

NXT – February 28, 2018: Gone But Not Out Of His Contract



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NXT

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Location: Center Stage Theater, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Percy Watson, Nigel McGuinness, Mauro Ranallo

We're still closing in on Takeover: New Orleans but this time we'll be doing it without Johnny Gargano. Last week Gargano put his NXT career on the line for another shot at the NXT Title but former partner Tommaso Ciampa cost him the title with a crutch shot to the back. Now we need to figure out what's going on in New Orleans so let's get to it.

[Here's Last Week's Show](#)

We open with a recap of last week's title match with Gargano and wife Candice LeRae stared back at the ring in sadness as Ciampa looked at them in contempt.

Opening sequence.

Velveteen Dream vs. Tyler Bate

This should be good. Dream crawls away in reverse and the fans are split, albeit more for Dream than Bate. Tyler puts on a short form clinic by

sliding between Dream's legs, jumping over him, and wristlocking Dream into a rollup for two. A dropkick has Dream livid on the floor as we take a break.

Back with Bate slipping out of a suplex but running into an elbow to the jaw. Dream gyrates a bit and grabs a reverse chinlock, followed by a reverse chinlock for good measure. Bate fights up and hits a running elbow in the corner for two as the pace picks up a bit. The airplane spin has Dream in trouble but he's still able to elbow his way out of the reverse version.

The Tyler Driver 97 is countered with a backdrop and one heck of a spinning spinebuster gives Dream two. They slug it out from their knees with Bate getting the better of it but Dream sends him hard into the buckle. Dream goes to the top but gets crotched. Bate is shoved down anyway and the Purple Rainmaker is good for the pin at 12:08.

Rating: B-. Bate is settling into the role of the bulletproof wrestler, which is about as bad of a spot as you can get. I can't remember the last time that he won a match and now he's stuck losing over and over again. That being said, he's still one of the most consistently strong performers around and it's almost always a good performance. Dream is on another level than almost anyone else right now though and I'd be surprised if he isn't NXT Champion by the end of the year.

Paul Ellering and the Authors of Pain want the Tag Team Titles back.

We see William Regal giving Gargano his termination papers, but Gargano will still be required to make media appearances and live events that he was already signed for. That sounds important. The referee admitted that he made a mistake and is sorry that he cost Gargano his career. Gargano seems to accept it.

Cezar Bononi vs. Adam Cole

Actually hang on a second as Cole grabs a mic and offers Bononi a spot on the team. O'Reilly throws him a shirt but it's a ruse so Cole can stomp him down in the corner. Bononi is right back with a Michinoku Driver for two but another distraction lets Cole hit a superkick. A running knee to

the back of the head ends Bononi at 2:55. Just a win to keep Cole hot until he gets a match at Takeover.

We recap Kairi Sane winning the Mae Young Classic by defeating Shayna Baszler, who has gone full villain since. Baszler has destroyed various people, typically by wrecking their arms. It seems that Baszler is on her way to the Women's Title but Sane is trying to slow her down.

The Street Profits interview people about the upcoming Dusty Classic. The first round starts next week.

Kairi Sane vs. Shayna Baszler

Sane hammers away to start but Shayna takes her down by the leg. Kairi is sent to the apron and Baszler starts in on the ribs to slow Sane down. A knee to the ribs takes us to a break with Sane in trouble. Back with Baszler getting two off a gutwrench suplex before starting on the arm.

The armbar is reversed into a rollup for two and Sane chops away in the corner. Sane gets a breather off a spear and the sliding knee in the corner has Baszler in trouble. A top rope forearm gives Sane two and a spinning backfist puts Baszler down again. It's too early for the Insane Elbow though as Baszler kicks her in the head, setting up the Kirifuda Clutch to make Sane tap at 7:22.

Rating: C+. This was exactly how the match should have gone: Baszler gets the win back and looks dominant in the process, showing that she is now better than Sane and can beat her in rather short order. The match should set Baszler up for the Women's Title match in New Orleans, where she needs to win the title in similarly dominant fashion.

Post match Baszler calls out Ember Moon, promising to leave with either the title or her limb.

Here are Andrade Cien Almas and Zelina Vega for a chat. Vega calls Almas Mr. 4-0 (over Gargano) and laughs about Gargano having his wife there for the last loss. Gargano was bragging about earning respect but Almas earns MONEY. Almas talks about making Johnny Wrestling Johnny Jobless but Almas is still called the NXT Champion. They go to leave but Aleister Black

cuts them off. Before Black can say anything though, here's Killian Dain for the brawl, including a running crossbody to take Black down and end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Well there's the next title match and they went out of their way to suggest that Gargano isn't quite gone yet. I'm starting to get excited for Takeover and that's a good sign with nearly six weeks left. The show could be a heck of a card and it's nice to have good TV setting us up on the way there. Throw in what should be the start of a good tournament next week and things are rolling.

Results

Velveteen Dream b. Tyler Bate – Purple Rainmaker

Adam Cole b. Cezar Bononi – Running knee to the back of the head

Shayna Baszler b. Kairi Sane – Kirifuda Clutch

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