

NXT – July 8, 2015: Do We Have Proof He's A Human?

NXT

Date: July 8, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Corey Graves, Rich Brennan

We have a new NXT Champion though we're likely only going to hear about it in voiceovers as this is a taped show from a few weeks back. Finn Balor took the NXT Title from Kevin Owens in Tokyo on 4th of July and you know Owens is going to be gunning to get his title back. Other than that though, we have the Vaudevillains vs. Enzo/Cass for the #1 contendership. Let's get to it.

Sasha Banks/??? vs. Dana Brooke/Emma

The new announcer introduces Dana and then throws in that she's accompanied by her partner Emma. Dana laughs at Sasha for not having a partner so the fans chant Blue Pants. Sasha is ready to fight on her own but here's someone to back her up.

Sasha Banks/Charlotte vs. Dana Brooke/Emma

Charlotte says she'll be Sasha's partner but Banks owes her one. Banks kicks Dana around to start but Brooke runs when it's off to Charlotte. That means it's off to Emma, who bails to the floor to avoid a knee drop. The heels finally take over but the fans are busy arguing over whether Dana is ratchet or not. Emma bodyscissors Charlotte to slow it down but she fights up for the tag off to Sasha and the champ cleans house. A running knee in the corner and the Bank Statement makes Brooke tap at 4:39.

Rating: C. This didn't have time to go anywhere and it dragged the match down a lot. Dana tapping out is a bad sign for her but I don't think anyone really bought her as the top star of the division or anything like that. Sasha vs. Charlotte again is going to be fine and Becky and Bayley

returning will make things even better.

As you might guess, Charlotte's payment will be a title shot next week, which Sasha is just fine with.

Bayley says she can't wrestle at the moment because of a broken hand. She'll be back for the NXT Title, but Emma is in for more than a hug.

Video on Finn Balor's rise to the top of NXT and becoming #1 contender.

We get a clipped version of Balor vs. Owens for the title in Tokyo, but here's the full match in case you haven't read it yet.

NXT Title: Finn Balor vs. Kevin Owens

We get the Demon entrance and oh yes it's still glorious. For a bonus, the camera changes to an arena shot at the crescendos of the music. To make it feel even more special, we get the full on flower presentation from geisha girls (Owens throws his into the crowd of course) and streamers for both guys. Get this through your head ROH: doing the same thing for every match doesn't make it feel more special. Hideo Itami is shown in the front row and we're ready to start. Balor has more paint than ever with his face, torso and left leg covered.

Balor charges at the bell and loads up the Coup de Grace in the first ten seconds. Owens rolls outside so Balor nails a big dive as the NXT chants start up. He tries to bail again and eats a baseball slide as Balor is all over him. Back in and Owens hammers away to take over for the first time. Owens: "AND THAT'S WHY I'M THE CHAMP!" We hear more of Balor's accomplishments in New Japan as Owens takes some bows.

It's off to Chinlock City before a forearm breaks up Balor's springboard. The slow pace is working for Kevin here and it fits him very well. Finn beats the count back in but takes the backsplash for two. Back in and Owens snapmares him down and runs the ropes...before stopping for a chinlock. Owens: "Are you not impressed? I don't care. I hate this country and all its stupid people!" Balor fights back again with a middle rope forearm for two so Owens does Cena's finishing sequence, complete with an attempted AA.

Balor is afraid of a lawsuit over gimmick infringement (only Kurt Angle can steal that many finishers) and slips out twice in a row. Bloody Sunday is teased (and the fans gasp) but it's a Pele Kick to put Owens down instead. Owens takes a big flip dive and a top rope double stomp to the back, followed by a reverse Bloody Sunday (not called that of course) for a VERY close two. The Coup de Grace misses though and Owens' Cannonball gets two. The package piledriver slam gets the same but Balor hits a quick Sling Blade.

Another Coup de Grace is countered so Balor kicks him in the head and FINALLY connects with the stomp...for two. Dang I thought that was it. Owens can't hit the swinging fisherman's superplex so he settles for a middle rope Regal Roll for two. That looked great. Kevin's Swanton hits knees and the real Bloody Sunday gets an even closer two. They're trading bombs here and it's getting awesome. Owens makes the eternal mistake of slapping a hero in the face and saying the hero can't beat him. Balor dropkicks him into the corner, hits a running corner dropkick and a second Coup de Grace for the title at 19:30.

Rating: B+. Was there ever any doubt that this was going to be awesome? Owens is one of the best heels that I've seen in years and he does everything he can do to make you hate him. The fact that he can go as well as he does in the ring makes him even better, which is saying quite a bit as he's that good as a character.

Tatsumi Fujinami congratulates Balor on his win.

Kevin Owens doesn't have anything to say about the loss.

Chad Gable doesn't know why Jason Jordan doesn't want him as his partner other than he's happy with losing. Jordan finally comes up and asks Gable to be his partner next week. Well it's more saying they'll be partners next week but it's as polite as Jordan gets.

Solomon Crowe says he's back to be the resident monster.

Marcus Louis vs. Solomon Crowe

Louis is back with no music but he's still crazy. A chop puts him down

and Crowe puts on a standing Crippler's Crossface with his leg tied into Louis' to crank on the shoulder. That's a new one. Louis crotches him on top for a very aggressive two and puts on a kneeling abdominal stretch. Crowe fights up again and slaps on a Brock Lock, apparently called the Crowebar for the tap out at 3:18.

Rating: C-. Well Crowe looked better, but it's still not fitting for him. I'm also never a fan of a crazy guy tapping out as it shows way too much logic and common sense to give up like that. The match wasn't anything special but neither guy has anything going for them so seeing them on TV is a good sign.

The Vaudevillains say they'll be the #1 contenders.

Clip of some guys congratulating Balor on winning, including John Cena. Balor says this couldn't have gone any better.

Vaudevillains vs. Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady

English is rocking a MANLY beard. Enzo and Gotch get things going with Simon getting a rollup for two. Off to English for a headlock on the mat but he's back out just a few seconds later. Cass shoves both of them to the floor and calls them S-A-W-F-T as we take a break. Back with Cass throwing Enzo into Aiden for two but Enzo charges into a boot in the corner, giving him one of the best eyes wide open stunned faces I've ever seen.

It's Enzo playing the semi-human in peril (I've yet to see actual proof that he's a person) in a chinlock followed by a legdrop before diving over for the tag to Colin. Everything breaks down and Aiden gets kicked in the face. The Rocket Launcher has to be changed into a cross body though and English rolls through for the pin and the title shot at 10:48.

Rating: C+. I liked this more than I thought I would but my goodness they're really not going with Enzo and Cass getting the titles in Brooklyn? Are they just asking for the worst reaction in years? I know the Vaudevillains will be well received, but my goodness this is one of those layup ideas that they're just missing. Granted there's another month before we could get there so all hope isn't lost.

Overall Rating: C+. This was another shot that set the stage for later more than a good stand alone episode. However, it's setting up Takeover in Brooklyn and there's no way that's not going to be awesome due to the crowd reaction alone. Things will pick up when they can say Balor won the title instead of just having the commentary do it, but Sami will get a great reaction next week in the last show of the taping cycle.

Results

Sasha Banks/Charlotte b. Dana Brooke/Emma – Bank Statement to Brooke

Solomon Crowe b. Marcus Louis – Crowebare

Vaudevillains b. Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady – English rolled through a high cross body

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume III at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00X0UNBEA>

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

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

Beast in the East: The Land of the Wrong Main Event

Beast in the East

Date: July 4, 2015

Location: Ryugoku Sumo Hall, Tokyo, Japan

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

This is one of those times where the WWE Network shows how amazing it really is. Instead of a pay per view or TV show, they've basically sent cameras to film a major house show and we get to watch it because we're lucky that we have the Network in our lives. The main draw is of course Brock Lesnar in a rare match as he faces Kofi Kingston in what could be a lot of fun. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about the only two things that matter: Finn Balor vs. Kevin Owens and Brock Lesnar. Does anything else matter?

It's a really basic set with a short aisle and a square Titantron. I like that.

Neville vs. Chris Jericho

That's quite the opener. The fans are mainly behind Jericho but the LET'S GO NEVILLE chants sneak in there. Feeling out process to start with Jericho working on a wristlock but getting sent out to the floor for his efforts. Back in and we hit a bow and arrow hold on Neville, only to have him flip over into a cover for two.

They're working a nice technical style to start here. Cole talks about their histories and my mind is blown as we hear about Dragon Gate and FMW on WWE programming. Back up and Neville tries some flips, only to be sent out to the floor. The springboard dropkick puts him down again and the fans are eating up some Canadian hero.

We hit the chinlock back inside as Jericho is working a very simple heel style while still being a face for the crowd. An enziguri gets two on Neville. Cole: "And now Neville may be the one heading back to the locker room." So is Jericho just going to stand out there if he wins? It's not the worst idea in the world but as usual, Cole doesn't think before he speaks. Neville fights back up and goes to the top but Jericho is right there waiting to knock him down. Very nicely done there as you can see the story they're telling here.

Jericho's superplex is countered but he has to roll through a Red Arrow

attempt. A try at a hurricanrana goes even worse as Jericho counters into the Walls for a very solid reaction from the crowd. The ropes are quickly grabbed though and Neville hits a quick dropkick and standing shooting star for two. Jericho forearms him down and hits the Lionsault for the same. The Codebreaker connects but Jericho takes his time covering so we keep going. Neville pops back up with the delayed German and a superkick but the Red Arrow hits knees, setting up the Liontamer (yes Liontamer) for the submission at 16:13.

Rating: B. Huh? They spent the entire match setting up Neville's big comeback to beat Jericho and then they have him win? I'm not sure on that one but at least Neville looked great in there. I was really digging the story they were going with here Jericho being one step ahead of Neville and cutting him off at every turn while treating him as someone beneath him with all of his cockiness. Good match with a questionable result but the fans dug the heck out of the Liontamer so points for giving them something to cheer for. Jericho was the heel here, but it was very basic at best.

Brock is here.

Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Tamina vs. Paige

Nikki is defending and it could be interesting to hear how the fans treat this one. Cole, ever the genius, calls the former Women's Champion Bull Nakana (it's Nakano, as Byron Saxton corrects him. Yes, Byron Saxton is the smart one on this team). Paige takes over to start but actually works with Nikki to suplex Tamina. You know, because Tamina is so big that you can't suplex her.

Nikki takes over as you can hear some very loud spots being called. The champ loads up a superplex but the referee is nice enough to tell Tamina to get back in so she can do the Tower of Doom. Tamina gets sent outside again though because she really has no reason to be here other than likely taking the fall later. The Rampaige gets two on Nikki because she killed that move during one of their title matches. It's Tamina in again though with a superkick to Paige but Nikki rolls away from the Superfly Splash, setting up the forearm to retain at 7:13.

Rating: C-. This was fine and basically a Raw Divas match. Nikki is pretty clearly getting the Divas Title record because it's going to make us forget about AJ Lee or something like that, because only WWE really cares about these things. You can see the other Divas having to take it back a notch to let her keep up, but Nikki is a lot better than she used to be.

Brock Lesnar video, which might as well be Kofi's last rites.

Kofi Kingston vs. Brock Lesnar

Just Kofi here and surprisingly no Heyman. For some reason I don't see him as being a big deal in Japan. Kofi is smart enough to bail to the floor to start and we're told that New Day's tag match took place before the show went on the air. I was wondering how they were going to be able to fit the whole seven match card in two hours, but did anyone really need to see New Day vs. Lucha Dragons? Cole mentions Brock being the IWGP Heavyweight Champion, which is always interesting to hear in WWE.

The chase is on for a few seconds but the inevitable beating quickly begins. Kofi's cross body works as well as you would expect it to work and a dropkick to the back just annoys Brock even more. Kofi flips out of a German and goes after the knee for as much effect as it's going to have. There's the first German though and the Japanese fans chant SUPLEX CITY. German #2 makes Kofi's hair bounce in a good bit. The fans try to cheer for Kingston so Brock just destroys him with the F5 for the pin at 2:58. This was exactly what it should have been.

Brock throws in a few more Germans because he can, followed by some F5's to an invading New Day. Again, this is exactly what it should have been.

In case you're wondering about the other two advertised matches, Cesaro beat Diego by submission and the Lucha Dragons pinned the New Day in dark matches.

Quick recap of the NXT Title match, which should be main eventing but instead we're getting a lame tag match because that's how WWE works. Anyway, Finn Balor made his name in Japan and is coming back home as the Demon to take the title from NXT Champion Kevin Owens. Kevin simply said

it's not going to happen.

NXT Title: Finn Balor vs. Kevin Owens

We get the Demon entrance and oh yes it's still glorious. For a bonus, the camera changes to an arena shot at the crescendos of the music. To make it feel even more special, we get the full on flower presentation from geisha girls (Owens throws his into the crowd of course) and streamers for both guys. Get this through your head ROH: doing the same thing for every match doesn't make it feel more special. Hideo Itami is shown in the front row and we're ready to start. Balor has more paint than ever with his face, torso and left leg covered.

Balor charges at the bell and loads up the Coup de Grace in the first ten seconds. Owens rolls outside so Balor nails a big dive as the NXT chants start up. He tries to bail again and eats a baseball slide as Balor is all over him. Back in and Owens hammers away to take over for the first time. Owens: "AND THAT'S WHY I'M THE CHAMP!" We hear more of Balor's accomplishments in New Japan as Owens takes some bows.

It's off to Chinlock City before a forearm breaks up Balor's springboard. The slow pace is working for Kevin here and it fits him very well. Finn beats the count back in but takes the backsplash for two. Back in and Owens snapmares him down and runs the ropes...before stopping for a chinlock. Owens: "Are you not impressed? I don't care. I hate this country and all its stupid people!" Balor fights back again with a middle rope forearm for two so Owens does Cena's finishing sequence, complete with an attempted AA.

Balor is afraid of a lawsuit over gimmick infringement (only Kurt Angle can steal that many finishers) and slips out twice in a row. Bloody Sunday is teased (and the fans gasp) but it's a Pele Kick to put Owens down instead. Owens takes a big flip dive and a top rope double stomp to the back, followed by a reverse Bloody Sunday (not called that of course) for a VERY close two. The Coup de Grace misses though and Owens' Cannonball gets two. The package piledriver slam gets the same but Balor hits a quick Sling Blade.

Another Coup de Grace is countered so Balor kicks him in the head and

FINALLY connects with the stomp...for two. Dang I thought that was it. Owens can't hit the swinging fisherman's superplex so he settles for a middle rope Regal Roll for two. That looked great. Kevin's Swanton hits knees and the real Bloody Sunday gets an even closer two. They're trading bombs here and it's getting awesome. Owens makes the eternal mistake of slapping a hero in the face and saying the hero can't beat him. Balor dropkicks him into the corner, hits a running corner dropkick and a second Coup de Grace for the title at 19:30.

Rating: B+. Was there ever any doubt that this was going to be awesome? Owens is one of the best heels that I've seen in years and he does everything he can do to make you hate him. The fact that he can go as well as he does in the ring makes him even better, which is saying quite a bit as he's that good as a character.

Tatsumi Fujinami comes in to congratulate the new champion. Owens of course refuses a handshake because he's a true heel.

Kane/King Barrett vs. John Cena/Dolph Ziggler

Here's a match that no one wants to see because it's lame even by house show standards and WWE didn't think this stuff through. And Lana isn't even here, though to be fair she wouldn't make sense out there with Cena. Ziggler shouldered Barrett down to start so it's off to the power guys, meaning Kane gets to bore main event crowds in a new country. Cole: "Cena has restored credibility to what many would admit was a rather stagnant United States Title." Oh yeah Vince isn't listening.

Cena slugs away at Kane for no effect, just as he's done about 194 times over the years. Maybe if we're lucky Kane will break a hole in the ring and be a demon/monster again. Barrett chinlocks Cena before it's back to Kane, who bores the announcers so much that they start name dropping Japanese wrestlers and co-promoted shows. Cole: "It's amazing to know that COO HHH is watching this show live." No Cole, it isn't.

Barrett comes back in for some big right hands as the announcers keep trying to find ANYTHING to talk about here. Another Barrett chinlock slows things down even more but Cena comes back with an AA to a very limited reaction. Kane breaks up the tag but can't hit a chokeslam, so

Cena, ever the genius, tries an AA. Since it's against Kane though, the powers of history and Cena's strength don't work because Cena can usually do that on Henry and Big Show but can't handle the 100lb lighter man.

ANOTHER chinlock makes the match drag on even further but Barrett misses an elbow to finally allow Ziggler to get the hot tag. Dolph cleans house...and gets taken down again so this match can keep going for reasons I do not understand. Just let Cena AA Barrett for the pin already. We hit the double arm stretch on Dolph before Winds of Changes is countered into a crucifix for two. The FIFTH chinlock of this match is followed by Barrett's apron knees and yet another chinlock.

Winds of Change stops Ziggler again and Kane does the old Arn Anderson drop down onto the back until he crotches himself. Now usually that would mean a hot tag, but why do that when you can have Kane hit a big boot and a double back elbow from the heels to keep this going? The chokeslam is countered and Ziggler finally hits the jumping DDT for the hot tag. Cena AA's Kane with ease (because this match has erased the last ten minutes from history) and hits another on Barrett for the pin at a mind numbing 23:52.

Rating: D. The match wasn't even horrible but you could have cut out at least ten minutes of this and done the exact same match. Rusev would have made a lot more sense than Barrett but for some reason they didn't change this match to ANYTHING else. The time was the real problem here as it went on forever and the chinlocks killed any interest there might have been here.

A big celebration ends the show. Cole: "You and I actually trended on Twitter tonight!" Is there really any other way to end this? Thankfully the last shot of the show is Balor holding up the title.

Overall Rating: B. Here's the thing: this show had two goals to take care of: Brock Lesnar being all destructive and a good NXT Title match with Balor getting the belt. They nailed those two things to near perfection, so anything else was a bonus. Luckily there was a good opener and a fine Divas match, but that main event killed a lot of the energy the show had. They really should have aired one of the other matches in its place,

because that was the completely wrong choice to end the show. This should have ended with Balor pinning Owens, not a lame tag match. Still though, really fun stuff for a glorified house show.

Results

Chris Jericho b. Neville – Red Arrow

Nikki Bella b. Paige and Tamina – Forearm to Tamina

Brock Lesnar b. Kofi Kingston – F5

Finn Balor b. Kevin Owens – Coup de Grace

John Cena/Dolph Ziggler b. Kane/King Barrett – AA to Barrett

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume III at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00X0UNBEA>

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

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

NXT – June 24, 2015: In Which Mojo Rawley And Sami Zayn Sit On A Couch

NXT

Date: June 24, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

We're getting closer to the big July 4th showdown for the title and that means Finn Balor needs to rack up a few wins. Up first we have the second half of the big sitdown interview with Balor, which is likely focusing on his time in New Japan Pro Wrestling. Other than that we might get some fallout from Joe vs. Owens from last week. Let's get to it.

We open with the roster on the stage and HHH talking about the loss of Dusty Rhodes. Dusty was family to everyone on this stage because he thought they were his kids. HHH, barely able to keep his voice together, asks for a moment of silence as the bell rings ten times.

Opening sequence.

Here's Hideo Itami for his first comments since being injured. He acknowledges that he'll be out another 3-4 months due to his shoulder injury but promises to come back and win the NXT Title. This brings out Kevin Owens, who is glad Itami will be in Japan for the July 4 show, but it's cute to hear Itami imply that Owens won't be leaving Japan as NXT Champion. Owens slips up on the word delusional but makes up for it by saying he sounds like Itami trying to speak English.

However, there are two things Kevin wants to make clear. First of all, he didn't hurt Itami because if he did, there's no chance Itami would be standing there. The other reason is because Owens wants an apology for Itami implying that Owens attacked him. Itami calls him a terrible human being, so Owens thinks that if he's going to be accused of hurting Itami, he might as well do it. Kevin comes to the ring but Balor comes out for the save, only to have Rhino jump Balor and knock him off the stage.

Balor vs. Rhino later tonight.

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Jason Jordan/Sylvester LeFort

The entrance sounds a bit faster this week but Enzo makes up for it by saying he sees two mushrooms from Mario's world in the ring: they're about to get flattened. Cassady's part didn't sound very smooth but he

got the lines out well enough. I had been wondering what happened to LeFort. Colin puts Sylvester down to start and slams Enzo down on top of him for two, only to have Jordan tag himself in and catch Enzo in a slam. LeFort's cobra clutch doesn't get him very far so it's quickly off to Jordan, who gets rolled up for the pin at 2:32.

After last week's main event, Joe talks about hearing the people chant LET THEM FIGHT. He got the fight he wanted but he didn't get the fight he wanted (not a typo) because Owens is still walking. Joe wants Owens again.

Dana Brooke vs. Cassie

Brooke has Emma in her corner and Cassie is K.C. Cassidy. A quick rollup gets two on Brooke and a headscissors puts her down again. That's enough for Dana as she throws Cassie down and gets two off a slam. Dana cranks on an arm and leg at the same time while advising Cassie to tap. Cassie comes back with something like a Thesz press and some clotheslines but Dana Whiplashes her off the top for the pin at 3:36.

Rating: D+. This wasn't quite a squash as Cassie got to show some spunk, which means she'll probably be pushed as something more serious when she gets some more ring time. Brooke is still definitely a work in progress, but if there's one thing NXT has shown it can do, it's take their girls and improve improve them about ten fold overnight.

Charlotte isn't worried about Dana.

It's time for part two of Balor's sitdown interview, which starts with some clips of Sami Zayn hanging out at his house. Balor likes to put jigsaw puzzles together (amen brother) and still plays with Legos while watching old pay per views. Suddenly I'm digging the heck out of this guy.

NXT head trainer Matt Bloom (actually called that here instead of Jason Albert) talks about meeting Fergal Devitt in Japan about eight years ago. We get some pictures of them hanging out over the years, including Bloom pulling Devitt's pants down as they posed for a picture. Bloom explains the concept of a young boy and we see some stills and videos of Fergal's

time in new Japan. Prince Devitt was someone obsessed with trying to master the Japanese style and he felt more like Prince than Fergal over there.

Then WWE came calling right around the annual Tokyo Dome show and Fergal wasn't sure if he could do it or not. He had to try though because there was nothing left for him to prove in Japan so here he is, with Sami Zayn and Mojo Rawley sitting on his couch in the background. He calls it an incredible journey but it's still continuing. Next week: the NXT days.

Bull Dempsey has been trying to get in better shape without much success. This is shown through a series of Instagram shots of Dempsey falling asleep while trying to train. So he's narcoleptic instead of just fat?

Hype Bros vs. Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins

That would of course be Rawley and Zack Ryder. You know what? Why not? It's not like Ryder has ANYTHING better to do. Mojo runs Dawkins over to start and it's off to Ryder for a nice dropkick to Fulton. Back to Rawley for HAMMER TIME, allowing the amateur guys to take over with the old Benjamin jumping over Haas' back onto Mojo's back spot. A backdrop ends Angelo's offense and it's off to Ryder for all his usual stuff. The Broski Boot gets two and everything breaks down. Rawley holds Dawkins up for a middle rope Rough Ryder and the pin at 4:00.

Rating: C-. Ryder and Rawley have a weird chemistry together and I've always been a fan of Zack so it's cool to see him do something other than losing to Rusev in 45 seconds. Fulton, Dawkins and Jordan seem like the perfect choice for a stable along with Chad Gable but for some reason the Shoot Nation stable was called off. They're still fine for roles like this though and you can easily rally them together later.

Eva Marie wants a match but Regal needs proof that she has more than charm.

Finn Balor vs. Rhyno

Kevin Owens comes out and shoves Byron away from his chair to do commentary. Balor takes it to Rhyno to start and slugs him down in the

corner. Rhino gets sent out to the floor as Owens denies attacking Itami again. A big flip dive puts Rhino down again and gets two back inside. Owens promises to win on July 4, even though he doesn't know what it is. "I'm Canadian so it doesn't mean anything to me. Independence Day? Will Smith? Good movie."

Rhino gets in his first offense with a spinebuster and puts on a bearhug. Owens has completely taken over commentary by ripping on Brennan, because Kevin doesn't believe that Brennan has talked to anyone on the roster. "I've seen them running away from you." Owens now has his arm around Saxton and has pulled Byron's head onto his shoulder. We take a break and come back with Balor fighting out of a second bearhug.

Owens is annoyed at all the questions Brennan is asking him as Balor gets two off a dropkick to the side of the head. That earns him a northern lights suplex but Balor staggers him with a Pele Kick. The Coup de Grace is loaded up but Owens comes down for a distraction, allowing Rhino to hit the belly to belly. The Gore is countered by a kick to the face though and the Sling Blade sets up the Coup de Grace for the pin at 11:40.

Rating: C+. This was fine. The idea behind Rhino is that he's intense enough to lose every big match he's in, beat some jobbers, and then come back for another loss to make someone look good. There's awesome value in that and it's something you can never have enough of. Balor vs. Owens is going to be awesome, especially if the demon shows up.

Owens comes in and double teams Balor until Samoa Joe comes in for the save, likely setting up a tag match next week.

Overall Rating: C. Not their best show this week but they did a good job of setting up Balor vs. Owens in less than two weeks. Other than that they have enough feuds and stories going on to set up a big non-Takeover show before we get to the REALLY big stuff down the line. Good effort this week, even though it was mainly a placeholder outside of the main story.

Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady b. Jason Jordan/Sylvester LeFort – Rollup to Jordan

Dana Brooke b. Cassie – Whiplash

Hype Bros b. Sawyer Fulton/Angelo Dawkins – Middle rope Rough Ryder to Dawkins

Finn Balor b. Rhyno – Coup de Grace

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume III at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00X0UNBEA>

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

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

New WWE DVD Survey

It's another of those surveys that WWE sends out to gauge interest in potential DVD projects. These can offer some compelling ideas so let's take a look at what might be on WWE's schedule.

ECW's Top 50 Craziest Moments

Yeah sure. As you probably know, ECW isn't my thing and they certainly had some insane moments, but I'm really over hearing about how great they were. There's definitely a market for it, but as a full on DVD? I'm not sure, but like I said, I'm not the target demographic.

Dudley Boyz Bio

I'd watch it. The Dudleys are one of the most successful tag teams of all time and giving them a full on three hour documentary and a quality match selection would definitely be worth the time. Just limit the Hardys/Edge and Christian matches to like two each. There are other teams out there.

The Best of 1996: 20 Years Later

This could be interesting as it's not quite the Attitude Era and there really is some great stuff in there. However, I'll turn it off (ok now I won't) if it turns into another "the NWO was awesome but we were going to have DX and we were never worried about it" show. Focus on something new instead.

Wrestlemania III

Sold. The behind the scenes stuff is always interesting and it's the biggest show of all time, meaning there have to be a ton of stories. Hearing WWE talking about the attendance question could be interesting. In case you're wondering, I say it's 93,173 for a few reasons.

1. The 80,000 limit or whatever you hear IS FOR FOOTBALL. A football field is 360 feet by about 160 feet. A WWF ring was at most 20ft by 20ft. Why this is never brought up isn't clear.
2. It's the official number. Just like the official line is that Undertaker and Kane are brothers, that Hulk Hogan is 6'8 and that Andre was 525lbs. Wrestling lies. Why this is supposed to be different isn't clear either.
3. What difference does it make? It's a lot of people.

Rivalries: Taz vs. Sabu

Again, this would be fine and hasn't been touched on enough, but it's not for me.

New Generation

Haven't there been enough Bret and Shawn DVDs already?

True Story of the Royal Rumble

Yep. I don't think this really needs any more explanation.

Rivalries: Eric Bischoff vs. Vince McMahon

We did a 20 part documentary on the Network about this already and I really, really do not need to hear about it ever again. The interviews could be entertaining but I'm totally over this entire subject. It was almost 20 years ago and it's over. Let it die already.

Hardcore

This would be a look back at the Hardcore Title years. This could be incredibly entertaining if they kept it short and went completely over the top serious with it. Get Foley and Road Dogg to do commentary and break down the psychology behind hitting someone with a cookie sheet or just rip on Al Snow for a full match. That could be hysterical.

Countdown

As in a collection of the Network series. I think you can figure this one out for yourself. Bring this series back to as it's a very easy way to kill an hour.

Unreleased Match Compilation

The names listed are Michaels, Austin, Undertaker and Rock. I'd be all over those four as there are some really fun matches in there, as long as it's not just a bunch of PPV matches that I've seen a bunch of times before.

Rivalries

Again, it's a Network series.

Podcasts

On DVD? Why?

Wrestlemania Rewind

You might be noticing a pattern here. However, why haven't we gotten Summerslam/Royal Rumble/Survivor Series Rewind? There's a ton of stuff in there for different series.

Shane McMahon

This would be short and entertaining, but at the same time it would get repetitive since most of the matches are street fight style.

Best of NXT

Oh yeah. There's a ton of great stuff in the old days of NXT (the Full Sail years that is) that people have forgotten about. However, it might be better to put that kind of thing in a different for. Like an e-book. In July.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume III at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00X0UNBEA>

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

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

Some New Network Content Uploaded

And some stuff you might actually want to watch. In the last two days, the remainder of Hulk Hogan's Rock and Wrestling's

first season has been uploaded. Now for those of you who aren't interested in something that awesome, we also have four Smackdowns from 2000. I'm all for additional content from the best year the company ever had so this could be a good sign going forward.

Checked Out The Remembering Dusty Rhodes Special On The Network

And yeah, it's awesome. However, there's one major thing that got into my head here. How amazing is it that WWE can throw something like this together in about four days? It's the beauty of having the Network instead of having this be something like another lame WWE.com feature or a five minute segment on Raw and Smackdown. They made this feel important and did it this fast. That's a far better treatment for someone like Dusty and this worked very well.

NXT – June 17, 2015: Who Is Fergal Devitt?

NXT

Date: June 17, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Rich Brennan

It's a big week here in NXT as last week saw Samoa Joe challenging Kevin Owens to a title shot but getting turned down because he hasn't racked up enough wins yet. Fair point said Commissioner William Regal, so it's a non-title match tonight instead. This is probably just filler until we get to July 4 in Japan but NXT filler is still good stuff. Let's get to it.

As you would expect, this show is dedicated to the American Dream Dusty Rhodes.

We open with the Dusty tribute video, which is still awesome stuff.

Opening sequence.

Blake/Murphy/Alexa Bliss vs. Carmella/Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady

Enzo's speech this week is about Star Wars but he keeps it short. Carmella wants a piece of Alexa Bliss, and Cass is nice enough to spell out the one word that describes Blake, Murphy and Bliss. There's a new ring announcer who sounds like he has no idea who any of these people are. He has a good, deep voice though. The fans think Blake and Murphy look stupid but switch to BONAFAIDE STUD/CERTIFIED G.

Blake and his headlock slow Enzo down to start before a shoulder puts him on the mat. With nothing else working, Enzo opts to dance and hits a very unique cross body where he doesn't actually jump but takes Blake down anyway. Everything breaks down and the Long Island guys (and Carmella) clean house.

Back from a break with Enzo slugging Blake down but getting dropped from behind by Murphy. We hit the headlock on the mat for a good while before Cass gets dropped off the apron. Enzo avoids a charge in the corner though and makes the tag off to Carmella, meaning Alexa has to come in. Carmella dominates in a hurry as everything breaks down again. Cass plants Blake with the side slam, setting up the Rocket Launcher for the pin at 10:22.

Rating: C-. This was fine, but there's a major point that caught my eye here. Since turning heel, Alexa has been wearing more revealing attire

and Carmella was wearing even less than usual tonight. However, other than Enzo calling Carmella hot during the entrance, their looks or attire are never addressed. The lack of comments from Lawler or the girls ripping on each other for their appearances and just fighting because they hate each other. I love that about NXT and it continues to show how lame and behind the times the Divas division really is.

Stills of Cena vs. Owens II and the aftermath.

Joe is here to deal with Kevin Owens but more than that he's here because he wants to wrestle in places that are cutting edge. That explains the departure from TNA as I doubt they could even cut paper. As for Owens, his running away last week told Joe that he didn't want to fight. Tonight though, the NXT World Champion (that's a new one) is getting what he deserves.

We get the first part of a look at Finn Balor, mainly due to a sitdown interview. First question: who is Fergal Devitt? Balor talks about growing up in Ireland and how his dad built his way up from a cleaner to a train engineer in a cool story. One day a show called Superstars came on his TV and he was instantly hooked. We get some really cool clips of him in some tiny independents as well as Insane Championship Wrestling (Scotland) and Revolution Pro Wrestling UK.

Becky Lynch cries talking about how Fergal (her word) opened a wrestling school in Ireland and got her into the business as a result. She lied about her age to get into the school and so that Fergal might ask her out, which apparently he did. There are some really cool pictures of the two of them going through school and starting their careers, including stuff like being in the ring or just listening to music together so you could tell they were close.

There are clips from Insane Championship Wrestling with him in the demon paint where the announcers praise him for being amazing. Next up was New Japan but he said he's be back to Ireland. This was about eight minutes long and totally awesome as it made me care about Balor more than I even have before. Part two is next week.

Charlotte vs. K.C. Cassidy

A headscissors takes Cassidy down to start but she comes back with a quick rollup for two. That goes nowhere as Charlotte kicks her in the face and chokes with the boot when asking the referee about the speed of the count. Charlotte's cravate doesn't work very well as K.C. comes back with a cross body for two, only to have her eat a spear (good selling too). The Figure Eight makes Cassidy tap at 3:50.

Rating: D+. Just a squash here to remind us that Charlotte is awesome before she gets back into it with Barrett and Emma for the big feud. That spear looked good and could be a good power finisher for her as Charlotte is tall and strong enough to make it work well. Cassidy has potential but is clearly not that experienced.

Dana Brooke says she's misunderstood because she's a current fitness competitor who isn't scared one of Charlotte. She's replacing Charlotte because she's the total diva and not using her family name to get into NXT. I have no idea what Carmella was looking at that was just a foot or so off camera but it made her look really weird. She makes up for it just a bit by coming back to pat Devon on the head.

Kevin Owens vs. Samoa Joe

Non-title. The crowd going silent when Joe's music changes tells you all you need to know about how horrible it really is. Owens bails to the floor to start but Joe goes right after him and gets in the champ's face. Back in and the fans already think this is awesome. Not so fast kids. Owens: "THE CHAMP IS HERE!" That earns him a right hand to the face and a big chop to the head as Joe gets in the first offense.

A back elbow drops Kevin again as the fans are quieter than you would expect. The corner enziguri sets up the Facewash and the big running boot to the face to send Owens outside for a break. Back with Joe missing a charge in the corner, allowing Owens to hit a Cannonball, almost out of desperation. A chinlock keeps Joe in trouble and the second version slows things down even more. Fans: "HEADLOCK CITY!" It's a chinlock but points for creativity.

The hold is finally broken and Joe drops his own backplash for two. Something like a running enziguri gets the same on the champ but he

fights out of the Muscle Buster. They fight to the floor but Owens can't powerbomb the baron of the buffet. The referee gets shoved down and that's a DQ at 14:39.

Rating: C-. This was more of an angle than a match but that chinlock in the middle killed everything they had going. I have a feeling they'll move on to Balor vs. Owens for now before Joe gets his big title match, or maybe just a non-title match against Owens instead. Fun power brawl while it lasted, but that chinlock went on way too long. It was much more of a preview than a showdown.

They do the big brawl with security not being able to hold them back post match. Owens shouts that the champ is here to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. It was another of those setting the future shows, which are often some of the best episodes NXT puts out. The Tag Team Title rematch is set, Charlotte looked dominant and Brooke is ready to fight her, there's a reason for Joe vs. Owens II and you top it off with the really awesome Balor video. That's quite an impressive use of 53 minutes as you have four stories set up, which could cover a month of upcoming TV. It's back to efficient for NXT and that's what they do best.

Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady/Carmella b. Blake/Murphy/Alexa Bliss – Rocket Launcher to Blake

Charlotte b. K.C. Cassidy – Figure Eight

Kevin Owens vs. Samoa Joe went to a double DQ when they both shoved the referee

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume III at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00X0UNBEA>

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

Checked Out Rey Mysterio's Masked Man Beyond the Ring

And I really dug it. This is the kind of thing I want to see more of as it was basically an 82 minute shoot (well as shooty as WWE is going to get) interview with no matches or anything and a few clips here and there. It's cool to slow things down for a change and hear Mysterio's take on stuff as well as some interesting stories. Do more of these things, which can't have a high production cost.

NXT – June 10, 2015: Oh How I've Missed You

NXT

Date: June 10, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton

The big story tonight is the in ring debut of Samoa Joe, who debuted a few weeks back and has had some intense staredowns with NXT Champion Kevin Owens. It should be interesting to see who Joe's first victim is, because it's fairly clear that he's coming for Owens and the title. Right now though, Finn Balor is the #1 contender and will be facing Owens for the title in Tokyo on July 4. Let's get to it.

The opening video is all about Joe debuting in NXT and setting his sights on the title.

Opening sequence.

Zack Ryder/Mojo Rawley vs. Mike Rallis/Elias Samson

Ryder is WAY over here and the fans even seem happy to see Rawley. Mojo shoves Rallis down, slams Samson, but then stop, HAMMER TIME. Ryder comes in and takes some shoulders in the ribs, only to raise his knees in the corner to stop a charge. The middle rope dropkick sets up the Broski Boot but Samson offers a distraction to take over.

We hit the chinlock but a GET HYPED chant brings Ryder to his feet for the hot tag to Rawley. Mojo cleans house with some very fast paced offense, including a big running punch and capped off by a middle rope Hart Attack with the Rough Ryder instead of the clothesline for the pin on Samson at 3:55.

Rating: C. I've always liked Ryder and this was a good sign for him. A lot of guys could use a recharge down in NXT and Ryder is probably at the top of that list. He clearly still has a following as the fans were all over him. Rawley was doing exactly what he should have done all along here: cleaned house and never looked back. One of his biggest problems was getting beaten up until the last 45 seconds of the match for a big comeback. Guys like him should hardly ever be on defense and the reaction was a lot better as a result.

Finn Balor promo with his voice talking about how everyone has two sides. Shots of the demon paint keep appearing until "FINN BALOR ARRIVES – July 4 in Tokyo" comes on screen. Oh that's going to be amazing.

Dana Brooke video. She's the Total Diva.

Emma vs. Blue Pants

SHE'S BAAAAACK! Big Cass' Price Is Right entrance music got one of the loudest reactions in recent weeks. The fans are smart enough to know that it's Blue Pants' birthday. Emma jumps her to start, making her the most hated woman in the promotion. A dropkick gets two and we hit the bow and

arrow on Blue Pants. Fans: "BLUE PANTS ROCKS!" Blue Pants gets some rollups for two but it's back to the chinlock. Emma drops an elbow to the back of the head for two more but Blue Pants comes back with some kicks to the head. Blue Pants gets going but Emma trips her down and the Emma Lock gets the submission at 4:40.

Rating: D+. Here's the key thing about Blue Pants: she isn't used that often. They could bring her in more often for some loud reactions, but they would eventually die down because Blue Pants is so beloved due to being a special attraction. If this were the main roster, she would be in five segments a night and people would get sick of her in two weeks. This common sense stuff is addictive.

Enzo, Cass and Carmella say that Blake/Murphy/Bliss wouldn't last one week in the Hunger Games and if they grew up where they're from, it would be time to go live with Uncle Phil. Six person tag next week.

Tyler Breeze vs. Bull Dempsey

Dempsey knees him in the head to start and we're quickly in a chinlock. Fans: "BULL IS GORGEOUS/NO HE'S NOT!" Back up and the standing splash sets up the top rope headbutt but Breeze rolls away before the jump. Breeze gets him in a chance around the ring and Bull keeps getting winded. Fans: "CARDIO! CARDIO!" Breeze laps Bull, throws him inside and gives him a Beauty Shot for the pin at 2:49. Tyler is basically a face now due to all of his hard work and string of good matches.

We look back at Becky Lynch's standing ovation after losing to Sasha Banks. Brennan's nickname for her: The Lass Kicker. As much as I hate myself for this, I kind of dig that name.

Becky Lynch vs. Jesse McKay

Becky has a very high energy entrance now, complete with smoke along the entrance. The fans are responding to it and it's easy to see why. McKay used to wrestle in Shimmer under the same name. Jesse gets in a kick to the ribs to start, followed by another to the face. An armbar has Becky in some trouble but she comes back with a hammerlock suplex and some legdrops. "BETTER THAN HOGAN!" Let's not get crazy here. Something like a

torture rack Samoan drop sets up the armbar (Rich: "The Disgoosted Armbar!" Graves: "The WHAT?") for the submission at 4:16.

Rating: D+. I really wasn't feeling this one as Jesse got in way too much offense in what should have been a Becky showcase match. McKay was good enough in there though and could be something interesting if she's allowed to develop like the rest of the girls down here have done. This was too much like an old Mojo Rawley match though: awesome entrance, next to no offense until the very end.

Regal announces that Owens will be on commentary for Joe's match but Bull Dempsey comes in eating a bag of Doritos. He blames his loss on a lack of sleep. Regal gets serious and tells Dempsey to get his act together. The boss leaves so Dempsey pulls an open Snickers out of his singlet. Well they had to do something new with Dempsey so this works well enough.

Jason Jordan says he has another partner when Chad Gable comes in, saying it should be him. "I'm ready, willing and Gable. See what I did there?" Jason says no but Gable adds his name to Jordan's locker.

Baron Corbin vs. Angelo Dawkins

Corbin throws him around to start and walks him around the ring before a slam. A bulldog attempt is countered by a huge clothesline and End of Days gives Baron the pin at 2:29.

Samoa Joe vs. Scott Dawson

Owens is on commentary and Joe's music still sucks. He does however look a bit more toned. Fans: "PLEASE DON'T DIE!" How nice of them to be worried about Joe's safety. They trade armbars to start until Joe takes it up a notch with a back elbow to the face. Owens: "Wow a back elbow! I've got a mean back elbow." The release Rock Bottom out of the corner sets up the Muscle Buster for the pin on Dawson at 3:45.

Rating: C. Total squash here and it did exactly what it was supposed to do. Owens is great on commentary as the guy trying to cut into Joe's hype and this was a very fun use of about five minutes. Joe's physique looked about as good as you can fairly expect. The guy is never going to look

like John Cena and it's unfair to expect him to, but he looked fine here.

During the replays, Kevin offers to get Brennan a Joe shirt from the merchandise table. Owens goes to leave but Joe calls him to the ring. Kevin won't get in because he's a good man who won't drop Joe after his first match. Joe is a rookie here in NXT and one win isn't enough for an NXT Title match. Cue Regal who agrees with Owens. Joe hasn't earned a title shot, but he's earned the right to a non-title fight against Owens next week.

Overall Rating: B-. Matches made for the future, six matches, some amusing promos, two in ring debuts and a new character for Dempsey. How in the world can they get all that inside an hour and have almost no filler? This was the efficient NXT that flies by every week because it's very well put together. Couple that with an energetic crowd and you have one heck of a fun show.

Results

Zack Ryder/Mojo Rawley b. Elias Samson/Mike Rallis – Middle rope Rough Ryder to Samson

Emma b. Blue Pants – Emma Lock

Tyler Breeze b. Bull Dempsey – Beauty Shot

Becky Lynch b. Jesse McKay – Disgoosted Armbar

Baron Corbin b. Angelo Dawkins – End of Days

Samoa Joe b. Scott Dawson – Muscle Buster

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume III at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00X0UNBEA>

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

WWE Airing Fourth of July Tokyo Show On WWE Network

And the card is STACKED. This might be better than Payback.

- * Lucha Dragons vs. Los Matadores
- * **Divas Title Match:** Nikki Bella vs. Paige vs. Naomi
- * **Tag Team Title Match:** New Day vs. Tyson Kidd & Cesaro (this may have to be changed due to Tyson Kidd's injury)
- * Chris Jericho vs. Neville
- * Brock Lesnar vs. Kofi Kingston
- * John Cena & Dolph Ziggler vs. Kane & King Barrett
- * **NXT Title Match:** Champion Kevin Owens vs. Fin Balor

This should rock, though I wouldn't be surprised if they changed Lesnar's opponent to Jericho.

On top of that, how awesome is the Network? WWE can just throw this kind of thing on there as a special with no clearance or anything like that. They're doing it because they can and we get a cool show. That's so awesome.