

NXT – March 21, 2023: They're Almost There

NXT

Date: March 21, 2023

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Booker T., Vic Joseph

We have two shows left before Stand & Deliver and things have been picking up around here. That should make for some interesting moments on the way forward and we should be in for two nice weeks of NXT on the way to Los Angeles. NXT does know how to build up a show and hopefully they do it again here. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a recap of Johnny Gargano vs. Grayson Waller, including Waller invading the Garganos' house last week.

Here is Pretty Deadly for a chat. They are your Stand & Deliver hosts so they are erasing all footage of last week's beatdown from the NXT archives. Cue Carmelo Hayes and Trick Williams to interrupt, setting off an argument about titles. A challenge is issued for tonight with Williams accepting on behalf of...Hayes and Bron Breaker? The fight is on with Hayes getting double teamed, drawing out Breaker for the save.

Post break Hayes rants about how they didn't need Breaker's help. He doesn't want to team with Breaker but Williams says this is a front row seat to study Breaker up close, which seems to work for Hayes.

Roxanne Perez has sent out a tweet saying she will be back, but she doesn't know when.

Women's Title Qualifying Match: Tiffany Stratton vs. Indi

Hartwell

Stratton clotheslines her down to start but Hartwell hits some of her own. They fight to the apron with Hartwell being dropped on the apron as we take a break. Back with Hartwell fighting out of a chinlock as Booker T. can't remember who Razor Ramon fought in a ladder match (thinking it was the 1-2-3 Kid, which never happened). Stratton double stomps her down but gets caught in a belly to back suplex. The knockout has Stratton frustrated so she misses a springboard Swanton, allowing Hartwell's spinebuster to get two. Stratton Regal Rolls her to set up a moonsault for the pin at 9:16.

Rating: C. Hartwell has fallen so far in recent months and Stratton shrugging off her signature spinebuster with commentary not even making it a big deal tells you a lot. Stratton seems ready to move up to the title scene and getting into the ladder match is a good start. Not a great match, but it did what it needed to do.

Gallus is playing pool when the Creeds show up and want to shoot some pool. Gallus wins but lose at darts. A Tag Team Title match is set up for Stand & Deliver. The four go to leave but Tony D'Angelo and Stacks are outside. They would like to discuss some Stand & Deliver business, with Julius saying it's going to be a long night.

Lyra Valkyria trains in what seems to be an empty building.

Gigi Dolin doesn't feel bad about Jacy Jayne being hurt because she can watch Dolin win the Women's Title. Tiffany Stratton comes in to laugh off the idea of Dolin winning. She'll climb the ladder to the tippy top!

Wes Lee is in the ring to talk about having to give it everything he had, hence all of the challenges. He needs four challengers for Stand & Deliver...and here is Dragon Lee (no relation) to interrupt. Dragon wants to prove himself as well and wants in, with Wes saying he's fine with that. Cue JD

McDonagh to say he wants in as well but they both mock him for the upcoming beating at the hands of Ilja Dragunov. Cue Dragunov and we're ready for our scheduled match.

Indi Hartwell is livid at her loss and Zoey Stark makes fun of her.

Kiana James watches the Hartwell outburst when Fallon Henley comes in to yell about what she found in James' office last week. As you might expect, James is livid about the invasion of privacy but Henley is more upset about how James is treating Brooks Jensen.

Ilja Dragunov vs. JD McDonagh

Dragon Lee is watching at ringside. Dragunov knocks McDonagh down hard to start but McDonagh takes over and hits the slingshot spinning splash. Back up and they both avoid shots to the face before an exchange of hard forearms leave them down. Dragunov grabs some rolling German suplexes (the fans approve) before the 6 1 Line gets two. McDonagh sends him outside in a heap though and we take a break.

Back with McDonagh's leg wrapped around Dragunov's neck until he turns it into a Brock Lock (from the mat) to escape. McDonagh strikes him down and ducks the jumping enziguri before kicking away at the face. Now the jumping enziguri gives Dragunov a breather as the fans are rather interested in AEW's (surely soon to be released) Fight Forever game. Dragunov plants him down but gets caught with a German suplex. Back up and Dragunov kicks him in the head but has to fight off McDonagh's Twister. They fight to the floor again and both get into it with Dragon Lee, which is enough for the no contest at 14:34.

Rating: B-. This was two guys hitting each other rather hard until they went to the ending to save both of them. Normally that would be annoying but it is a good idea here, with both guys needing to be kept strong as they (likely) head to the

ladder match in Los Angeles. Sometimes you need a hard hitting fight and that is what you got here.

The brawl is on with Wes Lee taking them out and helping Dragon up.

Carmelo Hayes and Trick Williams come in to see Bron Breakker. Bron says they have the chance to do something special at Stand & Deliver but accuses Pretty Deadly (and Trick) of being clowns who can screw it up.

Wes Lee grants Ilja Dragunov and JD McDonagh spots in the North American Title ladder match. There is one spot left and here is Axiom to claim it. Wes says a lot of people want the match so next week, we're going to have a battle royal for the last spot. Axiom is cool with that because all he wanted was a chance.

Here is Johnny Gargano.....'s music, as we get Javier Bernal instead. Bernal wants to know why people love Gargano instead of him. What does Gargano have that Bernal doesn't? Cue a ticked off Gargano to beat Bernal down before grabbing a microphone. Gargano has a contract for Grayson Waller to sign to make their match unsanctioned. Waller pops up on screen to say he'll sign it...next week, as long as Gargano isn't in the building. Gargano leaves the paper with Vic Joseph and knocks Bernal down again.

Eddy Thorpe (better known as Karl Fredericks) is coming next week and wants to honor his people (which appear to be Native Americans). Then he plays some DJing equipment (that's certainly a combination). He's here next week.

Ivy Nile is upset after what Tatum Paxley did to her last week but is ready to go to Stand & Deliver.

Video on Hank Walker.

Drew Gulak and Charlie Dempsey watch the Walker video, with

Gulak wanting Dempsey to be a good student, seemingly telling Dempsey to hurt Walker.

Women's Title Qualifying Match: Ivy Nile vs. Lyra Valkyria

Nile rolls her up to start before going after the arm and kicking her in the face. Valkyria sends her into the corner but Nile is right back with a snap suplex. The Diamond Chain Lock is broken up though and Valkyria nails a spinning kick to the head for the pin at 2:53. I know they're pushing Valkyria and that makes sense, but dang that didn't make Nile look very strong.

Isla Dawn and Alba Fyre jump Fallon Henley in the back, with Kiana James making the save.

Wes Lee is looking forward to the battle royal when Jinder Mahal, Dijak and Daba Katto take turns coming up to him, threatening to win next week.

And now, Chase U and Schism have a debate. First up, Rip Fowler talks about how much inclusion matters to the Schism. They even offered Duke Hudson a chance to take off his mask of school spirit. Hudson mutters something about taking off his mask and sits down, with Andre Chase asking what the f*** was that.

Next up we have Ava and Thea Hail talking about safety. Ava is happy to be under the Schism Tree and Hail...recites (rather quickly) a statement that sounds like it's from a Chase U handbook. Then she goes into quite the rant about how evil Schism is, which has Chase rather impressed.

Finally we have Andre Chase and Joe Gacy talking about how prepared their associates are to be on their own. Gacy cuts Chase off and mocks the students before Tyler Bate comes out of the crowd. Bate goes into a big speech about how you need a prepared mind to be ready, and that is something you get at Chase U, not with Schism. The match is...not on, as Gacy says

they have already beaten Chase U. Hudson offers to put up the school and that's enough for the match to be set. Schism talking isn't a good thing, but that should set up the blowoff match for good.

At the bar, Gallus, the Creeds and Tony D'Angelo/Stacks seem to have done a lot of drinking. Now a triple threat match is set for Stand & Deliver, as the bar is wrecked.

Stand & Deliver rundown.

Bron Breaker/Carmelo Hayes vs. Pretty Deadly

Trick Williams is here too. Hayes takes Wilson into the corner but Prince comes in to knock Hayes outside. Back in and the ring is cleared, with Hayes and Breaker looking a bit nervous about each other as we take a break. We come back with Hayes cleaning house but double teaming takes him down.

Wilson grabs a chinlock with a knee in the back and a clothesline keeps Hayes in trouble. Hayes misses an enziguiri but gets over to Breaker anyway. Everything breaks down and Breaker almost charges into Hayes in the corner. Instead Hayes hits a Codebreaker so Breaker can spear Wilson down. Breaker hands it back to Hayes for Nothing But Net and the pin at 12:01.

Rating: C+. This was a pretty run of the mill tag team formula match and while I'm not wild on Pretty Deadly taking another fall, at least it was two two juggernauts whose combined forces could be pret...never mind. Nice match here and Breaker can feel like a monster when he is let loose. Throw in Hayes looking as smooth as anyone in NXT and this worked well as a main event.

Hayes hands Breaker the title to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Much like Raw and Smackdown, there isn't much left to do for Stand & Deliver outside of filling in a

few empty spots. They added enough this week to make the show feel important, though Stand & Deliver needs to get here before they lose momentum. For now though, this was a good enough nudge in Los Angeles' direction. Just don't screw up next week and get to the big show safely.

Results

Tiffany Stratton b. Indi Hartwell – Moonsault

JD McDonagh vs. Ilja Dragunov went to a no contest when Dragon Lee interfered

Lyra Valkyria b. Ivy Nile – Spinning kick to the head

Bron Breaker/Carmelo Hayes b. Pretty Deadly – Nothing But Net to Wilson

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