

# Daily News Update – January 10, 2024

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[NXT – January 9, 2024](#)

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## **NXT – January 9, 2024: Vengeance The Day After Tomorrow?**

### **NXT**

Date: January 9, 2024

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Booker T.

We're back to the normal shows this week after New Year's Evil, which didn't see the advertised NXT Title match. NXT Champion Ilja Dragunov is still banged up and it makes me wonder if that will be the Vengeance Day main event. Other than that, Oba Femi is the new Breakout star and he has a title match wherever he wants. Finally, it's time to start the

men's Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic. Let's get to it.

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

New Year's Evil recap.

Blair Davenport and Nikkita Lyons got in a fight in the parking lot and it carries into the arena. And here we go.

### Blair Davenport vs. Nikkita Lyons

Lyons suplexes her down to start and a spinning kick to the face gives Lyons two. Davenport gets in a ship into the post though and a shot off the apron takes her down again. Back in and Davenport goes after the knee before grabbing a front facelock. That's reversed into a suplex, followed by another suplex which is almost more of a DDT. A hip attack in the corner gives Lyons two more and they go outside again. This time Lyons kicks the post by mistake, allowing Davenport to get in a chop block. The knee to the face finishes Lyons at 5:25.

**Rating:** C. The more I see of Lyons, the harder it is to get interested in her. I'm not sure what it is but there is something about her that makes it really difficult to take her seriously. Davenport isn't a good deal better, but she feels like a more serious heel and someone who could be a star around here. I'm sure Lyons will be too, but it might take a bit of time to make everything work.

Cody Rhodes narrates a video on the men's Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic.

Carmelo Hayes is in the back with Trick Williams, who isn't happy with Hayes coming to the ring last week. Hayes says Williams got the win last week and he has a surprise: they're the last team in the Dusty Cup! Williams isn't sure but the idea of being called Two Time Trick gets him on the same page.

Here are the brackets for the Dusty Cup:

Bron Breaker/Baron Corbin  
Gallus

Hank Walker/Tank Ledger  
Nathan Frazer/Axiom

Chase U  
LWO

Carmelo Hayes/Trick Williams  
Edris Enofe/Malik Blade

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Bron Breaker/Baron Corbin vs. Gallus

Breaker shoulders Mark down to start so Wolfgang comes in, only to be sent into the corner. Corbin comes in and gets dropped with some uppercuts so he and Breaker take a break on the floor. We take a break and come back with Corbin and Mark slugging it out in the corner until Corbin puts him down for two.

Everything breaks down and Deep Six hits Mark, setting up the four way slugout. Wolfgang pulls Mark away from a screaming Corbin, who misses a right hand to the post. Back in and Wolfgang splashes Corbin in the corner but Mark misses one of his own. That's enough for Breaker to come in and clean house, including suplexing both of them at once. Corbin tags himself back in (Breaker doesn't like it) and the End of Days finishes Mark at 10:56.

**Rating:** C+. Corbin and Breaker are your latest tag partners who don't get along but happen to be successful, which very well may be enough to get them the tournament. At the same time, it would be interesting to see the two of them beating the fire out of each other once the team breaks down. For now though, they got rid of a successful team in Gallus and that could be the start of something big.

We go to Fallon Henley's ranch, where Tiffany Stratton, in full on pink gear, including her wrestling top and skirt, arrives late. The sights and smells have her terrified, but not quite as much as the clothes Henley has ready for her. Henley goes over her responsibilities and Stratton is already wincing. More on this later.

Here is Women's Champion Lyra Valkyria for a chat. She promises to end the year as champion but needs an opponent for Vengeance Day. We'll find that out next week, with a 20 woman battle royal (erg) but the final four will have a four way for the title shot (slightly less erg).

Cue Lola Vice, with Elektra Lopez, to threaten to cash in her contract at any time. Valkyria is sick of hearing Vice talk and wants her to fight. Vice says the people love her Latina Heat, but Valkyria says the only heat is coming from Lopez. The brawl is on but Tatum Paxley runs in for the save. Just cash in the stupid contract to get rid of the Money In The Bank nonsense.

Meta Four laugh at Josh Briggs/Brooks Jensen/Fallon Henley splitting up. Briggs comes in to say he deserves a Heritage Cup rematch but gets Oro Mensah tonight instead.

Luca Crusifino presents evidence his foot was under the ropes but Ava doesn't care. With Crusifino gone, Dragon Lee comes in but Lexis King interrupts, saying that the open challenge is back on so we've got a title match. I could really go for no more open challenges either. Just build someone up already.

### Oro Mensah vs. Josh Briggs

The rest of Meta Four are here too as Briggs hammers away to start. Briggs plants him down and the chase on the floor doesn't go well, as Mensah stomps away on the way back in. A clothesline to the back of the head gets two on Briggs but he plants Mensah with a spinebuster. Dar's distraction doesn't work as Briggs hits a running clothesline for the pin at 3:23.

**Rating:** C. They didn't have time to do much here but it should set up Briggs' rematch for the Heritage Cup. That's still kind of a weird match but at least it's something a little different. I guess Mensah is the gatekeeper for Dar, who needs someone to stand in his way before he retains the title again, as he seems destined to do for the rest of time.

Back at the ranch, Tiffany Stratton finishes her first task (which seemed to have a lot of parts) but her feet are killing her in these heels. It's time to wash a horse (Buttercup) and terror ensues. With that done, Stratton is ready to go, but she has to muck a stall. She even gets a pink rake!

### Tag Team Titles: D'Angelo Family vs. OTM

The Family (with Riz) is defending while OTM has Scrypts. Stacks can't do much with Nima to start so Nima sends him into the corner. That doesn't work so it's off to D'Angelo as we get a four way standoff. D'Angelo sends Stacks into Price in the corner for two but OTM takes him to the floor. Stacks gets dropped face first onto the floor for a nasty crash and we take a break.

Back with Nima pounding Stacks down until Stacks manages a quick posting. D'Angelo comes back in to clean house, including a spinebuster for two on Nima. Everything breaks down and Booker sounds like he calls OTM "the young bucks". An assisted powerslam gives Price two on D'Angelo but Stacks is back in for the save. D'Angelo hiptosses Stacks onto the two of them on the floor and they all slug it out back inside. Riz cuts off an interfering Scrypts and the fisherman's suplex finishes Price to retain the titles at 11:47.

**Rating:** B-. I can't believe I'm saying this but the Family is goofy fun that is kind of working. They're not supposed to be anything serious but they've turned into a pretty nice team. It helps when they're doing more wrestling than over the top segments, but what they're doing is working. OTM is still a

work in progress, though the potential is certainly there, even with Scrypts being such an annoying human.

NXT Anonymous shows Jacy Jayne rallying the female Chase U students with an idea to save the school. Note newly signed Madi Wrenkowski as one of the students.

Oba Femi isn't sure when he'll cash in but Lexis King comes in to say Femi should focus on the NXT Title.

Gallus is mad over their loss but Ridge Holland interrupts. They don't like each other and we could be on the way to Joe Coffey vs. Holland.

### Cora Jade vs. Gigi Dolin

They trade wrist cranking to start but Dolin has to escape an early Jaded attempt. Some shoulders in the corner have Dolin in trouble and a running elbow to the back makes it worse. The chinlock is broken up so Dolin strikes away and hits an STO to drop Jade. The abdominal stretch bomb is blocked with a grab of the rope though and Jaded finishes Dolin at 4:05.

**Rating:** C. Jade's roll continues and it wouldn't shock me to see her getting the title shot out of next week's battle royal. She's pretty clearly being pushed as one of the new big heels around here and that isn't the worst way to go for her. At the very least she has the attitude down, and if she can get the rest of the package going, she has quite the potential.

OTM is made about their loss but run into Jaida Parker, who isn't surprised at the result. She seems ready to help them deal with Riz, so Scrypts says they should talk.

### Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic: Axiom/Nathan Frazer vs. Tank Ledger/Hank Walker

Walker runs Axiom over to start as Booker goes on a rant about Ledger and Walker's wardrobe. Ledger comes in and gets kicked

in the chest as commentary talks about how both teams used to fight each other. A slingshot splash gets two on Axiom but he rolls over for the hot tag to Frazer. Everything breaks down and a toss belly to back suplex gets two on Frazer. Back up and Frazer hits some hard dives but Tank clothesline Axiom down. Not that it matters as Axiom kicks Tank in the face, setting up Frazer's Phoenix splash for the pin at 4:41.

**Rating:** C+. This was short but had quite a bit of action, which is more than you often get out of a match like this one. Axiom and Frazer continue to work well together despite having some issues backstage, while Ledger and Walker just aren't very good. I get what they're going for but they didn't interest me when they started and they still don't now.

Back to the farm where Tiffany Stratton is near her breaking point so Fallon Henley and her friends mock her behind her back. She's finally done and Stratton yells at Henley for being pitiful enough to enjoy this stuff. Then Stratton steps in some droppings and falls into a tub of water. This was all funny stuff and the culture clash was great.

Edris Enofe and Malik Blade are ready to win next week and are tired of hearing about Carmelo Hayes and Trick Williams. Brinley Reece of all people come in to give them training tips but they show off their abs as proof that they're covered.

North American Title: Lexis King vs. Dragon Lee

Lee is defending and grabs a headlock takeover to start. That's broken up so King grabs a wristlock, which is countered into a rollup for two. Back up and they run the ropes until Lee hits a running dropkick. Cue Tre Bearhill to distract King though and Lee kicks him down as we take a break.

We come back with King grabbing a half crab before slapping Lee in the mask in the corner. Lee isn't having that and gets back up for a slingshot kick to the face. They chop it out and trade strikes to the face until King walk into a superkick,



setting up Operation Dragon to retain the title at 8:48.

**Rating:** C+. They got a bit of time here and it's still a little weird to see King lose so frequently. That being said, Lee is someone who is being pushed at the moment and racking up one win after another is a good idea. If nothing else, it's nice to see King getting a chance and doing something more interesting than Brian Pillman's kid.

Post match here is Oba Femi to cash in his contract.

#### North American Title: Dragon Lee vs. Oba Femi

Lee is defending and hits a suicide dive to the floor before the bell. Femi grabs a belly to back toss but charges into some boots to the face. A tornado DDT gives Lee two but counters Operation Dragon into a powerbomb for the pin and the title at 1:16. That's a surprise, but more importantly, one of those stupid contracts is gone.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was a show that helped move things forward to the parts where things could get interesting. In other words, it was the first step towards setting up Vengeance Day, though they are going to get to the bigger stuff in the future. Not exactly a great show here, but the title change in the end was important and the next few weeks should be bigger going forward.

#### Results

Blair Davenport b. Nikkita Lyons – Knee to the face

Baron Corbin/Bron Breaker b. Gallus – End of Days to Coffey

Josh Briggs b. Oro Mensah – Clothesline

D'Angelo Family b. OTM – Fisherman's suplex to Price

Cora Jade b. Gigi Dolin – Jaded

Axiom/Nathan Frazer b. Tank Ledger/Hank Walker – Phoenix splash to Ledger

Dragon Lee b. Lexis King – Operation Dragon

Oba Femi b. Dragon Lee – Powerbomb

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[Rampage – January 5, 2024](#)

[Ring Of Honor – January 4, 2024](#)

[Impact Wrestling – January 4, 2024 \(Best Of TNA\)](#)

[Collision – January 6, 2024](#)

[NXT LVL Up – January 5, 2024](#)

[Monday Night Raw – January 8, 2024](#)

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Come On Up? Former NXT Champion Makes Surprise SmackDown Debut.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/come-former-nxt-champion-makes-surprise-smackdown-debut/>

Uh Oh: Bad News On MJF's Injury Status And It Could Get Worse.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/uh-oh-bad-news-mjfs-injury-status-get-worse/>

The More The Merrier? Roman Reigns Has More Than One Challenger At The Royal Rumble.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/merrier-roman-reigns-one-challenger-royal-rumble/>

It Was Time For A Change: Why Advertised Title Match Did Not Take Place This Week.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/time-change-advertised-title-match-not-take-place-week/>

He's There? Surprising Name Competes In Dark Match Before This Week's SmackDown.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/hes-surprising-name-competes-dark-match-weeks-smackdown/>

Remember Him? SmackDown Star Appears For First Time In Months, Meets With Nick Aldis.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/remember-smackdown-star-appears-first-time-months-meets-nick-aldis/>

WATCH: Roman Reigns And Paul Heyman Respond To The Rock.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/watch-roman-reigns-paul-heyman-respond-rock/>

Come On Up: NXT Star Officially Promoted To Main Roster.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/come-nxt-star-officially-promoted-main-roster/>

The Big Ones: Here Are WWE's Current Plans For The Main Event Of WrestleMania 40.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/big-ones-wwes-current-plans-main-event-wrestlemania-40/>

They're In: New Title Match Set For Royal Rumble.

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Comeback Redux: Update On Pac's AEW Status Following Several Injuries.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/comeback-redux-update-status-often-injured-aew-star/>

One Down: Important Update On Liv Morgan's Legal Issues Following Recent Arrest.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/one-important-update-liv-morgans-legal-issues-following-recent-arrest/>

Important Details On Naomi Potentially Returning To WWE.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/important-details-naomi-potentially-returning-wwe/>

How WWE Is Working On More International Expansion, Their First Step.

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Get Well Soon: AEW Star Out Of Action With Ankle Surgery.

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[ction-ankle-surgery/](#)

He Broke It: Randy Orton Breaks Extensive And Unique Record With Recent Win.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/broke-randy-orton-breaks-extensive-unique-record-recent-win/>

Pick One: Update On Where Mercedes Mone Is Believed To Be Heading.

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Change Of Plans: WWE Originally Had Rather Different Plans For Roman Reigns At The Royal Rumble.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/change-plans-wwe-originally-rather-different-plans-roman-reigns-royal-rumble/>

Down For Now: Monday Night Raw Star Out Of Action For A Few Weeks Due To Injury.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/now-monday-night-raw-star-action-weeks-due-injury/>

To The Silver Screen: AEW Star Announced For Upcoming Film Role.

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The First Of Many? WWE Reportedly Planning These Surprise Royal Rumble Returns.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/first-many-wwe-reportedly-planning-surprise-royal-rumble-returns/>

Hurry Up? Rey Mysterio Reveals Plans For In-Ring Return Following Knee Surgery.

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Go For The Gold: WWE Announces Major Title Match For Next Week.

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WRESTLING RUMORS: Major WWE Superstar Turning Babyface.

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# Monday Night Raw – January 8, 2024: Punk Has Issues

## Monday Night Raw

Date: January 8, 2024

Location: Moda Center, Portland, Oregon

Commentators: Wade Barrett, Michael Cole

We are less than three weeks away from the Royal Rumble and while there is still a lot to cover, some of the show is starting to come together. This includes some names being announced for the Royal Rumble matches, including CM Punk. As luck would have it, Punk is here tonight, and he might have something to say. Let's get to it.

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

Cody Rhodes arrived earlier today but he's cut off by Drew McIntyre in the ring. McIntyre says he had the title won last week but he overdid it with the cover. Maybe Seth Rollins is right and McIntyre is the problem. If that is the case, maybe he needs to step away from WWE for a bit. But wait, that can't be it because Damian Priest cashed in during the match and the distraction cost McIntyre. You have all these people around here, including CM Punk, so maybe McIntyre should just leave for nine years so he can come back to a hero's welcome.

Cue Punk, who says we are in Piper Country, but McIntyre didn't wear a kilt. Piper was known for talking, just like Punk, but that's not the case with McIntyre. Since Punk has been back though, all he's done is see McIntyre talking. McIntyre says Punk has been back for more than a month without self destructing. We hear about Punk declaring himself as the "locker room leader" back in the day but no one helped McIntyre. Randy Orton couldn't help either because he had his own demons, but Punk is straight edge so he doesn't have demons.

Now McIntyre is back and he's Punk's leader. With McIntyre laying over the top, Punk says he has always led by example. Has McIntyre ever watched him? Does he know who walked out of WWE about ten years ago? He has all kinds of demons and when he's pushed, he's the devil himself.

Punk saw McIntyre come back bigger than ever so Punk is following his lead. McIntyre brings up how unlike Punk, he has main evented Wrestlemania, but those title wins he had were because someone needed to step up. Punk says it's getting heated here so he's going to lead by example and leave now, but he'll throw McIntyre out of the Royal Rumble. Interesting showdown here, with Punk's past being brought up again.

Finn Balor vs. Tommaso Ciampa

Damian Priest is here with Balor. We see Ciampa walking to the ring (with Johnny Gargano) where he talks about how his new year's resolution is for DIY to win the Tag Team Titles. Ciampa starts fast with an elbow to the face but Balor rolls through a sunset flip and hits a basement dropkick. Back up and a Thesz press with right hands has Balor in more trouble but a Priest distraction lets Balor knock Ciampa into the announcers' table.

We take a break and come back with Ciampa hitting a running clothesline into the reverse DDT for two. A knee to the face and Project Ciampa get two as Ciampa has gotten in quite the run of offense here. Balor knocks him down again but the Coup de Grace misses, allowing Ciampa to grab a crucifix for two. The seconds get in a fight on the floor so Ciampa knees Priest off the apron. Back in and Balor kicks the middle rope into Ciampa and loads up a suplex, only to have Gargano sweep the leg so Ciampa can fall on top for the pin at 8:16.

**Rating:** C+. Ciampa can still go with just about anyone and that was on display here, as part of DIY gets a win to move the team forward to a likely Royal Rumble Tag Team Title shot. The ending was more evening the odds as it's nice to see Judgment Day get what's coming to them for a change. Nice stuff here and I can go for more of DIY getting a chance.

Becky Lynch talks about how Nia Jax hit her hard last week but she's back up. Now she's entering the Royal Rumble and maybe it's not over with Jax.

### Kofi Kingston vs. Ludwig Kaiser

Kaiser starts fast and hits an early clothesline and takes him into the corner for some right hands. Kingston fights back but gets sent into the buckle to shut that right own. A ram into the corner has Kingston in more trouble but he fights right back to send them both outside. Kingston gets whipped into the barricade and we take a break. Back with Kaiser stomping away



in the corner but Kingston sends him outside again. There's the top rope trust fall and they brawl is on outside for the double countout at 8:56.

**Rating:** C. This was more about Kaiser wanting revenge for his injured friend, which is a logical story even if it is coming from an evil team. We can get to the big rematch with the teams when Vinci is back to full health but for now, his keeps things going in a bit of a surprising way, which is nice to see.

Post match the brawl stays on, with Kaiser throwing one of the announcers' chairs at Kofi. A running dropkick slams Kingston's head into the steps to leave him laying. Sounds like something Gunther will approve of rather strongly.

Post match Kaiser says that Kingston brought it on himself for taking out Giovanni Vinci last week.

Here is Nia Jax for a chat. Last week was no shock and she threatens to do something shocking by breaking Michael Cole's face. No one can stop her...but here is Rhea Ripley to interrupt. Ripley talks about eliminating Jax from the Rumble last year, but now Jax is laughing about beating Becky Lynch. Well Lynch isn't Rhea Bloody Ripley. Jax promises to win the Rumble and come after Ripley, who isn't the unstoppable one anymore. That's probably Elimination Chamber.

We look at the Rock's return last week.

Cody Rhodes says it should be over with Shinsuke Nakamura, who jumps him from behind to start a brawl.

Women's Tag Team Titles: Kayden Carter/Katana Chance vs. Chelsea Green/Piper Niven

Green and Niven are challenging. Green kicks Carter to the floor to start but they get back in, where Carter kicks her in the face. It's off to Chance, who gets sent into the corner

for a Cannonball from Niven and we take a break. Back with Chance kicking her way to freedom and handing it back to Carter to pick up the pace. Everything breaks down and Niven hits a backplash for two. A release Rock Bottom out of the corner plants Carter but a quick replacement means the Vader Bomb hits Green. Niven gets dropped with a top rope Codebreaker and it's the Keg Stand to retain the titles at 9:53.

**Rating:** C+. They kept this one relatively short and that makes sense, as the new champs get a win under their belts to help establish them a bit more. At the same time, the win clears out a good chunk of the division, as it isn't like there is depth to the thing. Nice enough match with Niven being the monster the champs have to overcome using teamwork and athleticism.

R-Truth gives us a special look at his childhood dream of joining the Judgment Day. Then he did it, especially now that JD McDonagh is out. Quite a bit of altered photography ensues here.

### JD McDonagh vs. Miz

Dominik Mysterio and R-Truth are both here too. Miz sends him outside to start and poses a bit, with the fans being rather happy. Back in and McDonagh kicks away a bit, with a Dominik distraction making it even worse. We take a break and come back with Miz jawbreaking his way out of a chinlock. McDonagh knocks him back down and hits a slingshot corkscrew splash for two.

A suplex gets the same as Truth is playing cheerleader. Miz fights up and hits a clothesline for two, followed by the YES Kicks. Some shots to the knee set up the Figure Four but McDonagh is straight into the ropes. A Truth distraction lets Miz send McDonagh into Mysterio though and the Skull Crushing Finale gives Miz the pin at 12:01.

**Rating:** C. The build towards what seems to be Awesome Truth vs. Judgment Day continues and I'm not opposed to the idea. It gives us a simple title program for the Royal Rumble until someone else can come along and get the real challenge going later. Either that or just change the belts so Priest can use his briefcase. For now though, not exactly a great match but it did what it needed to do.

The rest of Judgment Day is in the back and says this has to end.

Here is Seth Rollins for a chat. Rollins lets the fans sing the song before saying it's time to get ready for the Royal Rumble. He has done a lot of things at Wrestlemania but he has never walked into the show as a World Champion. Rollins asks who he is going to have to beat at the Royal Rumble to get to Wrestlemania...and here is Jinder Mahal to interrupt (Rollins is stunned too).

Mahal says he was a bigger revolutionary last week than Rollins has been in years. He talks about how Rollins does some horrible things, including throwing tantrums after the show goes off the air. Yet he disrespects Mahal, but now Mahal has his attention. Rollins agrees that Mahal has been overlooked, but it has been by design. He appreciates Mahal coming back out here but tells Mahal to take a swing. A cheap shot from behind lets Mahal beat him down but Rollins clears the ring without much trouble.

### Otis vs. Ivar

Maxxine Dupri, Akira Tozawa and Valhalla are here too. Otis hits a running elbow to start but Ivar knocks him into the corner. A quick World's Strongest Slam gives Otis two and the Caterpillar gets the same. Ivar kicks him in the face though and finishes with the moonsault at 3:48.

**Rating:** C+. You've seen this kind of match more than once recently and it still works very well. It's two big, strong

guys hitting each other with cool looking power moves and WWE knows just how to present it. I could have gone for this one going a bit longer, but someone powering Ivar around like that was impressive.

Jey Uso is ready to win his first singles title but Bronson Reed comes in to say not so fast.

### Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Cody Rhodes

Street fight and Nakamura tries to make him wait, only to have Cody hammer away. They fight towards the entrance with Cody sending him into the barricade. Back in and Nakamura rolls away, allowing him to grab a kendo stick for some hard shots. We take a break and come back with Nakamura missing a knee drop.

That's enough for Cody to get a breather, including some stick shots of his own. Nakamura knocks him down again though and some kicks to the chest have Cody in more trouble. Rhodes is back with a powerslam and grabs a table but Nakamura takes him outside. The mist is loaded up but hits the timekeeper, allowing Nakamura to deck a concerned Cody as we take a break.

Back with Nakamura chairing him down and hitting a middle rope knee to the face to rock Cody again. The Kinshasa is loaded up but Cody cuts it off with a superkick. The Pedigree gets two so Cody sends him through the table in the corner. That and the Cross Rhodes are enough to finish Nakamura at 24:08.

**Rating:** B. This felt like a big time house show main event and that has probably been the case more than once. It gives Cody the big conquering hero win over a dangerous threat going into the Rumble and that should be enough momentum. Nakamura is still really good in this kind of role, but it would be nice to see him actually win a big match once in awhile.

**Overall Rating:** C+. The main event was good but the rest of the in-ring action was only ok for the most part. The Punk vs.

McIntyre situation was interesting, but it did feel like they kind of punted again due to the big college football title game. That might have been a smart move, though they can only do that so many times. Not a bad show here, but they need another big one at some point before the Rumble.

### Results

Tommaso Ciampa b. Finn Balor – Ciampa landed on Balor  
Kofi Kingston vs. Ludwig Kaiser went to a double countout  
Kayden Carter/Katana Chance b. Piper Niven/Chelsea Green – Keg Stand to Green  
Miz b. JD McDonagh – Skull Crushing Finale  
Ivar b. Otis – Moonsault  
Cody Rhodes b. Shinsuke Nakamura – Cross Rhodes

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# NXT LVL Up – January 5, 2024: The Polite Technicians?

## NXT LVL Up

Date: January 5, 2024

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Blake Howard

We're in a new year and that means it is time to start finding out what this show is going to be in the coming weeks. LVL Up has been all over the place and I'm really not sure what that is going to mean going forward. The good thing is that things have been trending up in recent months. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

## Brooks Jensen vs. Luca Crusifino

They go to the mat to start as the fans are oddly split here. Crusifino can't get very far with the front facelock so Jensen monkey flips him down. A flying headscissors puts Crusifino down again but he's right back with a neckbreaker to take over. The stomping is on, with a jumping legdrop giving Crusifino two. Another neckbreaker gets another two and we hit the chinlock. Jensen fights up and hits a dropkick into a powerslam for two of his own. A top rope knee finishes Crusifino at 6:25.

**Rating:** C. It wasn't much of a match, but they were presenting the idea of Jensen being more of a throwback to a technician ala Brad Armstrong or Bobby Eaton. That's not the worst idea and certainly not something you see very often, but I'm not sure if Jensen has the technique to back it up. I can certainly go with this over the country boy thing, but at least he has something different.

Dion Lennox is a former football player and wants to chase his dream. He's rather polite, but things change when the bell rings. He thanks the interviewer for her time and hopes she has a great day. I think I like this guy.

### Brinley Reece/Kiyah Saint vs. Izzi Dame/Kiana James

Reece and James start things off with Reece flipping forward for a clothesline. Saint comes in to work on the arm, which has James straight over to the rope. Dame's choking on the ropes doesn't do much but a pull of the hair sets up a backbreaker for two. James grabs a front facelock before firing off some shoulders in the corner. Dame puts Reece in a torture rack (not quite Lex Luger's form) but she slips out and hands it back to Saint so the pace can pick way up. Not that it matters as James grabs the Dealbreaker for the fast pin at 5:16.

**Rating:** C. James and Dame are fine as a midcard heel team but there is only so much that you can do for a team that will have a grand total of no chance at getting the Women's Tag Team Titles. This was little more than a way to put them on the show and there is nothing wrong with that. Reece and Saint are just kind of there, so hopefully they got something out of their time in the ring.

### Oro Mensah vs. Dion Lennox

Mensah has Lash Legend and Jakara Jackson with him. Mensah sends him into the corner to start and stops to pose like a villain should. Lennox is right back with a takedown into a chinlock, followed by a headlock takeover. Back up and a Stinger Splash into a northern lights suplex sends Mensah flying again and there's a whip over the top. Mensah scores with a superkick on the way back in and Lennox gets sent flying back a suplex. Lennox gets in a boot to the face and a spinebuster but Mensah hits him in the back. The running spinwheel kick in the corner finishes Lennox at 5:36.

**Rating:** C. I'm still trying to get my mind around the idea that Lennox's entire deal is "he's polite". It's almost impressive to go that basic with something but it's oddly kind of working. Now that being said, he's still brand new and has a long way to go, but at least they're giving him something and a chance to stand out, even in the slightest.

**Overall Rating:** C. Oh this was straight out of the old LVL Up playbook, with little in the way of interest and matches that didn't really make me want to see more. There were some slightly important names on the show, but it felt more about introducing Lennox and Jensen's new characters than anything else. That being said, that's kind of the point of this show, so while it's doing what it's supposed to, it's not that interesting.

### Results

Brooks Jensen b. Luca Crusifino – Top rope knee

Izzi Dame/Kiana James b. Brinley Reece/Kiyah Saint – Dealbreaker to Saint

Oro Mensah b. Dion Lennox – Running spinwheel kick in the corner

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# Collision – January 6, 2024: Like The Old Days

## Collision

Date: January 6, 2024

Location: Bojangles Coliseum, Charlotte, North Carolina

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Tony Schiavone, Nigel McGuinness

It's the first Collision of the new year and this time around we have a big showdown with the House Of Black finally facing FTR. These teams have been teasing a fight for a long time now and it should be quite the fight. Other than that, Sting and Darby Allin are in action as the retirement tour continues. Let's get to it.

[Here is Dynamite if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

## Sting/Darby Allin vs. Workhorsesmen

Ric Flair is here with Sting and Allin and...yeah ok it's Charlotte. The Workhorsesmen try to jump them before the bell, with Sting no selling a chair shot from Drake and Flair even getting in a chop. The fight keeps going on the floor with Sting and Allin being beaten down until we go inside for the opening bell. Allin gets beaten down to start and Henry grabs a Backstabber for two. A cheap shot knocks Sting off the apron but Allin rolls away, allowing him to bring the quickly recovered Sting back in. The Scorpion Death Drop finishes Drake at 2:51. Well that was quick.

Post match the winners and Flair celebrate with some fans, including a Flair cosplayer in a nice touch.

We look at Konosuke Takeshita destroying Allin on Dynamite, setting up the Don Callis Family vs. Sting/Allin on Dynamite.

### Continental Crown: Trent Beretta vs. Eddie Kingston

Kingston is defending, and it's still not clear if this is for one individual title or all three combined. Trent gets powered into the corner for the early break before winning a strike off. Trent grabs a quick tornado DDT for one and a snap suplex gets the same. Back up and Kingston fires off the rapid chops in the corner, including one chop to the face.

That leaves Trent rather bloody (his nose might be broken) and his missed dive to the floor makes it even worse as we take a break. Back with Kingston hitting a running boot in the corner before pulling Trent off the ropes for a head first crash into the buckle. Trent manages some forearms to pound Kingston down against the ropes and a basement dropkick puts him on the floor.

Back in and Trent powerbombs him out of the corner for two but Kingston snaps off an exploder. The DDT gives Kingston two but Trent rolls some German suplexes. The running knee to the face and a Gotch style piledriver give Trent two more. They slug it out from their knees until Trent grabs the half nelson suplex. Kingston grabs one of his own though, setting up a spinning backfist into the northern lights bob for two more. Another northern lights bomb retains the title at 15:13.

**Rating:** B. It wasn't a match with the highest level of drama but they traded big shots here until one of them got the win. Kingston is still the kind of wrestler who can get a crowd behind him like few others and that is a very valuable thing to have. He's getting featured in a big way here and it makes sense with the reception he receives. Trent can still have a good match with anyone and that was the case again here.

Earlier today, Tony Schiavone asked Kris Statlander and Willow Nightingale about Stokely Hathaway but they'd rather just be

friends and have a big new year.

Hook says he's coming for Samoa Joe.

### Kingdom vs. Bryan Keith/Komander

Non-title Proving Ground match, meaning if Keith and Komander win or survive the ten minute time limit, they get a future title shot. Roderick Strong is here with the Kingdom, who take Komander into the corner to start the beating. Komander kicks away at Taven and brings in Keith to strike away against the ropes. A blind tag brings in Bennett to knock Keith down though and we take a break.

Back with a top rope elbow getting two on Keith and something like a Border City Stretch going on. Keith gets out and manages to suplex Bennett into the corner. Komander comes in with the spinning DDT, setting up a running headbutt in the corner to Taven. Komander's big assisted flip dive takes the champs down but Bennett is back in with a piledriver. Just The Tip hits Keith and the powerbomb/Zig Zag combination finishes for Taven at 8:33.

**Rating:** C+. You have the new champs (on Collision rather than ROH, where the titles have not been seen in over five months) making their debut after being revealed as part of the big heel stable and it takes almost nine minutes to beat a makeshift team? At the same time, commentary pointed out that no one has ever beaten the champ/survived in a Proving Ground match. It shouldn't have taken place here, but maybe it should take place at some point to add some drama?

Bullet Club Gold says they have no relationship with the Acclaimed, who come in to interrupt. Violence is teased but Anthony Bowens thinks they might be better together. The Club will think about it.

Here is Adam Copeland for a chat. Copeland talks about how he and Christian Cage had a fight at Worlds End and he won the

TNT Title. Then on Dynamite, Cage said that because he beat Copeland to get the title back, Copeland goes to the back of the line. If he has to earn his title shot, he'll start right here because he works hard. So get him someone out here.

### Adam Copeland vs. Griff Garrison

Maria Kanellis-Bennett and Cole Karter are here with Garrison. Before the match, Garrison says he wants respect but Copeland says he's coming from below sea level to Mt. Everest. A slap to the face has Copeland saying he likes Garrison, but it's time for a beating. Copeland chops him into the corner to start and drops Garrison face first onto the top turnbuckle. Maria breaks up the spear though and Karter offers another distraction, allowing Garrison to get in a big boot to take over.

The chinlock doesn't last long so Garrison faceplants him for two instead. Copeland is back up with the Edge O Matic and takes out Karter, setting up a high crossbody for two more. The spear is cut off by a discus right hand but Copeland headbutts him on top, setting up a superplex. The crossface finishes Garrison at 6:37.

**Rating:** C. It was nice to have Copeland in a random match like this, as we keep hearing about him wanting to work with others but he's been around Cage for a long time. Putting him in a quick match like this one was a fine way to go and it seems we might be seeing more of it in the near future, as he has to go up the ladder to get at Cage again.

Post match Karter jumps Copeland but gets speared down instead.

Sting, Ric Flair and Darby Allin are fired up for the tag match on Dynamite.

### Skye Blue vs. Kiera Hogan

Hogan powers her into the corner to start and we actually get a clean break. Blue's headlock slows Hogan down until she's back up with some slaps. A kick to the head gives Hogan one but Blue drops her again and we take a break. Back with Blue kneeing her in the chest but diving into a superkick for the double knockdown. Hogan hits the running hip attack (as seems to be required in women's wrestling these days), only to have Blue pull her into the dragon sleeper for the win at 8:49.

**Rating:** C. I've said this before but it's getting more and more difficult to get into a match between either of these two as they have been on the treadmill for the better part of ever. They'll win some matches, they'll get a bigger match, they'll lose, they'll start over. Odds are that is going to be the case again with Blue again, as has been the case with her for months now.

Serena Deeb is coming back.

#### Andrew Everett vs. Claudio Castagnoli

Everett's running dropkick has no effect and Castagnoli slams him down (with Schiavone continuing Everett's "I'm a seven footer" deal, which just kind of makes Schiavone sound dumb as it's not exactly something you hear about around here very often). The Swing connects but Everett is back with a springboard spinwheel kick. The shooting star press is loaded up but Castagnoli misses what seemed to be an uppercut to knock it out of the air. Thankfully Castagnoli just picks him up and hits the Neutralizer, followed by a clothesline to finish at 3:15.

**Rating:** C. This wasn't quite a squash and they weren't exactly on the same page. Everett's deal with the thinking he's a giant is kind of a weird thing and thankfully he's not around often enough for it to become a thing. At the same time, points for not worrying about the missed uppercut and moving on to the next thing without missing a beat.

Castagnoli wants (and will get) Hangman Page on Dynamite.

Big Bill and Ricky Starks are ready to face Chris Jericho and Sammy Guevara...at Battle Of The Belts. And we'll make it a street fight. Well dang. That's been one of the biggest issues with Battle Of The Belts and they addressed it. Nice job.

### FTR vs. House Of Black

FTR has some friends and family here. Wheeler and Matthews fight over a lockup to start and go into the corner. Matthews gets shoved away but comes back with some hard arm cranking. They go to the mat for some quick escapes so FTR grabs a double Russian legsweep (and yes we get a Brad Armstrong reference). It's off to Harwood vs. Black, with the latter dropping into a sit to avoid a right hand.

Harwood sits down as well and flips him off as we take an early break. Back with Harwood and Matthews chopping it out until Harwood is sent into the wrong corner. That's broken up and the tag brings in Wheeler, who is sent outside again for a middle rope moonsault. Wheeler manages to send them into each other back inside but Matthews cuts Harwood off in a smart move.

We take another break and come back with Harwood hammering on Black in the corner before diving onto Matthews. A brainbuster gets two on Black but the Sharpshooter is broken up. Matthews gets in a cheap shot from the floor but Harwood is fine enough to get Black into the PowerPlex. A Matthews saves breaks up the cover though and all four of them are down.

Back up and Wheeler is sent over the announcers' table so Black grabs a chair. We pause for Black to look menacingly at Harwood's family but the distraction lets FTR hit the Shatter Machine for two on Matthews. Black gets spike piledriven onto the apron so here is Brody King. Cue Daniel Garcia to chair King in the back and then throw the chair at his head. Back in and Matthews stomps Harwood for two but a powerbomb is

countered into a sunset flip to give Harwood the pin at 21:28.

**Rating:** B+. As usual, if you give FTR some time and the right opponents, they can make some magic happen. That was the case here as these guys tore the house down and had a heck of a main event. What matters is the good guys won for a feel good moment in front of their family, which gave the show a nice ending. King and Garcia get to continue their deal but they didn't actually get involved so the ending was even clean. Really strong stuff here, with FTR showing they can still do it.

Post match the House beats down FTR and Garcia, with Black spin kicking a chair into Harwood's head. Julia Hart pops up to slowly ring the bell to end the show. Well so much for the happy ending.

**Overall Rating:** B. This show was carried by two matches and that was more than enough to make it work. It went by quickly and the main event was a grudge match that more than delivered. Some of the stuff in the middle was a bit lacking, but they had a nice variety and it felt more like one of the first few Collisions, which is quite the compliment as those were some very good shows.

### Results

Sting/Darby Allin b. Workhorsesmen – Scorpion Death Drop to Drake

Eddie Kingston b. Trent Beretta – Northern lights bomb

The Kingdom b. Bryan Keith/Komander – Powerbomb/Zig Zag combination to Keith

Adam Copeland b. Griff Garrison – Crossface

Skye Blue b. Kiera Hogan – Dragon sleeper

Claudio Castagnoli b. Andrew Everett – Clothesline

FTR b. House Of Black – Sunset flip to Matthews

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# Impact Wrestling – January 4, 2024 (Best Of TNA): The Past And The Future

## Impact Wrestling

Date: January 4, 2024

Hosts: Tom Hannifan, Matthew Rehwoldt

With the relaunch of TNA Wrestling taking place next week at Hard To Kill, it's time to look back at some of the best moments of TNA. As a result, this week is called the Best Of TNA, meaning it is likely to feature matches from a good many years ago with wrestlers who aren't around here anymore. But at least the crowd chants will work. Let's get to it.

The hosts welcome us to the show.

From June 19, 2002, the first match in company history.

AJ Styles/Jerry Lynn/Low Ki vs. Flying Elvises



The Elvises jump them to start but get taken down for a series of dives. We settle down to Yang kneeing Styles in the face for two but Styles splashes down onto him for a breather. It's off to Lynn for a tornado DDT, only to have Yang send him into the corner for a kick to the chest. Siaki comes in for a shot to Lynn's face but Lynn is over to Ki without much effort.

Siaki is fine enough to hit an over the shoulder backbreaker and Estrada adds a running shooting star for two. Ki suplexes his way to freedom but Estrada kicks the legal Styles' head off for two more. Lynn comes back in for a cradle piledriver and we hit the parade of knockdowns. Yang Time (phoenix splash) finishes Styles at 6:23.

**Rating:** B-. They were right about the total nonstop action part as this was a pure sprint from the start to the finish. Styles got to show off his athleticism while the Elvises, as goofy as they might be, did get to showcase what they were able to do. Seeing Styles take the first loss ever in the promotion is certainly interesting, but what makes it more confusing is the fact that the three loses would be competing for the inaugural X-Division Title the following week. How TNA of TNA.

We look at Christian Cage's debut at Genesis 2005. That was a big, big deal.

We look at Kurt Angle's debut at No Surrender 2006. This set up his feud with Samoa Joe, which felt like it could have been that much bigger if they had waited a bit longer. The bloody Joe popping up to take out Angle was a great visual though.

From June 25, 2003.

### Chris Sabin vs. Frankie Kazarian

This was dubbed the Battle Of The Futures and they're both still with the company today. Joined in progress with Kazarian grabbing a suplex and kicking him in the face. A DDT gives

Sabin two and Kazarian bails to the floor for the big flip dive. Back in and Sabin gets two off a dropkick and we hit the chinlock.

Back up and they trade rollups for two each until Sabin kicks him in the back of the head for two. Kazarian gets in a shot of his own and goes up, only to have Sabin run the corner and slam him back down for two. Sabin is back up and avoids a springboard dropkick, setting up a backbreaker for two on Kazarian. A tiger suplex gives Sabin two but Kazarian catches him on top with the Flux Capacitor for the pin at 10:33 shown of 11:55.

**Rating:** B-. Given what these two would go on to become, it should be shock that the two of them had a good match when they were up and comers. It's a good example of what happens when talent is given a chance to showcase themselves and these two had a good one. Solid match here and a nice hidden gem.

Eric Young joins us in the studio and goes through some of various personae over the years, which really is rather impressive when you look at how much he has done.

From Turning Point 2007.

### Knockouts Title: Gail Kim vs. Awesome Kong

Kim is defending and we're joined in progress with Kong missing a charge into the post. They get inside for the opening bell and Kim goes after the arm, only to get swung down with straight power. Kong misses a charge into the corner but she powers Kim down again and grabs a camel clutch.

With that broken up, Kong hits a chokebomb and a running splash in the corner to make it worse. Back up and Kim ducks the spinning backfist before firing off some dropkicks. A top rope backsplash gives Kim two but Kong hits her in the face. The choking is on but Kong shoves the referee down for the DQ at 8:40.

**Rating:** C+. First off, points for going with the rematch instead of the initial title win. Other than that, you had Kong as the unstoppable force and Kim fighting to hang on, which is as classic of a story as you can get in wrestling. These two always had perfect chemistry together and it's this feud that made Kim a legend in women's wrestling. Not a great match here, but you got the idea instantly and that is the sign of something working.

Post match Kong powerbombs the referee.

From Wrestle Kingdom III.

Kevin Nash/Kurt Angle/Masahiro Chono/Riki Choshu vs. Giant Bernard/Karl Anderson/Takashi Iizuka/Tomohiro Ishii

Bernard (better known as Albert/A-Train) runs into Nash to start but can't get very far. Nash takes him into the corner for the boot choke so it's off to Iizuka, who gets kicked in the face by Chono. Ishii comes in (looking YOUNG) and gets taken into the corner so the beatdown can be on. That's broken up so it's Choshu coming in to work on Anderson's leg. Angle (big reaction) comes in and gets two off a suplex It's already back to Choshu, who is driven into the corner so Bernard can get in some shoulders to the ribs. Everything breaks down and Angle ankle locks Anderson for the tap at 7:04.

**Rating:** C+. There was only so much you could do with eight people and about seven minutes of action so this went as well as it could have gone. Having Angle and Nash there made for a special feeling, but the legends were the showcase here, as tends to be the case. It wasn't a great match, but it was a nice way to get a bunch of names in the ring.

From Victory Road 2010.

Tag Team Titles: Motor City Machine Guns vs. Beer Money

The titles are vacant coming in and we're joined in progress

with Roode being sent face first into the middle buckle. Standing Sliced Bread gets two with Storm making the save. A hurricanrana puts Storm down but Roode is right back in to roll Shelley up for two. Storm is knocked outside again and this time Sabin hits a springboard crossbody to take him down again.

Storm's beer accidentally goes into the referee's eyes so Earl Hebner has to run in and count two off Skull And Bones. Roode rolls through a high crossbody for two more and they trade strikes. Storm and Sabin grab stereo covers and it's a double pin at 5:37 shown. That doesn't work for Earl so restart the thing. Beer Money chokes away and Skull and Bones gives Shelley the pin at 7:52 shown of 15:50. I won't rate about half of the match but the full thing is rather good.

There's only one way to wrap this up. From Unbreakable 2005.

### X-Division Title: Samoa Joe vs. AJ Styles vs. Christopher Daniels

Daniels is defending and gets double teamed to start. He gets back up and yells so some double kicks put him right back down. Joe pulls Styles into a Rings of Saturn but Daniels makes the save. Daniels strikes away at both of them and gets two on Styles. Joe is back up and slugs away before hitting a release Rock Bottom on Daniels. The running boot in the corner is broken up though and Daniels hits a dive through the ropes to take Joe out again. Styles takes both of them down with a big dive and we take a break.

Back with Styles dropkicking Joe for two before Daniels monkey flips Styles...who hurricanranas Joe down. For some reason Daniels decides to slap away at Joe, who chokes him as a result. Styles breaks that up with the Spiral Tap and gets two each as a result. Daniels is back up but the Best Moonsault Ever is cut off, with Joe sending Styles into Daniels in the Tree of Woe.

Joe's backplash gets two on Styles but Daniels hits him with a Death Valley Driver to leave everyone down. Daniels and Styles both go to the floor and miss dives, only to have Joe take them both out. We take another break and come back with Joe superplexing both of them at once to leave them all down again. Joe Musclebusts Daniels and takes out Styles, only to go for the title. That allows Daniels to hit an enziguri to the belt to Joe's head, followed by a Blue Thunder Bomb for two on Styles.

The Best Moonsault Ever gets two more, with Joe making the save this time. Styles is back up with the moonsault reverse DDT for two more but Daniels plants Styles off the top for two. Joe is back up with the powerbomb into the STF on Daniels, who makes the rope. Styles' torture rack powerbomb hits Joe for two before he rolls into the Styles Clash with Joe making another save. Joe misses a charge out to the floor, leaving Styles to reverse the Angel's Wings into a backdrop rollup for the pin and the title at 21:45 shown of 22:50.

**Rating:** A. What else is there to say about this one? It's probably the best match TNA has ever had and it has its reputation for a reason. If they wanted to show what they can do, there isn't much of a better choice. It showcased the X-Division, three of the biggest stars the company has ever had and gave us a new champion. This is one of those matches where there is pretty much nothing wrong and the amazing action and pace carry it to an insanely high level.

The hosts wrap it up.

**Overall Rating:** B. The important thing here was the show focused on the wrestling and almost every division around. In other words, they stayed away from the storylines and angles that dragged everything down for years. Go with what makes things more interesting and focus on the good rather than the bad. There are only so many of these names left, but the flashbacks, with some actual hidden gems in there, made this a

rather entertaining show.

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# Ring Of Honor – January 4, 2024: Ok, Now Do Something

## Ring Of Honor

Date: January 4, 2024

Location: Frost Bank Center, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Caprice Coleman

We're back with another show taped a little while ago and in this case the TV Champion is actually going to be getting in the ring. Other than that, the World Title situation has since been resolved, but we won't be seeing the champ until next week at the earliest. We also have new Tag Team Champs, as in the titles that as of yesterday have not been seen on this show in five months. Let's get to it.

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

Eddie Kingston, after winning the Triple Crown at Worlds End, talks about how special it was. I'm still not sure if those are individual titles or one unified belt and they need to explain that sooner than later.

Opening sequence.

### Griff Garrison vs. Serpentic

Cole Karter and Angelico are here too. Serpentic snaps off a headscissors to start and let's hit that All In tickets are available plug! Karter offers a distraction but gets taken down by Angelico. The nefarious scheme works though as Garrison hits a hard clothesline to take over. Some belly to back suplexes set up a belly to back faceplant for two on Serpentic. Garrison's torture rack doesn't work as Serpentic is out with a superkick and Downward Spiral for two. Serpentic's shooting star press is loaded up but the seconds get on the apron for a distraction. Garrison hits a discus forearm and the torture rack bomb finishes at 5:25.

**Rating:** C. The match was fine, but forgive me for not believing that this is going to be the start of something important. Both teams, and as a result their individual members, have been stuck on a treadmill for months. Not having Maria out there didn't help and this was a perfectly watchable match that could not have felt less important if they tried.

### Lance Archer vs. JP Harlow

Harlow slaps him for not shaking hands so it's a chokeslam and a toss suplex to start the pain. Archer misses a charge into the corner though and Harlow strikes away, only to get kneed in the corner. The Blackout finishes for Archer at 2:09. Fun squash.

### Dalton Castle vs. Peter Avalon

Castle, with the Boys, comes to the ring looking rather disheveled and eating a sandwich. They start a bit slowly, with Castle shoving him around and Avalon being shocked at the strength. Avalon manages to shove Castle off the top for a nasty crash and we hit the chinlock back inside. That's broken up so Avalon hits a superkick into the Death Valley Driver for two. Avalon takes a bit too long though and it's a suplex to put him down. The Bang A Rang is countered into a rollup so Castle elbows him in the face. Now the Bang A Rang (with the Boys spinning around at ringside) can finish for Castle at 6:35.

**Rating:** C+. Another perfectly fine match which got a bit more time than some of the usuals around here. There is something to Castle being all out of sorts as it should set up a big match with Johnny TV down the line. What matters is they are giving us some kind of a story and that makes things more interesting going forward.

Ethan Page and Scorpio Sky talk about how they support each other and this will be their year.

#### Queen Aminata vs. Maya World

Aminata takes her down with a headlock to start but Maya is right back up with a flipping forearm in the corner. A moonsault hits knees though and Aminata snaps off a suplex. Aminata German suplexes her down and hits a running hip attack in the corner for two. World is back up with a running elbow but charges into a Downward Spiral. The Juicy Lock (a Koji Clutch with leg shots to the face) finishes for Aminata at 3:48.

**Rating:** C. Aminata seems to be the next project in the women's division, or at least someone who will be a prospect for the future. She has a unique look and the confidence, but I'm going to need to see her doing more than jobbing and winning three minute matches. Nice enough match and I'm sure we'll see



more from Aminata going forward.

### The Infantry vs. The Boys vs. Shane Taylor Promotions

Moriarty and Brent start things off with the latter taking over on the arm. Brandon comes in but gets kicked down, allowing Dean to come in for some right hands. A double suplex drops Brandon but Taylor pulls Dean outside for a heck of a right hand. Shane gets in and gets caught with a double Eat Defeat and a double superkick to send him back outside. Boot Camp hits Brandon but Taylor tags himself back in to break it up. The Marcus Garvey Driver finishes Brandon at 4:12.

**Rating:** C+. Ok, cool. Taylor and Moriarty get a win in another multi team match. With the Kingdom winning the Tag Team Titles, there is no reason for them to not be around here. Build up a team or two around here and get them a title shot. We are coming up on six months of the Tag Team Champions not even appearing on this show so fix things already. The match itself was a way to make Taylor look dominant and Moriarty compliments him well. I don't know why we should be seeing a heel vs. heel title program, but maybe there is another team coming up.

Serpentico interrupts Griff Garrison and Cole Karter because this feud must continue.

### Red Velvet vs. Alex Gracia

Gracia takes her to the mat to start and grabs a quickly broken ankle lock. An elbow to the face and middle rope spinning crossbody give Gracia two and we hit the front facelock. Back up and Gracia misses a charge in the corner so Velvet hits some running knees to the back of the head. The Mix (which I believe she used to call the Final/Last Slice) finishes for Velvet at 3:18.

**Rating:** C. This was a lot more about Gracia than anything else as she got in most of the offense until Velvet hit one or two

shots for the win. Velvet is another someone who seems like she has been ready for a push but I'm not sure she has the skills to make it work. Gracia wears a lot of bright pink so she stands out, though she's going to need some more time to really polish things up.

Post match Velvet says she wants the Women's TV Title.

### Rachael Ellering/Leyla Hirsch vs. Diamante/Mercedes Martinez

Ellering takes Diamante down to start and it's already off to Hirsch. With Diamante taken down, Ellering is right back in for a backsplash but Hirsch gets caught in the ropes for a hanging DDT. Diamante chokes and stomps in the corner before forearming Hirsch down. The corner dropkick misses though and Hirsch snaps off a running German suplex. That's enough for the tag off to Ellering for the house cleaning as everything breaks down. Hirsch is sent outside and it's standing Sliced Bread into an Air Raid Crash to give Martinez the pin on Ellering at 7:12.

**Rating:** C+. This feud continues to keep going and I can't imagine that changing until we get to the TV Title tournament. As usual, there is only so much that can be done with nothing for them to fight over and since there is nothing to suggest they'll be fighting Athena anytime soon, the TV Title is about all there is left.

We look at Eddie Kingston winning the Continental Classic. I believe this is the same package from Dynamite.

### TV Title: Willie Mack vs. Kyle Fletcher

Fletcher is defending and manages to power Mack into the corner to start. A headlock takeover puts Mack down but he's right back up to run Fletcher over. The running crossbody is countered into the swinging Rock Bottom to plant Mack again though as this is mostly one sided so far. Fletcher grabs the arm and knocks him down a few times, only to have Mack block a

slam.

Some running clotheslines and the swinging slam put Fletcher down and the Mackarena standing moonsault gets two. Back up and Fletcher hits a running boot in the corner, followed by a delayed brainbuster for two more. Mack is fine enough to hit a running Razor's Edge buckle bomb and we hit the Texas Cloverleaf. With that broken up, Mack takes him to the top but gets caught with a super Falcon Arrow. A piledriver retains the title at 11:03.

**Rating:** B-. This is the kind of title defense that Fletcher needed. He was in there against someone good enough to be a bit of a threat and had to work to get there, but ultimately the win felt pretty definitive. Best match on the show by far this week and it's nice when it's the most important as well.

Dalton Castle hasn't slept since Final Battle because he's worried about the state of Ring Of Honor. Johnny TV cost him the TV Title and cut off his connection with the fans. Cue TV and Taya Valkyrie, with Castle threatening to smash his face. Valkyrie does NOT approve and violence seems to be teased.

Gringo Loco/Workhorsemen vs. El Hijo del Vikingo/Lee Johnson/Komander

Henry kicks Johnson in the ribs to start and elbows him in the face to make it worse. Komander comes in and gets chopped by Loco but comes back with a quick headscissors. A springboard hurricanrana has Loco in the corner so it's off to Vikingo for a springboard wristdrag to Drake. Everything breaks down and Komander is sent outside, with Loco hitting a big dive onto the pile.

Back in and Vikingo gets crushed in the corner, setting up a DDT from Drake. Loco hits a powerslam for two but Vikingo rolls over and brings in Komander to clean house. Vikingo and Komander go up top for the big moonsaults to the floor but Henry powerbombs Vikingo out of the corner for two. Komander

and Vikingo wind up in an electric chair on Loco's shoulders (geez) before both get planted, with Johnson having to break up the cover. Komander grabs a quick rollup for the pin on Loco at 9:31.

**Rating:** B-. The match was the usual fun with the AAA guys flying around and doing their usual things, but I've almost lost count of the amount of times we've seen something similar on this show or Rampage. It would be nice to see something like this go somewhere, but for now that isn't the case. I'll certainly take a high flying main event though, with that double electric chair being rather impressive.

**Overall Rating:** C+. As usual, this show can be entertaining if you accept that most of the matches are a bunch of one offs that aren't likely to lead very far. The show was back up to over an hour and a half so it was an even longer than usual version of a bunch of filler around two or three matches that tied into an interesting story. I'm sure next week will be back to normal with the usual two hours, but could they please try to have some more of the champions around? It shouldn't be that complicated.

### Results

Griff Garrison b. Serpentico – Torture rack powerbomb

Lance Archer b. JP Harlow – Blackout

Dalton Castle b. Peter Avalon – Bang A Rang

Queen Aminata b. Maya World – Juicy Lock

Shane Taylor Promotions b. The Boys and The Infantry – Marcus Garvey Driver to Brandon

Red Velvet b. Alex Gracia – Mix

Diamante/Mercedes Martinez b. Leyla Hirsch/Rachael Ellering – Air Raid Crash to Ellering

Kyle Fletcher b. Willie Mack – Piledriver

El Hijo del Vikingo/Komander/Lee Johnson b. Workhorsesmen/Gringo Loco – Rollup to Loco

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## **Rampage – January 5, 2024: Would Anyone Notice?**

### **Rampage**

Date: January 5, 2024

Location: Prudential Center, Newark, New Jersey

Commentators: Excalibur, Tony Schiavone, Ian Riccaboni

We're done with Worlds End and that might mean a little something around here. The question becomes what we might be getting with this show, as Rampage has a tendency to be all over the place with fairly random matches. Hopefully we get another of the entertaining matches that tend to take place on this show. Let's get to it.

[Here is Dynamite if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

## Hardys/Mark Briscoe vs. Butcher and the Blade/Kip Sabian

Sabian works on Briscoe's arm to start and then runs him over for a bonus. Briscoe is back up to take over on Sabian and the Hardys come in for a double suplex. Blade comes in but gets caught by the leg, meaning he's already handing it off to Butcher. Matt's middle rope elbow gets two but Butcher counters the Twist of Fate and hits a hard clothesline. It's back to Sabian, who is quickly neckbreakered so Mark and Butcher can come back in. Everything breaks down and Sabian hits an Arabian moonsault onto Briscoe. Back in and the villains take turns beating on Briscoe as we take a break.

We come back with Briscoe and Blade trading forearms until Briscoe snaps off a neckbreaker. The double tag brings in Jeff to beat on Sabian, including the basement dropkick for two. A middle rope splash gives Jeff two more and Matt comes in for Poetry In Motion. Everything breaks down again and Sabian's springboard dropkick accidentally takes out his partners. The Twist of Fate into the Swanton into the Froggy Bow finishes Sabian at 11:13.

**Rating:** B-. This wasn't a match that broke any new ground but they did what they needed to do and did it rather well. That's what you need to do sometimes and it worked for an opener. If nothing else, I can go for the Hardys filling in a six man tag over having them get some kind of focus, as it tends to hide their limitations these days. Nice opener here as a good six man can go a long way.

Chris Jericho and Sammy Guevara have a Tag Team Titles hot coming but Guevara is ready for Ricky Starks next week. Guevara knows that Starks is good but he's not that good. Jericho will be ready to take care of Big Bill too.

The former Jericho Appreciation Society is ready for Anna Jay's match, but she thinks it's time for a change because things are feeling stale. She'll go out there by herself

tonight, but here is Harley Cameron to interrupt. She wants to help all of them and whispers something to Parker, who seems intrigued.

### Willow Nightingale/Kris Statlander vs. Notorious Mimi/Kennedi Hardcastle

Hold on though as Stokely Hathaway steals the microphone to handle the introductions. Statlander gets a bit more praise than Nightingale ("Thicker than a Snickers and quicker than a cat with whiskers."), possibly due to Hathaway thinking she's rather fetching. Statlander takes Mimi into the corner to start but Hardcastle gets in a cheap shot from behind. That's fine with Nightingale, who suplexes both of them down at once. Statlander comes back in with clotheslines to run them over, followed by Nightingale hitting a spinebuster for the pin on Mimi at 2:36.

The Hardys want a match on Dynamite so here is Private Party to share some respect. No match is set though, oddly enough.

### Anna Jay vs. Hikaru Shida

Jay slugs away against the ropes to start but Shida ducks some shots to the face and grabs a neckbreaker. Shida's running knee connects and we go outside for the chair, which takes too long to set up. Instead Jay runs her over and then wraps Shida's ribs around the post for a rather nasty visual. We take a break and come back with Jay yelling a lot and Shida unloading with forearms. A brainbuster gives Shida two but Jay hits a pendulum kick out of the corner. The Queenslayer goes on but Shida lips out and scores with a running knee for two more. The top rope Meteora into the Katana finishes Jay at 9:10.

**Rating:** C+. Shida winning makes sense as she's one of the biggest stars the division has ever seen, but it's weird to see Jay going back and forth with the wins and losses. She has potential and it seems that AEW wants to push her, but that's

not going to work when she keeps losing her momentum. Nice enough match, though Jay losing again is almost disappointing these days.

Sonjay Dutt yells at the Jarretts and Jay Lethal, demanding that they get back on the same page. Karen Jarrett wants the team to have a name but Jeff Jarrett says it needs to have LOSER in it because of Lethal. Jeff and Lethal have to be held apart.

Video on the Christian Cage/Adam Copeland ordeal at Worlds End, plus Cage intentionally not thanking Killswitch on Dynamite.

#### Ring Of Honor Pure Rules Title: Wheeler Yuta vs. Komander

Yuta is defending and they fight over arm control to start. A double wristlock has Komander using his first rope break barely a minute in. La majistral into a half crab sends Yuta to his first rope break as they're certainly starting fast. Komander's hurricanrana sends Yuta outside but it's too early for a dive. Instead Yuta takes him down by the arm as we take a break.

Back with Yuta holding him in a Gory Stretch but Komander rolls him into the corner for the break. A springboard kick to the face drops Yuta again and a springboard tornado DDT gets two. Komander misses a twisting moonsault though and it's an Angle Slam to put him down. Yuta grabs a Kimura so Komander has to use his last rope break. They trade kicks to the face until Yuta gets two off a bridging German suplex. The hammer and anvil elbows set up another Kimura to retain the title at 10:54.

**Rating:** C+. Yuta has something of a formula to his title defenses and it was on display here. He takes away the rope breaks and then usually wins by submission, which might make sense but doesn't make for the most thrilling stuff. I get that the idea is to have a title match, but Yuta's style is



only so interesting and doesn't exactly scream big time featured showcase. It also didn't help that even commentary was pointing out how strange it was for Komander of all people to get a shot at this title, but AEW's title shot logic has always been a bit all over the place.

**Overall Rating:** C+. As is usually the case these days, Rampage is just kind of there for the most part. You know what you're going to get most weeks and that was the case again here. It's not a bad show, but it's a show that you could skip a good chunk of the time. Even the best match on here was just pretty good, with the big attraction being things announced for Dynamite. The show is easy enough to watch, but it's also something that could be dropped without much being lost, which puts it in a very weird place.

### Results

Hardys/Mark Briscoe b. Butcher and the Blade/Kip Sabian – Froggy Bow to Sabian

Willow Nightingale/Kris Statlander b. Notorious Mimi/Kennedi Hardcastle – Spinebuster to Mimi

Hikaru Shida b. Anna Jay – Katana

Wheeler Yuta b. Komander – Kimura

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# Smackdown – January 5, 2024 (New Year's Resolution): When Did They Get Stupid?

## Smackdown

Date: January 5, 2024

Location: Rogers Arena, Vancouver, British, Columbia, Canada

Commentators: Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

It's the first Smackdown of the year and in this case it's New Year's Revolution. The big main event will determine who challenges Roman Reigns for the World Title at the Royal Rumble. On top of that though, the Rock showed up on Raw and seemed to call out Reigns for a showdown. We almost have to, ahem, acknowledge that here so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Rock's return and line about Reigns.

Roman Reigns and Paul Heyman arrive, with Reigns literally laughing off a question about the Rock.

US Title #1 Contenders Tournament Finals: Kevin Owens vs. Santos Escobar

Escobar has Angel and Humberto with him and cue Logan Paul to join commentary. The bell rings and cue the LWO to take out Angel and Humberto, allowing Owens to hit a Cannonball and frog splash for a fast two as we take a break. Back with Escobar knocking Owens off the top and taking over on the bad hand.

Owens fights out and grabs a chinlock so Escobar is right back on the hand in a smart move. Escobar sends him hard into the barricade as the fans chant for Logan, who gets up to pose in a smart move. Back in and Owens catches Escobar coming off the top with an atomic drop into a DDT for a needed breather. Owens goes up top and Escobar is right there, only to get caught with the swinging superplex (Graves: "Logan, don't ever try to superplex Kevin Owens." Paul: "What happens?" Graves: "This.").

We take another break and come back with Owens superkicking him out to the floor but the Swanton hits raised knees. Escobar snaps off a top rope hurricanrana for two, only to have Owens catch him on top with a super Regal Roll for two of his own. The Stunner is blocked so Owens hits a superkick but his pop up powerbomb is countered into another hurricanrana. The second powerbomb attempt works though and the Stunner sends Owens to the Royal Rumble at 16:49.

**Rating:** B. This got rolling near the end as they were trading moves and counters until Owens finally caught him with the big one. While there was the downside of Owens being the pretty obvious winner since the tournament started, it was nice to see the whole thing paid off with a good match. At the very least, we'll get more of Owens and Paul taking awesome shots at each other for a few weeks until the title match at the Rumble.

Post match Paul congratulates Owens and mocks the idea of a Canadian being the US Champion. Paul brags about himself and gets dropped with a right hand.

Video on Randy Orton, who is in the #1 contenders match tonight.

Post break Austin Theory and Grayson Waller console Logan Paul but get in a shoving match with Cameron Grimes.

Here are Bobby Lashley and the Street Profits for a chat.

Lashley talks about having a rough 2023 because he didn't have the success he wanted. Then he hooked up with the Street Profits and things got better. The Profits talk about how they want the Tag Team Titles, while Lashley is going to enter the Royal Rumble. Cue Karrion Kross and Scarlett (now a brunette), plus Paul Ellering of all people. The AOP jump Lashley and the Profits from behind as the return that was all but revealed two weeks ago comes true.

Video on AJ Styles.

### Smackdown Women's Title: Iyo Sky vs. Michin

Michin is challenging and the seconds all stay in the back. They fight over a lockup to start until Sky flips away from her for a standoff. Sky takes her to the mat for a double stomp but Michin gets in a whip to the floor. There's the big dive to drop the champ and we take a break. Back with Sky escaping a powerbomb but Michin's gutwrench suplex gets two. A half crab sends Sky over to the rope so they head to the apron, where Sky snaps off a nasty German suplex.

Since it was just a German suplex on the apron, Michin is able to block Over The Moonsault and hit a dragon suplex for two. They go to the corner and it's a super Styles Clash for a rather near fall, with Sky having to grab the rope. Michin misses another suicide dive though and the running knees in the corner set up Over The Moonsault to retain the title at 10:21.

**Rating:** C+. I'm not sure if there was much of a reason to believe Michin was going to win the title here but it was nice to see someone fresh getting into the title picture. Michin is a good hand who can work well with a lot of people and she did well enough here. It might not have been a great match, but for a title defense on a special show, it did exactly what it needed to do.

Paul Heyman is asked about the Rock and isn't pleased with

Rock inviting himself to the Head Of The Table. Rock has not received an invitation and is just trying to go viral, like John Cena, Brock Lesnar or Cody Rhodes, who like to interrupt Roman Reigns. CM Punk is back and talks about being an OG Paul Heyman Guy, but Heyman has upgraded from friend to advocate to Wise Man. Heyman promises Reigns will smash any of his opponents at the Royal Rumble to wrap things up, as he sounded a good bit shakier than usual here, which is exactly what he should have been doing.

Damage CTRL congratulates Iyo Sky on retaining her title and now the team wants the Women's Tag Team Titles. And the Royal Rumble, but Bianca Belair comes in to say she'll be in the Rumble and beat Bayley next week as a bonus.

### Pretty Deadly vs. Butch/???

Butch's mystery partner is...Tyler Bate from NXT. Bate and Wilson go to the mat to start with Bate flipping out of a headscissors and getting two off a rollup. Butch comes in for a basement dropkick to the back, followed by stereo running dives to take out Pretty Deadly on the floor.

We take a break and come back with Butch fighting out of a chinlock. That's enough for the diving tag to Bate so house can be quickly cleaned. The airplane spin leaves Wilson down and the rebound lariat/German suplex combination puts him down again. Prince gets in a cheap shot but Wilson can't grab what looked to be a Twist of Fate. A double Tyler Driver 97 finishes Wilson at 7:53.

**Rating:** C+. This was about bringing in Bate for his first match on Smackdown and it went well enough all things considered. I could go for Butch getting away from the Brawling Brutes and if he won't be a singles star, pairing him with Bate is far from the worst idea. At the same time, it's almost weird to see Pretty Deadly losing, but I'm sure they'll be fine going forward with that kind of charisma.

Video on LA Knight.

Ashante Thee Adonis comes in to see Nick Aldis to say he's a starving dog. Aldis says he doesn't feel sorry for him but he has believed in Adonis since the beginning. He promises some ideas for him going forward.

Here's what's coming next week.

### AJ Styles vs. LA Knight vs. Randy Orton

For the shot against Roman Reigns at the Royal Rumble. We're joined in progress after a break with Knight being knocked into the corner but Styles takes Orton into another corner for the stomping. Knight is back with a running clothesline to put Styles on the floor, with Knight following to send both of them face first into the announcers' table over and over.

Orton drops them both onto said table but Styles does it right back to him in a nice counter. The fans deem this awesome as Orton breaks up the Phenomenal Forearm and hits the hanging DDT. Knight breaks up the RK0 though and Orton is sent into the steps. Styles dives onto Knight to leave them all down as we take a break.

Back with Styles hitting the basement forearm to Knight and knocking Orton out to the floor again. Orton fights back and sends Styles into the steps before taking over on Knight back inside. A quick BFT drops Orton but Styles breaks up the cover at the last second. Knight and Styles slug it out with Styles getting the better of it, setting up the springboard 450 for two. Orton is back in with the RK0 to Styles but this time Knight (who got busted open somewhere in there) makes the save...and we've got the Bloodline. The big beatdown is on and we'll call it a no contest at about 16:30 shown.

Rating: B-. Gah that ending took down what was turning into a good match. Knight did better than I would have expected here, as he was in there with bigger stars but more than held his

own in a big match. Orton and Styles were their normal selves but their long breaks seem to have done good for both of them. That being said, we're now going with Roman Reigns and Paul Heyman being dumb enough to think this idea is going to work?

Post match the beatdown is on, with Reigns and company laying waste to the other three. Nick Aldis comes out and tells Paul Heyman (the Bloodline can't hear him) that Reigns has just earned himself a four way at the Royal Rumble.

**Overall Rating:** B-. The best thing I can say here is that it felt like things mattered, which is what this show needed to accomplish. The wrestling was good enough and the show flew by, though that ending felt more like Reigns and Heyman turning into morons for the sake of setting up a new title match. The rest of the show was good enough, but the main event mattered more than anything else and it left the show on a weaker note.

### Results

Kevin Owens b. Santos Escobar – Stunner

Iyo Sky b. Michin – Over The Moonsault

Butch/Tyler Bate b. Pretty Deadly – Double Tyler Driver 97 to Wilson

AJ Styles vs. LA Knight vs. Randy Orton went to a no contest when the Bloodline interfered

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