

NXT – March 18, 2015: Road Trip!

NXT

Date: March 18, 2015

Location: LC Pavilion, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Jason Albert, Corey Graves, Rich Brennan

This is a very interesting show as we have matches from outside the NXT Arena for the first time. A few weeks back, NXT held some shows in Columbus, Ohio as part of the Arnold Sports Festival and the matches were recorded for TV. Other than that we also have Owens vs. Riley in a showdown over Owens being a bully. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about being in Columbus and previews the major events tonight.

Opening video.

The arena looks similar but there are a lot more seats opposite the Titantron. The wrestlers have to come down some steps off to the side instead of a ramp as well. Finally the cameras are facing the Titantron instead of having it on the right.

Kalisto vs. Tyler Breeze

Breeze main events one week and jerks the curtain the next? Kalisto takes him to the mat but Breeze bails to the ropes like a heel should. Fans: "WATCH THE FACE!" It's a really good sign if the fans are just as hot on the road. They trade leapfrogs until Kalisto does his hand want into a headscissors, followed by a big flipping wrist drag. He tries to fly a bit too much though and gets dropkicked out of the air for a delayed two.

Breeze rips at the mask and puts on a chinlock as we take a break. Back with Kalisto fighting back but not being able to hit the Salida Del Sol. Instead he dives into the Supermodel Kick for two and Breeze is getting frustrated. Kalisto knocks him down again and nails a 450 but Breeze is

right next to the ropes. Salida Del Sol is countered again and the Beauty Shot is good for the pin at 10:07.

Rating: C+. Breeze has been on a roll lately and I'm digging his matches more and more every time. I wouldn't mind seeing him move up a bit higher on the card, but I don't see him fighting Owens or anything like that. Kalisto is great as a high flier and could be something special if he's put on the main roster.

We recap Owens vs. Riley, which is entirely built around Owens being a bully and Riley wanting to stand up to him. Riley has come out of retirement to fight Owens and proved himself against CJ Parker last week.

Hometown girl Alexa Bliss promises to show Sasha Banks what she's made of.

Video on the WWE Experience at the Arnold Sports Festival as well as their visit to a children's hospital and HHH being inducted into the International Sports Hall of Fame. Also includes are clips of Hogan and Flair appearing. Hulk Hogan showed up and thought being NXT Champion sounded good.

Finn Balor tells Alex Riley he'll be watching tonight. Riley is ready for Owens but Balor tells him not to take Owens lightly. We haven't seen Zayn or Neville since Owens hit them and Riley could be next.

Video of HHH talking about what it means to expand and the potential of NXT as a touring brand.

Colin Cassady vs. Wesley Blake

Carmella is with Enzo and Cass and is booed out of the building. Cass says they're at Arnold Sports Festival where people like to pump weights, but Cass and Enzo like to pump fists. "As for the Australian guy, why don't you didgeridoo yourself a favor a skedaddle?" Cass sends him into the corner to start and the fans declare Blake SAWFT. Wesley runs the ropes but charges into a knee to the ribs as the fans want Blue Pants. I can't say I blame them.

A springboard spinning forearm gets two for Blake and we hit the

chinlock. Colin fights up and stomps away in the corner, setting up a side slam. Murphy gets up on the apron and Carmella gets up to yell at him, only to have Cass boot him down. Carmella goes down at the same time though, allowing Blake to roll Cass up and grab the trunks for the pin at 3:55.

Rating: D+. This was nothing special but it advanced the stories. If nothing else it might be a step towards getting Carmella away from the guys, which would be better for everyone involved. There's potential in Carmella, but not as a face and not with Enzo and Cass. Thankfully this isn't WWE where they would just take her off TV and blame her for what happened.

Video on bodybuilder Dana Brooke who has signed with NXT.

Alexa Bliss vs. Sasha Banks

Non-title. Sasha is nailing the charisma at this point and is ready to be on the main show. Sasha goes after the nose, which she broke to put Bliss on the shelf for months. The double knees out of the corner gets two and we hit the chinlock. Alexa fights up and moonsaults into a double knee of her own before the Booker T. spinning sunset flip out of the corner gets two. Sasha bails to the floor so Alexa dives out onto her, only to be sent into the apron. Bliss quickly posts her though and wins by countout at 3:18.

Rating: C-. Bliss has gotten a lot better in a hurry and seems to be the next project of the division. I still think Bayley is the one to take the title off of Banks (if nothing else because I want to see the fans lose their collective minds) but Bliss is a good choice for a lower level challenger for now. Also, points for not jobbing her in her hometown or having the champ get pinned.

Kevin Owens is ready for Riley but is looking forward to facing Balor as well.

Alexa is happy with her win but Sasha comes in to say that wasn't a pin. Regal pops up and makes the title match for next week.

Alex Riley vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title. The fans chant for Owens to start as they shove each other around. The champ knocks him down and hammers Riley in the back and the fans call Owens Mr. Wrestling. Riley nails a dropkick but gets sent hard into the corner. There's the Cannonball for two before Owens puts on the chinlock. Riley gets up though and blasts Owens with a right hand, sending him out to the apron.

Another right hand puts him on the floor but Owens is ticked off. Back in and Owens misses another Cannonball, setting up a spinebuster for two. Riley hits the ropes on a missed crossbody, setting up three straight backsplashes. Instead of covering though, Owens sends him back out to the floor. Back in again and the pop up powerbomb gives Kevin the pin at 6:00.

Rating: C+. This was exactly what it should have been with Owens getting rocked a few times but never being in any serious danger. Riley got to try but gets beaten up in the end and Owens gets to look like a killer all over again. Good stuff here and nothing great, which was pretty much exactly the idea.

Owens goes after Riley post match but Finn Balor comes out to stare him down. Kevin reaches for Riley again but Balor dives off the stage (nothing that great as it's not a high stage) take him down. They head inside but Owens bails before Balor can hit the top rope double stomp. The champ bails but makes sure to get in a cheap shot on Riley because he's a great villain.

Overall Rating: C+. This wasn't a spectacular episode, but it was a very successful experiment. The crowd was great on their first trip outside of Florida and that's the best news NXT could have. As for the actual content, this was little more than a preview for next week, but it still worked well enough. Balor vs. Owens could be a lot of fun if they let them beat on each other for fifteen minutes. Good show here and hopefully the first of many road trips.

Results

Tyler Breeze b. Kalisto – Beauty Shot

Buddy Murphy b. Wesley Blake – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Alexa Bliss b. Sasha Banks via countout

Kevin Owens b. Alex Riley – Pop up powerbomb

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