

411mania Exclusive Reviews: Halloween Havoc 1995/NXT Takeover: Dallas

Two for this week, with one of the most WCW shows ever:

[Hall's WCW Halloween Havoc 1995 Review](#)

And an all time classic:

[Hall's WWE NXT Takeover: Dallas Review](#)

New Book: NXT: The Full Sail Years: From Dallas To New Orleans



What more is there to say about NXT? The promotion, which started off as nothing more than a developmental territory to build up some of WWE's stars, has taken on a life of its own. There have been more classic matches, more stars made and more great moments there than anywhere else in recent wrestling memory.

In this book, I'll be breaking down over one hundred more episodes of NXT plus ten live specials, ranging from the first show after Takeover: Dallas through Takeover: New Orleans. I'll also be breaking each one down match by match and segment by segment. Included will be analysis and ratings for the shows to see what worked and what didn't.

The book runs about 450 pages and is available on Amazon both in a physical paperback for \$11.99 or an e-book format for \$2.99. 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](#) in paperback and [here](#) as an e-book.

And From the UK Amazon [here](#) in paperback and [here](#) as an e-book.

Or if you're in another country with its own Amazon

page, just search “KB NXT III” and it should be the first thing to come up.

Also you can still get any of my previous books on the Intercontinental Championship, Monday Night Raw from 1997, 1998, 2001 and the first half of 2014, Monday Nitro from 1995-1999, 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, WWE Grab Bag 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 Takeover: Dallas: Night of a Thousand Chants

NXT Takeover: Dallas

Date: April 1, 2016

Location: Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We’re back with another NXT pay per view style special and one heck of a stacked card. The main event here is Samoa Joe challenging NXT Champion Finn Balor in a rematch from their match of the year candidate from London. Other than that we have Sami Zayn’s potential farewell match for the promotion against the debuting Shinsuke Nakamura in what should be a near classic. Let’s get to it.

Of note: I was in the arena for this show so this is my second time

seeing it.

Apollo Crews vs. Elias Samson was scheduled for the show but was bumped to a dark match due to time constraints. I'd assume it will air on TV at a later date.

The opening video focuses on the history of Texas wrestling before talking about how this is the future. The two title matches and Zayn vs. Nakamura receive the focus.

Tag Team Titles: American Alpha vs. Revival

Alpha (Chad Gable/Jason Jordan) is challenging. There isn't much of a story here other than Alpha has beaten all the other teams to earn a shot. Gable starts with Scott Dawson (of Dawson/Dash Wilder) and the fans do the GABLE chant in tune with Kurt Angle's old cheers. That quickly changes to "WHICH ONE'S DAWSON, WHICH ONE'S DASH", which makes sense as they're about as interchangeable as the Usos.

Gable takes him down with some headlock takeovers but Dawson keeps countering with headscissors. A rollup gets two for Chad as the sequence earns a nice round of applause. Chad gives him a gentle pat on the cheek and everything is about to break down. More armdrags have Dawson in trouble and it's off to Jordan who gets a chant of his own. The evil champs get a breather with a rake of the eyes, only to have Alpha backdrop them both as this is one sided so far.

Chad comes back in to work on the arm as things slow back down. Gable gets two off a cross body out of the corner but misses a dropkick. As usual I'm not sure why that miss hurts but the one that connected didn't. Jordan comes in for some stereo German suplexes and it feels like I'm watching the Steiners vs. the Brain Busters. To continue with that theory, Wilder comes in off a tag and gets Chad to chase him into a clothesline from Dawson to take over for the first time.

Now we get to the Revival's bread and butter of cutting the ring off and working on body parts like a good old school team would do. Dawson puts on a Gory Stretch but gets countered into a sunset flip for two. A double DDT drops the champs but Wilder crawls under the ring and nails Jordan to

break up the hot tag. That hooligan.

In the (unfortunately) memorable part of the match, Dash loads up a powerbomb for a clothesline from Dawson but can't keep Gable up, basically making it a slow motion Dominator with the clothesline missing completely. It's only two though as Wilder isn't legal, meaning it's back to Dawson as the fans chant BOTCHAMANIA and remind the champs that they screwed up.

Chad FINALLY crawls through Dawson's legs and makes the white hot tag to Jordan for some serious house cleaning. A string of suplexes gets two on the champs but Scott gets a quick rollup for two with Wilder using a towel to hold his partner's feet on the ropes like a classic heel. I'd love to see more of that kind of stuff. An uppercut gets two on Jordan with Gable making the diving save for a SWEET false finish.

Jason misses a charge into the corner but Gable makes a blind tag to come in. Some rollups are exchanged for two and Gable gets some more near falls off a small package and a reverse victory roll. Jordan makes a blind tag of his own and runs around the ring to sneak in and spear the heck out of Wilder, setting up Grand Amplitude for the pin and the titles 15:11.

Rating: B+. What a match and it really did feel like the Steiner Brothers vs. the Anderson and Blanchard. That's the kind of a pairing you never expect to see again in this generation but these two really did get close to pulling it off. Like so much in NXT, the Revival was talented but just ran into a team more evolved than they were. Alpha is one of the most polished acts I've ever seen given how long they've been together. I know Gable gets the hype (as he should) but Jordan is an amazing talent in his own right with some amazing athleticism and technical abilities.

Jim Ross and Michelle Beadle are shown.

Kota Ibushi is here for a BIG reaction from the crowd.

Ad for the NXT UK tour.

We recap Austin Aries vs. Baron Corbin, which is all about Aries debuting

and getting attacked by Corbin, who was mad over losing the #1 contenders triple threat match. Aries is out for revenge.

Austin Aries vs. Baron Corbin

Corbin whips him into the corner to start but gets forearmed in the head a few times for his efforts. A discus forearm puts Corbin on the floor and Aries nails a top rope ax handle for good measure. The announcers talk about Aries breaking up a 600+ day Samoa Joe title reign, which is as close as you'll get to an acknowledgment of Ring of Honor around here.

Back in and Corbin finally realizes he's a lot stronger than Aries and shoves him down to the mat. A whip sends Aries shoulder first into the post for two and things slow way down. We hit the nerve hold with Corbin shouting that Aries is a little man from nowhere. Not quite the Great Gatsby but close enough. Corbin lets go of the hold and gets two before telling the timekeeper to ring the bell. There's something awesome about someone who just yells at everyone else because he knows no one can touch him.

Aries comes back with some left hands and a neckbreaker across the middle rope for a cool spot. A missile dropkick followed by a running corner dropkick put Corbin on the floor for a suicide dive, which of course draws an NXT chant. Aries tries another charge but runs into Deep Six on the floor for a huge crash. For some reason the referee counts one twice so Aries dives back in at eleven. It must be getting the leftover Ring of Honor out of him. Back in and Aries says bring it so Corbin tries End of Days, only to have Austin roll over into a cradle for the pin at 10:43.

Rating: C. I really don't like this ending and the match felt a bit off. Aries didn't get in a ton of offense and then he wins on a quick rollup. I'd assume this was designed to set up a rematch but it's really not the best debut. The idea made enough sense but it's not the version I would have gone with. You can have Corbin take a loss here and not really have it damage him as he can just lay people out to make up for it later. I don't hate this but it didn't do much for me.

Balor arrived earlier in a Star Wars shirt.

We recap Sami Zayn vs. Shinsuke Nakamura. There's nothing personal here but Zayn made his debut with a big win over Cesaro years ago so now Nakamura wants to win a big match in his own debut. It's pretty clear that Sami is heading for the main roster after this one so they're likely going for a big moment here. We also get a video on Nakamura, whose introduction was basically "Yeah you all know him and you know he's awesome.". Why go with anything other than the obvious?

Scott Hall and X-Pac are here.

Sami Zayn vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

The fans sing along with Sami's music for a cool moment. As big as Sami's pop is though, Nakamura's chant and reaction are just that much bigger. The place seemed to be in awe of him and his spastic dancing, even doing their holy swearing chants during the entrances. They circle each other a bit and the fans chant YES in advance of contact. Sami ducks the kick to the head but Nakamura tells him to bring it.

Back up and Sami cranks on the arm as the fans are totally split. Now we get my new favorite NXT chant of "BOTH THESE GUYS!" That's quite the compliment and not something you often hear. As we hear about Nakamura's Kinshasa knee (Daniel Bryan's running knee), Sami starts throwing him around with armdrags before telling Nakamura to bring it in a nice touch. More knees to the ribs put Sami down and we get a SHINSUKE'S GONNA KILL YOU chant.

There's the first kick to the head and a second gets a one count. Nakamura puts on a front facelock as the director tells Graves to talk. Sami gets in a suplex for two and a big forearm puts Nakamura on the floor. That's not good for Sami as Nakamura gets in two straight knees to the head, followed by a running knee to the ribs for two back inside. Sami is smart enough to make Nakamura miss a charge out to the floor, setting up the big flip dive. The fans again declare this awesome as Sami catches a charge with a Michinoku Driver to put both guys down.

Then in the sequence of the match they slug it out with forearms for at least thirty seconds, drawing a YES chant until it turns into trading forearm bombs. Nakamura's nose is busted and they start speeding up again

to a round of applause. Nakamura gets the better of it with knees to the ribs and a flurry of kicks/stomps to the head to put Sami down. Both guys are gassed though so Sami takes Nakamura's head off with a clothesline.

That just earns Zayn a cross armbreaker which is turned into a triangle but Sami stands up and kicks him in the face for the break. When all else fails, KICK HIM IN THE FACE! Now it's Sami kicking Nakamura down against the ropes, followed by the Koji Clutch in the middle of the ring. Shinsuke turns it into a rollup for two and followed with a quick enziguri. Fans: "FIGHT FOREVER!"

The Helluva Kick misses but so does the Kinshasa, allowing Sami to grab the Blue Thunder Bomb for an awesome near fall. Nakamura rolls to the floor but still gets up a HARD kick to block Sami's diving DDT. Back in again and Sami tries the exploder, only to have Nakamura elbow the heck out of the back of his head. A middle rope knee to the head sets up the Kinshasa for the pin on Sami at 20:07.

Rating: A+. And that's your match of the show, weekend and year so far. Just a brutal, brutal fight with two guys hitting each other as hard as they could for twenty minutes until one of them couldn't get up anymore. Nakamura looks like a killer on arrival and Zayn gets to move on to the main roster with a classic on the way out. What more can you possibly ask for out of two guys in a match like this? Outstanding stuff and one of the hardest hitting matches I've seen in a very long time.

Nakamura takes a bow but helps Sami up to chants of "THANK YOU SAMI!" Zayn raises Shinsuke's hand before staying in the ring for a bit in what looks like his goodbye as his music plays one more time. We get one final OLE chant as Sami waves goodbye and looks back. The camera work here makes it much more effective on the broadcast than it was in the arena.

We recap Bayley vs. Asuka. Again it's similar to the Tag Team Title match as Asuka has run through the division and only the champ is left. Simple but effective.

Stephanie McMahon is shown and described as an integral part of the women's division. I'm to the point where I don't even care about this anymore. Stephanie has decided that she invented the division and set it

up so that's the official company line now. Moving on.

Women's Title: Asuka vs. Bayley

Bayley is defending and both women get enormous reactions. Asuka's entrance sees cherry blossoms fall from the ceiling, which were just bags being emptied out by production staff who could be seen in the rafters. The fans argue over whether Bayley is going to hug Asuka or if Asuka is going to kill Bayley. Feeling out process to start until Bayley eats a right hand to the face to knock her into the corner.

They hit the ropes but miss some running strikes to give us a standoff. The running hip attack puts Bayley down though and the champ is suddenly in trouble. A second hip attack misses though and Bayley gets in a middle rope elbow for two. Asuka can't quite get a Fujiwara armbar as Bayley makes the rope so it's off to some kicks to the ribs instead. A quick hurricanrana sets up Bayley's guillotine choke but Asuka escapes and puts on an ankle lock.

That's reversed as well and Bayley starts forearming her, only to have Asuka scream and dropkick the champ again. Now it's time for some YES kicks, followed by a running knee for two more. Asuka kicks her in the head again as this is getting a little more brutal. Back up and they both try dropkicks, followed by Bayley blocking another dropkick and grabbing a legbar of all things. Asuka gets up so Bayley elbows her in the leg before busting out a dragon screw leg whip.

A quick cross armbreaker has Bayley in trouble and a seated armbar makes it even worse. That's countered into a rollup (because of course) for two but Asuka can't get her namesake lock. Fans: "BOTH THESE WOMEN!" Bayley's armbar doesn't work and unfortunately the Bayley to Belly doesn't either, allowing Asuka to get in a snap belly to belly. The Asuka Lock goes on and Bayley is in trouble, eventually falling down and fighting for a LONG time before passing out in the hold to give Asuka the title at 15:24.

Rating: B. The ending felt a little flat here but that's up from feeling very flat live. The match worked and you could get a much better story with the camera showing Bayley getting more and more desperate as she just didn't have what it took to hang with someone as skilled and

seasoned as Asuka. They did a good job of protecting Bayley by having her pass out, but I still don't think Asuka did enough on the arm to set up that hold. The ending makes sense in theory but I still don't like the execution. It's still a good match though.

Post match Asuka looks at the fallen Bayley (now awake and sitting up) but walks away without a handshake or any kind of sportsmanship.

We recap Samoa Joe vs. Finn Balor. Joe already lost to Balor in their first title match back in London but went on to win a VERY long match over Sami Zayn to earn this spot. Since then, Joe has gone on a mini rampage (as is his custom) to set this up.

Bobby Roode is shown in the front row. Now that's a big deal. Well kind of. As big a deal as a TNA guy can really be.

NXT Title: Samoa Joe vs. Finn Balor

Balor, in full demon mode, is defending....and he has a chainsaw. It never ceases to amaze me how he goes from a normal looking guy in a leather jacket to whatever insane monster this is supposed to be (It's awesome but where in the world does this come from?). They slug it out to start with Balor being sent outside, only to come back with right hands to bust Joe WAY open. You really couldn't see the severity of the cut live but there's quite a bit of blood coming down his eye.

Joe throws Balor hard over the barricade so the doctor can look at his eye but then throws the towel away. In an amazing visual, the camera cuts to the barricade where the demon face rises up like he's on an elevator and springboards off the barricade with a forearm. The referee brings the towel in again but Joe throws it away and smacks Balor in the face.

Balor does that hop over the ropes out of the corner (that's always sweet) but Joe knocks him off the apron for one of the hardest suicide elbows I've ever seen. Oh wait though as we have to check the cut again, though to be fair half of Joe's face is bloody here. Again, that wasn't clear from the audience, who swear at the medical staff for not letting them fight. The announcers suggest that the match could be stopped but they finally get the cut closed (as well as they could at least) so Joe

can Rock Bottom Balor out of the corner.

The enziguri gets two on the champ and they stop it AGAIN for the cut. That earns them an F*** PG chant, followed by the Facewash to Balor in the corner. A running big boot and knee drop get two but Balor dropkicks him down. That means it's time for another medical check and a LET JOE BLEED chant. The champ fires off some chops to send Joe outside, followed by a HARD running kick to the chest.

The Sling Blade connects but Balor misses a dropkick, allowing Joe to hit the backsplash for two. Joe stays on him with the powerbomb into the sequence of submissions, capped off by a Crossface. This caused a Benoit chant in the upper deck which was immediately booed out of the building. So even NXT fans have standards.

The Muscle Buster only gets two and Balor wins another slugout with something like a Pele and it's time for demon mode. The dropkick sets up the Coup de Grace but 1916 is countered into the Clutch, only to have Balor climb the buckles and flip back onto Joe for the pin to retain at 16:22. Joe's stunned look is great as he has no idea what happened to him.

Rating: A-. This felt much more like a fight than a match and that's exactly what it needed to feel like. I know a lot of people are going to complain about the referee stoppages but that's the wrestling world we live in now. I really don't have an issue with someone having a bloody eye getting treatment before the cut gets out of hand. Yes it got annoying but after seeing how bad it really was, I more than understand it now.

What I'm not sure of is who the next challenger is going to be. There's no logical reason to do Balor vs. Joe 3 and the only other option would seem to be Nakamura, though it's a bit too soon for that. At least we had a really good match here, though it was a step down from their London match.

Joe stares at Balor to end the show.

Overall Rating: A. The show was better on a second viewing but it wasn't

a classic by any stretch. I didn't feel much of a flow here as it's really just a collection of matches. That being said, it's a collection of REALLY good matches with the Nakamura vs. Zayn match more than stealing the show. Other than that you have a great opener, an awesome main event and a totally watchable Aries vs. Corbin match that doesn't even last eleven minutes as the worst match of the night. This is what NXT does: set up matches and then blow the doors off when it's time for the show. Great stuff here and an amazing start to the weekend.

Results

American Alpha b. Revival – Grand Amplitude to Dawson

Austin Aries b. Baron Corbin – Rollup

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Sami Zayn – Kinshasa

Asuka b. Bayley – Asuka Lock

Finn Balor b. Samoa Joe – Balor flipped back onto Joe while in the Koquina Clutch

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:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EGQ>

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

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Wrestlemania XXXII

I'll be at the show tonight so use this to discuss the show if you like. I'll be back tonight (hopefully not too late) with a post about anything major that happens. Full reviews of Smackdown (yeah I know), NXT, Wrestlemania and then Raw later this week, probably once we get home.

KB

Went To NXT Takeover: Dallas

I'm half dead already so no full live report at the moment (though the full reviews are coming eventually) but here are some quick highlights. 1. American Alpha is so over it's scary.

2. The Aries match ended REALLY fast, almost to the point that I thought Aries was injured.

3. The Zayn vs. Nakamura match woke everyone up like few matches I've ever seen. That was amazing live.

4. "BOTH THESE GUYS" is the best chant they've had in a long time.

5. The ending of the women's title match really didn't work as it just ended out of nowhere. Also Asuka needed to work on the shoulder to set that up.

6. The towel was the biggest heel of the night.

7. This wasn't a great show and is probably in the bottom tier

of Takeovers.

8. I was tired at this show so a second viewing might severely change my mind.

New Column: NXT Takeover: Dallas Preview

I think the name speaks for itself here.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-nxt-takeover-dallas-preview/>

Wrestlemania Week Schedule

In case you haven't heard, the wife and I are heading down to Dallas for the weekend for Wrestlemania and associated acts.

We'll be taking in Takeover: Dallas, Axxess on Saturday, Axxess again on Sunday morning where we get to meet Shawn Michaels himself, then Wrestlemania and of course Raw the next night. Just like two years ago, things are going to be a bit slow around the weekend as I can only get in so much reviewing while I'm in the hotel. This is also our honeymoon so she's actually expecting me to spend time with her instead of something important.

Therefore, the reviews are all going to be a bit behind but I'll be making posts for discussion before we leave and I'll

put up a quick live recap/thoughts on each show after we get back to the hotel each night. Once I get back home I'll be looking at the shows in full for the regular reviews.

KB

New Column: The February Problem

Looking at how bad February pay per views tend to be and how to fix the problem.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-the-february-problem/>

I'm Going To Wrestlemania

Along with Raw, Takeover and Axxess when the tickets are available. Tickets have been purchased for the wife and I. She's never been so this is going to be a big moment for her.