

NXT – February 14, 2018: Roses Are Red, Violets Aren't Blue, OW MY ARM!

NXT

Date: February 14, 2018

Location: Center Stage Theater, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson, Mauro Ranallo

We've got another packed show this week with two title matches on tap. First up the Women's Title is on the line as Ember Moon defends against Shayna Baszler in a rematch from Takeover: Philadelphia. After that, Pete Dunne defends the United Kingdom Title against Roderick Strong. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick preview of both title matches.

Opening sequence.

United Kingdom Title: Roderick Strong vs. Pete Dunne

Dunne is defending. Strong goes for a very early attempt at the Strong Hold but Dunne slips out as we take an early break. Back with Dunne twisting Strong's arm around in a very strange angle and kicking it hard. They head outside with more shots to the arm as Dunne is certainly focused so far.

Strong sends him into the barricade though and gets it back inside to take it to the mat. The first backbreaker gets two and the second sends Dunne into the corner for a stomping. They head up top where Dunne cranks on the arm again to get out of a superplex. That's fine with Strong who gets a fireman's carry to drop Dunne onto the barricade.

We take another break and come back with Dunne grabbing the arm again. This time he cranks it back ala Lucha Underground's Pentagon Dark, followed by a sitout powerbomb for two. A snap German suplex puts Strong down again but he dives into a dropkick to give Roderick two this -time.

Another backbreaker is countered into an exchange of rollups for two and both guys are down again.

Dunne scores with an enziguri for two and grabs a triangle choke, only to have Strong pull him throat first into the rope for the break. Strong takes him up top for a super Angle Slam and it's time for another Strong Hold. That's broken up with a snap of Strong's fingers though and the Bitter End retains the title at 21:12.

Rating: A-. Is Dunne capable of having a bad match? I really don't remember the last time that he's done anything less than great and a lot of that has to do with bringing in a completely different style mostly independent of the WWE training system. Strong looked great here, but at some point he has to actually win something. The great performances can carry him a long way, but he has to actually pull off a big win.

We look back at last week's outstanding segment with Johnny Gargano, Candice LeRae, Andrade Cien Almas and Zelina Vega. The title rematch is next week.

Velveteen Dream is ready for No Way Jose next week. He has no comment on wanting to face Tyler Bate.

Here's Aleister Black in a suit for a chat. Black's path has always lead him one way, starting with a sensation, left him in a dream and put him in the way of an era. The devil has been driving him and that devil is the NXT Championship. Cue Killian Dain to say the devil isn't on Black's back. Dain is the one on Black's back and wants the NXT Title as well. That means Dain has crossed Black though, and now he must fade to black. Aleister challenging for the title in New Orleans makes sense and this certainly feels like the first step toward that match.

TM61 vs. Andrew Duckworth/John Skyler

Thorn drives Skyler into the corner to start and takes Duckworth down with a suplex. A few shots to Thorn's knee get him into the corner though and trouble begins. It's over in very short order though as Thorn grabs a belly to back suplex. The hot tag brings in Miller to start cleaning house in short order. Thunder Valley ends Skyler at 2:12. Basically a

squash.

Women's Title: Shayna Baszler vs. Ember Moon

Moon is defending and wastes no time hammering Baszler up against the ropes. The step up enziguri and a pump kick to a kneeling Baszler have her in big trouble. It's too early for the Eclipse though as Baszler rolls to the floor, only to be taken down by a HARD suicide dive. Moon wrecks the bad arm though and the title is in big trouble. Back in and Baszler grabs a cross armbreaker but Moon is quickly in the ropes. They head outside again with Moon's arm getting caught in the barricade for more damage. Baszler is going off on the arm so here's Kairi Sane for the save and the DQ at 4:46.

Rating: D+. Just angle advancement here with Baszler continuing to the monster who doesn't play by the rules. She'll win the title, likely in New Orleans, and whoever gets to beat her can be the giant killer. It's a classic story (or one ripped off from Samoa Joe and AJ Styles in TNA) and it'll work very well here.

Sane clears the ring and checks on Moon to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. They've got some big stuff set up for the coming weeks and you can tell they're already looking towards New Orleans, which is less than two months away. Next week intrigues me though as you could go either way with Gargano winning and facing Black, who he's already pinned, in New Orleans or have Ciampa interfere and cost Gargano his NXT career. I'm sure they could find a way to get to the obvious grudge match though, and it's cool to have so many of these options available.

Results

Pete Dunne b. Roderick Strong – Bitter End

TM61 b. Andrew Duckworth/John Skyler – Thunder Valley to Skyler

Shayna Baszler b. Ember Moon via DQ when Kairi Sane interfered

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