

Evolve – May 7, 2025: Open The Next Gate

Evolve

Date: May 7, 2025

Location: WWE Performance Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Peter Rosenberg, Robert Stone

Things very well may be picking up around here as we have a special announcement from Stevie Turner. That could go in a variety of directions as this show is still young enough that it has a lot of options. If nothing else, we might be seeing some new faces in the coming weeks after the recent string of releases/departures. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here is Stevie Turner for her big announcement: the Evolve Men's and Women's Titles. The Women's Title will be crowned in a four way match in three weeks, with Kali Armstrong, Kendal Grey, Wendy Choo and...someone else who will be determined. The Men's Title will be crowned in four weeks with Sean Legacy facing three others.

Keanu Carver isn't happy about not being included and gets in the ring for a showdown with Harlem Lewis. The Vanity Project runs in and are quickly cleared out. Cue Gallus to brawl with them out to the floor. Armstrong and Grey get in a fight of their own, with Armstrong taking out her knee. So we're going to have Evolve Titles AND ID Titles? That sounds excessive.

We run down the card.

Video on Wendy Choo tormenting Kylie Rae.

Summer Sorrell is scared of facing Wendy Choo but she's motivated to succeed. Maybe she needs a buddy.

Video on the ID Program, and some names who will be coming to Evolve, including It's Gal, Marcus Mathers and Jordan Oasis. That has to happen sooner or later.

Nikkita Lyons wants a big match tonight and Stevie Turner announces that she'll be facing Kendal Grey in the main event. Zayda Steel comes in and wants to be in the Women's Title match. Turner isn't convinced but Lyons thinks she could collaborate with the Vanity Project.

Summer Sorrell vs. Wendy Choo

Sorrell, who is rather athletic (believe it or not), cartwheels away from the smiling Choo to start. They run the ropes a few times and Sorrell hits a crossbody for two. Choo runs her over and hits a running shot to the throat. Sorrell gets planted again and the Dirt Nap finishes her off at 2:33.

Post match Choo goes after Sorrell again but Kylie Rae runs out for the brawl. The Dirt Nap is broken up with a snapmare and Choo bails.

Lexis King arrives.

After a break, here is King for a chat. King talks about wanting to come to Evolve back in the day because it was a way to get to the big time. Now it is a portal to NXT and no one knows more about the spotlight than him. He wants the spotlight around here but here is Sean Legacy to cut him off.

Legacy welcomes him to the show but King mocks Legacy for being a pretend locker room leader. That doesn't work for Legacy, who has paid his dues and been through the sleepless nights for a \$20 payoff and a handshake. Legacy isn't going to let King run over Evolve and the match is made for next week. We get the aggressive handshake and the staredown. Legacy is all but guaranteed to go to NXT sooner or later so this is a preview of things to come

Kendal Grey insists that her knee is fine. Carlee Bright comes in to ask if Grey can fight tonight, which she insists she can.

Keanu Carver is looking for Gallus and Harlem Lewis joins him to do the same. Stevie Turner makes the match for next week.

Drako Knox vs. Jackson Drake

The Vanity Project is here with Drake. Knox gets powered into the corner to start but comes back with a running shoulder. A t-bone suplex sends Drake flying again but he knocks Knox's hat off to take over. The chinlock goes on but Knox backdrops his way out of trouble. Drake takes him down again but gets crucified for two. Drake's Lethal Injection is countered into something like a Blue Thunder Bomb for another knockdown. A kick to the leg cuts Knox off though and now a Lethal Injection cuts him down. The running knee gives Drake the pin at 5:08.

Rating: C. The Vanity Project getting a win is fine and Knox continues to be someone who can lose without being too damaged. Granted it helps when you don't have much in the way of status to start. Drake isn't exactly a star, but the Vanity Project needs a singles star to push rather than just the Swipe Right team over and over.

We get a sitdown interview with Javier Bernal, who had to deal with an eight month injury layoff. Now he's back to hit the ground running in Evolve but he isn't Big Body Javi anymore. He never really was Big Body Javi, but now he loves metalcore music. That's the kind of unity he wants to bring here but It's Gal comes in to mock him. This would mean a bit more if Bernal wasn't already gone.

Lexis King runs into the Vanity Project as he leaves and he'll see them next week.

Here's what's coming next week.

Nikkita Lyons vs. Kendal Grey

Grey's leg is very banged up. The leg gives out early to start and Lyons is right on her, with some mocking thrown in for a bonus. A legdrop on the apron crushes Grey and Lyons wraps the bad leg around the rope. Something like a half crab goes on but Grey kicks her way to freedom. A spinning kick to the face gives Lyons two and she sits down on the leg a few times.

The half crab goes on again but this time Grey makes the rope to escape. Lyons misses a running splash and Grey goes for a cross armbreaker, with Lyons powering her up for the escape. A choke on the back works a bit better for Grey and a middle rope shoulder puts Lyons down for two. Grey tries something off the ropes but the leg gives out again. A Vader Bomb finishes for Lyons at 6:13.

Rating: C+. Perfectly fine story to the match here with Grey trying to fight through the injury and showing heart but coming up short against the more experienced star. At the same time, this continued to enforce Lyons' status of "not exactly great", as she didn't show anything here that makes me think otherwise. I get that she has something in the way of star power, but it isn't clicking for me so far.

Post match Kali Armstrong runs in to go after Grey's knee again. Grey is in trouble to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This show wasn't exactly great, but it did a nice job of setting up the title matches. That's the big story the show has been needing and I'm curious to see where it goes. Hopefully the titles wind up on people who can make the show more interesting, but what matters is there is a structure around here. Now just make the things that have been set up work out, which is the tricky part.

Results

Wendy Choo b. Summer Sorrell – Dirt Nap

Jackson Drake b. Drako Knox – Running knee

Nikkita Lyons b. Kendal Grey – Vader Bomb

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