

NXT – May 18, 2021: Then, Now, And For A Few Weeks

NXT

Date: May 18, 2021

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Beth Phoenix, Wade Barrett, Vic Joseph

It's time for a big main event with the North American Title being defended inside a cage. Johnny Gargano has to defend against Bronson Reed, which could set up a heck of a Tsunami to crush Gargano for good. That could be quite the match as you have two talented people in there, plus a lot of other things on the show. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a look at the cage match.

Toni Storm vs. Zoey Stark

Stark starts fast and drives her into the corner to hammer away, setting up a springboard missile dropkick. They head outside with Storm getting knocked around until she manages to whip her into the steps. The running hip attack crushes Stark against the steps and Stark barely beats the count. The chinlock doesn't last long so Storm boots her down for two.

Stark grabs a backslide for two and nails an enziguri to put both of them down as we take a break. Back with Stark reversing Storm Zero into a hurricanrana for two, followed by a half nelson suplex for the same. Storm is back up with Storm Zero for two and shock exists. That's fine with Storm, who grabs a judo throw and spins it over into a DDT, which drops Stark on her head (that was TERRIFYING) for the pin at 11:30.

Rating: C+. They got me with the finish as I was thinking

Stark was going to win after surviving Storm Zero. Granted I would hope they could come up with a better way to do it than by dropping Stark on her head, but at least she seems to still be alive. Storm really needed the win, and if she can get a less disturbing finisher, she should be good to go.

Post match here is Frankie Monet to stare at Storm.

Legado del Fantasma is ready for MSK but Tommaso Ciampa and Timothy Thatcher come in to say not so fast. Thatcher goes into Spanish to say....I believe "the cat does not have shoes." Ciampa: "That makes perfect sense." The match seems to be made for later.

Cameron Grimes comes up and says park his car, but he's in Ted DiBiase's spot. He gets a match with the valet, who happens to be Jake Atlas, for later.

The Way is at a spa, where Indi Hartwell admits that Candice LeRae was right about everything, including Dexter Lumis. As you might have guessed, Lumis is giving her the massage, though she can't see him due to the cucumbers over her eyes.

We get a Prime Target on Karrion Kross vs. Finn Balor II. Kross was feeling the injuries from the match for weeks and can't believe Balor survived as long as he did. At the end though, Kross left with the title. Balor says getting back up is how you keep going though and it's time to go. Pat McAfee is ready for the rematch and Paul Heyman says everyone is interested in the match, even Roman Reigns. As for a spoiler...it's a little too close to call. Next week, it's round two. More greatness from these videos, as usual.

Cameron Grimes vs. Jake Atlas

Before the match, Grimes says everyone is glad to see Ted DiBiase, but he has a video on the REAL DiBiase, including all kinds of bad things happening to him over the years. Atlas dropkicks him to the floor before the bell and we take a

break. Joined in progress after a break with Grimes hammering away but charging into a boot to the face. A springboard armdrag sets up a running enziguri in the corner, followed by the middle rope hurricanrana for two.

Grimes clotheslines him down and grinds an elbow into the chest in the corner. Atlas sends him chest first into the corner and snaps off a German suplex...as Ted DiBiase arrives in his limo. Something misses off the top and Grimes snaps off the flipping powerslam. The Cave In is loaded up but we've got Ted DiBiase in person, allowing Atlas to grab a rollup for the pin at 4:51.

Rating: C-. The action wasn't the point here and Grimes losing to Atlas in this kind of situation isn't going to hurt him. Grimes vs. DiBiase continues to be one of the best things going on in all of wrestling today and I want to see where it keeps going. I'm not sure if it is going to be but they have me wanting to see it every week.

Post match Grimes gives chase but DiBiase is in the limo, saying that Grimes will never be a Million Dollar Man. Ranting ensues again.

Bronson Reed is ready to make everything he has put into his career worth it by winning the North American Title. He has been around the world but now he is going to be here, winning the title and telling his wife that they did it.

We get a sit down interview with Pete Dunne, talking about how he can win any title he wants at any time. He has never had a bad match and even when he loses, people leave the ring a different person. Dunne talks about being influenced by British style and everything he has put together over the years (with the required Fit Finlay reference). The fans' influence makes a huge difference and he can't wait to see what is next.

Alexander Wolfe vs. Killian Dain

The rest of Imperium (minus Walter) and the still scared Drake Maverick are here too. Dain punches him into the corner to start but gets kicked and uppercutted for his early efforts. Some uppercuts from Dain allow him to send Wolfe into the corner. Fabian Aichner knocks Maverick off the apron and there's a German suplex to Dain. Marcel Barthel throws in a chair but Wolfe takes too long, allowing Dain to hit a running crossbody for the pin at 1:49.

Post match, Imperium turns on Wolfe and beats him down, setting up the posing.

Raquel Gonzalez and Dakota Kai are done with Mercedes Martinez and are ready for the Women's Tag Team Titles. Ever-Rise come in (with coffee mugs) to say Shotzi Blackheart and Ember Moon are the #1 contenders. They plug their show, but Gonzalez doesn't watch it. Matt Martel says that sounds like she wants to hit him...and she does, dropping him with one slap. These guys are good.

Legado del Fantasma vs. Tommaso Ciampa/Timothy Thatcher

Wilde dances at Ciampa to start, who takes him outside for a ram into the barricade. Back in and we hit the front facelock on Wilde, setting up the chinlock. Thatcher comes in for a hammerlock on Mendoza, followed by a headscissors from Ciampa. Mendoza fights up and raises a boot in the corner to cut Ciampa off. Thatcher comes back in for a headlock into an ankle lock.

With that still on, Ciampa comes in with his own to Wilde but stereo rollups get...no count because two of the people are illegal. Stereo enziguris put everyone down and we take a break. We come back with Ciampa hitting a string of running clotheslines in the corner. Mendoza breaks up the hanging DDT on Wilde as we see Mendoza's busted nose being checked on during the break. Ciampa gets punched and chopped in the corner but Mendoza misses a charge into the post.

The hot tag brings in Thatcher to hammer away in the corner, with Ciampa getting to do the same. Legado gets Ciampa into the corner for a clothesline and some moonsaults get two. Thatcher breaks up the Russian legsweep/boot combination and Wilde nails the big running flip dive. Back in and the hanging DDT gets two on Wilde with Mendoza making the save. Cue the Grizzled Young Veterans to jump Ciampa though and now the boot/Russian legsweep is good for the pin at 15:41.

Rating: C+. What we got was good but we got quite a bit of it as this match felt long. Legado is a solid team, though it's weird to have heels who fly around like they do. At the same time though, it sets up the Veterans vs. Ciampa vs. Thatcher, which more than works for everyone involved. Legado likely gets a title shot too so that is a well used match.

Bobby Fish says his business is with Pete Dunne and Oney Lorcan. The torn tricep was a long recovery, but now he is back and there is a debt to be paid. First up is Pete Dunne because they have unfinished business. Next week, they can finish it.

Back at the spa, the Way's credit card is declined. They think it is Austin Theory, but the spa employee called the credit card company and found out that it was something about a florist three weeks ago. Indi Hartwell puts the pieces together and realizes that Dexter Lumis still loves her. Hartwell runs off screaming this over and over as Candice LeRae is stunned. Beth: "Forget Bennifer! INDEX IS BACK!!!"

Johnny Gargano is ready to prove that Bronson Reed is not on his level. Gargano stops the unstoppable inside of a steel cage.

Aliyah vs. Sarray

Sarray starts fast with a springboard armdrag into a basement dropkick but Jessi Kamea grabs a leg. Aliyah gets in a few shots of her own but walks into a spinning kick to the face.

There's a German suplex into a missile dropkick from Sarray, followed by a running dropkick against the ropes. The high collar suplex finishes Aliyah at 2:25.

Shotzi Blackheart and Ember Moon are ready for the Way again and it's time to get gritty and wild. Howling ensues (Moon: "That's what she said.").

Hit Row vs. Ariya Daivari/Tony Nese

That would be Ashante Adonis/Top Dolla, with the former taking over on Nese to start. Dollar hits a World's Strongest Slam/Wasteland at the same time and it's already back to Adonis for the corner stomping to Daivari. A superkick drops Nese and Dolla has to calm Adonis down. Something like an AA into a neckbreaker gives Dollar the pin on Daivari at 2:20.

Post match, Hit Row brags about the win, with Isaiah Scott promising to watch the North American Title match.

William Regal announces Legado del Fantasma vs. MSK for the Tag Team Titles in two weeks. There are going to be some new stars in the cruiserweight division, and also next week it's Dakota Kai/Shotzi Blackheart vs. Ember Moon/Raquel Gonzalez.

Here's what's coming next week, including Frankie Monet's debut, Cameron Grimes and Ted DiBiase in a Million Dollar Faceoff, plus Balor vs. Kross II.

North American Title: Johnny Gargano vs. Bronson Reed

Gargano, with Austin Theory, is defending inside a cage. An early escape attempt doesn't work for Gargano as Reed pulls him back and shoves Gargano out of the air without much trouble. Reed sends him into the cage a few times and drives his face into the steel to make it worse. A missed charge hits cage, but the slingshot spear doesn't work because of the cage.

That lets Reed snap off a hanging DDT but Theory is there to

cut off a climb attempt. Gargano superkicks the knee out and we take a break. Back with Reed hitting a super Samoan drop for a delayed two. That means it's time to go up but Gargano powerbombs him back down. It's too early for Gargano to escape though as Reed pulls him back in and sits on his chest. A powerbomb is countered with a grab of the cage though and Gargano hits a poisonrana to put both of them down.

One Final Beat is countered with a toss into the cage but Theory slams the door on Reed's head. Now One Final Beat can give Gargano two so it's time to go up. Reed is right there to catch him with a superbomb but makes the mistake of climbing, allowing Theory to cut him off. Gargano gets headbutted off the top and Theory gets punched down. The splash to the back sets up the Tsunami to give Reed the title at 15:25.

Rating: B. This was exactly how such a match should have gone, with Reed overcoming the obstacles/odds and winning clean in the end. There was no fluke here either, as that Tsunami is one of the best looking finishers going today. Gargano was a good choice as champion because he could do something like this, but is more than enough of a legend to be back just fine in a few weeks. Solid main event here, and a good example of how a telegraphed finish isn't a bad thing.

Pyro goes off for the celebration to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Pretty awesome show here as they had a bunch of nice stuff capped off by the big main event, which more than delivered. I can always go with watching NXT get to do their thing and show how a good show is supposed to be put together. They have things set up for weeks now while delivering this week as well. That's an efficient two hours and it was worth the watch here as usual.

Results

Toni Storm b. Zoey Stark – Judo throw spun into a DDT

Jake Atlas b. Cameron Grimes – Rollup

Killian Dain b. Alexander Wolfe – Crossbody

Legado del Fantasma b. Tommaso Ciampa/Timothy Thatcher – Russian legsweep/running enziguri to Ciampa

Sarray b. Aliyah – High collar suplex

Hit Row b. Tony Nese/Ariya Daivari – Fireman's carry flipping neckbreaker to Daivari

Bronson Reed b. Johnny Gargano – Tsunami

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