

NXT – October 26, 2016: My Kind of Show

NXT

Date: October 26, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's the final night for the first round of the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic. We're also less than a month away from Takeover: Toronto and that means it's time to start firming up a lot of the card. We already know a few of the matches so there won't be many surprises but NXT is great at putting pepper on the steak. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic: DIY vs. Hoho Lun/Tian Bing

Bing is the recently signed Chinese wrestler Bin Wang. Ciampa and Bing get things going with Wang looking good as he runs Ciampa over to start. A PSYCHO KILLER chant breaks out but switches to a Johnny Wrestling version as Gargano comes in to kick Lun in the head. Hoho gets in a dropkick and brings Tian back in for some strikes to the chest. A chinlock doesn't last long as Gargano kicks Bing's head off and brings Ciampa right back in. Johnny tags himself back in though and cuts Lun in half with the spear through the ropes. The double strike puts Lun away at 4:15.

Rating: B-. Lun and Bing were just speed bumps on the way to DIY (I really hope that doesn't catch on) vs. Revival III and that's the kind of thing that makes this tournament awesome. Bing looked good here and certainly has some experience. I don't know if he's ready for a full NXT run but I've seen far worse.

Kota Ibushi and TJ Perkins are ready for their first round match. Perkins says if this was high school, the cool table would be Ibushi times five. Ibushi thinks his overall rating is a 99. I don't

understand what Ibushi just said. Can I get that translated to stars?

Recap of Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura.

Joe sees a scared man in Nakamura because he knows Joe could knock him out at any time. Nakamura knows the next NXT Champion is coming for him.

Aliyah vs. Billie Kay

Kay goes right after her to start and Aliyah's early jawbreaker has almost no effect. A seated Blockbuster works a bit better though and an enziguri staggers Billie. Kay comes right back with a discus forearm but here's Liv Morgan for a distraction, allowing Aliyah to grab a rollup for the pin at 1:48.

Post match the brawl is on and the Aussies leave both of them laying.

Tye Dillinger vs. Noah Potjes

Tye snapmares him down to start and that's a ten. That's not cool with Noah, who takes Tye into the corner for some kicks to the ribs. Tye turns it on and stomps Noah down, setting up the Tyebreaker for the pin at 1:38.

Post match, Tye says his opportunity is to get his hands on Bobby Roode, who jumps him from behind. The inverted DDT sends Tye head first into the stage.

TM61 is ready for their match with Austin Aries/Roderick Strong because they trust each other. They're also mighty and the mighty don't kneel.

Asuka vs. Thea Trinidad

Non-title. Asuka doesn't waste time and starts kicking at the legs before stopping for a little dance. Thea makes the mistake of hitting Asuka with a forearm and the champ is ticked off. A kick to the chest is easily caught and a German suplex into a Fujiwara armbar makes Trinidad tap at 1:45.

William Regal comes out post match and says he's found Asuka's

latest opponent: MICKIE JAMES! You can hear the fans gasp when she comes on screen to cut a fairly lame promo about coming to face the next star in the Women's Revolution. Asuka is very pleased with this announcement. Mickie was a last minute replacement for Trish Stratus, who had to back out due to announcing she was pregnant, hence why Mickie wasn't in the building.

Paul Ellering and the Authors of Pain think No Way Jose and Rich Swann will have fine futures in NXT but those futures will have to wait until after their destruction in the second round of the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic. That match is next week.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Mustafa Ali/Lince Dorado vs. TJ Perkins/Kota Ibushi

The winners face Sanity in the second round. Perkins is announced as the Cruiserweight Champion but doesn't have his belt for some reason. Dorado and Perkins kick us off and it's time to flip around the ring without making much contact. A standoff gets us nowhere as Graves offers the following Michael Cole style gem: "Most of the teams that have been successful so far have been tag teams."

Ibushi and Ali come in and the fans give Kota the kind of welcome you would expect. Ali is taken down in a test of strength but Kota can't break his bridge. They trade some kicks to the face with Ibushi getting the better of it as we take a break. Back with Perkins rolling suplexes on Ali and grabbing the kneebar. As is custom though, the first kneebar only results in the grabbing of a rope.

Perkins heads outside and that means a big flip dive from Dorado. Back in and Ali gets two off a neckbreaker but a faceplant allows the tag off to Ibushi so things can speed up. A moonsault from Kota and a frog splash from TJ combine for two. TJ dropkicks Dorado into the ropes to set up the Wrecking Ball dropkick. The kneebar makes Ali tap at 11:39.

Rating: B. This is the kind of match that you don't see on Raw because they have to cram in so much other stuff that there's no time for the cruiserweights to do their thing. Well that and the Raw

crowds don't care for this stuff like the NXT fans do (just a different style of audience). Kota and Perkins are good for a dream team but I'm not sure they're getting by Sanity.

Overall Rating: B. Of everything NXT does, this is my favorite kind of show: an hour of getting things done. This wrapped up the first round of the tournament, advanced some stories and set up some matches for next week. There's no wasted time and everything goes so smoothly from one segment to the next. Good show here and Toronto is looking better every week.

Results

DIY b. Hoho Lun/Tian Bing – Superkick/running knee combination to Lun

Aliyah b. Billie Kay – Rollup

Tye Dillinger b. Noah Potjes – Tyebreaker

Asuka b. Thea Trinidad – Fujiwara armbar

Kota Ibushi/TJ Perkins b. Mustafa Ali/Lince Dorado – Kneebar to Ali

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NXT – October 19, 2016: I

Love NXT and I Don't Know How Else To Say It

NXT

Date: October 19, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're getting closer to the second round of the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic and it's also the start of a fresh taping cycle. The other interesting story is the return of Shinsuke Nakamura to go after Samoa Joe. It's fairly obvious that they'll be facing each other again in Toronto. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at Nakamura being laid out about a month ago but coming back last week to go after Samoa Joe.

Opening sequence.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Rich Swann/No Way Jose vs. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak

It should be interesting to see this work so much better here than it would on Raw. Rich and Drew start things off as the fans aren't sure which good guy to cheer for. It's time for some fast flipping to start with Rich bouncing over Drew and handing it off to Jose for the big guy dancing. Nese comes in and eats a big flapjack (that sounds good) for two. Some quick kicks put Jose down for two but it's back to Rich for some kicks to the chest. They head outside and it's Nese superkicking (of course) Swann as we take a break.

Back with Gulak and Swann clotheslining each other for a double knockdown. That means a double tag off to Jose and Nese with the dancing one turning Tony inside out off a clothesline. Gulak gets thrown into the air and punched right in the jaw (better than most Superman Punches) for two with Nese making the save. The full nelson slam ends Gulak at 10:40.

Rating: C+. I've said it before and I'll say it again: Jose is WAY

too talented for this dancing party guy gimmick. He looked even more like a star than usual here as he was towering over the other three and was able to show off with the power game. It really is amazing how much more interesting the cruiserweights are when they're in front of a crowd that actually wants to see them.

Rich and Jose are ready for the Authors of Pain, who better not look past them. Dancing ensues.

Quick discussion of Hideo Itami's injury, meaning he's out of the tournament.

We look back at Glorious Ten splitting up.

Tye Dillinger has requested and been granted a match against Bobby Roode in Toronto.

Austin Aries would rather talk about potassium instead of his surprise partner. The tournament isn't for everyone, such as Hideo Itami. Hideo is out because an MRI revealed he doesn't have a spine.

Bobby Roode vs. Sean Maluta

Maluta actually grabs a rollup for an early two but Roode takes his head off with a clothesline. A hard whip into the corner makes it worse for Sean, followed by a spinebuster to break up his comeback. An implant DDT ends Sean at 3:07.

Rating: D+. Just a squash here, which is a good role for some of the lower level cruiserweights. We've seen what they can do in the tournament so these wins are more impressive than the ones you see over the run of the mill jobbers. Maluta has a good look and can be pushed if the need ever arrives, just like so many of the other people NXT has been using lately.

Roode laughs off Dillinger's complaints because Tye was the one who begged Roode to team up for the Dusty Classic. All Roode wanted to do was bring Tye up to a GLORIOUS level. After a line about Klingons, Tye comes out and clears the ring. The fans, who went nuts over Roode's entrance, give Tye a huge TEN chant.

Liv Morgan is in the back when Peyton Royce and Billie Kay jump her from behind. Morgan is dragged out to the stage and laid out again,

leaving Kay and Royce to brag about how this is their division.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Austin Aries/??? vs. Tucker Knight/Otis Dozovic

Aries' mystery partner is.....the debuting Roderick Strong, who teamed with Aries to win the ROH Tag Team Titles as part of Generation Next. The announcers put Strong over hard, mentioning his matches against people like AJ Styles, Samoa Joe, Daniel Bryan and Kevin Owens. Otis throws Aries around to start before it's off to Tucker for some hard chops to Strong.

Everything breaks down and Aries has to break up a Vader Bomb from Otis. Aries and Strong start trying to chop down the massive Dozovic but he pretty easily suplexes them both at the same time. The hot tag brings in Knight for a double splash in the corner but he misses a charge and falls outside. Back in and the Sick Kick knocks Knight silly for the pin (ignore the shoulder being up at one) at 6:15.

Rating: B-. It's strange to see the smaller, faster guys as the heels but this was a better match than I was expecting. Dozovic and Knight are two big power guys and I'm always entertained by seeing guys their size chopped down. Aries/Strong vs. TM61 should be a lot of fun, which is the cool part about tournaments like this one.

Andrade Cien Almas attacked Cedric Alexander over a lack of respect. Now it's time to take the respect for himself.

Nikki Cross vs. Danielle Kamella

Cross is just as crazy as she used to be and throws Danielle with a suplex. After biting and scratching herself, Nikki ends this with a fisherman's neckbreaker at 1:20. Total squash.

Nikki keeps beating on Danielle so the referee reverses the decision.

Here's Shinsuke Nakamura with a message for Samoa Joe. Nakamura confirms the rematch with Samoa Joe in Toronto because he'll beat Joe with no mercy. This brings out Patrick Clark, who wants the title shot for himself. Instead he gets a kick to the head, only to have Joe come out for the big staredown. Joe stays on the ramp while

Clark eats Kinshasa to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. I had a really good time here as they covered almost everything that's likely to be taking place at Takeover: Toronto in less than an hour. We had good tag wrestling, a debut, story advancement and a hot ending. In other words, things you rarely get on Raw and/or Smackdown and in even less time. NXT knows how to turn on the jets whenever they need to and that's exactly what they've done again here.

Results

No Way Jose/Rich Swann b. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak – Full nelson slam to Gulak

Bobby Roode b. Sean Maluta – Implant DDT

Austin Aries/Roderick Strong b. Tucker Knight/Otis Dozovic – Sick Kick to Otis

Danielle Kamella b. Nikki Cross via referee's decision

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NXT – October 12, 2016: Glorious Old NXT

NXT

Date: October 12, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're still in the first round of the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic but more importantly we're seeing more in the Samoa Joe path of rage as he tries to get his NXT Title back. In the next few weeks we should also be seeing more matches announced for the upcoming Takeover: Toronto special. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Sanity vs. Glorious Ten

Before Sanity comes out, we have Roode and Dillinger exchanging cheers from the crowd. Sanity are four people in masks and leather jackets who receive a rather impressed reaction. Two of them take off their masks to reveal Sawyer Fulton and Alexander Wolfe, both of whom attack Dillinger while Roode stays on the floor. The double teaming continues with Roode walking away just over a minute and a half in to make this a handicap match. A powerslam/suplex combo put Dillinger away at 1:59.

The smallest member of Sanity (a woman named Nikki Cross) beats on Dillinger until the leader gives Dillinger a wheelbarrow suplex into a neckbreaker. The leader is....Eric Young. Granted the Canadian flag patch on his jacket was a bit of a hint.

Billie Kay and Peyton Royce laugh off the idea of fighting Liv Morgan because she has no friends.

Roode blames Dillinger for what happened because Roode isn't a tag wrestler.

Liv Morgan vs. Billie Kay

Morgan starts with a dropkick and backslide for two before a gutbuster gets two for Billie. The torture rack with an arm trap makes it even worse for Morgan until an STO gets her out of trouble. Not that it matters though as Royce trips Morgan, allowing Billie to hit the big boot for the pin at 3:30.

Rating: D+. Neither of these two are worth much at the moment but NXT has indeed managed to start turning them into something more

than random talent. Maybe they're going to build Morgan up someday but at the moment she's glorified cannon fodder for the heels of the division.

We look back at Andrade Cien Almas turning on Cedric Alexander last week.

Almas yelled in Spanish after last week's show.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: TM61 vs. Tino Sabbatelli/Riddick Moss

Moss (formerly known as Mike Rawlis) and Sabbatelli compete against each other so often that they figured they might as well team up. Miller starts with Moss and it's TM61 taking over early on. Thorn comes in with a slingshot senton until Tino low bridges him out to the floor. Back from a break with Tino coming in for some forearms to the chest as the crowd is split on him.

Sabbatelli starts cranking on an armbar and we get some muscular posing. Moss gets in some trash talking but walks into a jawbreaker. The hot tag brings in Miller to clean house as everything breaks down. Sabbatelli's interference doesn't work and it's Thunder Valley for the pin on Tino at 12:02.

Rating: C. Sabbatelli is an interesting case as he looks great and has the athletic background from being in the NFL but he definitely needs ring time and experience. Moss was a more intense version of the guy we've seen for a long time now. TM61 is slowly growing on me but I haven't seen that great performance from them yet.

Buddy Murphy vs. Wesley Blake

Murphy has had a run of bad luck such as travel issues and having his furniture sold for not paying the bill on his storage unit. They stare at each other to start as the fans are more into Blake than Murphy. Buddy nips to his feet and both guys try big kicks at the same time. Blake is knocked out to the floor so Murphy hits a big running flip dive to take over. Fan: "MAMA MIA!" Cue Samoa Joe to jump Murphy for the DQ at 3:12.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere but Murphy

continues to look very good in the smaller sample sizes. He's got a somewhat better look and is much better than Blake in the ring but for some reason they won't just let these two split up. Joe coming in is probably the best outcome though as I don't know how long these two could hold a crowd.

Joe says time is up so Regal needs to bring him Shinsuke Nakamura or his title. After a break, here's Nakamura with a quickly removed neckbrace. The fight is on and security is suddenly the most hated team in the building. Their attempt to break up the fight goes nowhere and it continues on the ramp with Nakamura kicking Joe low.

Nakamura is dragged backstage but comes right back, only to be taken back again and again. Joe walks away on his own while Nakamura fights security. The distracted Nakamura is blindsided by Joe but nails Kinshasa inside to end the show. That's more emotion than I've ever seen from Nakamura and it added another gear to his awesomeness.

Overall Rating: B. It's back to what makes NXT great as we had a show dedicated to moving things forward this week. We now have half of the second round set for the Dusty Classic, the reveal of Sanity and Nakamura returning for the showdown with Joe. This felt like a show designed to make you want to see more in the future and it worked very well in that regard. The wrestling wasn't the point here and the storytelling more than makes up for it.

Results

Sanity b. Glorious Ten – Powerslam/suplex combo to Dillinger

Billie Kay b. Liv Morgan – Big boot

TM61 b. Tino Sabbatelli/Riddick Moss – Thunder Valley to Sabbatelli

Buddy Murphy b. Wesley Blake via DQ when Samoa Joe interfered

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NXT – September 28, 2016: Dusting Off the Classic

NXT

Date: September 28, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

This is an interesting time for NXT as we're still moving closer to Toronto but it's still too early to really know a lot of the card. We do however have a new #1 contender to the Women's Title in Liv Morgan, who Asuka agreed to face without seeming that worried about it. We've also got some cruiserweights around so maybe they'll make an appearance tonight. Let's get to it.

General Manager William Regal announces the second annual Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic Tournament, comprised of sixteen teams with the finals coming in Toronto. First round matches begin next week.

Opening sequence. Total time taken on Then, Now and Forever plus Regal's announcement: seventy two seconds.

Tye Dillinger vs. Angelo Dawkins

Dillinger does his cartwheel to start and says that's a ten. He mocks Dawkins' mixing bowl thing (Has that EVER been explained?) and avoids a spinning splash in the corner. A flying forearm and Russian legsweep set up the Tyebreaker for the pin on Dawkins at 2:25.

Post match here's Bobby Roode to say that was.....impressive. Roode came here to propose a tag team to enter the Dusty Classic.

Dillinger shakes on it and Perfectly Glorious is formed. Graves: "HALLELUJAH!"

Connor's Cure video.

Hideo Itami is ready to face an athlete like Lince Dorado, who has the heart Austin Aries is lacking. Maybe Aries needs to be put to sleep, again.

Ealy Brothers vs. Revival

Non-title and the Ealy Brothers are identical twins named Gabriel and Uriel. Actually never mind as here's Samoa Joe to beat up the brothers. Revival slowly backs away and applauds Joe as they leave.

Joe puts this on Regal and gets in a few more shots on the twins for fun.

Dan Matha arrives next week.

Mandy Rose vs. Ember Moon

Rose actually hits a heck of a forearm to start but gets kicked in the ribs for her efforts. A springboard crossbody gets two and Mandy is already in big trouble. Something like an abdominal stretch slows Moon down and a clothesline gets two. A tilt-a-whirl into a facebuster (Dalton Castle's Bang A Rang) gives Mandy another near fall but Ember sends her into the buckle, setting up the Eclipse for the pin on Mandy at 3:09.

Rating: C-. If Rose can dye her hair red, Eva Marie is out of a job. Mandy has a comparable look and can actually wrestle a coherent match, putting her light years ahead of Eva, whose whole gimmick is that she can't even be trusted to actually, you know, wrestle. Moon is almost guaranteed to be the next big challenger to Asuka and that's just fine.

Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa want to win the Dusty Classic and then get the Tag Team Titles from the Revival.

Authors of Pain vs. Jesus Yurnet/Jonathan Cruz

Yurnet is slightly better known as Mr. 450. The Authors go right after them to start and Cruz is gorilla pressed out to the floor. The Russian legsweep/clothesline wraps Cruz up at 1:10.

Post match Paul Ellering says the next chapter will bring pain and that is all we need to know.

Regal can't get hold of Shinsuke Nakamura so he can't give us an update. He can however tell us about some Dusty Classic teams, or at least he could if Blake and Murphy didn't come in and start

bickering some more. Regal tells them to go argue elsewhere.

Women's Title: Asuka vs. Liv Morgan

Asuka is defending and we get dueling LET'S GO LIV/ASUKA'S GONNA KILL YOU chants. They lock up to start and Liv's dropkick has no effect as Asuka takes her down and puts on something like the Rings of Saturn for the tap out at 55 seconds. This is EXACTLY what it should have been and is probably a record of some sort.

Asuka says no one is ready for her.

Next week: Cedric Alexander/Andrade Cien Almas vs. Revival in a first round Dusty Classic match.

Lince Dorado vs. Hideo Itami

They shake hands to start. Dorado misses an early charge into the corner but backflips away from one of Hideo's kicks. A jumping knee to the back of Hideo's neck doesn't do much good as an even harder kick to the chest drops Dorado. Lince comes right back with a dropkick to send Itami outside, setting up an Asai moonsault to drive Itami onto the ramp.

Back from a break with Itami getting kicked again, only to get in the tornado DDT neck snap across the top. Dorado's Tajiri handspring is almost countered into the GTS but Dorado reversed into a crucifix for two. Lince misses a shooting star press and that means it's time for the running kicks. The GTS puts Dorado away at 10:22.

Rating: B. This summed up so many of the problems with the cruiserweight division in a ten minute match. First of all, it wouldn't be a stretch to have Itami as a cruiserweight but because of who he generally fights, he's a heavyweight. Even though he is a heavyweight though, he had issues dealing with Dorado here.

Ignoring that though, it's not a big deal for the cruiserweight to be fighting the heavyweight. Over on Raw, so far at least, it's been cruiserweights vs. cruiserweights and that's almost all it can be. Once that stops, why should a cruiserweight go after their own title if they can fight for the heavyweight title? Now that we've seen people like Daniel Bryan, CM Punk, Seth Rollins and Finn Balor win the top titles in the company, it's pretty ridiculous to have them fight over a weight class title. The match was good though as Itami has gotten a lot better since coming back.

Post match here's Austin Aries to jump Itami but has to run away

when Itami gets back up. Hideo tells him to get back in here to end the show.

Overall Rating: A-. As is so often the case, the wrestling wasn't the point here. They managed to fit in five matches (and introduce a sixth) while also announcing a tournament and doing a run-in after the main event in fifty two minutes, including commercials. There's something so fun about watching a show when they know exactly what they want to do and then go out and do it so well. This show is quick and easy to watch but also entertaining and well put together at the same time. You can feel the Ryan Ward effect on here and that's a good thing.

Results

Tye Dillinger b. Angelo Dawkins – Tyebreaker

Ember Moon b. Mandy Rose – Eclipse

Authors of Pain b. Jesus Yurnet/Jonathan Cruz – Russian
legsweep/clothesline combo to Cruz

Asuka b. Liv Morgan – Double armbar

Hideo Itami b. Lince Dorado – GTS

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NXT – September 14, 2016:

And That's Ok

NXT

Date: September 14, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're slowly making our way to Toronto but first we need to get to the end of this taping cycle. The big story here is still Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura, which is probably going to headline the next Takeover. Other than that we have Bobby Roode vs. No Way Jose in a match that could have the crowd reacting in multiple ways. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Samoa Joe to get things going. Joe talks about how a man reaches a point where he knows something has changed. As NXT Champion, he was a disgrace. He ran roughshod over NXT for a year because he wanted to be the champion of the hottest brand in the WWE Universe. Joe requests and receives an appearance from Shinsuke Nakamura. They said a lot of things leading up to their match in Brooklyn and Joe meant every bit of it, including saying that Nakamura was an undeserving contender.

Standing here now though, he knows Nakamura is a worthy champion. Joe has a guaranteed rematch but instead of cashing it in, he wants to ask Nakamura for the shot man to man. The champ says it's on and very tentatively shakes Joe's hand. Joe leaves Nakamura to pose but comes back out and jumps the champ on the stage. Nakamura is whipped into and Rock Bottomed onto the steps as Joe shouts that he did this to Shinsuke. Joe leaves and Nakamura is taken out on a stretcher. Even William Regal and Corey Graves come out to check on Nakamura as he's wheeled away.

Graves and Phillips talk about how serious this is. It actually feels better here as this almost never happens around here, which is the case with almost every big angle they do.

Regal goes to find Joe but he pulls away in a car.

Liv Morgan vs. Rachel Fazio

Rachel used to be known as Rachel Ellering. Morgan works on a front

facelock to start as we hear that Nakamura has been taken to a medical facility. A running dropkick staggers Rachel but Liv doesn't seem to know what to do next. Morgan grabs a guillotine choke (which she barely keeps on) for the tap at 1:51. This really didn't work with Liv looking very sloppy.

Post match Liv grabs the mic and yells at Rachel for tapping out. The word on the street is that the NXT Women's division needs more challengers so she's throwing her hat in the ring to face Asuka.

Hideo Itami vs. Drew Gulak

Gulak gets in his face to start and they hit the mat for some submission attempts. Drew goes with a slap to the face so Itami gives him one right back. It's time for some kicks to the face with Itami getting in a running boot but running into a dropkick for his efforts. Drew starts in on the leg but thinks it's a good idea to slap Hideo in the face. The beating is on in a hurry and the GTS ends Gulak at 4:55.

Rating: C+. They kept it simple here by having Itami strike as hard as he can and Gulak trying to do the submissions to keep Itami in check. Itami is going to be a big deal in NXT but I'm still not entirely sold on him. He really doesn't have a character aside from hard striker and while he does that as well as anyone else, I don't know how far it's going to take him.

Authors of Pain vs. Doug Sessa/Chris Payne

Razar drops Sessa with a spinning elbow to the face and it's off to Akum for forearms to the chest. Payne (not named until after the match) tries to come in and gets a double powerbomb. The running clothesline/Russian legsweep combo ends Doug at 1:51.

Tye Dillinger is ready to prove that he really is a perfect ten.

No Way Jose vs. Bobby Roode

Roode is introduced on a spinning pedestal and the fans sing his song. His entrance in Toronto is going to be amaz....perfec....blast it why can't I think of the right word for it? Roode takes him down to start and does a pose, sending the fans into song. A headlock doesn't do anything for Roode so Jose slam him to take over. Fans: "YOU'RE NOT GLORIOUS!"

Jose sends him outside for a running forearm off the apron and we take a break. It's good to hear the No Way Jose song as the

commercial starts as Jose deserves some cheering despite being against the hottest act in the promotion. Back with Roode sending Jose into the buckle and getting two off a delayed vertical suplex. Jose fights out of a chinlock and puts on the airplane spin. The Baseball punch misses and Roode finishes with an implant DDT at 11:00.

Rating: C+. Fine match here with Roode doing just enough to win while Jose doesn't lose any face by going down against a bigger name. Roode is red hot right now and they would be crazy to not give him something big at the Toronto Takeover. I'd like to see Jose as something a bit more serious though as there's a lot of potential there. Good stuff here and probably most importantly: Roode changed finishers. The implant DDT isn't great but it's way better than a pumphandle slam.

Overall Rating: C. This show was a bit off as it felt like the first and last segments should have been swapped. Roode winning is fine but the opening segment took a lot out of the crowd, especially in the next match or two. Still though, it was a show that up some stuff going forward and let some people get needed wins. It's more effective than good and that's ok for a week.

Results

Liv Morgan b. Rachel Fazio – Guillotine choke

Hideo Itami b. Drew Gulak – GTS

Authors of Pain b. Doug Sessa/Chris Payne – Running clothesline/Russian legsweep combo to Sessa

Bobby Roode b. No Way Jose – Implant DDT

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NXT – August 31, 2016: Get Them In The Tent

NXT

Date: August 31, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

The champ is back tonight as Shinsuke Nakamura makes his first appearance on NXT since winning the NXT Title in Brooklyn. I mean, that was only eleven days ago but NXT is making it seem like a big deal. It should be interesting to see who comes out to challenge him for the title, though odds are it's Samoa Joe for a rematch. Let's get to it.

Earlier today, Samoa Joe was deemed unclear to wrestle due to injuries suffered in Brooklyn. William Regal looks annoyed.

Opening sequence.

Tye Dillinger vs. Buddy Murphy

Murphy is deemed a one by the fans. Back in my day, being number one was a good thing. Tye gets him to the mat in a hammerlock but gets thrown away, meaning Blake can give himself a ten. Back up and Dillinger does his spinout into a cartwheel for the real ten. Graves: "That would get you disqualified from any gymnastics competition."

The lame wrestling goes back and forth with Murphy sending him outside as we go to a break. That's probably the good thing as this is a very simple match and there's nothing that's working especially well save for the TEN thing. Back with Dillinger making his comeback off a clothesline and a backdrop. Some TEN stomps in the corner set up the Tyebreaker for the pin at 9:46.

Rating: C-. This is a good example of the crowd carrying a match higher than it should have gone otherwise. Dillinger's gimmick is way over but his in ring work isn't the greatest. It's an interesting change of pace from the Murphy vs. Ibushi match from a few weeks ago which was far more entertaining with Ibushi having more than one thing to carry him. Dillinger is more than worth investing in due to being so over but he needs some work. There's potential in Murphy too, albeit with some adjustments.

We look back at the Tag Team Title match in Brooklyn and Johnny Gargano's knee injury costing him in the Cruiserweight Classic.

Tommaso Ciampa says Gargano will be back soon when the Revival comes in and beats him into the arena. They take the beating into the ring and leave Ciampa laying. Wilder says everyone sounds tough until reality hits them in the mouth. Ciampa tries to get up but takes a good looking Shatter Machine.

Steve Cutler wants attention and demands respect. Dang the cupboard really is bare.

Steve Cutler vs. Kenneth Crawford

Crawford is a generic looking guy who Graves says is well dressed backstage. Cutler works on the arm to start but Kenneth flips his way out of a backdrop (didn't stick the landing but he tried) and grabs an armbar of his own. Some good looking dropkicks and a running shooting star get two on Cutler but he walks into a spinning fisherman's driver (as in a fisherman's suplex into a sitout slam) to give Steve the pin at 3:38.

Rating: C-. Crawford did some good looking stuff but neither guy was anything special here. Pushing Cutler (and by pushing I mean setting up to be fed to someone else) isn't the most horrible idea in the world as people already know him from all those jobs over the years and it's not like he can't just go back to being a jobber after this is done. It's better to give someone some value and then take it away than take away value from someone who you've invested a lot of time in.

Hideo Itami says he kicked Austin Aries in the head at Takeover but Aries disappointed him by claiming an injury. If he doesn't want to feel pain, get out of the ring.

Video on Sami Zayn vs. Nakamura back in Dallas.

Video on TM61.

No Way Jose vs. Angelo Dawkins

Jose dances around and grabs a headlock to start as Dawkins gets a few chants of his own. Dawkins' chinlock doesn't go anywhere so it's the baseball punch and a full nelson slam (looked more like a cobra clutch this time) to give Jose the pin at 2:43.

Aries, banana in hand (Dig that potassium replenishing!), interrupts Andrade Cien Almas' interview time, saying everyone is trying to steal his spotlight. Since Almas lost, Aries will just take his interview time. A challenge is issued for next week.

Video on Nakamura vs. Finn Balor.

Liv Morgan vs. Aliyah

Aliyah looks a bit more serious this time and kicks Morgan in the ribs. Some knees to the chest have Morgan in more trouble and Aliyah puts on a freaky hold where she cranks on Liv's arm and holds her head down with a leg. Morgan pops back up and tries a kind of spinning kick close enough to the head for the pin at 3:21. There was a hard edit in there so it was probably worse than it looked.

Rating: D-. If this is the future of the women's division, they've got a long way to go. Aliyah showed some fire but Morgan was a pretty bad mess. Her offense required an edit and consisted of two moves in about three and a half minutes. Also I'm really not sure how strong of a character I'M FROM NEW JERSEY is or how long of a life span it's going to have.

No Way Jose is fired up about his win and says he has the heart to go with the hair. Bobby Roode comes up, compliments Jose's head, and walks away.

Video on Nakamura vs. Joe.

Here's Nakamura for his celebration and the dancing entrance looks even cooler with the title around his waist. The YOU DESERVE IT chants start up until Nakamura starts talking about being in Japan and wanting to face the best competition in the world. That meant he had to come to NXT where he beat Sami Zayn, Finn Balor and Samoa Joe. He's still in a lot of pain but he became the NXT Champion. The Joe Era is over and it's now the Era of Strong Style. Nakamura kind of barks and poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This show was about setting up stuff for the future as we're firmly in the fallout period from Takeover and have a long way to go before the next one. Stuff like Almas vs. Aries and Asuka coming back next week are great ways to build week to week and keep you coming back long enough to let the big stories develop. It's about making something seem important enough that you want to watch the hour of TV to see it and then get you ready for the big stuff. That's such a simple strategy and NXT makes it work as well as anyone has in a long time.

Results

Tye Dillinger b. Wesley Blake – Tyebreaker

Steve Cutler b. Kenneth Crawford – Fisherman's driver

No Way Jose b. Angelo Dawkins – Full nelson slam

Liv Morgan b. Aliyah – Spinning kick to the face

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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 – June 22, 2016: The Greatest Dancing That Ever Lived

NXT

Date: June 22, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

It's a rare situation where we're coming off a Takeover and already have another announced. In theory we have our first match set as Shinsuke Nakamura challenged Finn Balor to a match though a promo on Raw suggested that the match would be taking place tonight. For the life of me I can't imagine NXT hot shotting a match like that so maybe it was just badly worded. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Nakamura challenging Balor last week.

Opening sequence.

Tye Dillinger vs. Oney Lorcan

And I thought Andrade Cien Almas was a bad name. Lorcan is the latest name for Biff Bushick, who takes Tye down to the mat by the leg. We hit a headlock takeover which earns Lorcan a ten. I mean it was from himself but at least he was trying. Back up and Lorcan flips over Tye and blasts him with a running uppercut for no count as Tye was under the ropes.

It seems to fire Dillinger up though as he fires Oney into the corner and starts in on some clotheslines. Oney nails a huge clothesline and another uppercut but runs into a superkick for two. That's good for a perfect ten but Lorcan shoves him out of the corner and hits a running Blockbuster for the pin at 5:55.

Rating: C+. They were beating the heck out of each other here but what are they doing with Dillinger? There's a strong chance that they're tearing him down to build him back up again though wins and losses mean something in NXT and you can only do the Sami/Bayley road to redemption so many times. Oney looked good but that name is just horrible.

Austin Aries is ready to keep going forward when No Way Jose of all people comes up to say you just say NO to adversity. That's quite the fall for Aries or quite the upgrade for Jose. Or maybe either.

We look at Bayley's leg injury.

Bayley is back tonight.

No Way Jose vs. Josh Woods

Jose dances out of a waistlock to start and hiptosses Woods down for two. Woods takes him down for a chinlock but walks into a double chop, followed by the swinging full nelson slam to keep Jose undefeated at 1:57.

Post match Austin Aries comes out to say Jose isn't defined by wins or losses. Aries was defeated at Takeover but he doesn't blame his bruised ribs. What Aries has learned from Jose is that wrestling is about having fun and he actually dances with Jose as Graves fights the urge to join in. Jose goes over to the announcers' table and the dancing continues until Aries finally lays Jose out with a forearm to the jaw. Aries puts on the Last Chancery on the ramp with Jose slowly blacking out. If nothing else it's nice to have Aries go full on heel.

Earlier today, General Manager William Regal makes Finn Balor vs. Shinsuke Nakamura for three weeks from tonight. Murphy of all people comes in to interrupt and gets Nakamura for later tonight as a punishment.

The announcers talk about Aries attacking Jose.

Deonna Purrazzo vs. Bayley

You can actually see the fans rise to their feet when Bayley's music comes on. Bayley dances to her the fans singing before suplexing

Purrazzo early on. The charge in the corner misses though and Purrazzo hits a running knee lift. Bayley shrugs off some rams into the buckle and hits a back elbow to the jaw. Bayley to Belly ends Purrazzo at 2:46.

Carmella says she wants to be Women's Champion when Alexa Bliss comes in to say Carmella is nothing without Enzo and Cass. She left Blake and Murphy because she was the star of the team. Carmella gets in her face and dares Alexa to get in her way of the title. I can't believe it but I'm getting into Carmella as a scrappy heroine.

Video on Samoa Joe.

Long video (as in the better part of four minutes) on Nia Jax vs. Asuka.

Nia Jax vs. Liv Morgan

Morgan grabs a headlock to start but is easily shoved away and pounded about the head and shoulders. Liv's forearms to the head have no effect and it's off to a very loose cobra clutch. An ankle scissors sends Nia into the buckle and a dropkick staggers her a bit. Not that it matters as Nia hits a great looking powerbomb for the pin at 2:11. That's a WAY better finisher for her than the legdrop. Morgan was squashed here but she showed some really good fire which could get her somewhere.

Carmella vs. Alexa Bliss next week.

Buddy Murphy vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

It's kind of interesting that they put Nakamura out there almost every week. No one else gets this much exposure around here but they've done a great job of having him save the King of Strong Style stuff for the big matches and just let him have fun in matches like this one. Nakamura kicks him away to start and grabs a headlock before doing that head against Murphy's chest.

Murphy misses a clothesline and Shinsuke tells him to bring it, setting up Good Vibrations. A counter sends Nakamura into the buckles and he just smiles at Buddy. It's time for the hard kicks ("KING OF STRONG STYLE!") and the running knee to the ribs makes it

even worse. The reverse exploder sets up Kinshasa for the pin on Murphy at 4:35.

Rating: C-. Just a squash here to close things out but it's always cool to see Nakamura flip that switch that makes you realize pain is imminent. Murphy is a good choice for a jobber to the stars as he's a former champion, which actually means something around here. I'm not sure what Blake is going to do because having them in the same vein would be a waste of time. Balor vs. Nakamura should be awesome, albeit a bit predictable.

Overall Rating: C+. This was back to the NXT formula as they used some simple matches to set up the bigger stuff for the upcoming weeks. We have a firm date for Balor vs. Nakamura and a few other feuds set up down the line. It's not a great show but that's not what these things are supposed to be. Sometimes you just need an hour of TV that builds towards the big shows and that's where NXT excels.

Results

Oney Lorcan b. Tye Dillinger – Running Blockbuster

No Way Jose b. Josh Woods – Swinging full nelson slam

Bayley b. Deonna Purrazzo – Bayley to Belly

Nia Jax b. Liv Morgan – Powerbomb

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Buddy Murphy – Kinshasa

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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 Takeover: The End: Going Out On A High Note

NXT Takeover: The End

Date: June 8, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're back with a big show at Full Sail for the first time since last fall. It also might be the final show under the Takeover banner depending on which news source you believe. If nothing else it's likely to be the final match between Finn Balor and Samoa Joe for Joe's NXT Title inside a steel cage as the gimmick makes its debut in NXT. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at the beginnings of NXT with names like Seth Rollins, Paige and the Wyatt Family. Then it was the era of Sami Zayn, Adrian Neville, Kevin Owens and Sasha Banks. However, all things that have a beginning must come to an end. We look at Samoa Joe and Asuka winning their respective titles as the old THE END IS

HERE theme plays. Tonight is the end of the beginning.

Tye Dillinger vs. Andrade Cien Almas

This is Almas' (formerly known as La Sombra in Mexico) debut. The place goes NUTS for Dillinger's count to ten entrance and you would think he was a huge star based on the reception. Almas' entrance attire is all white, including suspenders and a hat with a feather but no mask. The white comes off to reveal some blue and white tights for a pretty basic look. So he's a male stripper?

Dillinger takes him down into a sunset flip and the fans are just going nuts for him. Almas sends him outside as the fans chant BETTER THAN ONE HUNDRED (as in ten is better than Cien, which is Spanish for one hundred). A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker (very popular move these days) gets two on Almas but he pops up to put Dillinger down.

Almas misses a moonsault as Tye rolls away, only to have Almas hit a standing moonsault for two instead. Andrade tries a headstand in the corner, only to have Dillinger superkick him down for two instead. Almas backflips into a double kick to the back before a bulldog puts Tye in the corner, setting up a double running knee in the corner for the pin at 5:18.

Rating: C+. This was uh....not that great. Dillinger completely stole Almas' debut here as the fans were COMPLETELY behind him and Almas didn't exactly do much to win them back. Almas was totally fine here but certainly nothing that blew me away. It's good enough but running knees in the corner isn't enough of a finisher for him and he'll need something much better.

We look back at American Alpha taking the Tag Team Titles from the Revival in a great match at Takeover: Dallas. This turned the Revival into a much more serious and aggressive team coming into the rematch here.

Tag Team Titles: Revival vs. American Alpha

Alpha is defending. Dawson and Gable start things off with Chad taking him to the mat but getting dropped with a shoulder block. It's quickly off to Jordan who hits that really high dropkick for

two on Scott, drawing a JORDAN chant. Back in and it's a four way standoff with Alpha sending Revival at each other, only to have Dawson and Dash get behind the champs' backs for double belly to back suplexes.

Those are reversed as well and it's a double ankle lock to send Revival scurrying for the ropes. Back in and Alpha starts working on Dash's arm and the referee doesn't count a tag to Dawson. Not that it matters as the distraction lets Dash get in a cheap shot on Chad so the real tag can go through. That's fine with Gable who works on Dawson's arm, earning himself an uppercut to take it outside.

Everything breaks down again and Gable scores with a top rope double clotheslines, followed by a double dropkick to send Revival outside again. Back in and Chad tries a flying headscissors but gets caught in a hot shot to finally change control. They be clubberin in the corner for two on Gable and it's time for an armbar. Dawson gets two off a spinebuster and it's back to Dash for the armbar sequel.

Dash loads up something on top but gets pulled down into an armbar over the ropes. The hot tag is broken up by Dawson and a Trash Compactor (I haven't seen that in years. It's kind of like a delayed spinebuster from Dash with Dawson adding a top rope legdrop.) of all things for two on Gable. Not that it matters as Gable crawls through Revival's legs and makes the hot tag off to Jordan as house is cleaned.

The spear in the corner gets two on Wilder but a sunset flip/clothesline combo gets two with Dash spearing Gable down for good measure. Jordan grabs a backslide and tags out at the same time, allowing Gable to sneak in for a German suplex with Jordan adding a dropkick for two. The fans accurately call this awesome as Chad puts Dawson in an ankle lock, only to be kicked away into an uppercut from Dawson.

That and a rollup with trunks is only good for two so Revival loads up their powerbomb/top rope clothesline combo, only to have Gable reverse it with a belly to belly ala Rick Steiner back at Wrestlemania IX. Another quick tag brings in Jordan as everything

breaks down but Grand Amplitude is broken up and the Shatter Machine gives Revival the titles back at 16:00. That's the first time anyone has ever held any title twice in NXT history.

Rating: A. This was an amazing athletic display and I was genuinely surprised by the ending. That belly to belly to counter the clothesline was outstanding and really had me flashing back to the Steiner Brothers. Revival looked great here too and you can almost guarantee a rubber match between these two, maybe going 2/3 falls. Either that or Gargano/Ciampa get the title shot while Alpha heads up to the main roster. Whatever happens now, this was outstanding.

Alpha is getting a standing ovation when two big guys who look a lot alike hit the ring and destroy them with splashes in the corner. A swinging side slam/running boot to the head drops Gable and a Russian legsweep/running clothesline does the same to Jordan. As they stand dominant (and receive a WHO ARE YOU) chant, Paul Ellering of all people comes out to watch. Those two would be Sunny Dhinsa and Gzim Selmani, collectively known as the Authors of Pain and normally under masks.

Asuka is warming up when Bayley comes up to look at her.

We recap Austin Aries vs. Shinsuke Nakamura, which is built around Aries wanting to prove that he really is the best in the world. Simple story and that's all it needs to be.

Austin Aries vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Aries is coming in with taped up ribs. The fans are split but singing Nakamura's theme tilts it in his favor. They hit the mat to start and that's a standoff. It's back to the mat with Aries jumping out of a headscissors and both guys ducking kicks, leading to a staredown. Nakamura puts his hands on the bad ribs and tells Austin to bring it. The fans think Shinsuke is going to kill him as he starts firing off more knees to the ribs.

Nakamura does his shaky leg in the corner (Good Vibrations) but a third attempt is countered into a shinbreaker. Aries drives a knee into Nakamura's ribs but his slingshot hilo hits raised knees. For

once it actually hurts the legs though and Aries kicks away at them to keep control. Off to a modified chinlock with a knee in the back as the fans sing the song again. Nakamura pops up and shrugs off the leg injuries to start firing off kicks. He really shouldn't be able to do that. A knee to the ribs in the corner has Aries in trouble but he fights out of the reverse exploder suplex.

The knees to the head can't set up the Last Chancery so Aries discus forearms him out to the floor, followed by the suicide elbow. That's only good for two back inside as this is really starting to heat up. Aries goes up top but gets pulled into a triangle choke, only to make the ropes for the break. A release gordbuster looks to set up Kinshasa but Aries counters into another shinbreaker and throws on the Last Chancery.

As usual the hold can only stay on so long so Aries hits the running corner dropkick but he has to roll through the 450. Another running knee is blocked and Aries take him to the apron for a slugout with Nakamura scoring off an enziguri. Nakamura charges into a Death Valley Driver on the apron for a nine count but Aries screws himself over by missing a suicide dive and hitting the barricade. Back in and a middle rope Kinshasa sets up the real thing for the pin on Aries at 17:05.

Rating: A. The key there was Aries had Nakamura mostly beaten and then tried to go one step too far (in an effort to show how much better he was) and knocked himself out to set up the finish. It's another excellent match as Nakamura continues to be someone who can turn it up to about 17 on a scale to 10 but it wasn't quite as epic as the Zayn match. These two are both going to be fine though, especially if Nakamura learns to sell the leg injury. Aries could have done more with the ribs too but the announcers were speculating that they weren't even hurt in the first place.

We recap Asuka vs. Nia Jax, which is the basic giant vs. giant slayer story. Both of them beat Bayley up pretty badly but the question is whether Asuka's strikes can work on a monster like Jax.

Women's Title: Nia Jax vs. Asuka

Asuka is defending and is quickly headbutted, followed by a hair toss to send her flying across the ring. A modified Octopus Hold of all things has Nia in trouble but she reverses into a backbreaker for two. Nia rubs at the face but gets caught in a guillotine, only to reverse with a big old suplex for two. Nia has to spin out of an armbar but gets caught in most of a triangle. It's on loosely enough that Nia can lift her up for a buckle bomb to escape.

The champ's back is bent around the post as this has been mostly one sided so far. Off to a bearhug but Asuka escapes and grabs a quick kneebar. A rope is grabbed so Nia plants her with a spinebuster, only to miss a legdrop. Asuka comes back with a quick middle rope dropkick and a running hip attack for two. The powerbomb gets two on Asuka but she grabs an armbar to start a TAP chant. Nia powers out of that as well but gets kicked in the head three times in a row. A running kick/knee to the head retains Asuka's title at 9:09.

Rating: B. They had a story here with Asuka just coming at Nia over and over until she finally got somewhere but they're running a bit of a risk by having Nia lose two big matches in a row. There's more than enough time for her to rebuild but you have to assume Bayley gets the next title shot, possibly setting up a triple threat for the title. Nia looked more aggressive here and that's where she needs to go, though she needs to get the title sooner than later.

Earlier today, William Regal was talking about the show when Bobby Roode walked past him. Regal immediately left to talk to him.

The cage is lowered.

We recap Finn Balor vs. Samoa Joe. Balor beat Joe twice at previous Takeovers but lost the title to him at a house show. Tonight is the final match between the two and it's being held in the first ever steel cage match in NXT history.

Neville is here.

NXT Title: Samoa Joe vs. Finn Balor

In a cage with Joe defending. Balor is the Demon again and comes out from behind a piece of cage, which he shoves over and crawls across

for a really cool visual. Pinfall, submission or escape to win here. Joe goes straight for the door to start but it's barely even worth trying that early. The fans are behind Balor as he raises his boots to stop a charging Joe in the corner. A hard shot to Joe's head lets Balor try a climb but Joe quickly pulls him back to the mat.

It's time to go into the cage for the first time with Balor tasting the steel. Joe kicks him in the face but it's too early to escape. An enziguri almost lets Balor escape but a German suplex drops him for two instead. Joe chops him to make everyone go WOO but he misses a charge and gets caught between the ropes and the cage. Balor hits a string of running strikes but can't get over the top.

Instead Finn kicks him square in the jaw, only to have Joe fall on the ropes to crotch Balor down. The Muscle Buster is countered and they strike it out to put both guys down. Back up and Balor heads for the top, only to have to come down with a Sling Blade for two. A second Sling Blade gets two more but Joe pulls him out of the corner and gets two of his own off the Muscle Buster.

Joe shouts that he's going to end Balor but Finn sends him into the cage a few times, followed by a third Sling Blade. A quick Coup de Grace gets two and Joe grabs the Koquina Clutch. Balor tries to flip out of the corner onto Joe but the hold is broken, meaning Finn has to settle for most of a standing double stomp. Balor gets his legs over the top of the cage but Joe pulls his head down and hits a middle rope Muscle Buster to retain the title at 16:07.

Rating: A-. I was expecting a bit more out of the finish but I'm surprised by the fact that Joe won off a clean pin. It's a huge win for him as the Demon has never been beaten before. Again you have to think that Balor is heading to the main roster now and Joe should be soon behind him, but this was all about Joe and that's a good thing for the long term future of NXT because whoever beats Joe is a huge star.

Balor has to be helped out to end the show.

Overall Rating: A+. When sixty percent of your show is an A- or better, I don't know how much better you can get. The only thing

missing here was some of the atmosphere and energy that existed down in Dallas but that's hardly anything to take away. There were three excellent matches here that are worth checking out plus one very good and another that was just good, earning itself worst match of the night honors. This didn't have the hype coming in but it was another amazing night of NXT.

Results

Andrade Cien Almas b. Tye Dillinger – Running double knees in the corner

Revival b. American Alpha – Shatter Machine to Jordan

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Austin Aries – Kinshasa

Asuka b. Nia Jax – Running knee to the head

Samoa Joe b. Finn Balor – Super Muscle Buster

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