

NXT Deadline 2023: The Mario Kart Of Wrestling

Deadline 2023

Date: December 9, 2023

Location: Total Mortgage Arena, Bridgeport, Connecticut

Commentators: Booker T., Vic Joseph

This is a show built around a theme match with the Iron Survivor Challenge. It's something like a gauntlet Iron Man match (with a penalty box) with the winners getting a future title shot. For a bonus, we also have the NXT Title on the line as Ilja Dragunov defends against Baron Corbin. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Nathan Frazer vs. Axiom

This is a rematch after their previous attempt on NXT was broken up by a big fight breaking out. Axiom headlocks him down to start, which Frazer reverses into one of his own. Back up an Frazer snaps off a headscissors but Axiom sticks the landing to give us another standoff. Axiom takes it to the mat again but misses a running kick to the chest. Frazer knocks him into the corner for a heck of a chop and then does it again for a bonus.

A cobra clutch slows Axiom down a bit and Frazer grabs the bodyscissors, which is broken up almost immediately. The moonsault into the reverse layout DDT gives Frazer two and things slow down a bit. Axiom is right back with half and half suplex into a running kick to the chest for two.

Frazer is sat on top for a forearm to the floor, meaning Axiom can hit a top rope moonsault to take him out again (getting roughly 348% of the contact Charlotte would hit). Back in and Frazer hits the superplex into the Falcon Arrow for two, only to miss the phoenix splash. A rather hard superkick rocks

Axiom though and Frazer goes up top again. This time Axiom catches him though it's a super Spanish Fly into the Golden Ratio for the pin on Frazer at 10:53.

Rating: B. This feels like they were given the instruction "go out there and kill it", which is pretty much what they did. That's how you get things going for a crowd, though I'm almost worried about how many people they're going to overshadow. Axiom getting a win surprises me a bit as he tends to come up short, but dang they had a good one here and I could go for seeing more of them, either together or apart, in the future.

We open the show proper with Shawn Michaels, who wants to know if we're ready. Cue CM Punk, in a Bret Hart hoodie but doing the Shawn Michaels pose at the entrance. Punk apologizes for cutting Shawn off before getting to say SUCK IT but Shawn would rather talk about that hoodie. Punk points out that Bret and Shawn made up and since Punk and HHH made up, this is all about healing. He talks about growing up watching Shawn, and now he's able to take a picture with him, which he does. We get the tease of Punk joining NXT...and that's it in a rather fun but not exactly substantive cameo.

The opening video looks at the rise of the next generation, who will get their chance to emerge in the Iron Survivor Challenges.

North American Title: Dominik Mysterio vs. Dragon Lee

Lee is challenging and has Dominik's dad Rey in his corner. Well on commentary but the man just had knee surgery so give him a break. Lee starts fast and knocks him to the floor for the big running flip dive. Back in and Dominik manages to catch Lee's leg on the top rope to slow things way down. A DDT onto the apron doesn't go so well and Dominik crashes down to the floor in a heap. Dominik whips him hard into the corner and we hit the chinlock to keep Lee in trouble.

Lee fights up and catches Dominik on top, meaning it's a top

rope double stomp to the apron to the floor for a nasty crash. Some running forearm has Dominik in trouble and a superkick in the corner makes it worse. A nice dropkick cuts Lee off but they trade strikes to the face. Lee's sitout powerbomb doesn't go so well so Dominik powerbombs him for two instead. The 619 misses for Dominik and now Lee's sitout powerbomb gets two. Back up and Destino gives Lee the pin and the title at 10:40.

Rating: B-. Good opener here and Lee winning the title is the right call. At the end of the day, Lee is being presented as one of the future stars of WWE and he has to win something to get there already. Dominik has done some great things with the title but it might be time for him to move up the ladder. Good stuff here though and Lee gets a nice moment to start the show.

Women's Iron Survivor Challenge

25 minute time limit, two start, another comes in every five minutes. Anyone can get a pinfall, submission or DQ at any time with 1 point per fall. That fall also sends the defeated wrestler to the penalty box for 90 seconds, most points in the end gets a Women's Title shot at New Year's Evil. Fallon Henley is in at #1 and Blair Davenport is in at #2.

They go with the pinfall reversal sequence to start and neither can get anywhere. After a minute plus of reversals, Davenport hits a running knee for two and takes over for good. The double arm crank goes on but Henley kicks her away and it's Tiffany Stratton in at #3. The entrance takes its sweet time before Stratton comes in to take over on both of them.

Some clotheslines puts Henley down and we hit the double Fujiwara armbar from Stratton and Davenport. Somehow that isn't a submission so Stratton beats up Davenport. Another kick to Henley gets two, followed by an Alabama Slam or two. Davenport breaks up the cover though and pins Henley at 9:45.

Davenport – 1

Henley – 0
Stratton – 0
Jordan – 0
Legend – 0

Henley goes to the penalty box as Kelani Jordan is in at #4. Jordan cleans house and hits the split legged moonsault for two on Davenport as Stratton makes the save. Henley is back in and strikes away at Stratton, including a Shining Wizard for the pin at 12:10.

Davenport – 1
Henley – 1
Stratton – 0
Jordan – 0
Legend – 0

Jordan and Henley trade some near falls until Henley grabs an armbar into an armbar. Stratton comes back in and Davenport pops back up. All four go into the same corner and it's Lash Legend in at #5 to complete the field. Legend powerbombs Stratton and Henley out of the corner and then superplexes Jordan and Davenport. A chokeslam hits Stratton and a powerbomb hits Henley...for a double pin, and two points, at 16:13.

Legend – 2
Davenport – 1
Henley – 1
Stratton – 0
Jordan – 0

Jordan is back up with a double knee to send Legend outside. Jordan's Asai moonsault mostly misses and she takes a nasty crash into the announcers' table. Davenport is back up to deck Legend but here is Meta Four to block the door to the penalty box. Henley tries to climb out but Stratton shoves her through the announcers' table, followed by a big flip dive onto

everyone else. Back in and Jordan goes after Legend before double stomping Jordan for two. Henley makes the save with five minutes left and Davenport double stomps Jordan for the pin at 20:10.

Legend – 2
Davenport – 2
Henley – 1
Stratton – 0
Jordan – 0

Legend picks up Henley and Davenport at the same time but Stratton dropkicks them all down. Jordan comes back in and Henley takes down everyone not named Davenport. A high crossbody gives Jordan two on Legend with Stratton making another save. The Prettiest Moonsault Ever pins Legend at 23:12 to get Stratton on the board.

Legend – 2
Davenport – 2
Henley – 1
Stratton – 1
Jordan – 0

Jordan 450 Stratton and Davenport for two as Henley makes the save and covers both of them for two each. We have a minute left and some holds are broken up before Davenport German superplexes Jordan. A running knee gives Davenport the pin on Henley at 24:45.

Davenport – 3
Legend – 2
Henley – 1
Stratton – 1
Jordan – 0

Davenport runs the clock out to win at 25:00.

Rating: B-. This took some time to get going but they hit a

groove once everyone was in there. Davenport winning is a good call as Jordan and Legend aren't ready yet, Henley isn't at that level and Stratton doesn't need the title again. The concept takes some time to sink in but they got the drama going here and had a nice match as a result.

Post match Davenport calls out Lyra Valkyria who comes out...and is jumped by Cora Jade in a surprise return. Jade holds up the title.

Carmelo Hayes tells Trick Williams that he has the men's Iron Survivor Challenge. Williams tells him to take care of Lexis King, which Hayes doesn't seem to like.

Carmelo Hayes vs. Lexis King

King might have attacked Hayes' friend Trick Williams but has implied Hayes was involved so Hayes is fighting to prove his innocence. Hayes takes him down to start and hammers away, with King bailing out to the floor. Back in and Hayes starts in on the hand, including stomping it onto the steps. King is fine enough to knock him back outside for a dropkick through the ropes and start working on the back.

A kick to said back and a running clothesline to the back of the head gets two, setting up a pair of backbreakers for the same. King offers him a handshake but Hayes lips him of and fights up. They go to the top and crash out hard to the floor for a double knockdown. Back in and Hayes drops King for two of his own but King manages a Jackhammer of all things for the same. King hits another backbreaker but Hayes is up with a Codebreaker. Nothing But Net finishes King clean at 11:13.

Rating: C+. This was ok but never got into the next level. I'm more than a bit surprised that King just lost clean as Hayes is a bigger star, but King is still brand new around here. That's quite the loss to take so early, but there is a good chance that he'll be involved in something bigger rather soon. Good enough stuff here, though hardly anything great.

Post match King says he didn't attack Trick Williams, but he thanks Hayes for that PLE spotlight. Hayes is frustrated as he leaves.

Cora Jade says people aren't happy she is back but she gave everyone four months of. She'll be here on Tuesday.

Vengeance Day is on Sunday February 4.

Trick Williams is proud of Carmelo Hayes, who tells him to win tonight.

Men's Iron Survivor Challenge

Same rules as the women's edition, including the title match coming at New Year's Evil. Dijak is in at #1 and Josh Briggs is in at #2, with Briggs grabbing a rollup for an early two. They trade some leapfrogs until Briggs grabs a quickly broken headlock. An exchange of shoulders goes nowhere either so Briggs knocks him into the corner for some shots to the face. A hard running shoulder gives Briggs two but Dijak knocks him into the other corner. The toss suplex drops Briggs and High Justice gives Dijak two. A big boot gives Briggs the same but Feast Your Eyes gives Dijak the first fall at 5:01.

Dijak – 1

Briggs – 0

Bate – 0

Williams – 0

Breaker – 0

Tyler Bate is in at #3 and kicks away at Dijak, setting up a running uppercut in the corner. The airplane spin goes on but Briggs comes back in to go after Dijak. One heck of a clothesline gives Briggs the pin on Dijak at 7:03.

Dijak – 1

Briggs – 1

Bate – 0

Williams – 0

Breakker – 0

Bate is rammed up against the penalty box but comes back with a springboard uppercut to drop Briggs. Another uppercut is blocked though and Briggs hits a splash for two more. Dijak is back in...and gets rolled up by Bate for the pin at 9:03.

Dijak – 1

Briggs – 1

Bate – 1

Williams – 0

Breakker – 0

Bate punches Briggs but Dijak is yelling at the referee, meaning it's only a near fall. A huge jawbreaker hits Bate as Trick Williams is in at #4. The fans go coconuts as Williams runs over everyone, including using Briggs as a launchpad to knock Dijak out of the air for two as Bate makes the save. A very long airplane spin, complete with Bate putting his hands on his hips, cuts Williams off and the Tyler Driver 97 gives Bate the pin on Williams at 13:57.

Bate – 2

Dijak – 1

Briggs – 1

Williams – 0

Breakker – 0

Dijak gets to run some people over until Bron Breakker is in at #5. The spear pins Briggs at 15:13.

Bate – 2

Dijak – 1

Briggs – 1

Breakker – 1

Williams – 0

Another Breakker spear pins Bate at 15:27.

Bate – 2
Breakker – 2
Dijak – 1
Briggs – 1
Williams – 0

Another Breakker spear pins Dijak at 15:43.

Breakker – 3
Bate – 2
Dijak – 1
Briggs – 1
Williams – 0

That leaves Breakker and Williams, with Breakker grabbing the Recliner. The other three brawl in the penalty box and break out (as their times expire), leaving Williams to make a rope. Williams hits a Rock Bottom on Breakker, who falls out to the floor. A huge Williams dive takes everyone out but Dijak big boots him for the pin at 18:00.

Breakker – 3
Bate – 2
Dijak – 2
Briggs – 1
Williams – 0

Breakker is back up with a super Frankensteiner to send Dijak into a sitout powerbomb from Bate, who gets the pin at 18:35.

Breakker – 3
Bate – 3
Dijak – 2
Briggs – 1
Williams – 0

Breakker hits a heck of a gutbuster for two on Bate and a super flipping World's Strongest Slam gets the same as Briggs makes the save. Briggs and Dijak get up and start cleaning

house, setting up stereo moonsaults for stereo pins on Breakker and Williams at 21:09.

Breakker – 3

Bate – 3

Dijak – 3

Briggs – 2

Williams – 0

Bate hits a heck of a springboard tornado DDT to Dijak, setting up the big no hands dive to the floor. Briggs decks Bate with a right hand but Dijak takes them both down back inside. Breakker and Williams are back in, with Breakker posting Williams to cut him off. A spear through the barricade drops Williams again but Dijak chokeslams Breakker onto him. Back in and Williams rolls Briggs up for a fast pin at 23:49.

Breakker – 3

Bate – 3

Dijak – 3

Briggs – 2

Williams – 1

Feast Your Eyes hits Williams but here is Eddy Thorpe to jump Dijak instead. Williams steals a cover for the pin on Dijak at 24:29.

Breakker – 3

Bate – 3

Dijak – 3

Briggs – 2

Williams – 2

Williams rolls Bate up for the pin at 24:40.

Breakker – 3

Bate – 3

Dijak – 3

Williams – 3

Briggs – 2

Williams knees Breakker for the pin at 24:57.

Williams – 4

Breakker – 3

Bate – 3

Dijak – 3

Briggs – 2

Williams runs the clock out to win at 25:00.

Rating: B. The last minute and fifteen seconds or so was up there with the most ridiculous endings I've ever seen to a wrestling match...and that might be a good thing. Williams was beaten up like he owed people money throughout the match and then basically did a crazy Mario Kart style final lap where he caught up with everything. I'm not sure if it was good, but it was absolutely not boring and I'll take that every day.

Brooks Jensen tries to cheer up Josh Briggs and Fallon Henley when Meta Four comes in to be obnoxious. A fight breaks out.

Kiana James is driven from WWE Headquarters to the arena.

We recap Kiana James vs. Roxanne Perez. They have been fighting for months so it's time to lock them inside a cage. James talks about being a winner but Perez is ready to end her.

Roxanne Perez vs. Kiana James

Inside a cage (pinfall/submission only, with escaping not counting for a change) and James arrives. They fight before the bell with James getting the better of things but Perez slugs away. James goes for a climb but Perez dropkicks the cage for a smart breakup. Back up and James sends her into the cage, setting up a reverse chinlock.

With that broken up, a heck of a spinebuster gives James two.

Perez fights up again and hits a quick dropkick to start the comeback. There's a ram into the cage and it works so well that Perez does it a few more times. They both fight up until Perez gets pulled down, setting up a powerbomb off the bottom rope for two.

Perez is right back with a good looking Pop Rox for two but another attempt is blocked. James tries to leave and brings a chair back in, only to get kicked down. Perez goes to the door again but here is Izzi Dame to slam the door on Perez's head. The Deal Breaker with the chair finishes for James at 11:30.

Rating: C. This never really broke through to the next level and the few good spots they had didn't make up for the weaker stuff. The feud didn't feel like it needed to keep going after Halloween Havoc and this, which felt like the blowoff, didn't exactly work. It wasn't a terrible match or even bad, but it was fairly disappointing.

We preview the Men's Breakout Tournament.

Here's what's coming on NXT.

We recap Baron Corbin challenging Ilja Dragunov for the NXT Title. Dragunov wants to make the title special but Corbin just wants to be champion. Corbin has beaten Dragunov as well so he has a claim to a title shot. Dragunov has been playing some last minute mind games though and we're ready for a fight.

NXT Title: Baron Corbin vs. Ilja Dragunov

Dragunov is defending and gets taken down with a headlock takeover. Back up and Dragunov strikes away, including a running knee in the corner. A clothesline puts Corbin on the floor and Dragunov follows for a German suplex. Corbin is fine enough to hit a hard drop onto the announcers' table, meaning he can taunt Dragunov with the offering of stopping it.

Dragunov tries to fight up but gets dropped face first onto the top turnbuckle. Corbin puts him on top but gets knocked down, only to avoid a top rope backsplash. A top rope clothesline gives Corbin two and a release Rock Bottom has Dragunov in more trouble. Dragunov enziguris his way out of a chokeslam and nails a running knee to put Corbin down.

Now the top rope backsplash can connect but Dragunov is too banged up to cover. They slug it out until Dragunov drops him with a heck of a right hand. Corbin gets struck down in the corner where a running boot to the face makes it worse. Dragunov can barely follow up again but manages a running boot to the face (he likes that) on the apron. They go up top though, where Corbin hits a release chokeslam for two off a nasty crash.

A dragon sleeper goes on but Dragunov backflips out and Death Valley Drivers him into the corner. Back up and a quick Deep Six gives Corbin two, followed by his own Death Valley Driver. A brainbuster gives Corbin two but Dragunov muscles him up for a jackknife of all things (it took a few attempts but he got there). Coast To Coast hits Corbin but leaves Dragunov holding his ribs again. Back up and End of Days is countered into a DDT and a pair of H Bombs knock Corbin silly. One more H Bomb...doesn't leave Corbin down so Dragunov hugs him and hits the Torpedo Moscow to retain at 20:58.

Rating: B. As usual, a Dragunov match leaves you feeling that he would rather die than lose. That was on full display here and while he didn't quite hit his top level, he had me wanting to see him keep fighting until he won. That's a heck of a performance, which includes Corbin. I know he gets some major heat from a lot of people, but Corbin is able to do all kinds of things in the ring and do them at a high level. Good stuff here, with Dragunov getting another nice win.

Trick Williams, followed by Carmelo Hayes, comes out for the staredown to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This wasn't a great show, but it was a nice use of three hours, not counting a heck of a Kickoff Show match. That's all you can ask for out of something like this and it worked well all things considered. The Iron Survivor Challenge matches can take some getting used to but once you figure out the system, the drama can be great at the end. With only the cage match being a bit disappointing, I liked this show a good bit and NXT closes out the year pretty well, with New Year's Evil mostly set.

Results

Axiom b. Nathan Frazer – Golden Ratio

Dragon Lee b. Dominik Mysterio – Destino

Blair Davenport won the Women's Iron Survivor Challenge

Carmelo Hayes b. Lexis King – Nothing But Net

Trick Williams won the Men's Iron Survivor Challenge

Kiana James b. Roxanne Perez – Deal Breaker with a chair

Ilja Dragunov b. Baron Corbin – Torpedo Moscow

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