

NXT – March 2, 2016: An Old Friend

NXT

Date: March 2, 2016

Location: CFE Arena, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's a big night for NXT as we have a past great name coming in to face off with NXT Champion Finn Balor on the finale of the Orlando tapings with Neville coming back for one night only. In addition to that we're getting closer to the big showdown in a 2/3 falls match next week with Sami Zayn vs. Samoa Joe for the #1 contendership. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick video on Balor vs. Neville later tonight.

Opening sequence.

Hugo Knox/Tucker Knight vs. Vaudevillains

Knox is rather tattooed which I don't remember about him last time he got squashed. A dropkick puts Aiden in the corner but he quickly takes over and brings in Gotch for a chinlock. The announcers mention the Vaudevillains being up to their old ways to confirm their heel turn, which is probably the best move for a team called the VILLAINS. English kicks away and it's back to Gotch for another chinlock on Knox. Everything breaks down and the Whirling Dervish pins Knight at 3:33.

Rating: D+. Just a squash here with the Vaudevillains being back as the heels they should have been all along. I don't think they have much of a chance of getting back to the title picture but a feud with the Hype Bros feels like an older feud where the announcers just start talking about how they're having issues, setting up a big match later. Yeah they fought once but it was hardly anything huge. We don't need to have them come out here and fight or stare at each other every week. It worked back then so let's try it again today. It just might work better than having them fight over and over until people get sick of them.

Emma and Dana Brooke aren't impressed with women like Deonna Purrazzo and promise to win tonight.

Finn Balor video.

We look back at Dash Wilder/Scott Dawson attacking Enzo Amore outside the Performance Center until Big Cass made the save.

Enzo and Cass promise to stand over Dawson and Wilder as Tag Team Champions.

Dawson and Wilder (now collectively known as the Revival) blame Enzo and Cass for the attack.

Enzo/Cass vs. Revival for the Tag Team Titles at Roadblock.

Emma vs. Santana Garrett

Garrett used to be Brittany in TNA. Emma sends her into the buckle to start and pounds her into a butterfly suplex. There's a move you don't see very often anymore. Some kicks to the back (there's a more popular one) has Santana in trouble and another big kick stops a comeback bid. We hit the double arm crank as this has been one sided so far. Now we get the real comeback as Santana gets in a Russian legsweep, only to have Emma crotch her on top. Something like a curb stomp sets up the Emma Lock for the tap out at 5:38.

Rating: D+. Another glorified squash here with Emma getting to look good, even if there's little for someone on her level to do. Asuka vs. Bayley is going to be the big feud for the next month and I don't see anyone outside of Nia Jax being the next big challenger for whoever survives there. Emma has gotten better in the ring but I'd rather she be on her own as Brooke really doesn't add all that much.

William Regal tells Eva Marie and Nia Jax that they'll be facing Bayley and Asuka at some point in the near future.

Regal is in the ring after a break and introduces the latest talent acquisition: Austin Aries. The fans and announcers are WAY into this but Baron Corbin jumps Aries during his entrance and lays him out with the

End of Days on the floor. Corbin to Regal: "AN EYE FOR AN EYE!"

Elias Samson vs. Steve Cutler

Cutler seems to annoy Samson for some reason and gets punched in the face for his efforts. Maybe he didn't drop a dollar in the guitar case. A suplex and some elbow drops have Steve crawling on the mat but Samson stops for some air guitar. Samson's quick neckbreaker is enough for the pin at 3:03.

Rating: D+. I could go for something other than a squash at this point as they haven't been filling up the extra time with good promos like in the old NWA formula. Samson is turning into more than I was expecting but he still needs a big win over someone to take that next step. I don't know how well he's going to do and I'd call him a longshot at the moment but anything is better than jobbing like he did for all those months.

The Hype Bros are glad they lost the first match to the Vaudevillains and think they should take them out early. The Vaudevillains are listening and smile.

Neville video.

Finn Balor vs. Neville

Non-title and they have a ton of time here. It's a battle of the wristlocks to start with neither guy being able to get very far. Finn's headlock only works for a few moments and it's Neville smacking him in the face with a dropkick. Now it's Neville working on the headlock until he drops Finn with a hard kick to the ribs. Neville doesn't seem to know what to do against Balor so he kicks Finn down another time and we take a break.

Back with the fans getting behind Finn to get him out of a chinlock as Neville is the default heel here. Finn gets up again and catches a charging Neville with a backdrop over the top, sending him head first onto the steps to really wake up the crowd. Neville pops to his feet though and sends Balor outside for a great looking moonsault. It's time for another chinlock but Balor gets up with a great looking Pele to

stagger Neville.

Some kicks (hard ones too) get near falls on Neville but he comes right back with the rapid fire kicks and a pair of German suplexes. The Red Arrow is broken up with a running enziguri and Balor hits the big flip dive to put Neville down on the floor. That's still not enough for the Coup de Grace though as Neville crotches him again.

Neville has to bail out of the Red Arrow though and gets caught in a Sling Blade for a VERY close two. They're trading bombs here and the fans are getting more and more into it every time. Balor dropkicks him into the corner and nails the Coup de Grace, followed by Bloody Sunday for the pin at 18:40.

Rating: B+. This was a great chess game as Neville was way too cocky to start until he got serious and had to trade big shots with Balor, who he seemed to underestimate early on. People forget how good Neville can be when he's doing stuff besides high spots and that's what we got here: a long wrestling match built around high spots but still with enough wrestling and storytelling to keep the fans hooked from bell to bell.

They shake hands and applaud each other post match.

Joe says next week should be easy and calls Sami Zayn ungrateful. Sami thinks Joe is trying to come in here and take whatever he wants at Sami's expense. Joe gets in his face and brings up saving Sami from Kevin Owens. That was Joe saving his career but next week he's taking it away. I'm really digging this stuff with the interviews hyping up a match from next week to close out the show. So many times Raw is wrapped up to end the week and it gets annoying.

Overall Rating: C+. It's really hard to have a single match save a show but that's what they did here. This was a bunch of nothing until two guys got to spend nearly a third of the show beating each other up and showing how great the in ring product around here really can be. Really fun main event here and it actually makes up for the uninteresting stuff that got us here.

Results

Vaudevillains b. Hugh Knox/Tucker Knight – Whirling Dervish to Knight

Emma b. Santana Garrett – Emma Lock

Elias Samson b. Steve Cutler – Neckbreaker

Finn Balor b. Neville – Bloody Sunday

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