

NXT LVL Up – December 29, 2023 (Best Of 2023): They Were The Best

NXT LVL Up

Date: December 29, 2023

Host: Blake Howard

It's the last WWE show of the year and for once I'm kind of curious to see where this is going. Last week's show featured some bigger names as it felt like WWE was actually trying with this show for a change. I'm not sure that's going to be the case long term, but it's nice to have some hope around here. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We have a Best Of 2023 show here so we'll start around Wrestlemania season.

From April 7.

Sol Ruca/Dani Palmer vs. Lash Legend/Jakara Jackson

Ruca and Legend start things off with Ruca working on the arm and it's off to Palmer, who gets launched at Legend for two. Jackson comes in and gets headscissored down, only to come back with an Edge-0-Matic for two of her own. Palmer manages a rollup before flipping over for the hot tag to Ruca. Everything breaks down and the Sol Snatcher finishes Jackson at 4:49.

Rating: C. That Sol Snatcher is just awesome no matter what else happens in a match and it is going to get a reaction no matter what. The key here was that it came out of nowhere and made Ruca look like a killer. Palmer continues to have potential and Legend is still coming along now that she isn't

on TV every week and driving people crazy.

Tavion Heights is still learning around here but remembers facing Nathan Frazer.

From June 9.

Nathan Frazier vs. Tavion Heights

Heights wrestles/powers him to the mat to start but Frazier reverses into a sunset flip for two. Back up and Frazier starts flipping away, only to dive into an overhead belly to belly suplex (and a sweet one at that). Heights grabs the chinlock but Frazier reverses, only to get kicked throat first into the rope. A Dominator gives Heights two more but Frazier kicks him in the head. Frazier flips out of a German suplex, nails a superkick and finishes with the Phoenix splash at 4:40.

Rating: C+. Frazier being around instantly made the show feel more important and the fact that it was a rather nice power vs. speed match helped. This felt like Heights was told to go do all of his impressive stuff and the power/amateur mixture worked. Heights is another star who feels like he could be a big deal going forward, but he has to actually win something for that to take place.

Karmen Petrovic was nervous about facing Jacy Jayne but you'll see more of her in 2024.

From August 18.

Jacy Jayne vs. Karmen Petrovic

They fight over a lockup to start with Jayne powering her into the corner without much trouble. Petrovic takes it to the mat in a headlock before getting some rollups for two each. Jayne is sent to the apron and scores with a knee to the face, followed by a running elbow in the corner for two. A kick to the back keeps Petrovic down and we hit the double arm crank.

That's broken up and Petrovic gets in a kick of her own but Jayne blasts her with a discus forearm for the pin at 5:08.

Rating: C. There's not much to be seen here and just like after her first match, I don't know much about Petrovic. Commentary said she had a martial arts background but other than that, the only things I know about her is that she is in good shape and she has blond hair. Jayne is a much bigger deal and Petrovic didn't get much in here, so she didn't exactly gain much in defeat.

Riley Osborne talks about his pair of matches with Axiom, which really were good.

From October 13.

Axiom vs. Riley Osborne

Axiom takes him down by the arm to start as the fans seem a bit split here. Osborne takes him down with a test of strength for some near falls before they trade monkey flips. Back up and Axiom sends him outside, only to be sent into the corner back inside. Osborne grabs a chinlock back inside but Axiom fights up in a hurry and scores with a dropkick.

Osborne snaps off a running hurricanrana for two but Axiom wins a slugout. They crash out to the floor, where Osborne hits a 619 from the apron. Axiom knocks him down so Osborne has to dive back in, where Axiom is waiting with a frog splash for the pin (though Osborne's shoulder might have been up) at 8:21.

Rating: B-. That was one of the best matches I've seen around here in months as this was all about two people getting to showcase themselves with a little more time than usual. Axiom has shown that he can hang with anyone but Osborne got a chance to shine here as well. Heck of a match between these two and I'm glad to see them get such a chance.

And from October 27.

Axiom vs. Riley Osborne

They fight over wrist control to start and trade some spins to escape. Axiom gets him to the mat and cranks on the arms but can't keep the shoulders down for two. Osborne flips over but he gets knocked to the apron, only to come back with a slingshot shoulder. Back in and Axiom takes him down, setting up a half and half suplex.

A running kick to the chest gets two and Axiom powerbombs him out of the corner for two more. They go outside with Osborne bouncing off of the announcers' table, only to run Axiom over for two back inside. Axiom catches him on top though and it's a super Spanish Fly into the Golden Ratio for the pin at 7:45.

Rating: B-. This was another good match between the two as they do have chemistry and Osborne has gotten a lot of mileage out of the two match series. It wasn't quite as good as the first one though, which might be due to the expectations. That being said, it's something close to continuity around here and that is nice to see.

Overall Rating: C+. They seemed to be focusing on the idea of the former LVL Up regulars who have made it up to the main roster and that isn't a bad way to go. Focusing on Axiom vs. Osborne was a good idea as they probably were the best matches of the year. This was a very quick and easy show, which tends to be the case most weeks. The show is trending in the right direction and hopefully they keep that up in 2024 so we can have a better Best Of next time.

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