

NXT LVL Up – May 10, 2024: Remember Her?

NXT LVL Up

Date: May 10, 2024

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Blake Howard, Vic Joseph

We're back in Orlando and things have been at least a bit more interesting around here as of late. I'm not sure if that is going to continue but it has at least been nice to have something going on for a change. Hopefully there is at least a little something to keep the interest up this time. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Wendy Choo vs. Wren Sinclair

This is Choo's first match in almost a year. They fight over a lockup to start with Choo sending her down and striking a pose on the mat. Sinclair pulls her into an armbar, which is broken up rather quickly. Choo hits a dropkick but her knee (which put her on the shelf for so long) is slowing her down, allowing Sinclair to grab a suplex. Something like a running seated X Factor gives Sinclair two and we hit the cross arm choke. Choo fights out and makes the clothesline comeback, setting up a middle rope crossbody. The Snooze Button finishes for Choo at 4:47.

Rating: C. Choo is not exactly everyone's taste, though she wasn't doing her sleepy/weird stuff here for the most part. I'm still not sure I get what she is supposed to be, but it's good to have her back after such a long time off. Sinclair continues to lose every match and I'm not sure how much

beating her is going to matter if that continues much longer.

Post match, respect is shown.

The rather tall Cutler James is seen as a friendly guy and is ready to make his debut against Josh Briggs. This was quite recited.

Josh Briggs vs. Cutler James

Briggs wastes no time in powering him into the corner, setting up a splash for an early two. Back up and James wrestles him to the mat, earning a rather hard shoulder knockdown. Briggs shouts that this isn't a reality show and then drops James for two more. The chinlock goes on to keep James down but he fights up for the comeback. Said comeback lasts all of four seconds before Briggs nails the lariat for the pin at 4:26.

Rating: C. This was the traditional "getting your feet wet" match for James and that is only going to get him so far. Briggs being in there with someone his size can often make for some interesting visuals but that was about the limit of the appeal here. James showed off some of his amateur background before getting beaten, which didn't make for the most exciting match. His size and amateur abilities will give him a solid foot in the door though.

D'Angelo Family vs. Dante Chen/Dion Lennox

Riz is here with the Family. Lennox armdrags Crusifino into an armbar to start and it's right off to Chen for an armbar of his own. Crusifino fights up and hands it off to Stacks, with Chen being low bridged out to the floor. The chinlock keeps Lennox down for a bit, only to have Chen come back in with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. Chen stays on the back and kicks Stacks in the chest for two. Lennox's northern lights suplex and spinebuster get two each and he grabs an abdominal stretch. Stacks slips away though and brings Crusifino in to clean house. This includes tossing Lennox into a Codebreaker

to finish at 5:46.

Rating: C+. It still takes a bit of mental stretching to remember that the mafia guys are the heroes, especially since Lennox is a rather likable guy. Chen is the same thing he has always been, meaning there was no way he was taking the loss here. The energy was up here and having the Family involved helped, even if I have to remember I'm supposed to like them.

Overall Rating: C. I know how much of a broken record I sound like with this stuff but the bigger names being around helps quite a bit. This show had Choo's return and Briggs/the Family for some star power. That's a lot for around here, which helped make up for the fact that the matches were only decent at best. Nothing really to see here, but as usual, you can't get that annoyed at a show that isn't even breaking thirty minutes.

Results

Wendy Choo b. Wren Sinclair – Snooze Button

Josh Briggs b. Cutler James – Lariat

D'Angelo Family b. Dante Chen/Dion Lennox – Toss Codebreaker to Lennox

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NXT LVL Up – April 26, 2024: Now Why Is That So Hard?

NXT LVL Up

Date: April 26, 2024

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Blake Howard, Byron Saxton

We're back to the show and I have no idea what that is going to mean. Well other than the usual matches from the same people with almost nothing changing from week to week. For the life of me I still do not get why we are not seeing more in the way of building up some kind of story, but that just isn't the LVL Up way. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Jakara Jackson vs. Arianna Grace

The rest of the Meta Four are here with Jackson and this is already way more star power than you usually get around here. Jackson takes her down with an armbar to start but Grace reverses into something like a cross armbreaker. With that broken up, Lash Legend offers a distraction, allowing Jackson to send Grace into the buckle. Jackson grabs the cravate but Grace fights up and hits a running knee for two. Another Legend distraction works rather well though and it's a jumping Fameasser to finish Grace at 5:48.

Rating: C. The match was nothing out of the ordinary, but again, it's amazing how much more important the show feels when there are some bigger names around here. It was also a

bit weird to have a mostly heel vs. heel match here, with Meta Four being popular but still cheating enough to win.

Dion Lennox and Dante Chen are ready for Malik Blade and Edris Enofe. They're off to a film study.

Carlee Bright vs. Jaida Parker

Bright grabs a headlock to start but Parker fights up. That earns her a dropkick but Parker powers Bright into the corner and sits on her ribs for two. Parker works on the arm for a change but Bright makes the comeback and snaps off a running headscissors. That's shrugged off for a running neckbreaker, setting up a hip attack to finish Bright at 4:53.

Rating: C. Parker continues to feel like she could be something if she is given the chance and that chance seems to be starting. There is only so much that she can do on LVL Up, but getting in the ring should do her some good. At the same time, Bright continues to feel like the same, run of the mill athletic woman who hasn't figured herself out yet. That's not a bad thing as she hasn't been around long, but so far there is nothing that makes her stand out.

Edris Enofe/Malik Blade vs. Dion Lennox/Dante Chen

Brinley Reece is here with Enofe and Blade. Lennox shoulders Blade down a few times to start so it's off to Enofe for a slam. Back up and Lennox powers him into the corner, allowing Chen to come in. Since it's Chen, he's quickly taken into the wrong corner for the tag back to Blade. Chen is able to get back over for the tag to Lennox, who runs Enofe over with a clothesline. Chen's chinlock goes on but Enofe fights up as everything breaks down. Lennox is sent to the apron but Chen comes back with the double chop...to knock Enofe into Lennox for a crash. A TKO finishes Chen at 5:22.

Rating: C+. My goodness Chen continues to find new ways to not be very good, though they are almost leaning into it at this

point. Having him knock his partner out at the end was oddly on point for him and it led to the regular team winning. Lennox could go somewhere down the line, but there is still quite a bit of developing that needs to take place first.

Overall Rating: C+. While the show might not have been better than the regular show around here, it was far more engaging. It's a lot easier to care about the bigger names and the stars featured here were that much more interesting. While not a great show or anything you need to watch, I'll definitely take a show featuring some unused NXT lower card stars than what we usually get around here.

Results

Jakara Jackson b. Arianna Grace – Jumping Fameasser

Jaida Parker b. Carlee Bright – Hip attack

Edris Enofe/Malik Blade b. Dion Lennox/Dante Chen – TKO to Chen

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NXT LVL Up – April 5, 2024: For The Second Time Ever

NXT LVL Up

Date: April 5, 2024

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Blake Howard, Byron Saxton

It's Wrestlemania Weekend and we might get to see some people who might be at Wrestlemania L or so. It would be nice to have them do something a little different for this show but odds are that isn't what we'll be getting to see. If nothing else, just some slightly bigger names could help a lot so let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Dante Chen vs. Drake Morreaux

The rather large Morreaux takes him down without much effort so Chen goes to the arm. A hiptoss is blocked and Morreaux drops him with a clothesline, setting up a splash to the back. Chen goes for the arm again but walks into a backbreaker for two. We hit the waistlock before Morreaux misses another splash. Back up and Chen strikes away, including a pump kick into the double chop to finish Morreaux at 5:43.

Rating: C. One day someone is going to have to explain the Chen thing to me. He's nothing of note in the ring but even commentary was pointing out how he is the guy who gets to face all of the up and comers around here. That's one thing, but then he beats those up and comers, which makes things all the worse. It's hardly some career killer for Morreaux, though it doesn't do much to make me want to watch the show.

OTM threatened Je'Von Evans at the Performance Center but Tyson DuPont/Tyriek Igwe made the save.

Brinley Reece vs. Tatum Paxley

Reece grabs the armbar to start but Paxley stops to talk to her. That earns Paxley an armdrag into another armbar, followed by a running shoulder in the corner. Back up and Reece misses a dropkick, allowing Paxley to go after the ribs. A reverse chinlock has Reece in more trouble but she fights up with the elbows. Not that it matters as Paxley pulls her into the Psycho Trap for the pin at 4:22.

Rating: C. Reece is something similar to the original Bayley crossed with Thea Hail but she doesn't actually win anything. Having that kind of energy is nice to see but it isn't going to matter if she doesn't have some success. On the other hand you have Paxley, who is at least getting higher up in the women's division due to her weird association with Lyra Valkyria.

OTM vs. Je'Von Evans/Tyriek Igwe/Tyson DuPont

Evans slugs away at Scrypts to start, meaning the flipping escapes ensue. Price and DuPont come in to trade shoulders with the latter getting the better of things. A splash gives DuPont two and it's off to Nima, with Igwe working on the arm. Igwe gets taken into the wrong corner so the villains can take over. Scrypts is tossed at him for two and the chinlock goes on, only to have Igwe power out without much trouble. It's back to Evans to pick the pace up with the dives but Price and Nima catch DuPont in the assisted Alabama Slam for the pin at 6:20.

Rating: C+. Commentary said this was only the second six man tag in the history of LVL Up and I have no idea how or why that is possible. On a show built around the idea of getting people as much ring time as possible, why wouldn't you want to put more people out there? Just an odd bit of trivia but the

match itself was decent, with Evans getting to pop the crowd again.

Overall Rating: C. I'm not sure if a six man tag counts as anything special for Wrestlemania Weekend but I'm not sure how many people in WWE know this show exists in the first place. Just having a quick angle at the Performance Center helps and at least it was something from a previous week. Nothing of note here, but that's LVL Up for two.

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NXT LVL Up – March 8, 2024: Gah

NXT LVL Up

Date: March 8, 2024

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Blake Howard, Byron Saxton

My confusion with these shows continues as I had a better time

with last week's show after weeks of almost nothing. That could make for something good this time around here, assuming there is anything involving continuity. Granted There is no reason to believe that will be the case but oh well. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Scripts vs. Dion Lennox

OTM is here with Scripts, who is sent hard into the corner to start. Lennox wrestles him to the mat but Scripts flips away from the threat of a right hand. That's fine with Lennox, who grabs a bridging northern lights suplex for two but Scripts starts working on the arm. A middle rope crossbody gives Scripts two and it's back to the arm. Lennox fights up and makes the one armed comeback but the arm gives out again. Scripts sends said arm into the corner and it's a rolling cutter to give Scripts the pin at 5:51.

Rating: C. Scripts continues to be someone I tend to forget is around most of the time and that was the case coming into this as well. He's still an amazing acrobat and can do some impressive things, but that doesn't make him someone who is the brightest star around here. Lennox isn't someone who should be beating Scripts, making this less than ideal.

Karmen Petrovic is ready for Izzi Dame, even if Kiana James is in Dame's corner.

Karmen Petrovic vs. Izzi Dame

Kiana James is here with Dame. Petrovic's headlock doesn't last long as Dame reverses into an armbar. A big boot puts Petrovic down and there's a full nelson slam to make it worse. Some backbreakers give Dame two and she grabs the torture rack. With that broken up, Petrovic goes up for a middle rope

crossbody but Dame is back with the Z Quill for the pin at 4:28.

Rating: C-. Pretty to the point match here with neither of them getting to stand out. Dame and James are still the same middle of the road team they have been since they got together and that isn't exactly great. Petrovic isn't doing much either, though her martial arts stuff looks good when she gets to use them.

Dante Chen vs. Tavion Heights

They go to the mat to start and that goes a grand total of nowhere. Heights grinds away on a headlock but Chen is back with an armbar. More grappling doesn't get either anywhere as commentary talks about what Stand & Deliver means to the wrestlers around here. Ignore that neither of these two are anywhere close to that level as Heights hits a hard clothesline.

Heights pulls him down out of the corner and grabs an armbar to keep things slow. Chen is right back with a neckbreaker but Heights suplexes his way out of a headlock. Another suplex has Chen in more trouble and a doctor bomb gives Heights two. Back up and Chen hits something like a Side Effect for two, meaning frustration is setting in. The double chop misses though and Heights grabs a spinning belly to belly for the pin at 7:09.

Rating: C. This got better in the end and it was nice to not have Chen pick up another win over someone who needed the momentum. Thankfully WWE seems to have calmed down with keeping Chen so strong as I never got the point. Heights is someone who could have some potential and losing to Chen would have knocked that all the way back down.

Overall Rating: D+. Not one of their finer offerings here with little in the way of interest and the best match being fairly dull. It was a case where there was barely anything in the way of star power and the action wasn't exactly good either. This

really didn't work and there wasn't much in the way of positives on the whole thing.

Results

Scrypts b. Dion Lennox – Rolling cutter

Izzi Dame b. Karmen Petrovic – Z Quill

Tavion Heights b. Dante Chen – Spinning belly to belly

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Smackdown – February 23, 2024: The Kickoff's Kickoff

Smackdown

Date: February 23, 2024

Location: Delta Center, Salt Lake City, Utah

Commentators: Wade Barrett, Corey Graves

We're taped from last week as we are nine hours away from Elimination Chamber. The show is pretty much set but there is always the chance of a last minute addition. Other than that,

since they were around last week, there is the chance of getting something more from the Rock and Roman Reigns. Let's get to it.

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

Video on the Women's Elimination Chamber match.

Tiffany Stratton vs. Liv Morgan

Bianca Belair is at ringside. Morgan starts fast and forearms her out to the floor for a breather. Back in and Stratton takes over and hits a running corner splash. Morgan grabs a crucifix for two and we take a break. We come back with Morgan fighting out of a chinlock and an exchange of running shots to the face. Morgan sends her into the corner for a running knee as Belair is literally bouncing up and down.

Oblivion is countered into a spinebuster to give Stratton two but she misses the Prettiest Moonsault Ever. An Alabama Slam gives Stratton two but the moonsault is broken up again, this time with a powerbomb. Stratton sends her outside and into the announcers' table, followed by a slap to Belair. That brings Belair to the apron, with Morgan being kicked into her, allowing Stratton to grab a rollup pin at 11:38.

Rating: C+. You can see the talent in Stratton and she is already feeling like she belongs on the main roster. There was little in the way of nervousness or looking like she was trying to figure things out. That is more than a lot of veterans can do and it gives me hope for Stratton's future. At the same time, Stratton vs. Belair would be a rather interesting feud for both of them and a great sign for the start of Stratton's future.

Drew McIntyre says if he loses in the Chamber, his WWE career will be as worthless as CM Punk's Wrestlemania return. Bobby Lashley comes in to remind McIntyre of the time he beat McIntyre at Wrestlemania.

Ashante Thee Adonis and Cedric Alexander discuss possible matching ring gear but still can't get on the same page.

We look at the Bloodline interfering on Raw to cost Cody Rhodes and Jey Uso matches, the latter of which was for the Intercontinental Title.

The Bloodline is excited over what they did, but Roman Reigns wants to know who sent Jimmy Uso to Raw. That would be Paul Heyman, but Reigns says it was his idea. Heyman interrupts though, saying Grayson Waller is here. Reigns is interested.

We see some wrestlers arriving and spending time in Australia before Elimination Chamber.

Bron Breaker vs. Dante Chen

This is Breaker's debut as a full time member of Smackdown. Breaker wrestles him down to start and hits a running shoulder. A running clothesline (called a Steiner Line) connects but Chen gets in a neck snap over the top. Breaker slams him out of the air though and hits the spear for the dominant pin at 1:21. Destruction and Breaker looked great.

Judgment Day isn't worried about Tyler Bate and Pete Dunne, especially not after tonight.

Elektra Lopez comes up to the LWO and says the team is dying because of bad choices. Then Legado del Fantasma jump them from behind.

Tyler Bate/Pete Dunne vs. Judgment Day

That would be JD McDonagh/Dominik Mysterio here. McDonagh shoulders Bate down to start but gets headscissored out to the floor for his efforts. Back in and a monkey flip sends McDonagh flying before Bate dives over Dunne for a middle rope Swanton. McDonagh manages to send Bate into the other corner so Dominik can come in but Bate fights out of trouble rather easily. Dunne comes back in to work on Dominik's arm and then

twist away at the ankle. Bate and Dunne stomp onto the arms at the same time but the villains send them both outside.

We take a break and come back with Dunne stomping on McDonagh's fingers and kicking him in the head. Dominik breaks up a double suplex and gets pummeled down for his efforts. Bate airplane spins Dominik to the floor and McDonagh gets the same treatment. The rebound lariat/German suplex combination gets two on McDonagh with Dominik making the save. The standing Spanish Fly gives McDonagh two but his moonsault hits raised knees. A double Tyler Driver 97 finishes McDonagh at 13:16.

Rating: B-. This was almost literally a glorified warmup for Bate and Dunne, who feel like they could take the titles from Judgment Day proper tomorrow. The team doesn't have much of a history so giving them a win over a team with some name power is a good step. That double Tyler Driver 97 is growing on me too so they're doing something right so far.

Post match Damian Priest and Finn Balor come in for the brawl but are quickly dispatched.

Video on the men's Elimination Chamber match.

Grayson Waller and Austin Theory are in the back with Logan Paul when Kevin Owens interrupts. Owens wants to punch Theory and Waller in the face again and walks off. Paul Heyman comes in and says Roman Reigns wants to speak to Waller.

Dakota Kai has been hurt again and is limping into the trainer's room.

AOP vs. Street Profits

The rest of the Final Testament and B-Fab/Bobby Lashley are here too. Ford's dropkicks don't do much to Akam to start so Dawkins comes in to help take him down. A belly to back moonsault gets two on Akam and the AOP are sent outside.

Dawkins hits the big flip dive and we take a break.

Back with Ford fighting out of Rezar's chinlock but getting kneed in the chest by Akam. Ford fights up again and avoids a charge to send Rezar into the post. The tag brings in Dawkins to clean house but he misses a charge in the corner and gets booted in the face. The Final Chapter gets two with Ford making a save. A Doomsday Blockbuster hits Akam as the fans are doing Bray Wyatt's Fireflies for some reason. Ford goes up but everyone gets in a fight on the floor, including Karrion Kross crushing Lashley's arm with a chair. The suplex/sitout powerbomb finishes Ford at 11:21.

Rating: C+. This feud seems like it has a long way to go, even if it might not have the interest to get it very far. Other than chaos and violence, I'm still not sure what the point of the Final Testament is supposed to be. The AOP are still evil monsters who can do some damage though and putting them over the Profits will make them feel that much bigger.

Bayley comes in to check on Dakota Kai, who says Damage CTRL did this. Bayley swears vengeance and Kai promises to help make them pay.

We look at the Elimination Chamber press event.

Grayson Waller comes in to see the Bloodline, with Roman Reigns wanting to tell him something.

Elimination Chamber rundown.

Drew McIntyre checks on the injured Bobby Lashley and offers to pray for him.

LA Knight vs. Drew McIntyre

Hold on though as here is Logan Paul to join commentary. McIntyre punches his way out of the corner to start but gets sent into another corner so Knight can stomp away. The Glasgow Kiss cuts Knight but he backdrops McIntyre to the floor as

Kevin Owens is here for commentary as well. McIntyre fights back and catapults Knight into the bottom of the ring as we take a break.

Back with McIntyre hitting the toss suplex but charging into a boot in the corner. A DDT gives Knight two as Owens and Paul continue to bicker. McIntyre gets in a shot of his own and goes up, only to have Knight jump to the top for the superkick. Knight gets dropped again but he's fine enough to avoid the Claymore. They go outside where McIntyre is sent into the announcers' table over and over. Knight and McIntyre get into it with Owens and Paul though, with Owens attacking McIntyre for the DQ at 11:49.

Rating: C+. They might as well have had a countdown until one of the people on commentary got involved for the DQ and in this case, that is a good thing. There is little reason to have one of them take a pinfall the day before Elimination Chamber so don't waste the time. It's still impressive to see Knight going toe to toe with the stars and shows you what kind of impact effort can have.

Post match the big fight is on, with Bobby Lashley coming in to spear various people. McIntyre Claymores him but walks into the RKO from a surprise Randy Orton to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was the big final push towards Elimination Chamber and it was enough of a success. It doesn't help that almost everything was set for the pay per view coming into this, but they managed to put together a nice two hours. The show only mattered so much but they made it work, as tends to be the case in recent weeks.

Results

Tiffany Stratton b. Liv Morgan – Rollup

Bron Breaker b. Dante Chen – Spear

Tyler Bate/Pete Dunne b. Judgment Day – Double Tyler Driver 97 to McDonagh

AOP b. Street Profits – Sitout powerbomb/suplex combination to Ford

Drew McIntyre b. LA Knight via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

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Main Event – February 15, 2024: It's Still What It Is

Main Event

Date: February 15, 2024

Location: Rupp Arena, Lexington, Kentucky

Commentators: Brian James, Blake Howard

I haven't done this one in a bit but I was in the arena for the show so I might as well look at it for a bonus. The show is still what it has been for years: the dark matches for Raw with its own show which means very little to anyone. That doesn't exactly bode well but you know what you're in for with

this. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence, still featuring people who have nothing to do with this show.

Chelsea Green vs. Tegan Nox

They fight over a lockup to start and even go to the mat without it breaking up. Green climbs the ropes and then falls on her face, as tends to be her custom. Nox elbows her in the face and Green needs a breather on the floor. A running flip dive off the apron drops Green again but she gets in a shot of her own back inside to take over. They slap it out and go into a pinfall reversal sequence for a bunch of near falls until stereo headbutts stagger them both. Nox knocks her down and hits the reverse Cannonball in the corner. A high crossbody connects for Nox but Green rolls through and grabs the tights for the win at 5:01.

Rating: C. As has been the case for a long time, Green is at her best when she is (literally or figuratively) falling on her face. She talks such a big game and then gets shown up one way or another. That was the case here and it made for a good moment, even if she won in the end. This was more fun than it should be and that makes for a nice start to the night.

Nox's shocked face is rather good.

Long video on the Wrestlemania press event in Las Vegas.

From Raw.

Here is Cody Rhodes for a chat and he gets right to the point: he's challenging Roman Reigns at WrestleMania 40. He can do that because of the fans, who made their voices heard online after...well he doesn't say what caused it (him giving away his shot against Reigns in the first place). Rhodes doesn't want to get too emotional though, because it might make him a crybaby.

We see the Rock on the Pat McAfee Show, dubbing the term Cody Crybabies. Rock also lists some things that those crybabies can do with chicken nuggets, which has Rhodes so confused that he asks McAfee what Rock said. Rhodes didn't like Rock putting his hands on him and slapping him across the face so Rhodes is going to hit back. Cue Seth Rollins to interrupt so the fans get to sing a bit.

Rhodes thanks him for the help against the Rock, with Rollins wondering what else can he say except you're welcome. Rollins says Rhodes needs to finish his story at Wrestlemania because if he doesn't, everything changes after the match. Reigns shows up and defends the title even less so this is their last chance to take the title and give it to the people. While Rhodes might be the man, he needs a plan.

Last year he got cheated out of the title and now the pressure is even high but it's even more complicated because of the Rock. Rollins says Rhodes can't do that on his own because he is tired for Reigns and Rock getting away with this stuff. We hear about Rollins helping Reigns become who he is today but there is one man suited to be Rhodes' Shield. That man is an architect and a visionary, which seems to leave Rhodes a lot to think about. Rollins was bringing the emotion here but it feels like he's being set up to cost Rhodes the title at Wrestlemania.

From Raw.

Here is Becky Lynch for a chat. After accepting a prom invitation for 2034, Lynch talks about how crazy the Road to Wrestlemania has already been. She loves this, starting with the time she first set foot in the ring when she was 15. Wrestling is what let her meet her husband, have her daughter and cause her to miss her father's funeral. It's also left her having some weird conversations with her daughter like why her mom's face is busted open, why her shoulder is banged up and she can't pick her up....and why Daddy wants to fight Maui

(Rock's character in Moana).

Lynch knows a lot of people love Rhea Ripley and people believe no one can beat her, but Lynch isn't anyone. She gets a drink from ringside and drinks a toast to Ripley's last few days as champion. Cue Nia Jax, who talks about how she wishes her mother was half the woman Lynch is. She sounds rather emotional as she talks about how Lynch is going to win at Elimination Chamber. Just like she's going to beat Ripley...who interrupts for the fight. Lynch gets crushed in the corner though and dropkicks Jax out to the floor. They almost have to go with Lynch vs. Ripley at Wrestlemania and that's not a bad way to go.

Dante Chen vs. Akira Tozawa

I can't escape Chen no matter where I go. Maxxine Dupri is here with Tozawa. Chen shoves him down to start so Tozawa grabs a headlock. Tozawa's middle rope hurricanrana sends Chen outside but he's right back in with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. We take a break and come back with Chen whipping him into the corner for two, setting up the chinlock. Another backbreaker gives Chen another two and we hit another chinlock.

Tozawa fights up again and hits another (there's that word again) hurricanrana, setting up the Shining Wizard. The big dive to the floor hits Chen and Tozawa's missile dropkick gets two back inside. Chen kicks him in the face for two more but Tozawa is back with a spinning kick to the head. That means a Hulk Hogan shirt tear (ok that worked) and the top rope backplash finishes for Tozawa at 7:34.

Rating: C+. This was a nice surprise as I wouldn't have bet on these two having a rather decent match. At the end of the day, Chen has almost nothing interesting about him but at least he was getting to do something better here. Then you have Tozawa, who is the definition of "comedy guy", so having him do

something like this was nice to see.

From Raw.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Sami Zayn

Nakamura kicks him in the ribs to start but Zayn sends him to the floor and bounces back to the middle. We take an early break and come back with Zayn hitting a middle rope elbow to the head but Nakamura chokes him in the corner. Nakamura kicks him in the head though and we hit the chinlock.

Zayn fights up and hits a quick Michinoku Driver for two so they can both have a breather. A clothesline puts Nakamura on the floor and there's a big flip dive, with Nakamura not exactly catching him so Zayn hits the floor HARD. We take another break and come back with an exchange of forearms until Nakamura kicks him in the head. Zayn is right back up with a Blue Thunder Bomb for two and Nakamura rolls outside.

We go old school with Zayn trying a diving DDT over the bottom rope, only to get hit in the face. Back in and Nakamura hits a middle rope knee to the back of the head, followed by another one for another two. Zayn is back up with a heck of a clothesline and then the exploder into the corner. The Helluva Kick is loaded up but cue Drew McIntyre for a distraction. Nakamura kicks Zayn's knee out and hits a running knee to the back of the head for the pin at 17:07.

Rating: B-. While it wasn't quite their masterpiece in Dallas eight years ago, it was still good stuff with both of them hitting each other rather hard. The ending was part of Zayn's issues as he continues his downward spiral. I'm not sure where that's going to go, but hopefully it isn't a heel turn as Zayn getting into the title hunt as the big underdog could be incredible.

Post match the double beatdown is on, with Cody Rhodes running in for the save.

Overall Rating: C+. Main Event remains the same, with a pair of mostly skippable (yet occasionally entertaining) matches with low level stars and a bunch of Raw recaps. That's all it's supposed to be, and if you have no expectations coming in, you can have a good time. This week's show was fine enough, but you would be better off just watching Raw.

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NXT LVL Up – February 2, 2024: I Was Starting To Have Fun

NXT LVL Up

Date: February 2, 2024

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Blake Howard

We're back to the show and my hope for this show is starting to wain again. There is only so much that you can do with the

low level stars and that has been obvious in recent weeks. What matters here is getting things interesting with weaker star power, which is easier said than done. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Hank Walker/Tank Ledger vs. Tyriek Igwe/Tyson DuPont

Walker and Igwe start things off as commentary talks about a history between the teams. A side slam puts Walker down and DuPont comes in with a splash. That doesn't last long as Walker is over to Ledger so a backsplash can hit DuPont. Everything breaks down with Walker and Ledger clearing the ring.

The rather large DuPont is back with a hard clothesline and Igwe's gutwrench suplex gets two. Walker fights out of a chinlock though and it's back to Ledger to clean house. It's back to Ledger, who gets caught in a belly to back suplex/jumping clothesline combination with Walker having to make the save. A Bubba Bomb puts Igwe down and a powerslam/running forearm combination (the Collision Course) finishes for Walker at 6:22.

Rating: C+. This was more high energy than most of what you see on this show and I'll take that for a change. Walker and Ledger are pretty low on the totem pole in the tag division but they are a regular team and that makes things feel more important. Igwe and DuPont look great but are going to need a lot more time before they are ready to do much else.

Brooks Jensen needs to find his own success and it can start tonight with Dante Chen.

Carlee Bright vs. Blair Davenport

Bright actually armdrags her down to start and Davenport needs to think about this. They trade near falls off a rollup each

but Davenport hits a hard knee in the corner to take over. An abdominal stretch is broken up so Davenport goes after the ribs again. Now the stretch goes on before Davenport switches over to a chinlock. Bright fights up and hits a dropkick into a crossbody but Davenport pulls her down by the hair. The knee to the face finishes for Davenport at 5:05.

Rating: C. Bright got in some offense here and it wasn't a squash, which made for a nice enough match. Bright is another someone who hasn't gotten the chance to show much but that is only going to be so possible in a five minute match. Nothing to see here, as Davenport is a name waiting for something to do.

Dante Chen vs. Brooks Jensen

Chen takes over on the arm to start but Jensen is right back with a flying headscissors. That's broken up and Chen is right back on the arm so Jensen has to roll out of a short armscissors. Back up and Jensen snaps off a spinebuster as we hear about Jensen being a fan of old southern wrestlers. Chen fights up and strikes away, setting up a kick to the head for two. Chen slips off the top though, allowing Jensen to hit a top rope knee for the pin at 5:10.

Rating: C. Jensen as an old school wrestler is certainly not something you see very often these days and it's ok enough for a twist, but Jensen continues to not be all that interesting. He just feels basic and has nothing to make him stand out, which is a problem when you're in a spot like this. Not an awful match or even bad, but how far were you expecting this to go?

Overall Rating: C. It was another dull show here and that is becoming the norm more and more often these days. The biggest name on the show was....I guess Davenport, which isn't exactly a ringing endorsement. There are so many people in NXT and I don't get why more of them can't be featured around here. It's

worked before and it would work again if given the chance.

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NXT LVL Up – November 24, 2023: That's Different Too

NXT LVL Up

Date: November 24, 2023

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Host: Blake Howard

It's nice to see some changes around here as the show had been so dull for such a long time. The show isn't that much better now, but at least it does feel a bit tighter and more entertaining in some ways. Granted I have no reason to believe that will last, but I'll take what I can get. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

This week is especially different, as it's a Best Of 2023

show.

Eddy Thorpe talks about his debut on LVL Up on February 17. He had been around for a few weeks and wanted to make an impact against someone he respected.

Dante Chen vs. Eddy Thorpe

The debuting Thorpe is better known as Karl Fredericks in New Japan. Chen's headscissors doesn't get him very far and we have an early standoff. A cradle gives Chen two and he takes Thorpe down into an armbar. Back up and Thorpe hits a quick spinning crossbody and grabs a seated abdominal stretch, followed by the standing version for a bonus. Chen fights out and hits a running kick to the face, only to get caught with a running boot to the face. An implant DDT gives Thorpe the pin at 4:29.

Rating: C-. Not much to see here but the important thing is that Thorpe won. Far too often, NXT will debut a new star on this show and then have them lose to the "star". Chen is still the resident jobber around here and it makes all the sense in the world to have Thorpe, who might become something in NXT, beat him in his debut. At least they have something logical with this one so they got off on the right foot.

We look at Lola Vice winning the Women's Breakout Tournament over Kelani Jordan.

Vice talks about being ready for Ivy Nile on April 28 and how she doesn't need any of us.

Ivy Nile vs. Lola Vice

They fight over a rather aggressive lockup to start until Nile rides her to the mat. Vice is right back with a kick to the ribs, followed by a running hip attack in the corner. A double arm crank is broken up though and Nile kicks her down again. Nile grabs a gutwrench suplex and the Diamond Chain Lock

knocks Vice out cold for the win at 4:18.

Rating: C+. Vice has all of the tools in the world to be something, including the charisma that makes her feel like a star. Throw in the MMA background and all of the potential is right there. On the other hand you have Nile, who still feels like she could be something in the division as soon as she is given the chance.

Kelani Jordan was excited for her debut match on May 12 against Wendy Choo...which she found out about when she was at her niece's funeral. Well dang that makes things sad.

Wendy Choo vs. Kelani Jordan

They fight over a lockup to start with Jordan's early wristlock not getting him very far. A headlock takeover has a bit more success but Choo reverses into a headscissors. Choo grabs a quick takedown for two, followed by doing it again for the same, which leaves Choo looking a bit surprised. A kick to the face and a running elbow drop gets two but Jordan fights up and elbows her down as well. Jordan's springboard spinning crossbody connects for another near fall but Choo is back with the Snooze Button (full nelson slam) for the pin at 5:17.

Rating: C. Jordan didn't do anything overly flashy here but she looked solid enough with the basics. You can see the athleticism and athletic background, which will be more than enough of a foundation to go somewhere. Choo still feels like she is finding her feet after returning, which is what a show like this can help her do.

Tavion Heights talks about throwing everything he had against Axiom on July 14.

Tavion Heights vs. Axiom

Heights wrestles him down but Axiom is fine enough to take over on the mat. A headscissors doesn't last long on Heights

and they're back up for a standoff. Axiom grabs it again and holds Heights down a bit before kicking him in the head for two. Back up and Heights blasts him with a clothesline before a gutwrench suplex gets two.

The chinlock doesn't last long as Axiom is back up and hits a dropkick for a breather. Heights can't hit a German suplex so Axiom sends him outside for a big dive. Back in and Heights gets two off a doctor bomb but Axiom knees him in the head. The Golden Ratio finishes Heights at 7:05.

Rating: B-. This was a heck of a match, especially for around here, as Heights was looking like a power monster and Axiom was as smooth as ever. I was getting into this one and wondering who was going to win here. You don't get to see something like that very often and it worked really well. Good main event.

Overall Rating: C+. I'm not sure how much sense it makes to have a Best Of show for the night after Thanksgiving, but it's not like this show has any real rules to follow. At the same time, it's nice to show that some of these wrestlers have indeed moved up the charts a bit, which is the point around here. It's not a great show or even a good one, but it was a nice change of pace for a one off.

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NXT LVL Up – November 3, 2023: Well, It Was Good

NXT LVL Up

Date: November 3, 2023

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Blake Howard, Byron Saxton

We're done with Halloween Havoc and this show has gotten a good bit more interesting in recent weeks. I'm not sure how interesting that really is, but it's better than nothing and I'll take anything I can get around here. For now, hopefully we get something even better this week, or at least some fresh names. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Ivy Nile vs. Valentina Feroz

Feeling out process to start with neither being able to get very far. They wrestle to the mat with Feroz getting a fast one. Nile sends her flying but Feroz manages to snap off an armdrag. The short arm scissors has Nile frustrated until she powers up and takes her into the corner for the break. Feroz is right back with a hammerlock before ramming the bad arm onto the apron. Nile is back up and runs her over for two but Feroz hits a running Meteora. Not that it matters as the Diamond Chain Lock finishes Feroz at 4:48.

Rating: C+. This is probably going to be one of if not the

last Nile match around here and she went out with a pretty good one. The best thing here was that Nile had to work to win but then she just snapped on the Lock to wrap it up. That very well could be her calling card on the main roster and it's nice to see her giving Feroz a boost on the way out.

Trey Bearhill is ready to run it back against Myles Borne. I have almost no memory of their first match so that might go rather well.

Trey Bearhill vs. Myles Borne

Borne's friends are here too. Bearhill knocks him down without much trouble to start and begins dancing. The dancing is replaced by an armbar but Borne slugs his way to freedom. Borne grabs a chinlock with a knee in the back until Bearhill fights up with the chops. Damon Kemp offers a distraction though, allowing Borne to hit a dropkick for the pin at 3:49.

Rating: C. So I barely remembered Bearhill's first match and I barely remember this one either. He feels like something that belongs on a low rent 90s indy show and it's almost hard to fathom him being here now. It's not terrible or even bad, but it's really not working so well. On the other hand, Borne and his wrestling obsessed friends are a good idea, though they're also kind of losers.

Dante Chen vs. Oro Mensah

This is described as a "big" main event as the commentators lie to us again. The women o Meta Four are here with Mensah. Mensah fights out of a wristlock to start but gets pulled down into an armbar. The armdrag into the armbar works so well that Chen does it a second time. Mensah seemingly gets frustrated by having his arm pulled and kicks Chen in the head to take over.

A legsweep lets Mensah hit a forearm to the head for two before he grabs a crossface chickenwing in the ropes. Chen

fights out of a chinlock and starts kicking away, setting up a springboard clothesline. The double chop gets two but Lash Legend puts a boot on the rope...as Boa can be seen watching from the aisle. Mensah is back up with the running spinwheel kick in the corner for the pin at 7:41.

Rating: C. Well, that was certainly a match between these two and that is not the highest compliment. They're not very interesting and it was a rough watch to see the two of them in there having the same boring match I've seen them have over and over. Throw in Boa and it's somehow even less interesting.

Boa helps Chen out of the ring to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. The opener was pretty good but it was a rough watch otherwise, with a pair of mediocre (at best) matches to wrap it up. The not so interesting stars were back in full force here as this felt like they snapped back from the change of pace over the last few weeks. Hopefully that changes again, but this show hasn't given me much of a reason to believe that will be happening.

Results

Ivy Nile b. Valentina Feroz – Diamond Chain Lock

Myles Borne b. Trey Bearhill – Dropkick

Oro Mensah b. Dante Chen – Running spinwheel kick in the corner

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NXT LVL Up – October 20, 2023: The New Format Is Working

NXT LVL Up

Date: October 20, 2023

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Blake Howard

Things were actually a bit different last week as there were only two matches with a slightly shorter run time. It made things a bit easier to watch, though granted having the best match NXT LVL Up has presented in months helped as well. I could go on more of the new format as it did make for a tighter show. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Edris Enofe/Malik Blade vs. Boa/Dante Chen

Blade works on Chen's arm to start but Chen reverses into a headlock. That's broken up and Blade hits a dropkick before Enofe comes in to elbow away. It's off to Boa, whose armbar doesn't work in the slightest. Enofe has to fight out of the corner, allowing Boa to get in a kick to the ribs.

Chen's belly to back suplex gets two as commentary actually gives us a backstory for the villains (Boa has been around

since Chen's tryout and kept his eye on him the whole time). Enofe backflips out of another suplex attempt and hands it back to Blade to pick up the pace. A high crossbody takes Boa and Chen, setting up an assisted Blockbuster to finish Chen at 6:08.

Rating: C+. Not exactly a surprising result but Boa and Chen worked well enough together as a makeshift villainous team. Blade and Enofe continue to be a team that feels like it has a lot of potential but this is about all they've gotten to do in recent months. For a quick opener though, there were far worse options.

Fallon Henley, with Josh Briggs and Brooks Jensen, is ready for Lash Legend, who is loud and annoying.

Fallon Henley vs. Lash Legend

Josh Briggs, Brooks Jensen and the rest of the Meta Four are here too. Legend shoves her against the ropes to start and talks a lot of trash before firing off an elbow to the face. A hard slam puts Henley down again for two. Henley tries to fight up but gets caught with a right hand to slow her back down.

A pump kick sends her to the floor and Legend sends her face first into the apron back inside. Legend grabs a delayed suplex before putting on a torture rack (a move that needs to make a comeback), only to be reversed into a sleeper. With that broken up, Henley gets in a facebuster, leaving the others to brawl on the floor. Henley hits the Shining Wizard for the pin at 6:12.

Rating: C. Legend isn't great in the ring but she's a good bit better than she was a year or so ago. Letting her get in the ring more and more often is the best thing for her so even a six minute match can help her advance. I still see something in Henley and could go for having her around a lot more often but that doesn't seem likely to happen anytime soon.

Overall Rating: C. It's not just the shorter run time but I like the new format a good bit more. This lets the matches get a bit more focus instead of trying to get three matches and two commercials into half an hour. It also might help keep things feeling a bit fresher around here as it's one less match to have each week, which could help things out nicely. For now it's not exactly a game changer, but it is an improvement, which is long overdue around here.

Results

Edris Enofe/Malik Blade b. Boa/Dante Chen – Assisted Blockbuster to Chen
Fallon Henley b. Lash Legend – Shining Wizard

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