

NXT – March 23, 2016: Business As Usual

NXT

Date: March 23, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're getting very close to Takeover: Dallas with just two shows to go before perhaps the biggest show in the history of the promotion. The card is almost entirely set now and it should be interesting to see how they final building process goes. NXT tends to be good at this so hopefully the trend continues. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Elias Samson vs. Johnny Gargano

Samson is still undefeated and starts fast by pounding Johnny down in the corner. I'm hoping this doesn't turn into a squash as Gargano deserves better for the Johnny Wrestling name alone. With Johnny down, Samson gets a bit distracted by going into something like a trance. Samson charges into a boot in the corner and eats a kick to the head, only to catch a charging Johnny with a knee to the ribs. Another jumping knee is countered with a quick rollup to give Gargano the pin at 2:18. Well that was sudden.

Samson lays Gargano out with the neckbreaker post match and sends him into the post for good measure. He loads up another neckbreaker on the ramp but Apollo Crews comes out for the save.

Takeover video.

Rich Swann vs. Finn Balor

Non-title of course. Balor takes him to the mat with a wristlock to start and Rich can't get to his feet. Instead it's off to a headlock before the champ easily takes it down to a hammerlock. Back up and a good looking

dropkick staggers Balor, followed by a spinning kick to the face. Another dropkick puts Balor on the floor and the fans are behind Swann here. Balor is all fired up now though and sends Swann outside on the other side for a hard kick to the head. The Coup de Grace sets up Bloody Sunday for the pin on Swann at 5:22.

Rating: C+. I can always go for a quick match where a big name actually has to break a sweat to beat someone a few levels beneath him. It's also a good idea to get Balor out there every now and then to make sure that people don't forget how good he really is. They're doing a nice job with Swann in his first two matches as he's gotten to show off in losing efforts.

Emma and Dana Brooke are ready for Emma's rematch with Asuka. Dana has been helping her train and tonight Emma is going to do the job. She also confirms that she's been out due to injury.

Sarah Dobson vs. Alexa Bliss

Bliss is back in the old pink attire. Dobson takes her into the corner to start but misses a charge to give Bliss a quick two. We hit an armbar on Dobson as the announcers argue over how big a star Bliss really is. Bliss misses a charge in the corner and Dobson gets two off a high cross body. This brings Blake and Murphy to the apron for a distraction and cheap shot, setting up the Sparkle Splash to give Bliss the pin at 4:12.

Rating: D. Much like on the main roster, you can really see the line between the wrestlers and the Divas. Bliss is really just out there because of her looks instead of her ring skills, though she's awesome as the evil heel manager. Dobson wasn't bad from what I can see here and I know she's done some good stuff out on the indies.

Samoa Joe has nothing to say.

Bull Dempsey vs. Danny Burch

Well this is a bit more awkward. No match though as Samoa Joe comes out and destroys both guys before shouting about how he's coming for Balor and the title.

Video on the awesomeness that is American Alpha with the two of them talking about their paths through the amateur ranks towards NXT. None of that matters unless they win the NXT Tag Team Titles though.

Jose No Way is coming.

Emma vs. Asuka

Emma actually takes over with a headlock to start but Asuka reverses into one of her own. A jumping cross armbreaker has Emma in major trouble and the flying hip attack gets two for Asuka as we take a break. Back with Asuka working on a hammerlock until she gets bored and switches over to an ankle lock.

Emma finally kicks her to the floor and starts pounding away before putting her feet on Asuka's shoulders and pulling at the arms. It's off to a regular chinlock with Emma putting her knee in the back. As has been the case all match, the hold is quickly broken so Emma can put her in the Tree of Woe for some shots to the ribs.

Asuka is up at two though and the frustration is starting to set in. They run the ropes a few times until another hip attack drops Emma as the comeback begins. Emma dropkicks her into the ropes but Asuka bounces off for another hip attack. A good looking German suplex sends Emma flying and it's the Asuka Lock for the tap out at 15:14.

Rating: B. This was a very nice change of pace as these two still have some nice chemistry together. They were going with an enhanced version of the same formula from Balor vs. Swann here as the bigger name had to work harder than expected with a challenger. They've done an awesome job of setting up Bayley and Asuka as unstoppable, meaning the match is going to have some awesome buzz going on.

Overall Rating: C+. Nothing great here but the build towards the big show has been awesome so far. The card is mostly set at this point and there's only so much that a few more TV shows are going to be able to do. They're doing a good job of going around the card and giving everything a good build so I actually have some faith in what they might be able to pull off in Dallas.

Results

Johnny Gargano b. Elias Samson – Rollup

Finn Balor b. Rich Swann – Bloody Sunday

Alexa Bliss b. Sarah Dobson – Sparkle Splash

Asuka b. Emma – Asuka Lock

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