

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

## **NXT**

Date: September 7, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

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

Opening sequence.

### TM61 vs. Tony Nese/Ariya Daivari

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

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

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

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

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

#### Ember Moon vs. Leah Von

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

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

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

#### Austin Aries vs. Andrade Cien Almas

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

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

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

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

### Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Steve Cutler

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

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

Joe walks away from commentary to end the show.

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

### Results

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

Ember Moon b. Leah Von – Eclipse

Austin Aries b. Andrade Cien Almas – Last Chancery

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Samoa Joe – Kinshasa

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# Cruiserweight Classic – August 17, 2016: Where My Eyebrows Go Up

## Cruiserweight Classic

Date: August 17, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Daniel Bryan

If last week is any indication, this should be one of the most entertaining shows all week. We're into the second round now and already know two of the names in the final eight. Tonight that more than doubles with three matches advertised at the end of last week's show. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's great show and a preview of tonight's matches.

Opening sequence.

Jack Gallagher is still very British.

Akira Tozawa will never give up or back down. I believe these are the same vignettes from the first round with clips of their first round matches added in.

### Second Round: Jack Gallagher vs. Akira Tozawa

England vs. Japan. They trade wristlocks to start until Tozawa takes him to the mat and works on the leg. Gallagher reverses into an Indian Deathlock (with wrestling expert Daniel Bryan telling us that it's also called a British Figure Four) so Tozawa puts him on the mat with a headlock. That's fine with Jack as he gets up into a headstand and walks backwards to escape. Fans: "HE'S SO DAPPER!"

Somehow Gallagher ties Tozawa's limbs together into a ball. I'm not sure if Tozawa can't get out or doesn't realize Gallagher isn't there but he realizes it when Jack gives him a running kick. A frustrated Tozawa takes him to the mat in a chinlock and drops a

backsplash to slow Jack down a bit. Gallagher gets the closest thing he can be to ticked off and ties the leg up on the mat. Tozawa finally gets smart and kicks him in the face but that just earns him another leg lock.

Back up and Tozawa hits a running boot to the chest but the leg means he can't cover quickly enough. Tozawa tries a suplex but is smoothly taken down into a heel hook. Gallagher immediately lets go when Tozawa gets the rope, only to have Tozawa fall down on an Irish whip attempt. Tozawa seems to be goldbricking though and starts firing off kicks until Gallagher headbutts him in the chest. A deadlift German suplex sends Gallagher crashing into the mat though and that's enough for the pin at 11:38.

**Rating:** B+. As good as the wrestling was here, the commentary deserves so much praise in this match. Bryan and Ranallo did a perfect job of pointing out the differences in styles and treated it as a showdown of two very different wrestlers. The people in the ring then played their roles perfectly and I had a great time watching this match. Just a lot of fun in a wrestling match here and that's what I love about this show.

Hoho Lun has known what he wanted to do since he was eight years old.

Noam Dar is ready to go despite being the youngest man in this tournament and can submit anyone. "Everyone's leg bends the same."

#### Second Round: Noam Dar vs. Hoho Lun

Scotland vs. Hong Kong. They trade wristlocks to start with Dar getting the better of it before starting in on the leg with a dragon screw leg whip. A belly to back gets two for Dar so Lun kicks him in the head for the same. The fans' chant here: saying DAR over and over again to the tune of Darth Vader's theme song. Dar kicks him down again and we hit something like a half crab. Lun gets up and hits a missile dropkick with the knee giving out in a hurry. A Michinoku Driver gets two on Dar but he pulls Lun down into the kneebar (with kicks to the back) for the submission at 7:02.

**Rating:** C. Still good here but the time hurt them. That being said, there's only so much you can do with a story of taking apart someone's leg and then using submissions to make them give up. It's a simple idea and not something you can really stretch out that far. Dar has had a nice run but odds are he gets Zack Sabre Jr. in the

next round so this is probably it for him.

Tony Nese is very athletic and should have been here a long time ago.

Brian Kendrick is a veteran looking for one more shot.

### Second Round: Tony Nese vs. The Brian Kendrick

USA vs. USA. Nese doesn't play around and just blasts Kendrick in the face with a kick in the first fifteen seconds. Kendrick is knocked outside but Nese is right there to chop him some more. Back in and Nese somehow gets his hand caught in the turnbuckle pad, allowing Kendrick to get in his first offense. Nese ducks under a clothesline and comes back with some legdrops for two.

Kendrick realizes he has to get crafty by tying Nese's arm around the ropes and cranking away on a seated armbar. A cross armbreaker makes things worse for Nese and a Fujiwara Armbar makes Nese scream. Bryan gives a very impassioned speech about how he and Kendrick lived together and trained together which helped make Bryan the wrestler he was. Nese gets back up and sends Kendrick outside for a running dive over the top.

Back in and Nese easily wins a slugout before a Falcon Arrow gets two. Nese gets pulled off the top for two off a nasty crash but he comes right back with a buckle bomb for two. Brian isn't done yet either as he grabs that Bully Choke until Nese pumphandles him into a sitout powerslam for two more. Now Nese is getting frustrated so Kendrick just unloads with headbutts and a leg lariat. Kendrick gets kicked off the top but is still able to avoid a 450 and grab the Bully Choke for the tap out at 14:38.

**Rating:** B. That ending made my eyebrows go up as I was actually surprised by the finish. They told a really good story here with Kendrick being overmatched by the more athletic and younger Nese but hanging in there just long enough to catch Nese in a mistake. Good stuff here and that's all you can ask for with a match like this.

**Overall Rating:** B+. It's not as good as last week but that's not a fair comparison to make. The opener was really good and the other two matches ranged from just fine to a surprise, giving us three more strong matches to go with last week's two great ones. The final three rounds could produce some classics if these matches are any indication and I'm really excited to see where they go from here.

## Results

Akira Tozawa b. Jack Gallagher – German suplex

Noam Dar b. Hoho Lun – Kneebar

Brian Kendrick b. Tony Nese – Bully Choke

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# **Cruiserweight Classic – July 27, 2016: A Lot Of Wrestling**

## **Cruiserweight Classic**

Date: July 27, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Daniel Bryan, Mauro Ranallo

We're still in the first round but since this tournament is structured rather well, we'll be done with it next week. This show has become a very refreshing change of pace with nothing but wrestling and almost no storylines. I know that wouldn't work long term but it's really fun in the short version like this. Let's get to it.

We look at tonight's four matches.

Opening sequence.

Tyson Dux used to wrestle in WWE and then destroyed his knee.

Zack Sabre Jr. says Harry Potter isn't the only wizard from England.

#### First Round: Tyson Dux vs. Zack Sabre Jr.

Canada vs. England. I've actually never seen a Sabre match. The fans are entirely behind Sabre here as he takes Dux down by the leg.

Bryan talks about Sabre being well educated in the art of escapology, meaning he knows how to get out of every possible hold. Sabre keeps spinning around from one body part to another with some sweet movements, each one frustrating Dux even more. You can almost hear Bryan drooling over every single thing Zack does.

Dux tries to grab a headlock but gets caught in an armbar on the mat. A slam and some chops stagger Sabre a bit but he comes right back with European uppercuts. Some kicks to the arm only seem to tick Dux off and he grabs a fisherman's buster. Zack's stunned look as he lands is great.

Dux puts on a Fujiwara armbar but Zack gets to his feet and grabs an octopus hold. Tyson gets the ropes so Zack hits a running kick to the chest for two. A quick DDT gets two for Dux and he clotheslines Zack's head off. Sabre comes right back with a Kimura before taking him down into something like the YES Lock but he bends Dux's fingers back for the submission at 9:23.

**Rating:** B. This was exactly the way they should have had Sabre make his debut: Instead of having him just run through Dux, Sabre had to actually break a sweat here and that makes for a more interesting match. It means that Sabre might have to actually put in some work as he moves forward, which makes for something worth watching. Just having Sabre tie Dux up and make him tap in four minutes would have worked short term but this is putting in some early effort for a better payoff later. That's so rare these days and it's nice to see a change.

Drew Gulak is a submission expert from Philadelphia.

Harv Sihra was inspired by Eddie Guerrero to embrace his heritage.

#### First Round: Drew Gulak vs. Harv Sihra

America vs. India. Sihra is part of the Bollywood Boys and his brother is also in the tournament. They're quickly on the mat with Gulak grabbing a bodyscissors, only to have Harv tie the legs up to send Drew crawling to the ropes. The fans didn't seem to see what

was going on though and there wasn't much of a reaction. Gulak comes right back with a middle rope clothesline for two, only to be backdropped to the floor. Harv gets in a nice twisting cross body to the floor and grabs a superplex back inside. With Gulak down, Harv goes for the ankle but gets caught in a dragon sleeper for the tap out at 5:24.

**Rating:** C. Gulak isn't as flashy as Sabre but you can tell he certainly knows his submissions. That dragon sleeper looked great and he looked completely in control of Sihra out there. Sabre vs. Gulak in the second round should be excellent, especially if they give it enough time to go somewhere.

Tony Nese says he's a complete athlete.

Anthony Bennett is from Philadelphia and has very large hair.

#### First Round: Tony Nese vs. Anthony Bennett

America vs. America here and Bennett's hair has its own sunglasses. Bennett dances around to start and Nese will have none of that nonsense. They head outside with Bennett hitting a quick cannonball off the apron but is easily taken down for a springboard middle rope moonsault. A suplex plants Bennett, who pops back up for a dropkick. Bennett's guillotine choke doesn't get him very far so Tony slams him again...and the referee stops the match to check on him. We get the all clear and Nese hits a 450 for the pin at 6:33.

**Rating:** D+. I wasn't feeling this one as well with Bennett's size being a bit too much to overlook. Nese is fine but a bit too much of your standard "I'm awesome and athletic" cruiserweight. The 450 looked good though and made for a good ending to a not so great match. Eh they can't all be great.

Raul Mendoza grew up idolizing Eddie Guerrero who was small but became champion.

Brian Kendrick is here to get his second chance.

#### First Round: Brian Kendrick vs. Raul Mendoza

America vs. Mexico. Kendrick is looking very skinny and you can see a lot of his bones here. They trade leapfrogs to start with Kendrick being sent out to the floor. Back in and Mendoza slaps on something like a reverse Texas Cloverleaf, only to swing Brian around before taking him down into a leglock on the mat. Cool indeed. Kendrick suckers him in for a big boot before putting Mendoza's mouth on the

ropes, which he then kicks for good measure.

Mendoza is bleeding from the mouth but quickly says he's ready to continue. Raul comes right back and sends him outside for a flip dive, only to miss a springboard 450 back inside. A big running kick to the face drops Raul but Kendrick takes too long getting up top, allowing Raul to crotch him into the Tree of Woe. Mendoza goes way big with a Coast to Coast dropkick but a backbreaker only gets two. We get some old school goldbricking as Kendrick fakes an injury, only to pull Mendoza down into a choke (apparently the Bully Choke) for the submission at 7:35.

**Rating:** C+. I would have gone with Mendoza here as Kendrick is a big name but he's not exactly a big enough name that he has to go forward here. Raul was a sweet high flier here and that's something we haven't seen much of tonight. I get why they went with Kendrick but I hope he doesn't go much further than this.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This show worked but I would have gone with Sabre as the main event. It's clear that he's going to be a big deal in this and I don't know why they wouldn't go with him last. They had a good show with four good to watchable matches though as this tournament is flying by. The first round wrapping up is a good thing as we can now see big names facing off, which is the point of a tournament. Another good show this week, as has become the norm.

### Results

Zack Sabre Jr. b. Tyson Dux – Double arm lock

Drew Gulak b. Harv Sihra – Dragon sleeper

Tony Nese b. Anthony Bennett – 450

Brian Kendrick b. Raul Mendoza – Bully Choke

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