

Monday Night Raw – December 25, 2023 (Best Of 2023): They Covered It

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 25, 2023

Hosts: Jackie Redmond, Peter Rosenberg

Since it's Christmas night, we have the Best Of 2023, which could cover all kinds of things. There have been some rather good things taking place this year and that means we should have a nice set of options. There's a good chance that we'll be getting stuff from both main roster shows and pay per views so let's get to it.

Note that I'll be posting the full versions of matches rather than the clipped versions that air on the broadcast.

The Miz welcomes us to the show and says he was supposed to host the Oscars but was too busy hosting Wrestlemania instead. We run down some of the best matches of the year in what is probably a preview of what we're seeing tonight.

We go to the studio with Jackie and Peter, who run down the special guests we'll be hearing from tonight. For now though, our first match.

From Night Of Champions.

World Heavyweight Championship: AJ Styles vs. Seth Rollins

For the inaugural title and they're starting big here. They take their time to start with Styles sending him to the apron but it's too early for the Phenomenal Forearm. Styles rolls out of a headlock but Rollins is right back with a kick to the head to take over. Back up and Styles drives him into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs. The chinlock doesn't

last long and Rollins is back with a Downward Spiral into the middle turnbuckle.

Styles is right back with a suplex into the corner and the Phenomenal Blitz. The middle rope moonsault into a reverse DDT plants Rollins again but he's right back up with a buckle bomb. The frog splash gives Rollins two but the Pedigree is reversed into an enziguri. With nothing else working, Styles loads up the super Styles Clash but Rollins slips out to avoid quite a bit of pain.

Instead, Rollins puts him on top for a reverse superplex into a reverse sitout suplex for two. The Phoenix splash misses and they fight to the apron, where Styles hits a brainbuster to knock Rollins silly. Back in and Styles tries the Phenomenal Forearm (instead of covering) but Rollins breaks it up and sends him back to the floor. The suicide dive hits Styles but Rollins comes up favoring his knee.

Back in again and Styles grabs the Calf Crusher but Rollins grabs a choke for the escape. Styles kicks away until he has to duck the Pele. Rollins' Pedigree is countered into one from Styles for two as Styles is bleeding a bit from the head. The Phenomenal Forearm is superkicked out of the air but the knee gives out on the Stomp attempt. The knee is fine enough to hit a Pedigree, followed by the Stomp to give Rollins the pin and the title at 20:37.

Rating: B. This was a different kind of match as there was no personal issue and they were just out there fighting for the title. It worked well as the two are both incredibly talented and know how to work the main event style match. The knee injury was a nice way to go and gave the match some drama, but it was hard to imagine Styles having a real chance here. Rather awesome opener though and Rollins is the best choice possible for the first champion.

Rollins joins us to talk about what it means to be the

inaugural World Heavyweight Champion and to give opportunities to so many people. CM Punk is brought up, with Rollins talking about the lack of respect between them and it would be almost impossible for Punk to gain his respect. We move on to Drew McIntyre, who makes a lot of good points, but it's the way McIntyre is explaining them. If McIntyre wants the title, he has to beat him, so may the best man win.

The Alpha Academy shells WWE Shop.

We talk about Jade Cargill signing with WWE. Oh yeah that was a thing.

From Wrestlemania XXXIX Night One.

Smackdown Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Rhea Ripley

Ripley is challenging. They hit shoulders to start with Charlotte going down, allowing Rhea to tell her to suck it. Back in and they slug it out, with Ripley knocking her into the corner. Ripley bodyscissors her, followed by a German suplex to cut off the comeback. Charlotte gets in a shot and goes after the knee, as is her custom, but Ripley isn't having that. Riptide is blocked and they trade big boots to leave them both down.

They slug it out until Charlotte snaps off a fall away slam and goes up top. That takes too long though and Ripley catches her with a release German superplex for two, leaving Ripley stunned. Charlotte goes to the knee again and Natural Selection gets two. They go outside with Charlotte missing a charge into the steps, allowing Ripley to hit a belly to back faceplant for two.

Charlotte rolls some German suplexes but Ripley gets one of her own (with Charlotte almost landing on her head). Charlotte is fine enough to hit a big boot and Ripley is sent outside, where the moonsault connects. The Figure Four is blocked and Charlotte almost runs into the referee, leaving Ripley to hit

Riptide for...two (yeah you knew Charlotte would get to kick out of that at least once).

The stunned Ripley gets small packaged for two and the Prism Trap goes on instead. Charlotte makes the ropes and the referee is almost bumped, meaning a spear can give Charlotte two. They slug it out until Charlotte hits another big boot into the Figure Four but Ripley is right next to the ropes. Ripley goes to the apron and they both go up, with Charlotte being dropped face first onto the post. Charlotte is out and the super Riptide gives Ripley the pin and the title at 23:32.

Rating: B+. This started slowly but once they got into the big falls they had me wondering where it was going. While it would have been hard to imagine Ripley losing, there is always that chance with Charlotte in there. What matters is Ripley gets the win that matters and becomes the new star. Charlotte needs to go away from Ripley for a bit (it feels like she hasn't been on Raw in a long time) and let her be the big deal. For now they, I'll take Ripley getting the title that she has earned and getting it by pinning Charlotte at Wrestlemania.

Ripley talks about how dominant a year Judgment Day had and promises to eradicate Ivy Nile.

We take a quick look at Logan Paul beating Ricochet at Summerslam.

From Backlash.

Damian Priest vs. Bad Bunny

Street fight and Bunny is the hometown boy to a major reaction. Bunny brings the kendo stick but whips out a shopping cart full of weapons. Priest powers him into the corner to start but gets slapped in the face, with Bunny hitting a Michinoku Driver for two. Bunny grabs the kendo sticks but Priest knocks him down and breaks one of them. Back up and Bunny hammers away in the corner, only to get taken

down again.

South Of Heaven connects but Priest pulls him up at two. It's time to bring in an ax handle (single this time) but instead Priest loads up the springboard dive...which is cut off by a chair being thrown into his face. Bunny hits a big dive and drops him with a bunch of trashcan lid shots, giving us a Flair Flop on the floor. Back in and another Michinoku Driver gives Bunny two more but it's time to head back outside.

Priest gets the better of things this time and smashes the Puerto Rico kendo stick across Bunny's back. They head into the crowd and over to the tech area, where a Falcon Arrow sends Bunny crashing HARD through some tables. Adam Pearce comes out to say this needs to stop but Priest carries Bunny back to ringside. Priest misses a kick to the post and can barely stand, so Bunny blasts said leg with a kendo stick.

Bunny hits something like a Stunner to the leg out of the corner and the leg is wrapped around the post. A chain is wrapped around the leg to send it into the post again (with Priest begging him not to do it). Priest begs off from a chair shot and gets in a kick of his own, only to get hit low for his efforts. Cue Judgment Day to go after Bunny, with Rey Mysterio making the save.

With Rey beaten down, Carlito makes the save to an explosion, including the Backstabber and apple spit. Judgment Day gets back up but here is Savio Vega, who brings out the LWO to keep up the fight. With everyone else gone, Priest's leg gives out on a kick to the head attempt, allowing Bunny to grab a Figure Four. Priest gets out so it's a Sliced Bread for two (with Bunny almost landing on his head). A Canadian Destroyer finishes Priest at 25:05.

Rating: A. Yeah this was a total blast and played to the live crowd as well as anything else was going to. Bunny is as over as free beer in a frat house around here and they brought in

the legends/current stars to make it feel that much bigger. It was fun and Bunny put in an all time celebrity performance, but Priest deserves all kinds of credit for holding it all together. Great stuff here, but egads how is anything supposed to follow this?

New Day joins us to give their take on everything this year, ranging from big meaty men, the women's division, people who kick you in the head, the tag division and the Alpha Academy.

From the September 4 Raw.

Intercontinental Title: Chad Gable vs. Gunther

Gunther is defending and after the Big Match Intros, a headlock takeover puts Gable down. Back up and Gable dropkicks him to the floor as we take a break. We come back with Gable cranking on the leg over the ropes. The leg is fine enough for a big boot and the hand is fine enough for a chop but Gable is right back up. Gable unloads in the corner but Gunther kicks him out to the floor as we take another break.

Back again with Gable reversing a powerbomb into a hurricanrana to the floor. Gunther kicks him down and goes up, only to have Gable run the corner for a superplex. The ankle lock is broken up but Gable suplexes his way out of a sleeper. Rolling Chaos Theory gets two and the grapevined ankle lock goes on. That's broken up as well and Gunther gets the sleeper. With that broken up, Gunther hits a sleeper suplex into the powerbomb into the hard clothesline to retain at 16:03.

Rating: B. They were rolling by the end and made the most out of a rough situation. Gunther has gone over a year as champion and will break the record for longest reign ever later this week. There is no reason to take the title off of him here, so Gable was tasked with making the most out of a rough situation. It was a heck of a fight here near the end, but this was the only way it should have gone.

Paul Heyman joins us to talk about Roman Reigns' dominance over the year. We look at some of Reigns' victims, along with those who came up against the Bloodline. As a bonus, 2024 is a leap year, so we get one extra day to acknowledge Reigns!

Cody Rhodes joins us and talks about how much he and his family loves Christmas. He talks about how his dad wasn't around much on Christmas because it was a huge show day, but now it's the day after Christmas so he's ready to be in Madison Square Garden tomorrow. As for Shinsuke Nakamura, Cody is ready to settle things no matter how long it takes. As for Brock Lesnar, Rhodes never wants to go back to Suplex City, but he does have a soft spot for the post-Fastlane press conference. The fact that he and Jey Uso were a bit tipsy might have something to do with it.

From Summerslam.

Cody Rhodes vs. Brock Lesnar

Cody jumps him before the bell but gets caught with a quick suplex. A neck snap across the top staggers Brock and a pair of Disaster Kicks make it worse. Cody tries it again though and this time gets rammed into the corner for his efforts. Brock is knocked to the floor for a hard suicide dive though and Cody has an opening. Back in and Brock hits a trio of suplexes to send Cody down and it's time to bounce a bit.

Another German suplex sets up another suplex and Cody falls out to the floor. Brock knocks him off the apron and tells Cody to save himself but Cody beats the count again. That means an overhead belly to belly and Brock clotheslines him outside again. An F5 on the floor gets nine and Brock is mad. Another F5 through the announcers' table gets nine and now Lesnar looks more confused than angry.

More suplexes wake Cody up for some reason and he heads outside, where some postings slow Brock down and a steps shot (DQ anyone?) makes it worse. The Disaster Kick and Cody Cutter

drop Lesnar back inside and a double springboard Cody Cutter gets two. Lesnar pulls him into the Kimura but Cody makes the rope. Back up and Lesnar is sent into an exposed buckle, setting up Cody's Kimura. That's broken up so Cody hits three Cross Rhodes for the pin at 17:32.

Rating: B. They were trying for an epic match here and it just didn't get that far. Cody surviving and surviving was a rather Lesnar style story and it worked well enough, but I still can't buy Lesnar losing to the Cross Rhodes, which just isn't a very good finisher. This was the way the feud had to end though as Cody gets a huge win to defeat Lesnar for good and should be on his way back to the title picture sooner than later.

Post match Lesnar actually shows respect and even high fives some fans as he walks away.

We look at Becky Lynch winning the NXT Women's Title.

Lynch talks about how she does the buying and shopping for Christmas but Seth Rollins does all of the putting together. She went back to NXT to show what he has become and to help others get a chance they hadn't had yet. Becky is ready for Nia Jax in a match five years in the making. As for this year though, she was a team with Lita and got to feud with Trish Stratus, which is where we're going next.

From Payback.

Trish Stratus vs. Becky Lynch

In a cage with pinfall, submission or escape to win and NXT Women's Champion Tiffany Stratton is here watching again. Becky starts fast with the Bexploders but gets elbowed in the face for her efforts. Trish sends her into the cage and grabs a spinebuster to cut off a comeback attempt. The double fishhook keeps Becky in trouble (Trish: "CHEESE!") but Becky manages to ram her into the cage a few times.

It's too early for the Disarm-Her so Becky is sent into the cage two more times. Trish Matrixes her way out of a clothesline, only to have Becky drop a double legdrop onto the stomach in a clever counter. Some rapid fire rams into the cage have Trish in more trouble and Becky goes up top for the Fameasser in the ropes for two. Trish is back up and hammers away in the corner but Becky slips out and hits a powerbomb for two more.

Back up and Becky is sent into the cage again, setting up a Widow's Peak (including the Victoria hair pulling) for two. Becky misses something off the top and gets caught with Stratusfaction for another near fall. They go up top with Trish hitting a super bulldog for two, allowing her to stare at the camera and show off a NASTY welt on her forehead. Both of them head up top with Trish knocking her down, only to have Becky climb back up for a top rope superplex and a huge crash for two more. Becky goes up as Trish goes for the door so Becky climbs down for the save.

Cue Zoey Stark to grab Trish's arms but Becky pulls her back in...where Stark slams the door on her face. Not that it matters as the Manhandle Slam gets two, as Stark comes in for the save. Becky is back up and slams the door shut to fight both of them at once. A Manhandle Slam to Stark and a super Manhandle Slam to Trish are enough for the pin at 20:02.

Rating: B+. It was a heck of a fight and what matters is that it felt like the big blow of to the feud. That's what it needed to be, as this feud has gone on long enough and it's time for both of them to move on. As usual, Becky looks like a warrior who overcame the odds because very few can hang with her when she is at the top of her game. The Stark interference was a bit much but if that's the only downside to the match, they did rather well.

Chelsea Green interrupts Adam Pearce over not being on the show so far. He has a highlight package about her though,

which as you might expect, is her getting destroyed and humiliated in various ways. Green storms out and R-Truth comes in to say that was better than It's A Wonderful Life.

Jey Uso talks about how things are a bit different this year because he doesn't have the family around for the holidays. He got tired of fighting the Bloodline and went to Raw, where Sami Zayn made the transition that much easier. As for 2024, he just wants to be himself.

We look at Judgment Day's 2023.

From Survivor Series.

Men's WarGames

Seth Rollins, Cody Rhodes, Jey Uso, Sami Zayn, Randy Orton
Damian Priest, Finn Balor, Dominik Mysterio, JD McDonagh, Drew McIntyre

There's no Orton to start as they're milking the heck out of this. Balor and Rollins start fast with Rollins diving right at him to get it going. Balor is sent into the cage a few times but slips out of the Buckle Bomb and hits a clothesline. Rollins is sent into the cage as well but comes right back with a Sling Blade. A running knee to the face puts Balor down as McDonagh comes in to give the villains control.

Kendo sticks are brought in as well and the double beating has Rollins down. McDonagh moonsaults from one ring to another to drop Rollins again and more kendo sticks make it worse. Uso evens things up and hammers away with right hands and kicks to the head. McDonagh manages a running Spanish Fly to Uso but he and Rollins are back up with stereo superkicks. The four of them split off as the clock runs down...and Priest tells McIntyre that he's going in instead.

Priest comes in and is quickly double teamed but the numbers game gets him out of trouble. Some baton shots have the good

guys in trouble, setting up Priest's flip dive off the top. The beating continues until Zayn comes in, though only after slamming the door on Balor's head. A table is brought in to clean house, including a Blue Thunder Bomb to Balor. McDonagh catches Zayn going up but gets knocked back down, leaving Zayn to pull out a pipe.

With things slowing down, McIntyre comes in to wreck a variety of people until Uso cuts him off with some right hands. A 1D cuts McIntyre down and it's Rhodes in to even things up again. Rhodes pulls out a bullrope but Rollins wants to know if Orton is going to be here. Mysterio is in to complete the Judgment Day and loads up Three Amigos on Rhodes. The rest of the other team surrounds Mysterio though and the big beatdown is on fast.

The rest of Judgment Day gets up, with McIntyre and Priest hitting stereo moonsaults. Priest Razor's Edges Rollins through a table as the clock expires...and here is Rhea Ripley with the Money in the Bank briefcase but heeeeeeeeere's Randy, meaning WarGames is officially on.

House is quickly cleaned and we get the staredown with McIntyre as the fans are impressed. Orton and company start cleaning house, including the quintuple hanging DDTs. Hold on though as Jey and Orton have a staredown (remember the Bloodline put Orton out in the first place) but Jey takes a shot aimed at Orton. Back up and Judgment Day is beaten down, with McDonagh trying to run. That's cut off and McDonagh is thrown down into the RKO. Cross Rhodes finishes Priest off at 34:21.

Rating: B+. This was a better match than the first, if nothing else due to the match not feeling like it was trying to stretch out time. The Orton return was the big moment, even if he didn't exactly do much. There was a better story here and it was a heck of a fight, which is how WarGames is supposed to feel. Best match on the show here, which is a good sign given

that it was by far the most important.

The winners pose....and CM PUNK RETURNS! Punk comes to the entrance and hits IT'S CLOBBERIN TIME before hugging some fans to end the show. Well that's quite the shock.

We look at the reactions to Punk returning and his appearances on Raw, saying he is home.

The hosts wrap us up.

Overall Rating: B. These shows are always weird to grade as they almost can't have anything bad by default. It covered a lot of the major points of the Raw side of things for the year and that is kind o hard to do in three hours. For a Christmas night special though, this went rather well and that's all I could have asked for given the circumstances.

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

AND

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Merry Christmas

Hope you all have a good day and get to spend time with your family. It's one of my favorite days of the year and hopefully yours' is a great one as well. Thank you for everything you do for me by coming here, as it has changed the way I can live my life in ways I can never imagine. I'll be trying to do a bit better in the new year about getting more content up as I really don't like how much I've slowed down. Thank you all for sticking with me.

On a more important note, and I know that a lot of you might not be fans so I'll keep this short: Christmas is about celebrating the birth of Jesus. If you've never looked into him, give him a try. As someone who has been a fan on him my entire life, I can more than recommend him and guarantee it makes things better.

Thank you all again for everything and Merry Christmas.

KB

Collision – December 23, 2023: That's A Wrap

Collision

Date: December 23, 2023

Location: Frost Bank Center, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Tony Schiavone, Nigel McGuinness

We're a week away from Worlds End and that means we need some more semifinalists in the Continental Classic. The Blue League

should be getting down to its final two this week and maybe we can even add in some new matches to the pay per view card. On top of that, Thunder Rosa is back in the ring tonight after more than a year away. Let's get to it.

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

Continental Classic Blue League: Bryan Danielson vs. Claudio Castagnoli

Castagnoli powers him around to start before grabbing a test of strength to keep Danielson in trouble. Danielson takes it to the mat by the leg though and rips at the face for two. Back up and Danielson goes for the leg again but Castagnoli fights up for another test of strength. They go to the mat with the hands interlocked and bridge up at two each until Castagnoli blasts him with an uppercut.

Danielson tries the LeBell Lock but Castagnoli bails to the floor, where a knee off the apron takes him down again. Back in and Castagnoli fires off an uppercut but Danielson shrugs it off and hits the running corner dropkicks. Castagnoli shrugs that off just as well and grabs the Swing for two. A headbutt and clothesline put Danielson on the floor and we take a break.

Back with Danielson hitting a belly to back superplex for a nasty crash and a delayed near fall. The LeBell Lock goes on again but Castagnoli makes the rope again. We have five minutes left as Danielson takes him to the top, only to get caught in a spinning superplex for a sweet counter.

The Riccola Bomb is countered into a triangle choke, which is countered into something close to a Neutralizer for two. Another Neutralizer is countered and the running knee gives Danielson two. They trade stomps to the face before locking hands and kicking each other even more. Castagnoli pulls him into the Sharpshooter with a minute to go before letting Danielson out. An uppercut drops Danielson again but time

expires at 20:00.

Rating: B. Well at least they finally had a draw. This was another heck of a fight with both guys beating the fire out of each other, which made for a good brawl. Danielson is still likely moving on to the next round and it's nice to see Castagnoli get a draw instead of taking another loss. You knew these two were going to bring it and thankfully neither of them went evil in the process.

Blue League Standings

Bryan Danielson – 10 points (0 matches remaining)

Andrade El Idolo – 9 points (1 match remaining)

Claudio Castagnoli – 7 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

Eddie Kingston – 6 points (1 match remaining)

Brody King – 6 points (1 match remaining)

Daniel Garcia – 0 points (1 match remaining, eliminated)

Danielson officially advances to the semifinals. Castagnoli is frustrated but respect is shown.

We look at Dynamite's Gold League matches.

Trios Titles: Acclaimed/Billy Gunn vs. Top Flight/Action Andretti

The Acclaimed and Gunn are defending with Bowens kicking Darius in the face to start. A superkick gets two so it's quickly off to Andretti to pick up the pace. Everything breaks down and we get a big staredown until Gunn and Andretti trade SUCK IT's. Andretti gets taken into the wrong corner though and we take a break.

Back with Gunn missing a Stinger Splash, allowing Andretti to get over to Dante. A springboard high crossbody hits Caster as everything breaks down again. Gunn gets triple teamed (the fans don't seem to approve) so the Acclaimed make the save, leaving Gunn to hit a tilt-a-whirl slam. Scissor Me Timbers

takes too long though as all three champs get kicked down. Top Flight dives onto Gunn and Bowens on the floor but Caster avoids the running shooting star press and pins Andretti to retain at 9:14.

Rating: C+. I'm a bit surprised at the result here as Andretti and Top Flight have been built up rather strong in recent weeks. That match on Rampage last week was more than enough to get them some attention but we'll be continuing with the Acclaimed and Gunn for the moment. That's not a terrible idea, but I was almost expecting a fluke title change.

Commentary thinks Caster might have pulled the tights.

Hook wants Wheeler Yuta in an FTW Rules match for the FTW Title at Worlds End.

Brian Cage vs. Keith Lee

Prince Nana is here with Cage and yes Lee is wearing a Santa hat. They fight over a lockup to start with Lee shoving him away but Cage is back with a headlock. A running headscissors takes Lee down and now it's time to get a bit more serious. Lee snaps off his own headscissors so Cage kicks him in the head. Cage's running tornado DDT plants Lee and we take a break.

Back with Lee hitting a running splash in the corner and hammering away to put Cage in more trouble. Lee throws him down for two more but Cage is back with a 619. For some reason Cage tries the apron superplex, which goes as badly as expected. Instead a top rope superplex plants Lee for two (with about 30 "2" signs in the first few rows). An F5 gives Cage two...so let's get a cinder block. That's too far for Lee, who comes back with a Big Bang Catastrophe or the pin at 9:54.

Rating: B-. This was the spectacle match and it worked very well for what it was supposed to be. Lee seems on his way to the Swerve Strickland match because waiting a year and a half

is more than fine. Cage did get to showcase his crazy power and cool moves here, which made for a heck of an entertaining match.

Post match Lee brings up the cinder block attack from...someone (Swerve Strickland) in this building about a year ago. He'll be at Dynamite to make his point clear.

Toni Storm isn't sure who Mariah May, who is standing behind her, actually is. May says they've met before but more importantly, her wrestling license is here. Storm is ready for Riho.

Here is Christian Cage, with Nick Wayne, for a chat. Cage brings up Shayna Wayne attacking Adam Copeland and brings her out for the official explanation. Shayna is surprised that the fans are booing her (A MOTHER!) for what she did to Copeland. She was just protecting her son, who Copeland hit with a Conchairto a few weeks earlier. The only person who cares about her son is Cage, who goes into a speech praising Shayna.

You would think Copeland would understand what it's like to grow up with a single mother. Cage kind of wishes Copeland's mother was still alive so she could see what her son became. We head suggestions of what happened between Cage and Shayna after he beat Copeland (she seems pleased) and Cage dubs her the Matriarch, Mother Wayne. And sure Copeland can have another title shot at Worlds End, because Cage can finish him for good.

Big Bill and Ricky Starks say their Tag Team Title match at Worlds End is off. Cue Chris Jericho to say it's still on (date not clear) and he's looking for a new partner.

Continental Classic Blue League: Daniel Garcia vs. Brody King

Garcia slaps him in the face to start so King unloads with forearms in the corner. The Cannonball gives King two and Garcia heads to the apron, where he gets forearmed in the

face. King breaks up a choke and grabs one of his own, with Garcia falling out to the floor as we take a break.

Back with King slamming him down by the hair and dropping a backplash for two. Garcia stands up and won't be put down by chops as the fans seem to approve. King lets him chop away and Garcia's running forearms manage a staggering. Garcia finally muscles him over with a belly to back suplex but King is back with a Death Valley Driver. A hard clothesline into the Ganso Bomb gets two on Garcia and King is stunned. Another Ganso Bomb is loaded up but Garcia reverses into a jackknife rollup for the upset pin at 10:18.

Rating: B-. This was another step in Garcia's road to...something, as he continued to fight through the odds and win in the end. His tournament didn't exactly go so well but at least he didn't lose the whole time. This told a nice story and should pay dividends later, while King's tournament comes to something of a bad halt.

Blue League Standings

Bryan Danielson – 10 points (0 matches remaining)

Andrade El Idolo – 9 points (1 match remaining)

Claudio Castagnoli – 7 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

Eddie Kingston – 6 points (1 match remaining)

Brody King – 6 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

Daniel Garcia – 3 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

Post match the lights go out and the House Of Black goes after Garcia. Matt Menard tries to come in for the save but FTR offers the real save, with the House running. The challenge is issued for some point in the future.

Skye Blue/Julia Hart vs. Abadon/Thunder Rosa

Blue is now all evil and Rosa is in her first match in over a year. Blue stomps Abadon into the corner to start and hands it off to Hart for some forearms. A swinging Rock Bottom lets

Abadon hammer away but Blue cuts Rosa off. Blue and Hart chop away at Abadon and we take a break.

We come back with Abadon hitting a double Downward Spiral, allowing the hot tag to Rosa, which the fans appreciate. Rosa cleans house, including running knees in the corner to Blue. A northern lights suplex gets two with Hart making the save. Blue catches her in the corner though and a powerbomb brings Rosa back down. Everything breaks down and Rosa hits the Tijuana Bomb to finish Blue at 8:18.

Rating: C+. Rosa is indeed back and that is a good thing, as she can be put into a variety of spots on the roster immediately. If nothing else, she should be getting a guaranteed Women's Title shot in the near future, but for now she's off to a good start with a win here. Hart vs. Abadon is already set and that should be a nice addition to Worlds End, as Hart gets to be protected here to continue her momentum.

Continental Classic Blue League: Eddie Kingston vs. Andrade El Idolo

Kingston advances with a win while Andrade advances with a win or a draw. An early spinning backfist misses for Kingston so Andrade grabs a headlock. Andrade takes him into the corner and then grabs an armbar as commentary plugs upcoming pay per views. Back up and Kingston hits a hard clothesline and we take a break.

We come back with Andrade fighting out of a chinlock, setting up some dragon screw legwhips. The running knees in the corner give Andrade two and Three Amigos are good for the same. Andrade goes up but dives into a kick to the face, which damages Kingston's bad leg even more. Kingston unloads with the chops in the corner but Andrade sends him outside for a moonsault.

The double moonsault gives Andrade two back inside but Kingston's belly to back gets the same. It takes a bit for

Andrade to get up and he scores with the spinning elbow for two. Kingston gets caught in the Figure Four but is straight into the ropes. Back up and the spinning backfist into the northern lights bomb gives Kingston the pin at 15:30.

Rating: B-. Kingston felt like he was fighting to survive here and that is pretty much exactly what he was doing. It made for a good fight as the two of them were both doing their thing, including Andrade continuing to be on quite the roll as of late. This sets up Kingston vs. Danielson in a heck of a showdown though and that should be enough to help carry Dynamite.

Blue League Standings

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Brody King – 6 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

Daniel Garcia – 3 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

Overall Rating: B. This show covered a good bit more than just the Continental Classic, making it that much more interesting than Dynamite. The tournament has been full o good action, but I'm kind of glad to see this phase of it wrapping up. We've seen these same six people wrestling for weeks now and there comes a point where it doesn't have quite the same impact. Other than that, Keith Lee's path to Swerve Strickland continues and Thunder Rosa is back. That's a nice use of two hours and we should be moving into something new next time.

Results

Bryan Danielson vs. Claudio Castagnoli went to a time limit draw

Acclaimed/Billy Gunn b. Top Flight/Action Andretti – Rollup to Andretti

Keith Lee b. Brian Cage – Big Bang Catastrophe

Daniel Garcia b. Brody King – Rollup

Abadon/Thunder Rosa b. Skye Blue/Julia Hart – Tijuana Bomb to Blue

Eddie Kingston b. Andrade El Idolo – Northern lights bomb

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Rampage – December 22, 2023: As Rampage Of A Rampage As Rampage Can Be

Rampage

Date: December 22, 2023

Location: Paycom Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Chris Jericho, Excalibur

We're just over a week away from Worlds End and that means things are starting to come together. This week's show is a

bit different though as we are in between the Continental Classic shows, meaning some other things should be getting some focus. That could make for an interesting show so let's get to it.

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

International Title: Rocky Romero vs. Orange Cassidy

Cassidy is defending. They start fast to start with Cassidy taking him down and doing Romero's dance. Cassidy teases a big wind up punch but puts his hands in his pockets instead, only to get taken down by a hurricanrana. Back in and Cassidy rolls away, only to get taken down by another hurricanrana on the floor. The Forever Clotheslines have Cassidy in more trouble and a backbreaker gives Romero two.

Cassidy manages the tornado DDT but Romero drapes him over the top. The jumping knee misses but Romero settles for a suplex on the apron. We take a break and come back with the exchange of forearms until Cassidy hits the Orange Punch. Cassidy stomps away but has to counter Strong Zero into a sunset flip. Romero knees him out of the air and Strong Zero gets two. Cassidy is right back with the Orange Punch into the Beach Break to retain at 10:54.

Rating: C+. This was exactly what you would have expected from Cassidy against a perennial midcarder in a Rampage title defense. Cassidy has done this match more times than I can count during his reigns as champion and it only has so much impact here. Decent match, but it was only going to be so good.

Hugging ensues post match.

Kris Statlander is happy about the win in a tag team street fight on Collision. Cue Stokely Hathaway, who comes in to recruit her, though he incorrectly calls her Kristen.

Brian Cage is ready to beat Keith Lee up on Collision.

Hardys vs. Kingdom

Roderick Strong is here with the Kingdom and calls some fans stupid on the way to the ring. For the sake of simplicity, I'll only refer to Matt Hardy as Matt and Matt Taven as Taven. Matt takes Taven into the corner to start and hammers away before Jeff comes in for the flip splash/fist drop combination for two. Bennett comes in to punch Matt down but it's right back to Jeff for Poetry In Motion.

A cheap shot sends Jeff outside though and we take a break. Back with Matt Side Effecting Bennett onto the apron, allowing Jeff to bring Matt back in. House is cleaned and the Side Effect gets two on Taven. The Twist Of Fate is broken up though and the fight heads outside. Jeff takes off his boot to beat on Bennett but Taven gets a rollup to pin Matt at 9:24.

Rating: C+. It's nice to have the Hardys back in the ring here as they haven't gotten to do much in recent months. They're only doing so much here and the Kingdom needs some wins to go anywhere in the future. I'm not sure how far either team is going to be going anytime soon, but at least the Kingdom has Strong around to keep them active.

Angelo Parker interrupts Ruby Soho and invites her out for a drink tonight. Saraya comes in to say she supports this before sending Soho and Renee Paquette away. With the two of them gone, Saraya says she hates Parker and Soho is all hers. Soho pops back in and Saraya says she loves Parker.

Skye Blue vs. Prince Aminata

The much larger Aminata sends her outside to start but Blue gets in a knockdown on the apron to take over. Back in and Aminata hits a suplex into a running hip attack in the corner for two. Blue superkicks her way out of trouble though and it's a TKO into a dragon sleeper for the tap at 3:42.

Rating: C. Aminata wasn't bad here, especially for someone coming back after a bad knee injury. Blue wasn't about to lose after her big official turn last week though and it's not like it took her long to pick up the win. These women's matches going short aren't really helping anyone, but at least Blue got a quick win to boost her up a bit.

AAA Mega Title: Black Taurus vs. El Hijo del Vikingo

Vikingo is defending and slips out of a powerbomb attempt to start. Taurus shoulders him down so Vikingo snaps off some armdrags. Back up and we get a standoff, as the fans are declaring this awesome about two weeks in. The pop up Samoan drop gives Taurus two and we take a break.

Back with Taurus blocking a poisonrana but missing a charge to crash out to the floor. Taurus is right back up for a dive, only to get posted by Vikingo. Somehow Vikingo manages a powerslam and the rope walk twisting flip dive drops Taurus again. Back in and a rope walk running poisonrana plants Taurus, who is back up to run Vikingo over. Taurus sends him crashing down with the super gorilla press and a discus lariat gets two. Vikingo flips over him into a sunset bomb, followed by the running knees. More running knees set up a 630 to retain the title at 14:10.

Rating: B-. It was a good back and forth match but I just saw these two have a better, longer match on a bigger stage just a week ago. Now that being said, these two could seemingly have a solid match in their sleep as it's a pretty easy dynamic to make work no matter what. Vikingo feels like a mega star despite his smaller stature and having Taurus there to bounce off of makes it even easier.

Overall Rating: B-. That's as Rampagey of a Rampage as Rampage could be. Very little happened in the way of advancing any stories and it was more "here are some AEW wrestlers doing things" for forty five minutes before a good main event helped

it out a lot. Rampage is an entertaining hour most of the time but it's a show that could disappear without much being lost. Good enough show this week, but don't expect much of anything that matters in the bigger pictures.

Results

Orange Cassidy b. Roocky Romero – Beach Break
The Kingdom b. The Hardys – Rollup to Matt
Skye Blue b. Prince Aminata – Dragon sleeper
El Hijo del Vikingo b. Black Taurus – 630

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Smackdown – December 22, 2023: I Remember All Of Them

Smackdown

Date: December 22, 2023

Location: Resch Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Commentators: Michael Cole, Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

We're taped this week for what might be the final Smackdown of the year. Things got interesting to end last week's show as AJ Styles made his return to go after the Bloodline. At the same time though, he also went after LA Knight, which could have some Royal Rumble implications. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a recap of Roman Reigns returning and the challengers lining up, including the returning AJ Styles.

Here is Styles to get things going. Styles talks about how Randy Orton and LA Knight want to face Roman Reigns. He can't blame them, but he's at the front of the line to face Reigns. Cue Knight to say he gets Reigns first and the fans are going to be saying his name, but Styles can be first on Knight's list.

Styles brings up Knight using Styles' absence to get into the Crown Jewel title shot but here is Orton to interrupt. Orton says this ring is his home but Knight says the Bloodline hasn't taken him out yet. Cue Nick Aldis to say the three of them can fight in two weeks for the Royal Rumble shot at Reigns. Works for Styles, who tells them both to stay away tonight when he faces Solo Sikoa.

Shotzi/Bianca Belair/Zelina Vega/Michin vs. Damage CTRL

This is Holiday Havoc, the Christmas themed street fight. It's a big brawl to start with Belair dropkicking Sky into the corner to start. Bayley makes a save but Shotzi is back in with a present. That would be a chair but Bayley blocks the drop toehold onto said chair. Instead Shotzi uses the chair for a springboard dive onto Bayley.

Shotzi hits a big dive but the villains clear the ring with kendo sticks. Belair and Shotzi get their own sticks for their

own house cleaning but it takes too long to set up a table. We take a break and come back with everyone down until Vega sends Sky outside. Belair sunset flips Bayley for two and a Doomsday Dropkick, with a trashcan over the head, drops Sky for the same.

Vega drops Sane but gets misted by Asuka, allowing the villains to go for some big boxes. Those contain...Isla Dawn and Alba Fyre, who wreck Sane and Asuka. Bayley gets caught with the KOD and Michin gives Sky Eat Defeat. The top rope backsplash through the table gives Michin the pin on Sky at 12:43.

Rating: B-. I can go on these goofy, completely out there matches and that's what we had here. It was a fun, goofy match and that's all it needed to be, though Michin is likely to get a one off title shot out of this. There are worse ways to go for her and throwing in the returns of Dawn and Fyre make this all the more interesting.

Jimmy Uso talks to Solo Sikoa about audibles as Roman Reigns looks annoyed. He wants Nick Aldis here now.

NXT North American Title: Butch vs. Dragon Lee

Lee is defending and works on the wrist to start. Butch punches him in the face but Lee manages a slingshot dropkick in the corner. The running dive to the floor is cut off though and we take a break with Lee in trouble. Back with Butch stomping on the hands until Lee snaps off a running hurricanrana over the top and out to the floor. They get back inside where Butch hits a sitout powerbomb for two, setting up a chop off.

Lee gets the better of things and hits his own sitout powerbomb for two of his own. Butch gets tied in the Tree of Woe but is fine enough snap Lee's fingers. Since fingers aren't needed, Lee hits the top rope double stomp for two. Butch's Bitter End is countered as well and Operation Dragon

retains the title at 9:46.

Rating: B-. More good stuff here with Lee getting to have another match against a more than capable opponent. That is more than you get most of the time and it worked well here. Lee's status is growing more and more every week and the more title defenses he gets under his belt, the higher he'll go. Good stuff here, though can we please find something else for Butch to do?

We recap the US Title #1 contenders tournament.

Paul Heyman brings Nick Aldis to Roman Reigns, who does not like Aldis booking matches without running them by Reigns first. Adam Pearce understood that, but Aldis says he's the sharp end of the stick around here. Tonight, Solo Sikoa is facing AJ Styles and Sikoa will be fine. He's a big boot who took care of John Cena in a way that even Reigns didn't. Aldis is looking forward to getting to know Reigns better. This was good stuff from Aldis here, as he didn't back down from Reigns and gives him a bit of a new adversary.

US Title #1 Contenders Tournament Semifinals: Kevin Owens vs. Carmelo Hayes

We get an insert interview from Logan Paul (these are GREAT ways to keep him involved when he's not around) who says Hayes' first win was impressive but now he has to face the DISGUSTING Kevin Owens. They lock up to start with Hayes taking him down for an early two. An exchange of near falls lets Hayes hit a dropkick and Owens seems impressed. Owens comes back with a right (as in still broken) hand, allowing Hayes to pull him out to the floor.

That's fine with Owens, who sends Hayes into the steps as we take a break. Back with Hayes grabbing a slam, followed by an ax kick for two. A spinning faceplant gets the same but Owens puts him on top for a hanging DDT. They trade kicks to the face until Owens blasts him with a clothesline. Hayes manages

a Codebreaker but Nothing But Net misses, allowing Owens to hit a pop up powerbomb for two more. The Swanton and Stunner send Owens to the finals at 10:20.

Rating: B-. That's a fine way to get rid of Hayes, who came in and got a win on the main roster before losing to a bigger star. This wasn't meant to bring Hayes up full time and they didn't do anything they shouldn't have done. At the same time, Owens has felt like the obvious winner of the tournament since the beginning so him in the finals was almost expected.

The OC comes in to see AJ Styles, who hasn't been in touch. Karl Anderson asks if they're good. Styles: "I don't know. Are we?"

Karrion Cross promises to take away something else from other people. Of note: he seems to say the word "authors" and as the lights are lashing, two large men can be seen standing around him. Authors of Pain perhaps?

United States Title #1 Contenders Tournament Semifinals: Bobby Lashley vs. Santos Escobar

The Street Profits are here with Lashley, who starts fast with a running shoulder in the corner. Escobar manages to go up top but gets pulled out of the air and sent outside. We take a break and come back with Escobar hitting a suicide dive. The running knees in the corner connect twice in a row but Lashley fights his way out of a superplex attempt. Cue some men in masks to jump the Profits though, with the distraction letting Escobar grab a rollup for the pin at 8:19.

Rating: C+. That's a smart move as not only did WWE need a way to get the almost unstoppable Lashley out of the way, but it also avoids the fans cheering for him over Kevin Owens in the finals. Escobar also seems to have some backup now and that could very well set up a nice six man tag against the LWO when Rey Mysterio is back.

Post match the masked men are revealed as Humberto Carrillo and Angel Garza.

Butch is upset by his loss but he lost to the better man. Pretty Deadly comes in to mock him and the fight is on, with Nick Aldis coming in to tell Butch to find a partner for two weeks from now. That sounds Sheamus-y.

Logan Paul isn't impressed by his potential opponents. As usual, he's at his best when he's talking down to people and that was on high here.

Here's what's coming in two weeks. Earlier tonight, a graphic confirmed that next week will be a Best Of show.

AJ Styles vs. Solo Sikoa

Styles strikes away to start but gets dropped with a shot to the face. Sikoa is knocked outside for a knee from the apron, followed by a slingshot forearm as we take a break. Back with Sikoa hitting a backdrop and sending Styles back first into the post. Another whip sends Styles face first into the bottom buckle and the running Umaga attack makes it worse.

Styles fights back and drops him as well, setting up a Lionsault for two. The Phenomenal Blitz connects but Sikoa grabs a pop up Samoan drop for another near fall. A forearm to the face looks to set up the Phenomenal Forearm, which is countered into a missed Samoan Spike. Styles gets back up and hits the Phenomenal Forearm, only to have Roman Reigns run in for the DQ at 11:33.

Rating: C+. I'm a bit surprised that Styles didn't get a pin here but he did have Sikoa in trouble until the screwy ending. What matters is that Styles is back in the ring and looked like his old self. I don't know if he'll win next week, but having Styles back in any role on the roster is going to be something that helps out quite a bit.

Post match Jimmy Uso comes in to help with the beatdown but Randy Orton and LA Knight make the save. The Bloodline is cleared out but the other three get in a fight to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a pretty nice show with some good action and quite a few returns. They've also set up a pretty stacked card for New Year's Revolution, which should be a big time event to send us on to the Royal Rumble. You have to do well n the way to a Best Of show next week and they did well enough, though I wouldn't call anything here worth going out of your way to see.

Results

Shotzi/Bianca Belair/Zelina Vega/Michin b. Damage CTRL – Top rope backslash through at able to Sky
Dragon Lee b. Butch – Operation Dragon
Kevin Owens b. Carmelo Hayes – Stunner
Santos Escobar b. Bobby Lashley – Rollup
AJ Styles b. Solo Sikoa via DQ when Roman Reigns interfered

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Daily News Update – December 22, 2023

Make sure you check out a recent review:

[Dynamite – December 20, 2023](#)

WRESTLING RUMORS: WWE Reportedly Lands New Deal With NHL For Special Merchandise.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/wrestling-rumors-wwe-reportedly-lands-new-deal-nhl/>

Former WWE Superstar Shannon Moore Reveals Drug Addiction, How WWE Helped Him With Rehab.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/former-wwe-superstar-shannon-moore-reveals-drug-addiction-wwe-helped-rehab/>

Get Your Ballots Ready: WWE Officially Opens 2023 NXT Year End Awards Voting.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/get-ballots-ready-wwe-officially-opens-nxt-year-end-awards-voting/>

Free For All: 16 Former WWE Superstars Officially Free Agents, Can Sign Anywhere.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/free-16-former-wwe-superstars-officially-free-agents-can-sign-anywhere/>

Already? Missing WWE Superstar Possibly Teasing A Royal Rumble

Return.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/already-missing-wwe-superstar-possibly-teasing-royal-rumble-return/>

Roadblock? Mercedes Mone Reportedly Has Very High Asking Price, Wants More Than Top WWE Star.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/roadblock-interesting-note-mercedes-mones-asking-price-compared-top-wwe-star/>

WATCH: Wrestling Legend Makes Special Return On AEW Dynamite.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/welcome-back-wrestling-legend-makes-special-return-aew-dynamite/>

Locked In: LA Knight Receiving Very Special And Unique Honor.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/locked-la-knight-receiving-special-unique-honor/>

Tony Khan Introduces A New Championship.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/tony-khan-introduces-new-championship/>

Two Former Champions Reportedly Set For WWE Return After Three And A Half Year Absence.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/two-former-champions-reportedly-set-wwe-return-three-half-year-absence/>

It's A Family Thing: WWE Signs 4th Generation Wrestler.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/family-thing-wwe-signs-4th-generation-wrestler/>

Get Well Soon: Jim Ross Reveals Wrestling Legend Has Undergone Brain Surgery To Battle Parkinson's Disease.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/get-well-soon-jim-ross-reveals-wrestling-legend-undergone-brain-surgery-battle->

[parkinsons-disease/](#)

On The List: WWE Reportedly Signs Another Former Champion To Brand New Multi-Year Contract.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/list-wwe-reportedly-signs-another-former-champion-brand-new-multi-year-contract/>

Update On WWE/Warner Brothers Discovery Negotiations, Pros And Cons Of A Deal.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/update-wwe-warner-brothers-discovery-negotiations-pros-cons-deal/>

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Dynamite – December 20, 2023: Three For Two

Dynamite

Date: December 20, 2023

Location: Paycom Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Commentators: Excalibur, Taz, Tony Schiavone

Things are finally coming to a head in the Continental Classic as we will find out the semifinalists in the Gold League. That alone should be a big deal, but we also have the Devil stuff going on. What we don't have is a ton set up for Worlds End,

which could use a good bit of building. Let's get to it.

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

Continental Classic Gold League: Rush vs. Swerve Strickland

Swerve takes him down with a headscissors to start but Rush is back up with some chops. Rush avoids a dropkick and it's a staredown for a breather. Swerve is sent outside for a big flip dive, followed by the stomping in the corner back inside. Back up and Swerve kicks away at the leg in the corner but that's too much defense for Rush and they head outside. Rush whips him into the barricade over and over and we take a break.

We come back with stereo big boots leaving both of them down. Rush knocks him into the corner but the knee gives out on the charge, allowing Swerve to grab a Stretch Muffler. That's broken up so Rush goes to the apron for a chop off. Swerve charges into a belly to belly to the floor, only to avoid a backsplash back inside. A 450 gives Swerve...one, and Rush is up to his feet before Swerve. Swerve's brainbuster gets two and the Swerve Stomp finishes Rush at 14:53.

Rating: C+. There was only so much drama in this match, but Rush did manage to get in his ridiculous kickout because he must have one of those in every match to show his awesomeness. Swerve seems to be on the way back to a rematch with Jon Moxley in the semifinals, or at least that's how things should be going. He had a nice match here though and beating Rush does feel a bit special.

Gold League Standings

Jon Moxley – 12 points (1 match remaining)

Swerve Strickland – 12 points (0 matches remaining)

Jay White – 9 points (1 match remaining)

Rush – 6 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

Mark Briscoe – 0 points (1 match remaining, eliminated)

Jay Lethal – 0 points (1 match remaining, eliminated)

We look back at Collision's Blue League matches.

Chris Jericho talks about Kenny Omega having diverticulitis, meaning the Golden Jets' Tag Team Title shot is off. Omega's health is what matters most though and everyone is pulling for him.

Continental Classic Gold League: Jay Lethal vs. Mark Briscoe

They fight over a lockup to start until Lethal takes him down into an armbar. With that broken up, Briscoe chops away in the corner until Lethal wins a fight over a suplex. Briscoe is sent outside for the suicide dive from Lethal, who gets in the strut on the apron. Another dive is broken up and we take a break.

Back with the Lethal Combination putting Briscoe down but he breaks up Hail To The King. Lethal knocks him back and grabs a torture rack slam for two as frustration sets in. The Lethal Injection is blocked as we talk about ticket sales for Revolution. A fisherman's buster gives Briscoe two but the Froggy Bow hits raised knees. Lethal's Jay Driller gets two as Briscoe is back with a Burning Hammer of all things. The Jay Driller finishes Lethal at 13:55.

Rating: B-. This was a weird one as they had no actual stakes and were only fighting for the sake of pride. That is only going to get you so far but the talent here helped a bit. At the same time, Briscoe needed to win here more than Lethal as he still feels like someone who could be a star if given the slightest push. Lethal might be breaking away from his friends and that should help him a lot as well.

Gold League Standings

Jon Moxley – 12 points (1 match remaining)

Swerve Strickland – 12 points (0 matches remaining)

Jay White – 9 points (1 match remaining)

Rush – 6 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

Mark Briscoe – 3 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

Jay Lethal – 0 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

Respect is shown post match.

MJF was inducted into the Jewish Sports Hall Of Fame.

Wardlow still wants to hurt MJF.

Here is Samoa Joe, who wants answers about the Devil. He finds it interesting that we've never seen MJF laid out and wants him out here right now for some answers. Cue MJF, who says he remembers Joe promising to protect him on the way to Worlds End. MJF doesn't remember the Devil's Henchmen touching Joe last week, so MJF wants to fight right now.

Cue a bunch of masked men but Joe and MJF clear them out rather quickly. The lights go out and we see the Devil on screen. Text saying "Where Can You Go? Who Can You Trust" appears, followed by a challenge for the ROH Tag Team Titles next week. MJF starts to talk Joe into it but Joe immediately accepts, promising violence.

The Best Friends aren't sure what's next, with Rocky Romero saying he wants gold. Orange Cassidy says he'll see Romero on Rampage.

Riho vs. Saraya

For the Women's Title shot against Toni Storm (on commentary) at Worlds End. Ruby Soho is watching in the back as Riho takes over but Saraya bails away from a running knee. Riho snaps off a headscissors on the floor but Saraya hides behind a security guard. That's enough for Riho to be swung into the barricade and we take a break. Back with Saraya getting in some mocking but being pulled into a headlock. A northern lights suplex gives Riho two and a top rope double stomp into a running knee finishes Saraya at 9:40.

Rating: C. Riho, who has been teased to get the title match for weeks now, is getting the title match. She has a history

of being gone for months and then coming back to get into the title picture and that is what we're seeing again here. It's nice to see her getting a win, but it doesn't exactly feel like a top title match.

Post match Storm comes in for the staredown (with opera glasses) but Riho beats her down. Mariah May makes the save with a belt shot.

Tony Schiavone has a prepared statement from Christian Cage, including threats to Tony if he doesn't do things properly. He'll be back to address Adam Copeland on Collision and expects a hero's welcome.

MJF finds a Devil's henchman mask outside the Mogul Embassy's locker room. A knock brings out Swerve Strickland, who MJF seems to know from their independent days. Swerve calls him the best chauffeur he ever had. Threats are made over MJF's lack of respect, but MJF says show some respect to the champ. MJF accuses Swerve of being the Devil and violence is teased, with the rest of the Mogul Embassy comes in. Samoa Joe comes in as well to get MJF out of there.

Roderick Strong vs. Komander

The Kingdom is here with Strong. They fight over a lockup to start so Komander flips away, earning a running knee to the face. Back up and a headscissors into a dropkick has Strong down but he's right back with a backbreaker. Komander knocks him to the floor though and we take a break.

We come back with Komander avoiding a charge into the corner and hitting a kick to the face. A springboard crossbody gives Komander two and he kicks Strong face first into the turnbuckle. Komander hits a phoenix splash for two so the Kingdom pulls Strong outside. That earns them all a big moonsault to the floor but Strong knees him out of the air back inside. End Of Heartache (to the chest instead of the back) finishes for Strong at 9:58.

Rating: B-. Pretty good stuff here with Strong picking up a win over someone who is around a good deal of the time. Komander might not be the biggest star in AEW but at least he has been active and a danger to some bigger stars. I'm not sure where Strong is going, but at least he got a win here.

Post match the Kingdom gives out MJF IS THE DEVIL signs and Strong doesn't like the accusations that Samoa Joe had anything to do with it. That's his best friend by proxy!

Jim Ross joins commentary for the main event.

Continental Classic Gold League: Jon Moxley vs. Jay White

White goes to the floor to start but has to escape the rear naked choke back inside. A piledriver gives Moxley an early two so White has to bail outside from another choke. Back in and Moxley punches him out to the floor again, where they fight up the ramp. This time White reverses a piledriver into a backdrop but Moxley hammers away back inside. White gets in a shot to the knee though and sends Moxley outside again as we take a break.

Back with White holding a Muta Lock but Moxley fights up. White gets knocked into the corner and stomped a bunch before a clothesline sends him outside. Moxley hits a suicide dive but White gets in a shot of his own, setting up a chop block to the bad knee. The count is beaten and Moxley grabs a Paradigm Shift for two.

A running knee gives Moxley two but White snaps off a sleeper suplex and swinging Rock Bottom for two of his own. The Kiwi Crusher gets two more but the Blade Runner is countered into a King Kong lariat. The Death Rider is countered into a Blade Runner out of nowhere though and Moxley is done at 15:09.

Rating: B. That would appear to make the semifinal a triple threat because you can never have enough of those. This felt something like a Rush match, as Moxley cut White off time

after time, though it didn't get to quite those extremes. White did get the win to keep Moxley from being perfect, so we should have some drama next week.

Gold League Standings

Jon Moxley – 12 points (0 matches remaining)

Swerve Strickland – 12 points (0 matches remaining)

Jay White – 12 points (0 matches remaining)

Rush – 6 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

Mark Briscoe – 3 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

Jay Lethal – 0 points (0 matches remaining, eliminated)

So yeah, it's a triple threat.

Post match Swerve Strickland comes out to stare at Moxley, allowing White to take out Moxley's knee to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Good enough show this week, though it only did so much for Worlds End. We're at least a step closer to the end of the Continental Classic and we'll be half done by this time next week. Other than that, the Devil stuff seems like it might be in for a big moment next week, though I'm getting more and more scared of who might be revealed as the Devil. Not a great show here, though it did move the biggest stories forward. It just needs something else besides those stories.

Results

Swerve Strickland b. Rush – Swerve Stomp

Mark Briscoe b. Jay Lethal – Jay Driller

Riho b. Saraya – Running knee

Roderick Strong b. Komander – End Of Heartache

Jay White b. Jon Moxley – Blade Runner

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NXT – December 19, 2023: Try Again Next Week

NXT

Date: December 19, 2023

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Booker T.

We're closing in on New Year's Evil and the two big title matches are already set. There are some other things that need to be followed up on as well though and we might find out a few of them this week. This is a taped show, which can take away some of the energy that is usually around. Let's get to it.

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

Fallon Henley vs. Tiffany Stratton

They start fast with Henley knocking her outside to keep up the beating. Back in and Henley elbows her in the corner but gets knocked out to the floor in a big crash. Stratton gets to beat on her a bit as well but Henley rains down some right hands in the corner. A hurricanrana takes Stratton down again, only to have her come back with a spinebuster for two. They go to a pinfall reversal sequence...and Henley gets a sunset flip for the completely clean pin at 3:51.

Rating: C. I've been wanting Henley to get a better push for a long time now and she might just be getting that here. That's by far the biggest win of her career and I could go for her getting to do some more in the future. It's nice to see some fresh blood in the division and Henley is pretty much set for a long time around here anyway so the loss won't hurt her.

Post match Stratton jumps her and drags Henley to the back. Stratton rubs a mop over her face and covers her with garbage

in a rather mean moment.

Trick Williams congratulates Carmelo Hayes on his Smackdown win but they talk about who actually attacked Hayes last week. Hayes suggests they turn the New Year's Evil match into a triple threat match but Williams doesn't get the thinking. That doesn't seem to be happening, though Hayes says it doesn't matter who wins as long as they have the title. Williams: "It does matter." Williams hopes it's cool and Hayes seems to be ok, though some of the enthusiasm is lacking.

Here is Ilja Dragunov to talk about how he doesn't know how he got in the middle of this Trick Williams/Carmelo Hayes mess. He didn't have that on his 2023 Bingo card, but he'll start 2024 by defeating Williams, no matter how popular he is. Cue Ridge Holland to interrupt, saying he needs to prove himself again in NXT. Holland wants Dragunov to help him get there, perhaps by winning the NXT Title. He isn't going to beg for a title shot so he wants to prove himself. He'll face everyone to get to Dragunov, and then he'll be worthy of a shot. Dragunov is tired of all this so he'll face Holland tonight.

Lexis King knows he's already the breakout star around here, but he'll win the Breakout Tournament if he has to.

Trick Williams doesn't like Ilja Dragunov giving away title shots but Dragunov says he's the champ so get over it. Makes sense.

Breakout Tournament First Round: Dion Lennox vs. Lexis King

King wastes no time in taking him into the corner for a running clothesline. A knee to the ribs keeps Lennox in trouble but he fights back with some shots to the face. King heads outside where he grabs the contract and tries to grab the contract. That's not going to work for Lennox, who takes King back inside, where the Coronation gives King the quick win at 2:57.

Post match Tre Bearhill chases King off.

Eddy Thorpe talks about his feud with Dijak and wants to settle it in NXT Underground.

Jacy Jayne/Thea Hail vs. Kiana James/Izzi Dame

Riley Osborne is leading the cheers in the Chase U student section as Jayne takes Dame into the corner. A rollup gives Dame two as Hail is very fired up on the apron. Dame clotheslines her way out of trouble and hands it off to James for some knees to the ribs. It's back to Dame or another clothesline but Jayne gets in her own shot, meaning it's the hot tag off to Hail. House is quickly cleaned, including a springboard bottom rope backsplash for two. Osborne approves as Hail Kimuras James...but Dame came in off a blind tag. A big boot finishes Hail at 3:51.

Rating: C. The idea of Hail having a crush on Osborne and her excitement messing with her attention is an interesting way to go and I'm curious to see where that goes. James and Dame aren't the greatest team but at least they have been together for a few weeks now and could be built up with some kind of a business relationship. Not exactly a great match but at least they kept it moving.

Roxanne Perez is annoyed at Kiana James and Izzi Dame and gets in a fight with Arianna Grace over them.

Andre Chase is gambling with OTM and wins a lot of money, but offers to put up the money double or nothing over a tag match between Chase U and OTM next week. Scripts says as a bonus, if OTM wins, they get a Tag Team Title match, which they can apparently authorize. The D'Angelo Family's associate comes in and says everything is on. Hudson doesn't look convinced and Chase doesn't seem to have the best idea.

North American Title: Dragon Lee vs. ???

Lee is defending against a to be determined member of the No Quarter Catch Crew, but here is Gallus to interrupt, with Joe Coffey saying he wants in on this too. Works for Lee.

North American Title: Dragon Lee vs. Joe Coffey vs. Charlie Dempsey

Lee is defending and gets sent to the apron to start. Back in and Coffey throws Lee but misses a middle rope elbow. Dempsey gets headbutted own but Gallus' distraction earns them an ejection. Coffey grabs a suplex on Lee and we take a break. Back with Lee grabbing a hurricanrana and knocking Dempsey into the corner. Dempsey fights up and drops Lee but has to slug it out with Coffey.

With Coffey getting the better of things, he goes up top but gets uppercutted out of the air. That leaves Dempsey to suplex Coffey, who is suplexing Lee at the same time. Back up and Lee DDTs Dempsey but gets headbutted into the corner for two more. Dempsey is knocked outside so Lee can knee Coffey in the head for two. Lee is knocked to the floor this time so Coffey hits a dive...as a smiling Joe Gacy pops out from underneath the ring. Gacy pulls Coffey under the ring, leaving Dempsey to tabletop suplex Lee for two. Lee is able to come back with Operation Dragon to retain at 12:12.

Rating: C+. The action was good and they had an exciting enough match, but I'm not a fan of just throwing someone in there to make it into a triple threat. It felt like they were just adding something for the sake of adding it to make it different. Lee getting wins is a good thing, but have him beat one of the Catch Crew and then one of Gallus in separate matches rather than changing what they announced in the first place.

Post match Gacy runs off but the No Quarter Catch Crew jump Lee. Cue the LWO for the save.

Trick Williams rants to Carmelo Hayes about Ridge Holland

because if he wins, it might make New Year's Evil a triple threat. Hayes: "Someone should have thought of that!" They need a way to take the title from Dragunov.

Cora Jade announces her return to the women's locker room and takes over Karmen Petrovic's locker. With Jade gone, Petrovic comes in and isn't pleased. Gigi Dolin tells her to go after Jade.

Breakout Tournament First Round: Luca Crusifino vs. Tavion Heights

Heights, the amateur wrestler, takes Luca down without much trouble and then suplexes him for a fast two. A neckbreaker gives Luca the same and another neckbreaker gets another two. Back up and Heights grabs a powerslam, followed by a spinning belly to belly for the pin at 3:27.

Rating: C. These two have been on NXT LVL Up for months now and it is clear that Heights is someone WWE wants to push in a big way down the line. He's one heck of an athlete and has the amateur wrestling background which should take him a pretty long way. At the same time you have Luca, who has an interesting gimmick with the wrestling lawyer deal, but then he doesn't really do anything with it and that stops having any kind of an impact.

Video on Lyra Valkyria vs. Blair Davenport, focusing on their paths here, with Valkyria fighting the right way and Davenport doing anything to get to the top. They meet in two weeks at New Year's Evil.

Valkyria is ready when Nikkita Lyons comes in to say she'll deal with Tatum Paxley for Valkyria, but she wants the Women's Title too.

The Meta Four is happy this season because Noam Dar isn't scared of Josh Briggs.

Nikkita Lyons vs. Tatum Paxley

Lyons takes her to the floor to start and fires off the chops until Paxley sends her hand into the steps. Back in and Paxley is right back on the arm, including a Fujiwara armbar. That's broken up and Lyons kicks her in the head, setting up the running hip attack in the corner. Something like a German suplex puts Paxley down again and a kick to the chest makes it worse. Lyons hits the splits splash for the pin at 3:20.

Rating: C. Well that happened. Paxley did something interesting last week when she went after Lyra Valkyria but then got wrecked by Lyons here. Whatever she had last week is more or less squashed immediately, which isn't the most thrilling development. Lyons is back and seems ready to move into the title picture, but I can't get my head around how ridiculous her new gear looks. It's like some genie outfit that didn't get finished and it's a big distraction.

Hank Walker and Tank Ledger are ready for Gallus.

Fallon Henley is livid at Tiffany Stratton, who has never had to work a day in her life. Henley swears revenge and storms off. Josh Briggs is ready for his Heritage Cup Title match but asks to do it on his own. Jensen isn't thrilled but agrees.

Tank Ledger/Hank Walker vs. Gallus

Hank works on Mark's arm to start but it's quickly off to Wolfgang so Walker comes in to work on the arm. Wolfgang gets sent into the corner for a splash but tags out and offers a fast distraction. Walker is knocked out to the floor and comes up holding his shoulder, meaning Wolfgang has a target. Back in and Mark gets kicked away, allowing Ledger to tag himself in, but the referee says no because he was WAY too far down the apron. Therefore no tag, meaning Mark can kick Walker in the face for the pin at 3:59.

Rating: C. That's certainly points for a creative ending, as I

wouldn't have thought of that happening in WWE, even if it is by the standard rules of wrestling. I'm really not seeing it with Ledger and Walker, as their every man deal isn't working. Gallus isn't exactly great, but they're the better option here and could be put back into the title hunt sooner than later.

Joe Gacy is watching Gallus from the Chase U student section.

Dijak is in for NXT Underground against Eddy Thorpe.

Tiffany Stratton calls Fallon Henley a servant in society and swears Henley will NEVER be her. Henley will always be trash, so they can fight at New Year's Evil. When Stratton wins, Henley can become her servant.

Here's what's coming on various shows.

Ridge Holland vs. Ilja Dragunov

Non-title. Dragunov's running shoulders stagger Holland but his running shoulder puts Dragunov down. A hard clothesline drops Dragunov again but he's back up with some hard chops in the corner. An Alabama Slam drops Dragunov, who shrugs it off and rolls some German suplexes.

We take a break and come back with Holland striking away to take over, including a clothesline to knock Dragunov out of the corner. A suplex is countered into a DDT and the H Bomb knocks Holland silly. Holland gets in another shot of his own and tries a suplex but settles for something like a DDT. Hold on though as Dragunov is badly shaken up and the referee calls in the medics, with the match being stopped at about 10:30.

Rating: B-. They were having a good match here and then they went with the rather scary ending. Having what is hopefully a storyline injury in a match is one thing, having a neck injury from the hands of Holland is quite another when he might have accidentally ended Big E.'s career in the same way. I'm really not a fan of this and while the crowd reacted very well, that

doesn't necessarily make it a good idea.

The arena goes silent as Dragunov is taken out on a stretcher, with the title being laid on him, and he is wheeled out to end the show. Of note: this has been reported to be a storyline injury rather than a legitimate injury.

Overall Rating: C. Ignoring everything at the end, this was a rather flat episode with nothing that stood out, save for the surprise of Henley beating Stratton in a heck of an upset. Other than that though, you had a few matches featuring rookies or lower level talent, which didn't make for the most entertaining show. Granted it was a taped show, but that didn't exactly make for a good week. We have another of these next week and that's not exactly compelling after this less than stellar effort.

Results

Fallon Henley b. Tiffany Stratton – Sunset flip

Lexis King b. Dion Lennox – Coronation

Kiana James/Izzi Dame b. Jacy Jayne/Thea Hail – Big boot to Hail

Dragon Lee b. Joe Coffey and Charlie Dempsey – Operation Dragon to Dempsey

Tavion Heights b. Luca Crusifino – Spinning belly to belly

Nikkita Lyons b. Tatum Paxley – Splits splash

Gallus b. Tank Ledger/Hank Walker – Jumping kick to Walker

Ilja Dragunov vs. Ridge Holland went to a no content when Dragunov was injured

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