

NXT – December 23, 2020: Blame It On The Holidays

NXT

Date: December 23, 2020

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Beth Phoenix, Wade Barrett, Vic Joseph

It's the Christmas show as we have A Very Gargano Christmas. That's special enough, but this show is also not up against Dynamite due to an NBA game so it should be interesting to see what they have on their own. We do have a title match tonight as the Tag Team Titles are on the line in a street fight. Let's get to it.

Here are last week's results if you need a recap.

Tag Team Titles: Killian Dain/Drake Maverick vs. Oney Lorcan/Danny Burch

Lorcan and Burch are defending in a street fight but Dain and Maverick jump them from behind. The champs are in some early trouble but Maverick gets taken down so Dain can be double teamed. We settle down to Dain in trouble in the corner (BECAUSE THIS STREET FIGHT HAS TAGS TOO) but managing to backdrop Burch onto a pair of chairs.

Maverick comes in without a tag to trip Lorcan down and Dain slams him onto Lorcan for a bonus. Dain hits a running boot in the corner to Lorcan and takes him to the floor, leaving Burch to hit a clothesline on Maverick. Burch escapes a suplex through a table on the floor and avoids a charge to send Dain through it instead.

We take a break and come back with Dain down on the floor, leaving Maverick to be whipped by a belt. Dain fights up and starts cleaning house, including a powerbomb into a running

elbow. Maverick comes back in but gets knocked off the apron and onto (not through) a table. The breather lets Maverick get the belt to whip the champions until a low blow cuts him off. A cricket bat shot to the ribs and the elevated DDT retains the titles at 14:38.

Rating: C. I liked the violent parts but can we PLEASE stop with the tagging in street fights? It looks so stupid to have chairs and belts and tables but YOU HAVE TO TAG BECAUSE IT'S THE RULE! It wasn't as bad as the mess on Raw but figure this stuff out. The ending wasn't in doubt here and it could be a good while before Lorcan and Burch drop the titles given their lack of competition. Nice opener here, bad interpretation of the rules aside.

We go to House Gargano where Johnny updates the number of days until Christmas and plays the piano. Indi Hartwell and Austin Theory join them with Johnny runs the camcorder. Theory gets in trouble for saying no way Jose and is told to put his cookie down. Things are smoothed over with Theory getting some Gargano Protein Powder. Theory: "I CAN BE LIKE YOU???"

We look at Finn Balor and Kyle O'Reilly watching their match at Takeover: 31 to set up their rematch at New Year's Evil. They talk about how hard hitting everything was and how much of a struggle the whole thing was. We take a special look at the exchange of strikes which put both of them on the shelf after the match. Balor says he is still the champ but all anyone remembered was the broken jaw. Now they are doing it again and there isn't going to be a trilogy this time around.

Malcolm Bivens talks about how great Tyler Rust was in his debut and this week, we'll see that he is a diamond in the Rust.

Isaiah Scott vs. Jake Atlas

They stare each other down to start and then exchange some shoves. Atlas gets in a slap to the face but Scott takes him

down into an armbar. Back up and Atlas pulls him down with a dragon screw legwhip and a triangle enziguri puts Scott on the floor. We take a break and come back with Atlas getting two off a Code Red but Scott sends him outside.

They head back in with Scott flipping out of the corner and grabbing a rolling cradle for two. A hard elbow to the face staggers Atlas (and seems to serve as Scott taking things a little too far) and Atlas staggers to the ropes. Scott picks him up and hits the JML Driver (Confidence Boost) at 10:32.

Rating: C-. I know they're trying here and I can go for Scott as a heel but this is as nothing of a feud as is taking place anywhere in WWE at the moment. The feud is there but it feels like absolutely nothing and there is no reason to see anything that these two are doing. There are no stakes to be seen, but Scott getting a change and hopefully a push should be an upgrade.

The Undisputed Era loves the idea of O'Reilly winning the NXT Title at New Year's Evil but here's Velveteen Dream to say Adam Cole is becoming a cheerleader while O'Reilly becomes the new leader. Cole punches him in the face, says there is no leader in the Undisputed Era, and sets up a match for later. The heavy sigh I let out when Dream showed up sums up everything about him right now.

Timothy Thatcher likes that Tommaso Ciampa has come after him. Ciampa tried to take his ear at Takeover but the lesson wasn't complete. Last week, Thatcher came out for a fight but received no respect because security took him out of the arena. Ciampa is the kind of guy who talks a lot but doesn't do anything about it. Tonight Thatcher is going to take some liberties with Leon Ruff so Ciampa can come do something about it.

Rhea Ripley vs. Dakota Kai

Ripley powers her into the corner to start and then throws Kai

down with ease. Dawn bails out to the floor but manages to get in a show to the ribs to take over. Ripley gets posted and we take a break. Back with Kai pulling on the cross armbreaker but Ripley powers out again. A kick to the ribs and a belly to back faceplant gives Ripley two and an electric chair faceplant gets the same.

Kai can't get a wheelbarrow rollup so Ripley slaps on the Prism Trap, only to have Raquel Gonzalez come out to offer a distraction. Kai makes the rope so Ripley pounds away in the corner while still looking up at Gonzalez. A superplex attempt is broken up though and the Kairopactor gives Kai two of her own. Ripley powers her down again though and Riptide finishes at 10:33.

Rating: C+. Rather fine match here and it's nice to see Ripley get back on track after a loss. Ripley still has the potential to be one of the best things in all of NXT and setting her up for another showdown with Gonzalez should work out. I'm still not sure how much longer Ripley is in NXT, but she's doing well enough for now.

Post match Gonzalez comes to the ring and the brawl is on, with referees not being able to hold them back. They're separated a few times but then go right back at it for a pretty cool fight.

It's back to House Gargano where Indi Hartwell has gotten the box from Johnny Gargano's Playstation 5. Johnny has a better gift for her though: Hartwell is now officially INDI WRESTLING. Theory just shakes his head.

Toni Storm says she wants the NXT Women's Title. Io Shirai is scared of her because Toni is the one woman she can't beat. Like in the finals of the Mae Young Classic for instance.

Xia Li continues to beat up Boa, who continues to scream for more. The old man says enough and things seem to be taking a turn.

Bronson Reed vs. Ashante Adonis

Adonis tries some grappling to start and is run over in a hurry. Reed runs him over again and stomps on the ribs, setting up the Tsunami for the pin at 1:07. That's how it should have gone.

Io Shirai says hit her music because she's coming to the ring. After having some issues getting a chair into the ring, Shirai tells Storm to get out here. Cue Mercedes Martinez from behind to jump Shirai, including sending her into various things.

Back at House Gargano, Candice LeRae gets....a wheel from Shotzi Blackheart's tank. Everyone hates wheels you see, but this one is special. They take their photo together, with Theory spitting out his powder at the wrong time.

Timothy Thatcher vs. Leon Ruff

We get the empty chair for Tommaso Ciampa at ringside. Thatcher takes him straight to the mat to pull on Ruff's face but Ruff is back up with a jumping headlock. That earns him an uppercut into a front facelock suplex to send Ruff flying. The abdominal stretch on the mat goes on, with Thatcher covering Ruff's face at the same time. A quick small package gives Ruff two and he hammers away on Thatcher to limited effect. Ruff hits a clothesline but gets uppercutted out of the air. There's a butterfly suplex and Thatcher loads up the half crab, only to have Ruff reverse into a small package for the pin at 4:00.

Rating: C. This is the kind of thing that makes you realize how far NXT has come in recent years, as usually Thatcher wouldn't lose until his next match with Ciampa at the earliest, but here he loses because he can't stop thinking about Ciampa? It's not the same as a distraction finish, but this would have gone the same with Thatcher winning and then attacking Ruff after the match. I like Thatcher and he could be something around here, so stop having him lose when there

is another way out.

Post match Thatcher stays on Ruff but Tommaso Ciampa runs in to hit Willow's Bell. Ciampa says he'll see him in the Fight Pit. Cool. That's a gimmick that needs to be used more than once.

Damian Priest doesn't see Killer Kross as much of a killer because he's still standing.

Dexter Lumis paints Rhea Ripley vs. Raquel Gonzalez in a Last Man Standing match for New Year's Evil.

Tyler Rust vs. Ariya Daivari

Malcolm Bivens is here with Rust. Daivari gets taken down by the arm to start and the arm cranking continues as they get back up. Rust spins him around by the arm but the threat of a cross armbreaker sends Daivari to the ropes. Daivari manages a kick to the heck in the corner and a neckbreaker over the middle rope sets up a dropkick to put Rust on the floor. Back in and Daivari talks trash, allowing Rust to pull him into a triangle choke. That's broken up so Rust ducks the hammerlock lariat and kicks Daivari in the head. The Rings of Saturn, with Rust using his leg to pull the top arm down, finishes Daivari at 4:32.

Rating: C. Rust continues to look good in the ring and the cruiserweights continue to be there for the sake of filling up the roster and serving as losers to others. That's a big reason why 205 Live means nothing but that has been a problem for years. Anyway, Rust might be something around here and that's a good thing to see.

Leon Ruff is getting his rematch for the North American Title next week to continue Johnny Gargano's curse.

Karrion Kross laughs off the idea of Damian Priest calling him out and mentioning Scarlett.

The NXT Year End Awards are next week. Vote now on WWE.com.

Adam Cole vs. Velveteen Dream

Roderick Strong is here with Cole. Dream gets taken to the mat with a headlock to start as Beth compares Barrett to the Grinch. Back up and Dream is driven into the corner, where he misses a slap to the face. A cheap shot out of the corner drops Cole but he isn't having any of that and punches Dream down a few times. The jumping neckbreaker puts Dream down again and a pump kick puts him on the floor. Back in and they bang heads for a double knockdown.

Cue Pete Dunne to go after Strong with a ram into the steps and a kick to the head. The Bitter End onto the apron lets Dream hit a clothesline and we take a break. Back with Dream missing the Purple Rainmaker and the slugout it on again. Some shots to the face sets up the flipping fireman's carry slam onto the knee into a German suplex for two. Dream is back with a hot shot and a neckbreaker for two but Cole superkicks him off the top.

Cole is knocked to the floor but manages to superkick a diving Dream out of the air. Back in and a superkick sets up a Figure Four, sending Dream to the ropes for the break. Cole almost superkicks the referee, allowing Dream to grab the wind up DDT. The Purple Rainmaker gives Dream two but Cole goes up, only to dive into a superkick. Cole does the same though and finishes with the Last Shot at 13:11.

Rating: C+. I don't remember the last time I did not want to see someone as much as I don't want to see Velveteen Dream right now. He is mostly lifeless out there and is just floating around with nothing to do, but because he has done some things before, he gets to stick around. Throw in the allegations against him and I really could go with him falling in a hole and never coming out because....well we all deserve some happiness now and then.

Overall Rating: C. Maybe they weren't feeling it because of the holiday season or because everything is focused on New Year's Evil at this point but this was a pretty lackluster show with nothing standing out. It just came and went, which isn't something you often say about NXT. That being said, the next two weeks are looking stacked and anyone can have an off night. Not a bad show, but just read a recap instead of watching.

Results

Oney Lorcan/Danny Burch b. Killian Dain/Drake Maverick – Elevated DDT to Maverick

Rhea Ripley b. Dakota Kai – Riptide

Bronson Reed b. Ashante Adonis – Tsunami

Leon Ruff b. Timothy Thatcher – Small package

Tyler Rust b. Ariya Daivari – Rings of Saturn

Adam Cole b. Velveteen Dream – Last Shot

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