

# NXT 2/12 Review: Everybody Is Looking For Momentum



We have arrived at another go-home show for NXT. *Takeover: Portland* is on Sunday and the participants are making their final stamp on a pretty robust match card. Like always, NXT tries to establish some feuds for post-Takeover and showcase some newer wrestlers mixed with wrestlers who need a little momentum. The wrestlers who aren't present (a la **Keith Lee**, **Dominik Dijakovic**), they build on their matches through video packages. The major matches are the focus this week. Now that the table is set, let's talk about the show.

**Roddy Has An Axe To Grind:** Anytime a man puts your family on their wrestling tights, there's going to be a problem. I like that **Velveteen Dream** came back and picks up where he left off with his issues concerning the Undisputed Era. A **Roderick Strong**/Dream feud doesn't need a title attached to it. It's just a good ol' personal grudge that will at least carry both men towards the next *Takeover* in Tampa. The Portland card is stacked already and you want to give a match like this the proper time it needs.

Strong continues a good track record wrestling opponents bigger than him. If you notice, there's a certain psychology to them. Strong takes a lot of damage and waits at the right moment to pull off a big power move. In this case, a superplex. With **Keith Lee**, it was the Olympic slam. **Bronson Reed** is going to have a good future ahead of him within NXT. They featured him on the offensive front a lot during this match. You had a conundrum where you have to showcase up-and-coming talent, but also play off the anger that Strong showed in his promo. The match leaned more to Reed, but I expect the upcoming match between Strong and Dream to show that vitriol.

**Dakota Builds Up Some Momentum:** I felt a little unfulfilled with the match that happened between **Dakota Kai** and **Tegan Nox** that happened on [NXT a couple of weeks](#) ago. Then again, I figured that there would be a bigger match because this is too big of a feud to just have a blow-off. Candice LaRae is Tegan's good friend, so it made sense to have a quick match against Dakota. These two got a lot of stiff shots into each other (Candice's bloody nose).

It was the right call for Dakota to get the roll-up win. She had to win here, but you don't want to take a lot away from Candice in the process. The upcoming street fight between Dakota and Tegan should be a fun watch. Expect there to be a third match with a possible Dakota win in Portland.

**Gargano Escape:** The last time that **Johnny Gargano** had a match on NXT TV was on [October 2nd, 2019](#) where he defeated **Shane Thorne**. (Where has he been?) **Cameron Grimes** seems to be in that NXT holding pattern where he has really good potential, but there are too many programs going at the same time. It's the gift and the curse of being in NXT. So much talent to fill two hours worth of programming a week. This match was probably the best one of the night. Gargano gave a good reminder of what he can do in singles competition. I'm making the call that **Finn Balor** vs. Johnny Gargano will be the match of the night on Sunday.

**I Came To Collect: Lio Rush** and **Angel Garza** have great chemistry in-ring and this was another good outing for them. I would give their first encounter for the Cruiserweight title a slight edge over this match. Maybe because there was a title at stake. I just felt like both men hit another gear in that match.

So, Garza is going back and forth between *NXT* and *Raw*. You can choose to heat him up for the Cruiserweight title anytime you want. However, I think his *Raw* program is the most intriguing going into the thick of *Wrestlemania* season. Lio Rush versus **Jordan Devlin** is going to be great. Although the Cruiserweight title has had a 'hot potato' stigma to it, Devlin is going to retain. There's just too much potential with him having the belt.

**K.O.D.:** Poor **Santana Garrett**. She just had to be in the way of a very determined **Bianca Belair**. Since the [Royal Rumble](#) where Belair tied the elimination record, they've done a good job at keeping her looking like a constant threat. This is even with **Rhea Ripley** perusing around *RAW* and challenging **Charlotte**. Could Rhea be overlooking Bianca in a possible matchup with Charlotte at *Wrestlemania*? Bianca coming out on top tries to tease that. Rhea will probably retain because this money match with Charlotte is being built up for a reason.

Let's be honest; Bianca is more than ready to make an impact either on *RAW* or *Smackdown*. *Smackdown* is in dire need of another all-around blue chip for that women's division. Granted, **Becky Lynch** is currently tied up with **Shayna Baszler**, but who's to say that Charlotte and Bianca can't be a really good post-*Wrestlemania* feud for *RAW*. (It would.)

**Goldy vs. Destiny**: Just a phenomenal video package for **Tomasso Ciampa** and how much this championship match in Portland means to him. Think of the things we were robbed of due to his unfortunate injury; a proper ending to the feud with **Johnny Gargano** and him having a *Wrestlemania* weekend moment. He's never lost the championship. For someone who worked like a proverbial madman to get back from a neck injury that had him questioning his future, 'Goldy' means everything to him. (Take a look at the promo he cut below).

The match between **Adam Cole** and **Kushida** was fine. If you haven't caught on yet, the ongoing theme of this show is people involved in matches for the upcoming weekend looking good in competitive matches. Kushida is another wrestler where I'm not sure where his place is. He was hot coming over from New Japan and had a long winning streak where he got to show off his technical ability. Now, he's cooled off. I think *post-Mania* where a lot of wrestlers should move on to other brands, that's where NXT can utilize him. Jordan Devlin is going to need challengers.

The Undisputed Era belts 'prophecy' is starting to dwindle and it will all fall on Adam Cole. Does he lose here or is it more fitting for him to drop the belt in Tampa? An intriguing question to the weekend.

How great at the Broseweights, huh? The odd couple pairing of **Matt Riddle** and **Pete Dunne** really have gelled together given their short time as a tag team. The videos throughout this episode were hilarious. Dunne acting as the straight man and Riddle who is pulled from *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*. Give them a title run.

Listen, NXT Takeovers pretty much sell themselves. You are guaranteed to have a very solid card that is both just the right amount of matches and high in quality. Did the show lack a certain pizzazz? If you're looking for huge, dramatic angles, it may not be for you. Most of the Portland match card are personal feuds that have been built up over time. We've gotten through misdirects like [War Games](#), the *Royal Rumble*, and [Worlds Collide](#) where they put a lot of feuds into a holding pattern. Now, we're here, Portland will deliver, and we'll start to see what a post-Mania NXT looks like.

**The NXT 2/12 Episode is currently streaming on [WWE Network](#).**

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