

NXT – March 11, 2015: There's Always Next Week

NXT

Date: March 11, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips, Jason Albert

Things are starting to pick up again in NXT as commentator Alex Riley is coming after NXT Champion Kevin Owens for bullying him on commentary recently. First up for Riley is CJ Parker, as Alex has to earn a shot at the champ. Other than that we're waiting on the return of Sami Zayn and the Finn Balor showdown with Owens for the title. In other words, no one likes Owens except the audience. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Lucha Dragons

No Carmella this week. Enzo thinks the Dragons are more like the Geico Lizards. Cass: "Either save us 15% or more or get out of our way!" When I grow up, I want to be Enzo's beard. Enzo and Kalisto get things going as the fans duel between "GEICO LIZARDS!" and "FIFTEEN PERCENT!" Kalisto grabs an armbar to take Enzo down and it's quickly off to Cara, who slams his partner into a senton on Amore for two. The tag brings in Big Cass who shows Cara how to throw your partner around.

Enzo comes back in but gets kicked away, allowing the hot tag to Kalisto as things speed up. The Dragons take over again as this is going longer than your average opening match on this show. Everything breaks down with Enzo and Cass going outside. Cass shoves his buddy away to take the double dive but is still able to break up the swanton from Cara. He does the smart thing by dragging Enzo over for the tag and the East River Crossing plants Kalisto, setting up a Rocket Launcher from Amore for the pin at 5:40.

Rating: C-. The match dragged a bit but you have to give Amore and Cass a

win or two here and there to set up their title program down the line. Cass is big and strong enough to make up for Amore and they have great comedic chemistry together. Also, notice how much more into them the fans were without Carmella at ringside. NXT gets that logical thinking thing while it's totally lost on WWE.

Next week we see matches from NXT at the Arnold Sports Festival in Columbus, Ohio.

Video on Alex Riley.

Video on Kevin Owens' dominance.

Alexa Bliss vs. Carmella

Carmella throws her away from a headlock to start but Bliss grabs the arm to take over. Alexa misses a charge into the corner so Carmella just hammers her in the face. The fans aren't exactly interested in having Carmella out there. We hit the body scissors on Bliss before Carmella drives her back into the corner. This really isn't much to see so far. Bliss comes back with some forearms and a flip splash for two, followed by a spinning splash from the top (the Sparkle Splash) for the pin at 5:03.

Rating: D+. These two aren't exactly on Charlotte and Banks' level. The fans flat out do not like Carmella and it's definitely good to keep her apart from Enzo and Cass. Bliss isn't great but she's adorable and can carry herself well enough in the ring. To be fair though, I never thought much of Sasha or Charlotte at first and they've turned out great.

Alex Riley gives a very serious speech about being stuck in a cage for two years and constantly being told "maybe next week kid." Owens talks about having a wife and kids but Riley's family is in that arena. It's time to fight for his family. Really good stuff from Riley here and I've always been a fan of his. I always thought it was a waste of his talents to put him behind a mic for so long but at least he's getting back in the ring now.

Breeze says this didn't have to get ugly with Itami. "Well you were

involved so maybe it did have to get ugly.”

CJ Parker vs. Alex Riley

Riley's entrance cuts off Parker complaining about the world. Riley is still in shape but his face makes him look a bit homeless. Parker's headlock doesn't get him very far as Riley comes back with a nice dropkick. The TKO is countered though and Parker lays in some left hands. The Third Eye is countered with a backdrop and Riley nails a hard clothesline. Something like John Morrison's flip neckbreaker puts Parker down again and a Blockbuster is good for the pin at 3:20.

Rating: C-. Not terrible here but Riley had some ring rust. That's the point of something like developmental but he needs to do some more before he's ready to make it onto the main roster. I'm hoping he uses the TKO again instead of a Blockbuster as a few people are using that one already.

Post match Kevin Owens comes out and calls Alex Riley the dumbest man in NXT. Riley gave up his commentary career just so Riley can destroy his in ring career too. Owens hasn't forgotten about Finn Balor either.

Tyler Breeze vs. Hideo Itami

Rematch from Rival. Breeze heads to the floor to start and says this won't be like last time. He does it a second time and the fans keep booing. Old style heat still works. Back in and Breeze drives Itami into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs but Itami kicks him right to the floor. Itami throws him back inside for a running knee in the corner and the tornado DDT into a guillotine. He goes back up but gets crotched this time, giving Tyler his first real advantage.

The fans think Itami is gorgeous as Breeze drops a leg and puts on a chinlock. Back from a break with Itami punching Breeze away and hitting a top rope dropkick to put both guys down. A leg trip sends Breeze to the floor and a big kick gets two. Itami kicks him in the face but walks into the Supermodel Kick for two.

Breeze gets pulled face first into the post while trying to crotch Itami,

setting up a top rope knee to the back of the head. Breeze gets up again though and Itami is getting mad. The fans call for the GTS but have to settle for a hard series of strikes instead. Itami misses a running dropkick in the corner though and the Beauty Shot is good for the pin on Hideo at 11:25.

Rating: B-. That's a surprising ending but I like it better than just giving Itami the pin. The problem with Breeze was that he kept putting people over and it stops meaning anything after so many times. This win gives him some credibility back and makes future wins over him mean more. In other words, it's trading in the short term for the long term, and that's rarely a bad thing.

Overall Rating: C+. This was solid enough for the most part and I really like that we're getting the short term stories instead of the major stuff every week. Riley vs. Owens isn't the biggest feud in the world, but it lets the anticipation for Owens vs. Balor and eventually Owens vs. Zayn build up instead of just blowing through them immediately. Another thing that NXT understands better than WWE is you don't have to get everything in by a certain date, at least not most of the time. Take the extra time, because as HHH said on Austin's podcast, there's always next week.

Results

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady b. Lucha Dragons – Rocket Launcher to Kalisto

Alexa Bliss b. Carmella – Sparkle Splash

Alex Riley b. CJ Parker – Blockbuster

Tyler Breeze b. Hideo Itami – Beauty Shot

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