to this guy. Back up and Nakamura takes him to the ropes before casually putting his head on Tye's chest. That gets a ten from Shinsuke and an offer to bring it.

The fans already say it's awesome and while I get the sentiment, could you save that for more than two minutes into a glorified squash? Tye gets two off a good looking superkick and we hit the chinlock. Graves has to mock the fans for failing to chant ELEVEN in rhythm as Shinsuke starts his comeback. We get the kicks to the chest and head, including the shaking stomp in the corner. The Kinshasa puts Dillinger away at 5:14.

Rating: C. Dillinger is a great example of someone who has skills and talent but is rarely ever going to win a big match. However, as soon as you get the TEN thing going, everyone forgets about that because he's got enough charisma to carry him wherever he needs to go, even if that's normally to a loss. I don't think Nakamura needs much more explanation.

Overall Rating: C+. This was back to basics for NXT and that's what they do best. It was a night of quick/nothing matches but we got some storyline advancement and potential matches set up for down the road. It also helps that they announced two matches for next week (American Alpha vs. Enzo/Cass and Joe vs. Crews) to give us something to look forward to. As usual, NXT knows how to book week to week and sets the standard for doing so.

Results

Austin Aries b. Angelo Dawkins – Roaring elbow

Alexa Bliss b. Tessa Blanchard – Moonsault knees to the chest

Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa b. Vaudevillains – Flip over armbar to Gotch

Baron Corbin b. Tucker Knight – End of Days

Bayley b. Liv Morgan – Bayley to Belly

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Tye Dillinger – Kinshasa

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NXT – April 6, 2016: A Rare Disappointment

NXT

Date: April 6, 2016

Location: Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

This is the first of a series of special shows from Wrestlemania weekend with most of the matches taped from Axxess weekend. It should be interesting to see how things go with a very different style audience. Also it's not clear whether or not we'll get much advancement in the major angles as everything needs to reset after Takeover: Dallas. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Takeover as you might guess.

Phillips and Graves welcome us, clearly from Takeover.

New correspondent Catherine Kelly tells us what we can expect, including Apollo Crews vs. Elias Samson, which was a dark match at Takeover.

We see a video on American Alpha winning the Tag Team Titles, followed by Jordan (nearly in tears) and Gable talking about what it means to win the titles on the biggest weekend of the year.

Video on Asuka winning the Women's Title from Bayley.

Bayley says congratulations to Asuka and admits that Asuka is just on another level. A champion is made by how many times they get back up and get better so she'll rise to the occasion again.

We recap Elias Samson getting pinned by Johnny Gargano a few weeks back. Post match Samson beat him down until Apollo Crews made the save.

Recap video of Aries vs. Corbin.

Aries calls himself the most polarizing man in wrestling and that's just fine. He's not out there to prove anything to the people though because he's out there to prove something to himself. Talent and passion can't be measured with a ruler and a scale but he proved everything he needed to prove to Baron Corbin and isn't going anywhere soon.

We see Finn Balor retaining the NXT Title over Samoa Joe.

Balor says he escaped and survived Joe again.

Joe has nothing to say.

We see Samson singing a song to Crews but backing away from a fight.

No Way Jose is coming.

Elias Samson vs. Apollo Crews

Samson comes out with his guitar and has something to say but we have a lot of booing to get through first. The fans say that they want wrestling but thankfully Crews cuts it off to get things going. Crews throws him into the corner to start so Samson hides behind the guitar. A headlock doesn't get Elias anywhere and it's an armbar to put him on the mat. The armbar even goes to the floor so they head back inside for yet another armbar.

Back from a break with Samson getting in a shot to the back of the head and putting on a chinlock. Another chinlock doesn't go anywhere and it's Crews getting up and hammering away to a surprisingly strong reaction. Samson bails to the floor and gets taken down with an apron moonsault, only to have the standing version hit knees back inside. Elias gets in a jumping knee to the head but asks for silence, allowing Apollo to kick him in the face. The toss powerbomb puts Samson away at 14:46.

Rating: D. This really wasn't very good and that's probably it for Samson for a little while. Crews moving to Raw is still a surprise but at least he went out on a win unlike Corbin. Unfortunately it wasn't a good match as most of it was spent on armbars and chinlocks. Samson is much more of a character than a wrestler but I'm not sure how far he can get on that alone.

Video on Zayn vs. Nakamura.

Sami can't put all of his emotions into words.

Nakamura says strong style has arrived.

Overall Rating: D+. This is a tricky one as the show should have been white hot coming off Wrestlemania weekend and the awesome Takeover but instead it's a recap and dark match. Maybe you can argue that this is a breather from all the action and a fear of burnout but I was looking forward to something entertaining here and wound up seeing a bunch of

stuff all over again. It's not often that I get to say this but I was disappointed here.

Results

Apollo Crews b. Elias Samson – Toss powerbomb

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New Column: In Other News

Looking at some of the other WWE stories from the weekend.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-in-other-news/>