

Smackdown – December 25, 2020: And To All A Good Smackdown

Smackdown

Date: December 25, 2020

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

It's the biggest holiday of the year and WWE is doing a show because I'm assuming network requirements. It's a stacked (and thankfully taped) card with three title matches, including Kevin Owens vs. Roman Reigns in a cage, Big E. challenging Sami Zayn and Charlotte/Asuka defending against opponents to be named. Let's get to it.

[Here is Tables, Ladders And Chairs if you need a recap.](#)

Universal Title: Kevin Owens vs. Roman Reigns

Reigns, with Paul Heyman at ringside, is defending inside a cage. Owens slugs away to start but gets sent into the cage a few times. The Samoan drop gets two but Owens is back up to stomp Reigns in the corner. That means the Cannonball can connect for two and Reigns is in trouble. Back up and Owens tries the Pop Up Powerbomb, only to have Reigns reverse into a Rough Ryder of all things. Owens punches him down again and the Bullfrog splash connects for two.

We take a break and come back with Reigns hitting a sitout powerbomb for two of his own. Owens is able to hit the Pop Up Powerbomb for two more but Reigns catches him in the corner. The superplex is loaded up but Owens reverses into the spinning superplex for two more. Reigns hits the Superman Punch for another two and it's time to choke on the ropes. Owens is back with his own choking to break free though and

Reigns is down in the middle. The Stunner gives Owens two more and we take a second break.

Back again with Reigns having to pull Owens off the top but getting superkicked away. Owens' Swanton hits knees though, allowing Reigns to hit the spear for a rather near fall. Reigns is aghast and talks trash, only to have Owens slam the door on his head. Owens sends him into the cage over and over to knock Reigns silly so here's Jey Uso to slam the door on Owens' head.

That earns Jey a door to the head but the delay lets Reigns pull Owens back in. A superkick connects but so does Reigns' Superman Punch. The spear only hits cage though and there's another Stunner to drop Reigns. Owens goes to the door...and here's Jey again to handcuff him to the cage. Reigns is up and steps over Owens, who shouts that Reigns' kids should be ashamed of him to retain at 25:36.

Rating: B. This felt like a big time TV match and that's all you can ask for out of a big time TV match. It was a nice followup to the TLC match and that's a hard trick to pull off given how great that was. The ending feels like a way to set up a Last Man Standing match, which should be a heck of a violent blowoff to the whole thing. This had good drama and action and the ending gave them a way to keep going. Not bad for a long, entertaining match.

Here are Charlotte and Asuka to defend the Tag Team Titles against opponents to be named, so here is Bayley to interrupt. Before she can get very far though, here is Sasha Banks to interrupt. Before she can get very far though, here is Bianca Belair to interrupt. Before she can get very far though, here's Carmella to interrupt and the trash talk sets up a match that was already announced by commentary. So why did we need all of the interruptions and mini promos?

Women's Tag Team Titles: Asuka/Charlotte vs. Carmella/Bayley

vs. Bianca Belair/Sasha Banks

Asuka and Charlotte are defending with elimination rules. Charlotte kicks Asuka in the ribs to start and Asuka comes in to kick her down for two. Carmella comes in (with Graves swooning) so Banks joins her to send Carmella into the corner. Running knees set up a tag to Belair, who drives in the shoulders to the ribs. Charlotte takes Carmella place and they take turns mocking each other before trying dropkicks at the same time. That means stereo nip ups so it's Bayley and Asuka coming in.

The Bayley to Belly gets two on Asuka and we take a break. Back with Asuka hitting a middle rope dropkick for two on Bayley but getting taken into the corner. Carmella comes in to send Asuka head first into the mat, allowing Bayley to come back in and knock Charlotte off the apron. Asuka fights up and brings in Charlotte to clean house as everything breaks down. Bayley gets knocked down and Banks hits the frog splash for the first elimination at 13:04.

The Bank Statement has Charlotte in trouble but she's back up to take the leg. The Figure Four attempt is broken up though and Banks kicks her in the face. Charlotte's big boot connects though and now the Figure Eight goes on. Belair can't reach Banks for the tag so she throws her hair out, allowing Banks to pull herself over (Couldn't you say that touching the hair counted as a tag?) for the tag.

Belair goes up but Charlotte kicks her down, injuring the knee in the process. The Figure Eight is broken up with a Meteora so Asuka takes Banks down, knocking her into Reginald, who is still at ringside for some reason. Bayley is still here too as Asuka kicks away at Belair. One of the kicks is countered into a sitout powerbomb for two on Asuka but there is no one for Belair to tag (which Bayley enjoys pointing out). A Codebreaker into Natural Selection finishes Belair to retain the titles at 16:56.

Rating: C+. The action was good enough, but there wasn't exactly any drama when you have the dream team new champs facing two makeshift teams. What else was there going to be here? I have no idea who is going to take the titles from Asuka and Charlotte, because aside from the Riott Squad, I'm not even sure if there are any teams. Good enough match though, and made the champs look good.

The Street Profits preview the rest of the show but overhead Sami Zayn yelling at a member of the production team about the main event being a lumberjack match. She walks away, so the Profits bring Sami his present: a shirt saying "I WAS INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION." Storming off ensues.

Daniel Bryan vs. Jey Uso

Jey jumps Bryan during the entrance and beats the heck out of him, including a slam on the ramp. We take a break and come back with Bryan saying he's good to go, meaning Jey sends him outside in a heap. The suicide dive connects and Bryan is in a lot of trouble early on. Bryan gets whipped into the steps and it's time to head back inside for the chops in the corner. Another slam bangs up Bryan again but he avoids a running elbow. Jey avoids the running corner dropkick though and the running hip attack rocks Bryan again.

Bryan hits a backdrop to send Jey outside though and he bangs up his ankle on the landing. Bryan's suicide dive mostly misses though and he crashes shoulder first into the announcers' table. There's the belly to back superplex to drop Jey and we take a break. Back with Bryan going after the leg and getting two off a super hurricanrana. The running knee is blocked with a superkick though and the Superfly Splash hits Bryan.

Jey's bad knee delayed the cover though and Bryan kicks out. Another Superfly Splash hits raised knees though and Bryan slaps on a half crab. With that broken up, they slug it out on

the match with Bryan getting the better of things. The running knee finishes Jey at 13:46.

Rating: B. They did a nice job of setting up the drama here as Uso has been on enough of a roll to make you think that he could be a threat to Bryan. At the same time though, Bryan seems to be the most likely challenger to Reigns at Wrestlemania (at least for now) so giving him a win is a good idea. Also, is anyone going to think that Uso is downgraded by losing to Bryan?

Post break Bryan says there is one thing he has not accomplished in his career so he is setting his sights on it. As of tonight, Bryan is officially entering the Royal Rumble. Sami Zayn comes in to say Bryan was the one who said the Intercontinental Title needed to be defended more often and accuses Bryan of setting up the lumberjack match. If that's the case, Sami will deal with him. Bryan: "Did Santa not bring him a Playstation 5? Is that what the kids are into?"

Video on Sami Zayn vs. Big E.

Intercontinental Title: Sami Zayn vs. Big E.

Big E. is challenging in a lumberjack match (with a few Raw wrestlers at ringside). Sami gets powered around to start but manages to get in a running shot to the face in the corner. E. is sent outside where the lumberjacks get in some cheap shots before throwing him in again. Back in and Big E. runs Sami over with the straight power that you would expect, only to miss the running apron splash.

Back with Sami charging into the Rock Bottom out of the corner for two. Sami tries to run away but gets thrown back in by the lumberjacks. Big E. pulls him back in with Sami grabbing the ring skirt in the process. The referee fixes it up so Sami uses the chance to get in a poke to the eyes. That gives Sami two so he goes up top, where a sunset bomb gets two more. The spear through the ropes connects so the lumberjacks slug it

out, even as Sami tries to bail. That doesn't work, as Sami is throw back in for the belly to belly, the Warrior Splash and the Big Ending to give Big E. the pin and the title at 13:15.

Rating: C+. The wrestling wasn't the point here and there is nothing wrong with that. Above all else, they got in, did their thing, and got out with a match that felt important. They needed to do something special for Big E. and winning the Intercontinental Title on Christmas night, even in a match without much drama, feels like something important. Nice main event here, but the moment mattered more.

Post match the lumberjacks pick Big E. up and confetti falls to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. The wrestling ranged from rather good to good all night long, but above all else this show felt like it belonged on a special show. It felt like a show that belonged on a holiday and the Big Ending gave us a big ending. I can't imagine many people actually watch the thing, but it certainly gave them something to talk about on the way to the new year. Very strong show here and Big E.'s singles push seems to have begun.

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good Smackdown.

Results

Roman Reigns b. Kevin Owens – Reigns escaped the cage

Charlotte/Asuka b. Sasha Banks/Bianca Belair and Carmella/Bayley – Natural Selection to Belair

Daniel Bryan b. Jey Uso – Running knee

Big E. b. Sami Zayn – Big Ending

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NXT UK – December 24, 2020: Like They Could Do Anything Else

NXT UK

Date: December 24, 2020

Host: Andy Shepherd

It's a pretty special day and that means NXT UK is smart enough to know better than to try and run a regular show. Just like we had for months earlier this year, it's a Best Of show and that's the best option that they have. There are still some great matches to pick from and that is our Christmas present around here. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Andy is in a light up Roddy Piper sweater, because he should be. We aren't wasting time as it's off to our first match.

From NXT, January 15, 2020.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Broserweights vs. Flash Morgan Webster/Mark Andrews

That would be Pete Dunne/Matt Riddle. Dunne and Andrews start but it's a very early standoff to send us to a break. Back with Webster flipping out of Dunne's German suplex but getting caught in a quick X Plex. Webster fights out of the corner, flips over Dunne and crawls underneath Riddle to get over to Andrews. The pace picks up with Andrews doing the double knee slide and backflipping into a double Pele.

Andrews and Webster hit the stereo flip dives, followed by the assisted 450 for two on Dunne back inside. Dunne punches Webster out of the air but Andres is there to break up...well there wouldn't have been a tag anyway as Riddle was pulling himself back to the apron. A double stomp to the hands allows Riddle to come in and stereo kicks to the head get two on Andrews.

Riddle German suplexes Andrews for two and Dunne grabs an ankle lock to mix things up a bit. Andrews rolls out and hits a double stomp as we take another break. Back with Webster dropkicking Dunne to the floor, setting up the big flip dive onto both of them. Andrews hits a reverse hurricanrana for two on Riddle with Dunne having to shove Webster into the cover for the save. A tornado DDT plants Dunne on the floor but Riddle spears Webster down.

Riddle's suplex is countered into a small package for two so Riddle throws him into a kick from Dunne for a closer near fall. Andrews grabs a hurricanrana for two on Riddle with Dunne punching Webster into the cover for another save. The Bitter End is blocked and the X Plex is countered into a Stundog Millionaire. Riddle has had it with these two and gives Webster Bro Derek on the floor. Dunne loads up the Bitter End on Andrews, dropping him onto Riddle's knee to the face for the pin at 18:20.

Rating: B+. This was an interesting one with the regular team being able to hang in there against the two individual stars. Then Riddle took it to a level where they just couldn't hang and Riddle looked like the star that he is. Dunne looked rather good as well, but Riddle was the monster

at the end and it was cool to see.

Tyler Bate, Xia Brookside, Jordan Devlin, Amale, Levi Muir, Aoife Valkyrie, Tyson T-Bone (with a sweet old school wrestling figures collection) and Flash Morgan Webster wish us a Merry Christmas.

A-Kid, Isla Dawn, Joseph Connors, Pretty Deadly, Piper Niven (her Christmas tree is nice), Sam Gradwell and Eddie Dennis wish us a Merry Christmas.

Jinny talks about what a year this was and thinks we should look back out our accomplishments. NXT UK showed the world how tough it was, but she showed everyone how great she was. 2021 is a new, clean slate and it will be her year. Merry Christmas.

Dave Mastiff reads various wrestlers' Christmas wishes, including HHH wanting a motorbike or flaming water.

Mark Andrews, Ashton Smith, Aleah James, Amir Jordan, Dani Luna, Kenny Williams and Oliver Carter wish us a Merry Christmas.

Nina Samuels, Gallus, Noam Dar, Rampage Brown, Jack Starz, Wild Boar, Sid Scala, Saxon Huxley and Ilja Dragunov wish us a Merry Christmas.

Video on Walter vs. Joe Coffey at Takeover: Blackpool II.

United Kingdom Title: Joe Coffey vs. Walter

Walter is defending and tries a big boot at the bell in a flashback to last year's Blackpool. The early sleeper is countered into a spinning belly to back suplex so Walter gets a breather on the floor. Coffey follows and hits a big diving shoulder over the barricade as Walter can't get going so far. Back in and Coffey stomps away, setting up a belly to belly for two. There's a tornado DDT for two more and it's time for the slugout, with Coffey seemingly rather pleased. A stalling suplex gives Coffey two more but they chop it out, and that's just a bad idea against

Walter.

Some big chops put Coffey on the floor and that means a big boot against the barricade. Back in and a half crab into the STF have Coffey in more trouble but Walter lets it go. More forearms just fire Coffey up...so Walter knocks him right back down. Some forearms to the chest set up a Boston crab and then a modified Crossface has Coffey in more trouble. A rope is grabbed so they ram into each other a few times until Walter suplexes him for two more.

The sleeper is broken up with a drop backwards and they're both down. That doesn't last long as Coffey spears Walter in the back to set up a German suplex for two. Walter is right back up with a powerbomb for his own near fall but the ref gets knocked VERY silly (and sells it like he fell out of a building).

All The Best For The Bells connects for no count so here's Alexander Wolfe to go after Coffey. Ilja Dragunov makes the save but knocks Wolfe into Coffey's leg. Walter clotheslines Dragunov to the floor and kicks him down before sending Coffey into the steps. We have another referee as Dragunov and Wolfe fight to the back. Coffey catches him on top and manages a belly to belly superplex to put them both down again.

Walter is up first for his awesome top rope splash and another near fall. The powerbomb is escaped and All The Best For The Bells connects (after the first one grazed the top of Walter's head) for two so Walter slaps on a sleeper. The sleeper suplex drops Coffey on his head and there's the powerbomb. Walter hits another powerbomb and puts on the Crossface to make Coffey tap at 27:40.

Rating: A. It's the second best NXT UK Takeover main event ever and that's not bad at all. This was exactly what it should have been with both guys beating the heck out of each other as only a pair of monsters can do. I had fun watching them hit each other really hard and that's how it should have gone. Heck of a fight here and Coffey continues to have a great role around here. It's going to take something special to beat Walter and you can probably pencil in Dragunov for the next shot, which could be fascinating.

Overall Rating: A. What else can you ask for here? It's a show on a holiday so who is going to care about anything they present? Don't bother doing anything other than having a good show like this because it's all you should be doing here. The matches were good too so it's as solid of a show as you are going to have.

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Main Event – December 17, 2020: The Recap Of The Unwatched Show

Main Event

Date: December 17, 2020

Location: Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for Tables, Ladders And Chairs and for once I'm not sure what to expect around here. The show has gotten a little more interesting in recent weeks and while

that might not be the best thing in the world, it is a little more interesting than what we were getting before. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's R-Truth for an opening chat. Truth says his third middle name is Dangerously, which is the same way John Cena lives. The only thing he is missing is a legendary contract signing but here's Drew Gulak, with a contract, to interrupt. Gulak says he has always looked up to Truth and he has drawn up the contract. Truth: "For starters, we'll need a bouncy castle." He also wants a fancy table, lazer pins, and Gary Oldman dressed as Commissioner Gordon. Truth looks at the contract, which looks more like a stick drawing. Gulak goes for the rollup but gets caught with the AA so Truth can escape.

We look at Roman Reigns and Jey Uso attacking Kevin Owens on Smackdown.

From Smackdown.

Jey comes up to Reigns, who asks if Jey and his family are both good. Kevin Owens comes to the ring and Jey says let me go get him. Reigns gives him permission as Owens is loading up weapons. With Jey on the way to the ring and Reigns watching, Owens sets up the table, ladder and chairs before talking about how Reigns is using his family to fight. Owens doesn't have a family, but he has some friends to help him out.

First up you have the cold, unforgiving chairs, which will help him bruise Reigns. Maybe he can even break a few bones to make it hard for Reigns to sit at the head of the table. That brings him to his second friend, the table. See, table is hard at first but then it's looking forward to receiving Reigns at TLC. Then there is ladder, which is unforgiving, rough around the edges and unpredictable. It's his favorite though, because it is going to help him hurt Reigns and get back to where he

belongs.

Owens climbs the ladder and says Reigns can be head of the table because Owens is going to give everything he has to become Universal Champion again. Cue Jey Uso with the chair to take Owens down and hammer away, including a shot to the knee. Owens gets back up for a Pop Up Powerbomb through a table, so here are Reigns and Heyman. Reigns is ready to go but Heyman talks him out of it, saying Reigns is the OG and the head of the table. Heyman: "Who's zooming who here?" Reigns leaves and Owens grabs a chair and limps off after him.

Post break, Owens yells at Reigns talking about his family...and gets jumped by Reigns from behind. The beatdown is on, with Reigns shouting about who supports Owens' family. Reigns looks at the camera and lists off his accolades, saying he is the one who puts a roof over your head and the food on the table. Owens' kids need to talk some sense into their daddy, before he takes the food off of the table. One more kick to the head leaves Owens laying with a glossed over look on his face. This was rather good, as Owens may be ticked off, but Reigns is a complete monster.

We recap Randy Orton vs. Bray Wyatt, including the Fiend attacking Orton after Orton fought Bray.

From Raw.

Here's Bray Wyatt for a road trip, complete with the puppets on the other side of the barricade. Bray is glad to be here but he needs to apologize to Randy Orton for everything that has been happening in recent weeks. Things have gotten out of hand and the Fiend has a mind of his own. After Orton takes Him on this Sunday, Bray isn't sure what is going to be left of Randy.

It won't be any fun and games because all that is left is sadness. Yowie Wowie that's alright! There won't be any fun and games on Sunday, so Bray has prepared some jokes for

tonight and they are going to be HYSTERICAL. What's the best way to measure a viper? In inches, because they don't have any feet. What do snakes use to clean their car windows? Windshield vipers! That one knocks Bray to his knees but here's Orton on the screen to interrupt.

Orton talks about how the Fiend changed him last week, just like Bray changed into the Fiend. For the first time in a long time, Orton was outmaneuvered by Him, so tonight, Bray should come see him. Tonight, they can play a game of hide and seek. Bray loves the idea and accepts so Orton says come find him. The puppets approve as Bray says let the games begin. More on this later.

From Raw.

Post break Bray goes looking for Randy but finds an empty, shaking rocking chair. Bray has a seat and Orton pops up behind him for the beatdown. Orton sends him into various things and then locks Bray inside a wooden case. He whips out a well placed can of gasoline and pours it on said crate, which is then set on fire. The Fiend pops up and Mandible Claws Orton. This ends the most obvious surprise in recent memory, but Orton's face helped a lot.

Nikki Cross vs. Lacey Evans

This is actually fallout from two weeks ago when Evans cost Nikki a match against Peyton Royce. Before the match, Peyton again insists that she and Lacey are NOT friends, though Lacey calls Peyton a nasty. They agree that Nikki is a loser for only being known as Alexa Bliss' former friend. Lacey bails into the corner to start so Nikki armdrags her into an armbar. Royce's distraction doesn't work so Lacey chokes on the ropes instead.

We take a break and come back with Lacey Gator Rolling her and then pulling the hair. Nikki tries to fight back but gets posted, meaning she can barely beat the count back in. A

flying hair takedown sends Evans face first into the mat and some short arm clotheslines connect. The running crossbody in the corner keeps Evans in trouble but Peyton offers a distraction. That's about all of the good though as Nikki grabs a rollup for the pin at 9:02.

Rating: D+. This was a little too messy to work but it's nice to have some actual continuity around here. You can only get so far with the two of them trying to cram in a bunch of stuff, not even counting Peyton. That's the kind of thing this show can be used for though and this was a fine enough use of the time.

We look at Sasha Banks getting disqualified against Carmella and then getting beaten down post match.

From Raw.

It's time for the Championship Ascension Ceremony so here are AJ Styles and Drew McIntyre with Tom Phillips in the ring. AJ says Drew doesn't need to address him, but rather the title, because he won't be having it around his waist again. This is going to be their first ever singles match so maybe AJ needs to find out a little more about McIntyre. AJ can't believe that it took Drew nineteen years to get here but AJ is ready to use every table, ladder and chair to get the title back.

Drew calls that an impressive speech and says he has always wanted to face AJ. This Sunday, the match is TLC and no, he has never been in one before. Drew says he thought his goal was to win the WWE Title but the loss and second win changed everything for him. It is so much harder to stay champion and he was the man who lead WWE through uncharted waters. He's a frickin diamond and he's ready for AJ on Sunday. Every man dies but not every man truly lives, so on Sunday he's willing to do whatever it takes to remain champion.

The title is raised up but AJ says he isn't the only person Drew is facing on Sunday. Cue Miz and Morrison to jump Drew,

who fights them all off and throws a ladder to the floor. Omos throws in the steps for a distraction though and AJ chop blocks Drew down (nice move after setting it up earlier tonight against Sheamus). The Phenomenal Forearm connects and AJ adds some ladder shots. AJ tells Omos to throw in some more stuff so we get a table and another ladder. Various other shots let AJ climb the ladder to pull down the title...and we cut off with Tom in the middle of his big close.

Overall Rating: C. I know the match was nothing to see, but they had a segment to open things up and then focused on the three main TLC matches for the rest of the show. That's what this show should be for if not getting more wrestlers in the ring, so I'll take what I can get with it. This would have worked as a quick recap heading into the pay per view and that's what they needed here.

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Merry Christmas Everyone

Have a good one and, if safely possible, be with your loved ones. At worst, call them up and talk with them for a bit if you can. This year has taught us that you don't know when you might not be able to again, so cherish the time while you can. It's worth it all the time, but especially today.

KB

Monday Night Raw – July 24, 2006: They Were A Little Preoccupied

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 24, 2006

Location: Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Attendance: 12,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're on the way to Summerslam and that means it's time to start cranking up the build towards the show. You can guess where a lot of the card is going but they still need to hammer home some of the details. That can be quite the tricky situation but hopefully they can figure it out. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

Here's Shawn Michaels (and only Shawn, as Stephanie McMahon went into labor earlier in the day so the McMahons and HHH are a little busy) to get things going. A few weeks ago, he and HHH said that Stephanie McMahon had gone into labor and that was a lie. After a quick chat with God, Shawn says that life imitates art because Stephanie is currently in a hospital in Connecticut giving birth. As good family, Vince and Shane are at her side but HHH is at the hospital as well. Now between you and me, Shawn thinks HHH knows who the father is.

Cue Jonathan Coachman, on the phone with Vince, to interrupt. Vince has decided that Shawn won't be running amuck tonight because the Coach is in charge. Shawn takes the phone and has Cleveland give Shawn two words. Shawn: "No sir they didn't say that. They said hi!"

Shawn gives Vince some Lamaze lessons and then hands the phone to Coach because Vince is rather annoyed. Coach hangs up and Shawn asks if Vince asked about him. It turns out that Vince has made a match tonight with Shawn vs....Coach himself. Shawn pauses and then bursts out laughing needing Coach to hold him up. A pause sets up more laughter and Shawn falls to the mat in hysterics. They had to throw this together at the last minute so this was as good of a plan as they could think of.

We look back at Randy Orton attacking Hulk Hogan at Saturday Night's Main Event.

Lilian Garcia is back so we look at Viscera attacking her two weeks ago.

Tag Team Titles: Spirit Squad vs. Highlanders

The Highlanders are challenging. Kenny sends Rory (not Robbie JR/Lawler) into the buckle and it goes rather badly. Everything breaks down in a hurry with the Highlanders getting in some right hands in the corner. Rory is sent outside and it's Robbie in trouble until he neckbreakers his way to freedom. It's off to Rory to clean house but a distraction

lets the rest of the team break up the Scot Drop. Kenny Rolls the Dice to finish Rory and retain the titles.

Rating: D. Well that was necessary. They bring the Highlanders in, give them some nothing wins, and then have the Squad beat them in about three minutes. It might not be the end of the team, but were they that bad that you needed to have them lose so soon? Nothing match due to the time, but man that's a fast defeat after bringing them in.

Mick Foley joins us from WWE Studios and can't believe that Ric Flair called him "fat boy" last week. It hurt then and it hurt thirty years ago when Foley's brother used it on him. Flair uses a fourth grade insult because he has nothing left and is nothing but a second rate circus sideshow. What has become of Flair? Now all he is doing is attacking innocent women, one of whom happens to be a friend of Foley's. He'll see Flair next Monday.

This week in wrestling history: Great American Bash 1989. Yep that works.

Here's Ric Flair for a chat. Flair talks about the clip we just saw, which featured him beating up Foley's mentor Terry Funk. Now all Flair wants is Foley in a match in any arena in this country. Cue Edge and Lita to say that Edge is the man now....and here's Johnny Nitro to jump Flair from behind. The double teaming is on but John Cena runs in for the save.

Carlito hits on Trish Stratus and they'll be hanging out after the match.

Coach is on the phone with Vince McMahon to try and get out of the match but Edge and Lita come in to rant about what just happened. Vince has a solution: Edge/Nitro vs. Cena/Flair tonight.

We get an official announcement that Stephanie has given birth to a girl named Aurora Rose.

Shelton Benjamin vs. Carlito

For the #1 contendership to the Intercontinental Title, which Carlito beat Shelton for last week. Carlito grabs some early rollups for near falls to start and a quick dropkick gets two. Benjamin is sent to the apron but pulls Carlito over the top by the arm to take over. Back in and a DDT on the arm sets up an armbar to stay on the shoulder.

Carlito fights up and hits a hurricanrana to head up top, only to dive into a Fujiwara armbar. The rope gives Carlito the break and he counters a powerbomb into a sunset flip for two. The Backstabber connects for two as Shelton gets his foot on the rope. With nothing else working, Carlito takes the turnbuckle pad off so the referee goes to yell. Shelton uses the distraction to get in a low blow for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: C-. They had a little more time here though this would seem to be setting up a triple threat for the title at Summerslam. If that's the case, I've heard of far worse ideas than putting these two with Nitro on a big stage for a title. It could work out well for all three and WWE could benefit from pushing younger stars for the Intercontinental Title.

We look at the Diva Dance Off from Smackdown.

Here's Hulk Hogan (the greatest sports entertainment attraction of all time according to JR) and the ovation takes a rather good while, with the song starting over. Hulk talks about how crazy these Cleveland fans are but he knows that Randy Orton is crazy too. This wouldn't even be the first time that he has dealt with the Orton family. Back in the 80s, Hogan dealt with Randy's dad Bob.

When the blood was shed, there was respect on both sides. Now Hogan has to deal with Randy, who comes out to cut Hogan off. Randy is here to talk about Brooke Hogan and yes there was chemistry there. You could see it, even with Hulk's fading

eyesight. He and Brooke talked for at least five or ten minutes before Hulk showed up.

Brooke told him how handsome he was and how she loved the color of his eyes. The only bad thing is that Brooke is going to have to see her father's legend killed. Hulk is ready to fight right now so Orton heads to ringside but takes his time. Hogan knocks him off the apron and into Jerry Lawler, who throws Orton inside for some right hands. Orton bails from the threat of the big boot. Nice little tease of the match here.

Mickie James vs. Candice Michelle

Non-title. Mickie kicks away for an early two and the chinlock goes on. Lawler makes his usual jokes as Mickie gets in the shoulders to the ribs. Candice is back with the figure four neck lock over the ropes, only to have Mickie roll through a high crossbody and grab trunks (or something close to them) for the fast pin.

Jerry Lawler threw out the first pitch at an Indians game.

Shawn Michaels vs. Jonathan Coachman

Shawn's pyro is missing so he blames Coach. The bell rings so hang on a second as Shawn rolls outside to grab a skullcap. Coach nearly loses his pants and there's the forearm into a nip up. The atomic drop sets up the top rope elbow...and here's most of the Spirit Squad. Shawn dispatches them in a hurry so Sweet Chin Music drops the coach. Cue Umaga to jump Shawn for the DQ. This was an angle instead of a match but it worked fine.

Post match Umaga hits Shawn with the Samoan Spike to leave him laying as DX might have to sweat a bit for the first time in a few months.

John Cena thinks Maria is a little confused. Yes she's beautiful, but sometimes he thinks she ate paint chips when

she was a kid. Then sometimes he looks at her and thinks about things he only see in Penthouse Forum and...where was he going with this again? Anyway the show is being run by a phone tonight because Stephanie had a baby (Cena: "And HHH might have an inside track on knowing who the father is. He knows somebody or something."). Then you have Edge, who is really rated PG-13 and Lita is rated NC-17 (Cena: "No Cold Sores In 17 Days!").

Then there is Johnny Nitro, who is named after a natural gas and I'll let you figure out the jokes yourself. Then you have the Legend Killer trying to put the moves on the legend's daughter (Cena: "And I can't blame him.") but remember: Hogan Knows Best. Cena runs down the rest of the midcard and says that the big point is so clear even Maria can understand it: his partner is Ric Flair and they get to beat up Edge. Cena tells Maria to call him to wrap up a rather all over the place promo. Again though: the show was rewritten in a hurry so maybe he was told to just go fill time.

It's time for the Diva Search elimination with Maryse being eliminated. I'm sure we'll never see her again. This Friday: it's musical chairs, with Miz nearly cracking up at the idea.

John Cena/Ric Flair vs. Edge/Johnny Nitro

Flair and Nitro lock up to start with Nitro getting smart by going to the eye. Everything breaks down in a hurry with the villains being cleared out as we take a break. Back with Cena getting beaten down with Edge getting in a little dance. Cena fights out and gets over to Flair for the tag as the pace picks up. The Figure Four goes on Nitro but Edge makes the save and hits the spear.

Nitro grabs a neckbreaker to send Flair outside but he's back in with the chops. A clothesline takes Flair down though and he is knocked outside again to keep up the beating. Back in and Edge gets chopped out of the air, allowing the hot tag to

Cena so house can be cleaned. Lita offers a distraction though so a chair to the back can give Nitro two. Cena is fine enough to grab the STFU to make Nitro tap.

Rating: C. Just a run of the mill main event tag here and that's fine. I know the Intercontinental Champion had to tap out but it's not like Nitro is anywhere near Cena's level at this point. They're still teasing Cena FINALLY getting his hands on Edge and I think you know where this whole thing is going. Not a great match or anything, but for a one off main event, it worked well.

Cena and Edge yell at each other a lot to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. They didn't have much to offer here but it worked out well enough all things considered. Again though, how much can you really complain about when the show is thrown out of wack due to Stephanie having a baby? There is still time to set up Summerslam and it's not like you can't see the card from here anyway. Not a very good show, but it didn't need to be this week.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the paperback edition of KB's Complete 2004 Monday Night Raw Reviews (also available as an e-book) from Amazon. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2019/08/26/new-book-and-e-book-kbs-complete-2004-monday-night-raw-reviews/>

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New Column: Sweet 2020 Goodness

There have been some good things this year, believe it or not.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/review-sweet-2020-goodness/>

Dynamite – December 23, 2020: It's Cold Outside

Dynamite

Date: December 23, 2020

Location: Daily's Place, Jacksonville, Florida

Commentators: Jim Ross, Tony Schiavone, Excalibur

It's the holiday season and for once this show isn't going head to head with NXT thanks to an NBA game. I'm not sure what to expect from this week's show but the Young Bucks are defending the Tag Team Titles. Other than that it's time to build towards the next two weeks of New Year's Smash. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

Chris Jericho/Maxwell Jacob Friedman vs. Top Flight

The fans sing Judas to make sure you know that Chris Jericho is the coolest thing in the world. Jericho and Darius trade shots to the face to start with Jericho getting the better of things without much effort. Darius gets in a shot of his own though and it's Dante coming in for a double kick to the chest. It's off to Friedman, who gets dropkicked to the floor, meaning it's a double slugout to put the Inner Circle in trouble.

Friedman is knocked outside again but Jericho clotheslines Dante down to take over. Back in and Jericho knees Dante in the ribs and hits a belly to back suplex. There's the double flapjack to Dante and a quick distraction lets MJF choke away. A catapult sends Dante throat first into the bottom rope and Jericho throws his feet on the ropes for two like a villain should. Jericho's superplex attempt is broken up though and Dante hits a high crossbody for two.

The hot tag brings in Darius for a standing Spanish Fly on MJF and a suicide dive hits Jericho. Back in and a springboard missile dropkick gets two on MJF, followed by a DDT for the same. Jericho is back up with a spinebuster into the Lionsault for two but the Walls is countered into a rollup for the same. Darius grabs a sunset flip on Jericho and sends Dante flying over the top onto MJF with a dive (sweet) for a near fall at the same time. Jericho drops Dante onto the apron and it's the Heatseeker to give MJF the pin at 11:40.

Rating: C+. Not too bad here as Top Flight is one of the smoothest teams that I've seen in a good while. They could use some polish (as could everyone) but for as young as they are, they're a heck of a team. Jericho and MJF working well together is interesting and I'm curious to see where the whole Inner Circle deal goes.

Post match Jake Hager gets in the ring and says the team has

been doing great in recent weeks, save for Wardlow that is. Wardlow has been gone dealing with his own stuff instead of worrying about Inner Circle business. It's obvious that Wardlow is an asset but he's also an a*****, so next week it's Hager vs. Wardlow. MJF tries to talk Hager out of it and Jericho is annoyed.

We get a music video from the Acclaimed talking about the Young Bucks, who suck up to Dave (just Dave) for star ratings and quit Twitter because they got upset.

Here's what else is coming on the show.

Tony Schiavone brings out Sting for a chat in the ring. Sting knows that he has come full circle by coming back to TNT and he is glad to see that the jungle is still intact. Tony asks about Sting looking at Darby Allin but Sting says that's kind of a complicated question to answer. Instead, Sting talks about watching the matches through the curtain with Dusty Rhodes, who decided to put some bright colors on his face and tights. Then Sting was going to face Ric Flair and get funky like a monkey.

Now Sting sees Cody Rhodes in the ring and it's hard to fathom. He goes back to Darby but here's Team Taz to interrupt. Taz says that the speech would bring a tear to a glass eye and Ricky Starks says this is the jungle. Team Taz comes to the ring so Sting grabs the bat, only to have Allin and the skateboard morph in next to him. That's fine with Taz, who says they'll wait until January 6 when Brian Cage can win the TNT Title. This showed me two things. 1. A skateboard is a pretty stupid looking weapon. 2. Allin is a rather small man, as Sting is hardly a giant.

MJF comes up to Santana and Ortiz and brings up Santana losing his stepfather recently. MJF knows what it's like because he just lost his grandfather to cancer and it was the hardest thing he's done. He's here for Santana though, and Santana

seems to accept the friendly gesture. They shake hands and Ortiz seems to buy it also, with MJF not even saying anything as they leave.

Dark Order/Colt Cabana vs. Jurassic Express

It's 5/10 for the Order. Jungle Boy rolls up Five to start as Excalibur explains the numbers to JR. Cabana and Luchasaurus come in with Cabana being kicked out to the floor in a hurry. That means it's time for 10, with Luchasaurus slamming Stung down onto him a few times. Boy comes back in and gets caught in a German suplex for two.

We take a break and come back with Luchasaurus getting to come in and clean house, including the standing moonsault to 5. Marko dives in off of Luchasaurus' shoulders to take Cabana down but 5 runs him over. The frog splash gets two on Stunt as everything breaks down. Luchasaurus throws Stung over the top onto Cabana and 10, leaving 5 to be flipped into a sitout powerbomb from Boy for the pin at 10:35.

Rating: C+. I liked this more than the usual Jurassic Express match, which may be due to Stunt not being left on his own for too long (the lack of dancing helped too). Let Luchasaurus come in and wreck stuff while Boy does the bulk of the work. The Dark Order, especially this group of them, can lose over and over again so this was hardly some big waste of talent.

Post match Marko talks about how good it is to be back but Tully Blanchard and FTR cut them off, with Tully saying it's time to let the trained professionals talk. The teams meet on January 6 and this is personal because FTR wants the titles back. Stunt better be careful too, because Tully might have a flashback to the 80s. Stunt to be held back, which makes me dread the idea of Stunt getting anything over on Tully. Good promo from Blanchard here, now that he is finally getting to talk.

Kenny Omega and Don Callis are arriving at the hotel, where

Callis isn't happy with Pac making Omega vs. Rey Fenix. When did wrestlers get to make matches around here? Omega is ready to destroy Fenix in a few weeks and once he's done, Konnan can take him back to AAA. Fenix is the kind of guy who gets hurt, while Omega gets titles. This promo style is starting to work for them more and more.

Butcher vs. Pac

Butcher looks like he's wearing Shinsuke Nakamura's pants that shrunk in the wash. Eddie Kingston is on commentary and Tony has to shush him for talking while trying to promote a match. Pac slugs away to start and gets sent outside, which doesn't cause him much trouble. Back in and Pac kicks away at Butcher as Eddie and Tony continue to bicker with some surprising chemistry.

Butcher is right back with some hard shots of his own though, even as Kingston tells Tony to stop putting himself over. Pac gets crushed in the corner a few times as Eddie isn't happy with the referee. They head outside with Pac getting in a few shots and reversing a whip into the barricade. Butcher kicks him in the face and Eddie demands that commentary "put that over".

We take a break and come back with Pac kicking away but the Blade's distraction breaks up the Red Arrow. A big clothesline drops Pac again and a running layout powerbomb gets two on Pac. Butcher goes to do something and Eddie shouts to PICK HIM UP for a good while, only to have Lance Archer come out to go after Kingston. The distraction lets Pac hit a kick to the head and the Black Arrow is good for the pin at 11:53.

Rating: C+. That ending hurt this a bit as Butcher was standing around far too long until we got to the point. Archer going after Kingston is interesting, if nothing else due to how little Archer seems to need Lance Archer. Butcher looked good here and it was nice to see him get to showcase himself.

Pac still needs to shake off the ring rust though.

Eddie isn't happy, but does show respect to JR. Kingston: "Schiavone, up yours."

Jade Cargill finds it interesting that Brandi got pregnant as soon as she showed up. Shaq wants Cody Rhodes and AEW better find her a better opponent, because she's tired of this s***. I'm getting rather tired of them having to work s*** into every other promo.

Miro wants Tony Schiavone to get fired up but Kip Sabian and Penelope Ford need to announce their wedding date. They load up the video announcement but here are the Best Friends and Orange Cassidy to interrupt. Well at least their video, as we see Trent being loaded into an ambulance last week to get rid of him. Anyway, the wedding is going to be on the beach on February 3 (happy freaking birthday to me) and it is going to be the defining moment of this company's history. JR: "This is a train wreck."

Dustin Rhodes vs. Evil Uno

Lee Johnson and Stu Grayson are here too as Uno jumps Dustin to start. They fight on the floor with Uno hammering away, only to chop the post by mistake. Uno knocks him down again though and it's a Swanton for two as commentary tells us about how great Dustin is. We take a break and come back with Dustin hitting the Flip Flop and Fly, only to charge into a boot. Not that it matters as Dustin is right back with the bulldog for the pin at 8:28.

Rating: C. Not too bad here and they were putting in some effort, even with the lack of time when you factor in the break. Uno got to showcase himself a bit here but it's not like taking a loss to Dustin is that big of a problem. Dustin is in a bit of a weird place as he's a veteran but doesn't have much in the ways of storylines. Nice enough match though, as Dustin isn't going to have many bad ones.

Post match Uno offers another chance for Dustin to join but Dustin kicks him away. Grayson comes in with the Knightfall so here's QT Marshall for the save. Marshall gets taken down as well so Johnson hits a springboard dropkick to take the Order down.

Shawn Spears sits down with Schiavone and talks about how no matter what company he is in, the glass ceiling is still there. It's a management problem, and he really doesn't like Tony suggesting that Spears himself is the problem.

Hikaru Shida's interview about being attacked by Abadon is interrupted when she is attacked by Abadon.

Hikaru Shida vs. Alex Gracia

Non-title. Shida starts fast with a Falcon Arrow attempt but Alex is having none of it. After a quick trip to the floor, Gracia gets two off a small package and nails a running boot in the corner for the same. Shida is annoyed at being hit in the face, setting up a delayed vertical suplex. The running kick to the face connects but hold on as here's Abadon for a distraction. Shida beats her up in a hurry and heads back inside to counter Gracia's headscissors into a backbreaker. The Falcon Arrow finishes Gracia at 3:32.

Rating: C-. This was more about the Abadon deal than anything else but I'm rather over the whole evil monster characters. AEW does those rather frequently and while Abadon is good at it, there have been so many characters of a similar nature that it loses its impact. Gracia was acceptable in the short bit of time that she had here.

Post match the brawl is on again with Abadon biting Shida's neck to draw blood.

Here's what's coming over the next few weeks, including the return of Jon Moxley next week.

Tag Team Titles: Acclaimed vs. Young Bucks

The Bucks are defending and Max Castor raps his way to the ring again, this time about their winning streak. Matt works on Castor's arm to start and shrugs off the comeback attempt. A dropkick into an armdrag has Castor in trouble and Nick comes in to stay on said arm. It's off to Bowens but the Bucks sent them both to the floor to send Bowens into the barricade.

Nick spears Castor down and it's time to head back inside. Matt gets taken down this time though and Castor gets in a few shows, only to have Nick get the semi hot tag without much effort. House is cleaned until Nick's Swanton hits Bowens' raised knees. We take a break and come back with the Bucks starting to fire off the kicks, including Nick hitting Castor with a kick from the apron.

Back in and Matt hits Locomotion into the Sharpshooter on Bowens. Castor strikes away but can't break it up, allowing Nick to pull Castor outside for a Sharpshooter on the floor. Both are broken up and it's Nick being shoved off the top. A suplex/high crossbody gets two on Nick with Matt making the save. An errant superkick takes the referee out and the boom box to the head gets two from another referee (that spot still makes no sense and never has). Matt powerbombs Bowens through a table at ringside and the BTE Trigger finishes Castor at 13:47.

Rating: C-. This really didn't work as it was little more than an extended workout for the Bucks. It certainly didn't help the Acclaimed, whose big move was hitting them with a boom box. The rapping entrance helps, but that's all they had here and it showed badly. The Bucks didn't give them much here, which made for a pretty long 13+ minutes.

Overall Rating: C+. This wasn't their strongest effort, but again it feels like they're setting up for the big shows over the next two weeks and that's ok. I'd much rather step back a

bit for a week to let things breathe than burn through stuff on a show that doesn't matter. As usual: if this is their weak show, they're in a pretty good place.

Results

Chris Jericho/Maxwell Jacob Friedman b. Top Flight – Heatseeker to Dante

Jurassic Express b. Dark Order/Colt Cabana – Sitout powerbomb to 5

Pac b. Butcher – Black Arrow

Dustin Rhodes b. Evil Uno – Bulldog

Hikaru Shida b. Alex Gracia – Falcon Arrow

Young Bucks b. Acclaimed – BTE Trigger to Castor

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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 Kaiopractor 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 Cross 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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<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2019/08/26/new-book-and-e-book-kbs-complete-2004-monday-night-raw-reviews/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Pick A Royal Rumble For Me To Redo

It's that time of year again. Starting on December 28 I'll be redoing the Royal Rumbles in order, including a fresh edition of the 2020 show. I'll redo another one and you can vote in the comments on which you want. All are eligible except for the following (mainly ones I've done recently or done too many times before):

2006

2014

2011

2019

2020

Vote in the comments below.

KB

Major League Wrestling Fusion – December 16, 2020: It's Very MLWish

Fusion #114

Date: December 16, 2020

Location: Gilt Nightclub, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Jared St. Laurent, Rich Bocchini

We're back to the club and that means the Opera Cup is continuing. I'm not sure what we're going to get here other than the second semifinal, but Alex Hammerstone is back after a few weeks off due to Contra. That seems to be your next big showdown and it needs more building, so let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Richard Holliday and Alex Hammerstone arrive and aren't happy with being interviewed as soon as they get to the show. Some masked goons jump them but don't get very far. Hammerstone is about to ram one of them into the car but Holliday stops Hammerstone because the car is in Holliday's name. Hammerstone elbows him in the face instead as I get a hearty laugh.

Opening sequence.

LA Park Jr. vs. Bu Ku Dao

Dao is TJP's protege so TJP, along with LA Park, is here. Park points to the ropes to distract Dao (barely five feet tall) and kicks him to the rope, allowing Park Sr. to get in some cheap shots. A forearm doesn't get Dao very far as Park hits what might have been a low blow. Dao is sent outside for the

dive but Park charges into a boot back inside. A high crossbody gives Dao two, only to have Park hit an enziguri for the same. An Alabama Slam gives Park two, followed by a spinning Downward Spiral to give Dao the same. Park looks to load up a suplex but Dao reverses into a small package for the fast pin at 4:45.

Rating: C-. They didn't have time to do anything of note but this was more of a get to know you match anyway. Both of them were making their singles debut and that's going to make for an awkward situation no matter who is in there. Park looks to be more of a complete package but Dao's size is enough to make him a unique star most of the time.

We look at Low Ki advancing to the finals of the Opera Cup.

Tom Lawlor and ACH are ready for each other. Lawlor knows ACH is a great athlete while ACH knows Lawlor is a better grappler and traditional wrestler.

Simon Gotch has attacked Koto Brazil and forced him to retire.

Jordan Oliver wants to face Gotch to get some revenge, because Gotch isn't going to outlast him.

Mads Krugger vs. Ben Heavy/Daniel Starling

Krugger runs them over to start as we hear that Hammerstone is being held back from rushing the ring. A running powerslam sends Starling into Heavy and a full nelson slam gives Krugger the double pin at 58 seconds. Total destruction.

Post match the Sentai Death Squad comes out to put Heavy and Starling in the body bags.

Here's the Top 10:

10. Mads Krugger

9. Calvin Tankman

8. Richard Holliday

7. Laredo Kid

6. ACH

5. Myron Reed

4. LA Park

3. Tom Lawlor

2. Low Ki

1. Alexander Hammerstone

As the countdown ends, we hear that Hammerstone and Krugger are fighting in the back but we don't have a camera on them.

Alicia Atout is being told to move because of the Hammerstone vs. Krugger fight to bring us the Kings Of Coliseum Control Center, including Hammerstone vs. Krugger for the National Openweight Title.

We go to the Aztec Ruins where Salina de la Renta doesn't understand how anyone could see her as a traitor. She is very powerful and has stared evil in the face. Every temple and arena have burned to the ground but MIL MUERTES is coming.

The Von Erichs want ACH to bring the Opera Cup home to Texas.

Opera Cup Semifinals: Tom Lawlor vs. ACH

Team Filthy is here with Lawlor. ACH teases the striking to start before pulling him into the early grappling. A bodyscissors has ACH in trouble but he reverses into a waistlock. That is broken up as well so it's a quick standoff until Lawlor takes him up against the ropes. ACH's headlock on the mat is broken up in a hurry as Lawlor slaps on a headscissors, which is reversed back into the headlock.

Back up and Lawlor goes with the forearms to the face into the cravate with knees. Lawlor tries to go after the arm but settles for some elbows to the head instead. ACH gets two off a rollup and manages to get away for a rather needed breather. A backbreaker gives ACH two and he starts kicking away, which makes a bit of sense. Lawlor is right back with a suplex for two and it's off to the armbar.

ACH gets caught in the ropes for some shots to the face but he's right back up with some of his own. The slugout goes to Lawlor though as he tries a few rear naked choke attempts but some a few rapid fire kicks into a tiger driver gives ACH two two put them both down. It's ACH up first for a frog splash but Lawlor gets the knees up and rolls ACH up for the pin at 12:29.

Rating: B-. I was starting to get into this one and then it just ended when it felt like they had another five to ten minutes left. Lawlor is a heck of a star for a promotion like MLW as he has the amateur/MMA stuff and it's great to see him getting the chance to shine like this. The same is true of ACH, who has always been talented but then went a bit insane in WWE. This seems more his speed and it is working well enough in the early going.

Lawlor says he is one win away from being on the list of Opera Cup winners. The first round was rocky, the semifinals were super, and now he's ready to go undefeated against Low Ki to become king of the mat.

Overall Rating: C+. I liked this was a good bit as it was focused on the main event, but they also did a nice job of building up Hammerstone vs. Krugger. There is something great about the small stuff like having Hammerstone and Krugger's brawl (which you never saw save for a quick flash) mess with stuff in the back. You don't have to have something going on when you can SAY it is going on, which WWE could stand to learn. Nice show here, and it felt more like an MLW show than

anything since they have been back.

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