

NXT – August 24, 2016: On Vacation

NXT

Date: August 24, 2016

Location: Barclays Center, New York City, New York

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

This is the closest thing NXT has to a week off as we'll have matches taped before Takeover this past Saturday night. That means we'll be seeing some stand alone stuff in front of a white hot crowd, which should make these matches mean a lot more than they would otherwise. Other than that and a few interviews, this isn't the biggest show in the world. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Saturday night.

Opening sequence.

Tye Dillinger vs. Wesley Blake

Dillinger is treated like a face here and the announcers seem to treat him as one. Fans to Blake: "LET'S GO ZERO!" Dillinger easily takes him to the mat and does a cartwheel before giving himself a ten. A poke to the eye puts Tye down and we take a break. Back with Dillinger's comeback being cut off by a Backstabber but Dillinger hiptosses him into the corner. A few shots to the chest and back set up the Tyebreaker (fireman's carry backbreaker onto an exposed knee) for the pin at 11:18.

Rating: C. This is where NXT is a step ahead of WWE. Dillinger was getting huge face pops and was clearly one of the most over gimmicks on the roster despite being a heel. The solution: turn him face and accept the chants. Now they have a freshly over guy who could move up the roster under the right circumstances and all NXT had to do was start putting him against heels. Dillinger did almost all the work and everyone comes out ahead. Why is this so complicated for the main roster?

Quick clip of Bobby Roode winning on Saturday.

Roode says that was no surprise. Almas was a fine opponent but he's not GLORIOUS.

Clips of Austin Aries beating No Way Jose and Hideo Itami making a post match save.

Aries is made that he didn't get to leave with his hand raised. He's tired of being interrupted and people stealing his moments. Aries has already gotten rid of people who interrupted him (Baron Corbin and No Way Jose) and Itami will be no different.

Long recap of Asuka vs. Bayley. Have they made it clear enough that they don't have much tonight?

We get a video of Bayley's time in NXT, including her reading part of her essay from middle school.

Bayley says this time was different but Asuka was just better. Ember Moon comes up and says Bayley should be proud of her performance and says she's here because of Bayley.

We see Bayley's Raw debut.

Video on Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa vs. Revival.

Revival knows they're the best and unstoppable. Top guys out. Clink me.

Recap of Shinsuke Nakamura taking the NXT Title from Samoa Joe. Nakamura is back next week.

TM61 vs. Authors of Pain

The Authors jump them before the bell and it's a brawl to start with TM61 actually taking over and sending the big men to the floor. The opening bell brings the Authors back inside and it's the tattooed Author (still waiting on names so we'll call him #1) slamming Thorn. TM61 comes back with some double teaming and a leg lariat in the corner. #1 sends Thorn hard into the post though and TM61 slows down. Apparently the tattooed one is Akum and the other is Razar. I prefer Tokka and Razar but that's

just me.

Back from a break with Thorn hitting a jawbreaker on Razar and rolling over for the tag off to Miller. Nick speeds things up and gets two off a high cross body. That's enough for the Authors as they lift TM61 up for stereo powerbombs and slam their backs together. The Russian legsweep/clothesline ends Miller at 11:29.

Rating: C. I get the idea of paying dues but TM61 is looking more and more like a pair of jobbers every week. I'm assuming this sets up the Authors of Pain as potential challengers to the Revival but I'm really not sure how that's going to go. You don't often see heel vs. heel and I'm not sure how much Revival could do with guys this big. The Authors are certainly something different though and that's usually a good thing.

Overall Rating: D+. This was the usual post outside Orlando Takeover show and there's nothing wrong with that. They cobbled together whatever they could here and it was basically a week off as a result. I'm fine with them taking a break after all the effort they put in on Takeover and next week things will be back to normal. Just a week off here and that's fine.

Results

Tye Dillinger b. Wesley Blake – Tyebreaker

Authors of Pain b. TM61 – Russian legsweep/clothesline combo to Miller

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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 if 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 – June 15, 2016: The Rebuilding Phase

NXT

Date: June 15, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's the week after Takeover and possibly the last taping cycle before the Brand Split really screws things up. Not a lot of major changes took place last week aside from new Tag Team Champions as Revival took the belts back from American Alpha in a pretty surprising upset. Next up is Brooklyn in August so let's get to it.

We get a We Stand With Orlando graphic.

Long recap of Takeover, running the better part of four minutes.

We'll be hearing from Finn Balor and Samoa Joe later tonight.

Authors of Pain vs. ???/???

The Authors of Pain are the monsters who attacked American Alpha last week and have Paul Ellering (who somehow looks younger than he did when he first came to the WWF in 1992) in their corner. The announcers have no names for the jobbers, who are run over at the bell to start. To be fair they don't have individual names for the Authors either with one of them being referred to as the Tattooed One.

Some hard knee strikes have the first jobber in trouble before it's off to the other one for more of the same. The non-tattooed Author throws one jobber into the other and it's a side slam/big boot combo for one and a

running clothesline/Russian legsweep combo to the second for the pin at 1:36. Total dominance, though names for the Authors would be helpful, as well as a better finisher.

Andrade Cien Almas (speaking of needing a better name) is happy with his win last week when Tye Dillinger comes in to interrupt. Dillinger: "Now listen up you six." A rematch is requested and seems to be granted.

Ellering is asked what he and the Authors are doing here but he'll only say "in due time".

Carmella vs. Tessa Blanchard

Carmella grabs a quick rollup for two to start and a dropkick makes things even worse for Tessa. Blanchard drops her with a forearm and asks how the fans are doin. A legsweep doesn't work though as Carmella dances away, only to get caught in an abdominal stretch. Carmella just blasts her with a right hand to the jaw, followed by a superkick to set up the Bronco Buster. A Downward Spiral into the Code of Silence (that leg crossface) is enough to put Tessa away at 2:47.

After last week's cage match, Samoa Joe says he destroyed his brother and hunted a demon around the world to get his title. This cage match ended all the questions and officially started the reign of Joe. No one can take it from him.

Blake and Murphy say there were no problems until Murphy started causing the issues. The blame seems to go towards Alexa Bliss but they agree to get their Tag Team Titles back.

TM61 vs. Blake and Murphy

It's now TM Six One instead of TM Sixty One. In case it's gone over your head (which was the case with most people, including me), the 61 is the international calling code for Australia. The fans want to know where Alexa is. Blake and Thorn start things off with Shane nipping up out of a wristlock before it's off to Miller for a shot to the face. A slingshot hilo gets two for Thorn and a standing moonsault/jumping fist drop combo gets the same on Murphy. TM61 is moving very quickly here and even better

than they were in their debut.

Murphy comes back with a clothesline, which Graves thinks could have taken out Lord Humongous. We hit the chinlock on Thorn for a bit before it's time for the heel miscommunication as Blake clotheslines Murphy by mistake, which allows the hot tag off to Miller as everything breaks down. Murphy is sent outside and Thunder Valley (a double gorilla press slam) puts Blake away at 5:37.

Rating: C+. Nice match here that accomplished two goals at the same time with TM61 looking dominant over former champions and Blake and Murphy dissolving for good. I'm really not sure where they go from here but TM61 should be up for a title shot after Alpha and Gargano/Ciampa get their chances.

Revival said they told you so and now have their titles back. Dawson: "Clink me Jack!" That means bang the titles together.

The announcers talk about Bobby Roode debuting in the UK over the weekend.

We look at Bayley injuring her knee against Nia Jax.

Bayley has a doctor's appointment next week and if she's cleared there, she can get back in the ring.

Tye Dillinger vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Takeover rematch and Dillinger is still crazy over. The fans start the dueling chants with something about one hundred and then a much louder PERFECT TEN response. Almas flips over the top rope to start and a springboard cross body sends Tye outside. Back in and Tye takes over, only to run into a dropkick to send him outside again so Almas can do his pose in the ropes as we take a break.

Back with Almas getting two off a sunset flip and slapping on an armbar. Tye gets free and they run the ropes, only to have Almas dropkick Dillinger as he tries to drop down. Dillinger gets one off a backbreaker and some crossface shots to the face have Almas in more trouble. Back up and Almas hits some forearms to the face and a spinwheel kick, followed

by a dive over the top to take Ty out again. A Rey Mysterio sitout bulldog sets up the double running knees in the corner to give Almas the pin at 10:48.

Rating: C+. Almas looked better here but there are still a lot of things that need to be fixed with him. It's a combination of the old school vignettes not matching the character, the male stripper entrance gear, the lack of a mask and the not great in ring abilities. He's hardly horrible and is really just more bland than bad with a pretty weak finisher for a high flier. Finally, either go with Andrade Almas or Cien Almas because the three names really don't work together. It doesn't help that Dillinger is so popular right now, especially in front of the Full Sail crowd. They need to capitalize on that, especially with the recent callups.

Here's Finn Balor to address the crowd but first he has to soak up a THANK YOU FINN chant. That switches to a PLEASE DON'T GO before Finn starts talking about watching NXT in Ireland and wanting to be a part of that. He became a part of NXT but it became a part of him as well. Finn was NXT Champion for 292 days (YOU DESERVE IT) and he went to wars with Neville, Tyler Breeze, Kevin Owens and Samoa Joe. At the end of it though, he's not the champion. Now the question is what's next for him. Fans: "BALOR CLUB!" Finn: "Too sweet!"

Balor asks what's next for him again...and here's Shinsuke Nakamura. They shake hands and the fans instantly think this is awesome. Nakamura says when he was in Japan, he watched Balor become the icon of NXT but now he's no longer champion. Balor is still an icon though and if Nakamura wants to be champion, he has to beat the icon. The fans lose their minds over that and start the MATCH OF THE YEAR chant. Balor says that's the answer to what's next for him so the match is on at some point in the future.

Overall Rating: C. You really can feel the recent callups hurting things a lot these days as the last few shows have only been decent. The Takeover special was great but there's only so much they can do aside from dream matches. Almas is really just not clicking though and they need to make some adjustments with him. To be fair though, not facing

someone as hot as Dillinger would help a lot and it's not like the matches have been disasters or anything close to them.

The rest of the stories have potential but it's a bit early to see where they go. I have no idea who is next for Joe, unless Balor vs. Nakamura is on TV to set up the title match in Brooklyn. NXT has a lot of work to do but I can easily trust them to pull it off, which is a really rare thing in wrestling.

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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 Ortgun

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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