

NXT – March 2, 2016: An Old Friend

NXT

Date: March 2, 2016

Location: CFE Arena, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's a big night for NXT as we have a past great name coming in to face off with NXT Champion Finn Balor on the finale of the Orlando tapings with Neville coming back for one night only. In addition to that we're getting closer to the big showdown in a 2/3 falls match next week with Sami Zayn vs. Samoa Joe for the #1 contendership. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick video on Balor vs. Neville later tonight.

Opening sequence.

Hugo Knox/Tucker Knight vs. Vaudevillains

Knox is rather tattooed which I don't remember about him last time he got squashed. A dropkick puts Aiden in the corner but he quickly takes over and brings in Gotch for a chinlock. The announcers mention the Vaudevillains being up to their old ways to confirm their heel turn, which is probably the best move for a team called the VILLAINS. English kicks away and it's back to Gotch for another chinlock on Knox. Everything breaks down and the Whirling Dervish pins Knight at 3:33.

Rating: D+. Just a squash here with the Vaudevillains being back as the heels they should have been all along. I don't think they have much of a chance of getting back to the title picture but a feud with the Hype Bros feels like an older feud where the announcers just start talking about how they're having issues, setting up a big match later. Yeah they fought once but it was hardly anything huge. We don't need to have them come out here and fight or stare at each other every week. It worked back then so let's try it again today. It just might work better than having them fight over and over until people get sick of them.

Emma and Dana Brooke aren't impressed with women like Deonna Purrazzo and promise to win tonight.

Finn Balor video.

We look back at Dash Wilder/Scott Dawson attacking Enzo Amore outside the Performance Center until Big Cass made the save.

Enzo and Cass promise to stand over Dawson and Wilder as Tag Team Champions.

Dawson and Wilder (now collectively known as the Revival) blame Enzo and Cass for the attack.

Enzo/Cass vs. Revival for the Tag Team Titles at Roadblock.

Emma vs. Santana Garrett

Garrett used to be Brittany in TNA. Emma sends her into the buckle to start and pounds her into a butterfly suplex. There's a move you don't see very often anymore. Some kicks to the back (there's a more popular one) has Santana in trouble and another big kick stops a comeback bid. We hit the double arm crank as this has been one sided so far. Now we get the real comeback as Santana gets in a Russian legsweep, only to have Emma crotch her on top. Something like a curb stomp sets up the Emma Lock for the tap out at 5:38.

Rating: D+. Another glorified squash here with Emma getting to look good, even if there's little for someone on her level to do. Asuka vs. Bayley is going to be the big feud for the next month and I don't see anyone outside of Nia Jax being the next big challenger for whoever survives there. Emma has gotten better in the ring but I'd rather she be on her own as Brooke really doesn't add all that much.

William Regal tells Eva Marie and Nia Jax that they'll be facing Bayley and Asuka at some point in the near future.

Regal is in the ring after a break and introduces the latest talent acquisition: Austin Aries. The fans and announcers are WAY into this but Baron Corbin jumps Aries during his entrance and lays him out with the

End of Days on the floor. Corbin to Regal: "AN EYE FOR AN EYE!"

Elias Samson vs. Steve Cutler

Cutler seems to annoy Samson for some reason and gets punched in the face for his efforts. Maybe he didn't drop a dollar in the guitar case. A suplex and some elbow drops have Steve crawling on the mat but Samson stops for some air guitar. Samson's quick neckbreaker is enough for the pin at 3:03.

Rating: D+. I could go for something other than a squash at this point as they haven't been filling up the extra time with good promos like in the old NWA formula. Samson is turning into more than I was expecting but he still needs a big win over someone to take that next step. I don't know how well he's going to do and I'd call him a longshot at the moment but anything is better than jobbing like he did for all those months.

The Hype Bros are glad they lost the first match to the Vaudevillains and think they should take them out early. The Vaudevillains are listening and smile.

Neville video.

Finn Balor vs. Neville

Non-title and they have a ton of time here. It's a battle of the wristlocks to start with neither guy being able to get very far. Finn's headlock only works for a few moments and it's Neville smacking him in the face with a dropkick. Now it's Neville working on the headlock until he drops Finn with a hard kick to the ribs. Neville doesn't seem to know what to do against Balor so he kicks Finn down another time and we take a break.

Back with the fans getting behind Finn to get him out of a chinlock as Neville is the default heel here. Finn gets up again and catches a charging Neville with a backdrop over the top, sending him head first onto the steps to really wake up the crowd. Neville pops to his feet though and sends Balor outside for a great looking moonsault. It's time for another chinlock but Balor gets up with a great looking Pele to

stagger Neville.

Some kicks (hard ones too) get near falls on Neville but he comes right back with the rapid fire kicks and a pair of German suplexes. The Red Arrow is broken up with a running enziguri and Balor hits the big flip dive to put Neville down on the floor. That's still not enough for the Coup de Grace though as Neville crotches him again.

Neville has to bail out of the Red Arrow though and gets caught in a Sling Blade for a VERY close two. They're trading bombs here and the fans are getting more and more into it every time. Balor dropkicks him into the corner and nails the Coup de Grace, followed by Bloody Sunday for the pin at 18:40.

Rating: B+. This was a great chess game as Neville was way too cocky to start until he got serious and had to trade big shots with Balor, who he seemed to underestimate early on. People forget how good Neville can be when he's doing stuff besides high spots and that's what we got here: a long wrestling match built around high spots but still with enough wrestling and storytelling to keep the fans hooked from bell to bell.

They shake hands and applaud each other post match.

Joe says next week should be easy and calls Sami Zayn ungrateful. Sami thinks Joe is trying to come in here and take whatever he wants at Sami's expense. Joe gets in his face and brings up saving Sami from Kevin Owens. That was Joe saving his career but next week he's taking it away. I'm really digging this stuff with the interviews hyping up a match from next week to close out the show. So many times Raw is wrapped up to end the week and it gets annoying.

Overall Rating: C+. It's really hard to have a single match save a show but that's what they did here. This was a bunch of nothing until two guys got to spend nearly a third of the show beating each other up and showing how great the in ring product around here really can be. Really fun main event here and it actually makes up for the uninteresting stuff that got us here.

Results

Vaudevillains b. Hugh Knox/Tucker Knight – Whirling Dervish to Knight

Emma b. Santana Garrett – Emma Lock

Elias Samson b. Steve Cutler – Neckbreaker

Finn Balor b. Neville – Bloody Sunday

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NXT – October 9, 2013: Even Their Filler Shows Are Great

NXT

Date: October 9, 2013

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Alex Riley, Tom Phillips

This is kind of the show before the big show with next week having the showdown between Sami Zayn and Bo Dallas. As for tonight there isn't anything big announced. We do however have a major guest star in the form of Rob Van Dam. I love how they bring in big names like that to give the fans a treat almost every week. Let's get to it.

We open with a Rob Van Dam music video, meaning he's likely the main event tonight.

Welcome Home.

Leo Kruger vs. Antonio Cesaro

This should be good. It's a result from the Bo Dallas Invitational where both guys fought over a chance at fighting Dallas. Cesaro charges at the bell and hits a running dropkick to fire up the crowd. Kruger loses his shirt but comes back with some loud chops. A clothesline puts Cesaro on the floor and Kruger rakes his back.

We head back inside with Cesaro driving in knees to the ribs to take over, drawing a "Push Cesaro" chant. Kruger gets choked on the bottom rope but comes back with a quick suplex and some choking of his own. A Russian legsweep gets two for Leo but Antonio hits a quick running European uppercut in the corner for two of his own.

Cesaro puts him down with something like a Rock Bottom for two but gets crotched on the top rope. A superplex puts Cesaro down and we take a break. Back with Cesaro being knocked to the floor for a suicide dive from Kruger. They head inside again with Cesaro running away from the Slice clothesline and heading outside again. Cesaro sends him into the steps and drops him back first onto the apron in a bid for a countout. Kruger gets back up so Cesaro gives him a gutwrench suplex on the ramp.

Kruger still makes it back in at nine so Cesaro goes into boxing mode to punch him down again. A fast series of European uppercuts and a second cousin of the Angle Slam gets two but Kruger backdrops out of the Neutralizer. Kruger gets a boot up in the corner but charges into Swiss Death for another near fall. There's the standing sleeper but Cesaro pulls him down into a bodyscissors. Kruger fights up again but gets his head taken off by a clothesline. Cesaro goes into beast mode and this the Neutralizer for the pin at 11:57 shown of 14:47.

Rating: B. If you give Kruger a near fall here it's a great match. As it is, it's only a great way to make Kruger into a face that won't quit. The thing to see here though was the energy. Both guys were clearly working hard to tell a story out there and it worked like a charm. This is the kind of stuff WWE desperately needs at the moment to break up the stale feeling.

Post match Cesaro drops a top rope knee on Kruger because that's the kind of guy he is. Kruger seems to have an injured throat.

Breast cancer sucks.

Charlotte vs. Santana Garrett

Bayley is with Charlotte here and Renee Young is on commentary again. Santana fights out of a wristlock to start but Charlotte uses her gymnastic stuff to take over again. A bad looking kick to the face gets two for Santana as Renee talks about an article on WWE.com with Charlotte complaining about being compared to her dad.

Here are Sasha Banks and Summer Rae for some Laycool style applause. Charlotte fights out of a headscissors into a cradle for two before bridging Santana down for two. Sasha's distraction gives Santana a rollup of her own for the same result but she walks into a reverse F5, setting up a HORRIBLE looking flip Diamond Cutter for the pin at 3:10.

Rating: D. This was mainly about Sasha and Summer, but Charlotte's finisher looked terrible. Hopefully it's because Santana took it from her knees, but she barely went down at all and Charlotte didn't connect for the most part. Still though, Charlotte has a good ring presence which will serve her well later on. Bad night I'm hoping.

Post match Summer and Sasha declare themselves the B.F.F.'s: the Beautiful Fierce Females. They've gotten rid of Paige so there's no one

left to do anything about them. Cue Paige but she gets beaten down as well, leading to a save by Emma.

Mojo Rawley wants to motivate you.

Post break Summer and Emma challenge Paige and Emma to a tag match next week.

Danny Burch vs. Mojo Rawley

Rawley's entrance music starts with "I don't get hyped. I STAY HYPED!" He sprints around the ring with so much energy that Ultimate Warrior would tell him to tone it down. Burch pounds away on the well built Rawley before putting on a quick chinlock. Mojo fights up and hits a few quick shoulder blocks before finishing Burch with an Earthquake splash for the pin at 2:27. Not a great debut but the entrance told you everything you need to know about Rawley.

Paige and Emma don't like each other but they agree to team up next week.

Scott Dawson/Alexander Rusev vs. Colin Cassady/Enzo Amore

Dawson and Rusev might be named the Legionaries. Enzo thinks we're in Cheers right now because everyone knows their names, causing Cassady to sing part of the cheers song. Rusev and Dawson are definitely S-A-W-F-T and the fans let them know it. Cassady and Amore are just so much fun. Rusev starts with Big Cass and pops him in the jaw with an elbow to slow him down.

Off to Amore who has about as much success as you would expect. A series of knees to the ribs put Amore down and it's off to Dawson for some elbow drops for two. There's a hard clothesline for the same and everything breaks down. Rusev crushes Enzo in the corner and finishes him at 2:52 with a camel clutch, which is called the Accolade for some reason.

Dawson and Rusev beat up Cassady post match.

Sami Zayn is ready for his title shot next week against Bo Dallas. Bo comes in and says that Sami hurt his feeling last week and that's it's certainly not personal. Sami has no problem with Bo other than he's the NXT Champion. Bo offers a tag team instead of fighting over the NXT Title, which Sami agrees to, after the title match that is. "Un-Bo-lievable."

Rob Van Dam vs. Aiden English

English, now an Artiste, sings about kicking someone's teeth in because he's a sports entertainer. Ricardo does RVD's entrance but not in song. Aiden takes Rob down with a top wristlock to start but we hit a quick standoff. A quick rollup gets two on English and sends him back into the corner for some finger pointing. The monkey flip out of the corner has English in trouble and a clothesline puts him on the floor.

Rob moonsaults him off the apron and we head back inside for Rolling Thunder but Aiden bails before Rob can start. English kicks the rope to crotch Rob and shouts that it's his show. A suplex gets two on Rob and we hit the chinlock. Back up and Rob kicks him down a few times before a superkick sets up Rolling Thunder. The Five Star ends English at 5:32.

Rating: C-. This was just a workout for Van Dam but it didn't need to be anything more than that. English getting this spot is a good sign for him as he debuted the new gimmick just a few weeks ago and is facing a former world champion already. This was just a thrill for the crowd and there's nothing wrong with that.

Overall Rating: B. Even their filler shows are good. The best thing about NXT though is it's not just a few guys they have that make an awesome show. Cesaro and Kruger are the only guys here from last week and they were only in action for about 45 seconds last week. NXT changed the entire roster for this week's show and it was still very entertaining.

That tells me it's the promotion and not the stars, which is a REALLY good sign going forward.

Results

Antonio Cesaro b. Leo Kruger – Neutralizer

Charlotte b. Santana Garrett – Running flip Diamond Cutter

Mojo Rawley b. Danny Burch – Earthquake Splash

Scott Dawson/Alexander Rusev b. Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady – Accolade to Amore

Rob Van Dam b. Aiden English – Five Star Frog Splash

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