

# 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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# **NXT – October 31, 2023 (Halloween Havoc Week Two): What's So Spooky About That?**

**NXT**

Date: October 31, 2023

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators Vic Joseph, Booker T.

It's week two of Halloween Havoc and this time it's actually Halloween night. The main event this week will see Carmelo Hayes getting a rematch against Ilja Dragunov for the NXT Title. Other than that, we'll probably hear from Chase U following their title win last week. Let's get to it.

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

Scarlett and Shotzi, dressed as Ghostbusters and getting out of ECTO-1, arrive because they got called about a job.

Opening recap, complete with clips of last week's opening live performance of Vampyre by New Year's Day. Some previews for tonight are included too.

Creed Brothers vs. Angel Garza/Humberto Carrillo

Tables, Ladders and Scares match, meaning a TLC match but with

pins. Julius starts fast by putting Garza through Carrillo through a table on the floor before crushing both of them with a ladder. Another pair of tables is set up at ringside but Garza gets in a cheap shot on Brutus to break up Julius' superplex. Instead it's Julius being sent onto a bridged ladder inside. A Blockbuster/Gory Bomb combination sends Brutus through a table at ringside and we take a break.

Back with Carrillo hitting a springboard spinning kick to send a chair into Brutus' face. Garza hits a missile dropkick to knock Brutus out of a chair and then powerbombs Julius into a ladder in the corner. Julius' back looks AWFUL as Brutus puts the ladder around his head for the Terry Funk spinning spot. Back up and Julius makes the save on the floor and it's time to load up another pair of tables inside. Garza is knocked to the floor and the Brutus Ball through the tables finishes Carrillo at 14:02.

**Rating:** B. They had some time here and beat the fire out of each other, which is what a match like this is supposed to be. The Creeds are pretty clearly main roster bound and if this wasn't their last match, it's probably one of them. They've done everything they can do in NXT and if this was their swan song, they went out with a heck of a fight.

Shotzi (a clown) and Scarlett (as Scarlett) mess with a Ouija board but Ivy Nile and Alba Fyre come in to show them how it's done.

Tiffany Stratton is NOT happy with Fallon Henley impersonating her last week.

Joe Gacy (now that is scary) talks about seeing horrors and the pain and suffering he had to go through to get here. Everyone stabbed him with his judgmental eyes, but he wonders if he is the problem. Yes.

Tiffany Stratton vs. Fallon Henley

Stratton jumps her before the bell and wreck's Henley's knee. No match.

The Meta Four (dressed as the Scooby Doo gang) go to a haunted house to find the Heritage Cup. They hear Japanese and Noam Dar shouts that he wants his Cup back from Akira Tozawa. Various monsters scare them off and more on this later.

North American Title: Nathan Frazer vs. Dominik Mysterio

Mysterio (an inmate), with Rhea Ripley (a prison guard, Cobb County, Georgia residency status unclear), is defending. Feeling out process to start until Frazer snaps off some armdrags into a dropkick to the floor. Back in and Frazer sends him to the floor again and we take an early break.

We come back with Dominik hitting some Amigos but Frazer double legs him down to hammer away. Ripley offers a distraction so Dominik can send him outside, only for Frazer to jump back in for a dive. Back in and Frazer superplexes him into a twisting suplex for two. Dominik dropkicks him into the rope but the 619 is cut off with a superkick. Frazer goes up and gets shoved hard into the announcers' table. The frog splash retains the title at 10:27.

**Rating:** B-. It's still hard to fathom that Mysterio is rather good at what he does these days. He and Ripley are still one of the most over acts in the company but it isn't just because of Ripley anymore. Mysterio can more than hang in the ring and he showed that here, wrestling a completely good match and finishing Frazer without a ton of help. Nice stuff here.

Post match Wes Lee runs in to go after Dominik and hold up the title.

Jacy Jayne congratulates Andre Chase on the title win. Chase says they won fair and square last week but Jayne doesn't seem to buy it. Jayne and Thea Hail leave when Tony D'Angelo and Stacks come in. Chase calls D'Angelo sir and he says Chase U

owes them. Hudson says of course they'll get a rematch but D'Angelo says "yeah, that too." Chase again looks a bit shaken.

Alba Fyre and Isla Dawn, now as Poison Ivy and Harley Quinn, talk about who is the most cursed.

Back to the haunted house where the split up Meta Four gets scared by a variety of scary things. Oro Mensah, as Shaggy, runs into Akira Tozawa and gets beaten up. Lash Legend (Velma) beats up one of the monsters but gets kidnapped by another. More on this later.

### Mr. Stone vs. Bron Breaker

Stone is fighting for his injured friend/client Von Wagner and starts by running away. The chase on the floor results in Breaker running him over and there's a suplex to make it worse. The spear finishes Stone at 2:36. That's all it should have been.

Post match Breaker loads up the steps (how he hurt Wagner) but cue Wagner for the save. A chokeslam onto the steps leaves Breaker laying but he avoids being crushed with the steps.

We look back at Lyra Valkyria beating Becky Lynch to win the Women's Title last week (as narrated by what sounds like Finn Balor). Valkyria has been on a media tour in Ireland to celebrate her victory.

OTM (Reggie/Scrypts and Lucien Price and Bronco Nima) talks about the rough way they grew up and now they're someone.

### Women's Tag Team Titles: Thea Hail/Jacy Jayne vs. Piper Niven/Chelsea Green

Hail and Jayne, with the rest of Chase U, are challenging. The brawl starts on the floor before the bell until it's Hail armdragging Green into the corner to start. Hail gets knocked outside but runs back in for a dive. The champs are down on

the floor and we take a break. Back with Hail fighting out of Niven's chinlock and avoiding a Cannonball in the corner.

Hail grabs a Kimura on Niven, who seems more annoyed than anything else. A tornado DDT plants Niven and a crawl between Green's legs is enough for the tag back to Jayne. Green gets planted with a spinebuster but Niven makes the save. Chase goes to hype up the student section so Jayne goes for a belt...but Chase won't let her. The distraction lets Green hit Unpretty-Her to retain at 9:00.

**Rating:** C. It's nice to see the champs actually win something and the ending keeps the Chase U issues going. With Chase wanting to go one way and Jayne, arguably the source of their success, wanting to go the other, there is a setup for something down the line. That being said, Green and Niven continue to get better in the ring and they're gelling as a team rather well all things considered.

As the champs leave, Alba Fyre and Isla Dawn make the Wheel spin, but we don't see where it lands.

Lexis King is pleased with his performances and likes the buzz around his name around here. You should see what he's doing next, or better yet, what he's already done. King hits on McKenzie Mitchell a bit but she leaves. This was more charisma than he showed in his entire AEW run.

#### Women's Breakout Tournament Final: Kelani Jordan vs. Lola Vice

Vice has Elektra Lopez with her. Jordan spins over into a backslide to start but Vice swats away a dropkick and fires off some kicks. We take a break and come back with Vice fighting out of trouble and hitting...I think an elbow to the face. MVP's Playmaker connects but Lopez's distraction causes Jordan to miss a moonsault. Vice's spinning kick to the head is good for the win at 6:59.

**Rating:** C. That's about as good as you're going to get with

two still fairly new stars and seven minutes including a commercial break. Vice felt like a star from the second she debuted and giving her the win here is the logical choice to make. Jordan did well in the tournament and got a lot out of it, but this was Vice's to win and that was the case from the start.

Back to the haunted house where Noam Dar finds the Heritage Cup, which he kisses. Then a bunch of the scary things surround him and Akira Tozawa comes in to steal the cup. Tozawa wants a title shot and Dar is scared into agreeing.

Alba Fyre and Isla Dawn talk about how Shotzi and Scarlett have fixed the other realm but here are Von Wagner and Mr. Stone. The former wants Bron Breakker next week but Stone says it's too soon. Wagner's head starts hurting, though he still wants the match.

Here's what's coming next week.

NXT Title: Carmelo Hayes vs. Ilja Dragunov

Hayes is challenging. They miss kicks to the head to start and go with the forearm exchange instead. A double knockdown sends us to an early break and we come back with Dragunov chopping away, including at the knee of all things. Dragunov cuts him off with a hard clothesline for two and they both need a breather. Hayes is back up with a spinning faceplant for two of his own, setting up one heck of a frog splash for two.

Quite the DDT plants Dragunov again but he's up with a clothesline and something like a spinebuster for his own near fall. Hayes hits a hard clothesline but can't put Dragunov down, allowing Dragunov to hit a quick H Bomb for two. Back up and they crash out to the floor for a nasty landing but Dragunov gets to scream.

Dragunov gets the better of things and hits an H Bomb through the announcers' table but they both make it back inside. The

springboard Codebreaker is blocked so Hayes sends him into the buckle. Dragunov is back with another H Bomb for two but the super H Bomb is countered into the Codebreaker. Nothing But Net is loaded up...but here is an angry looking Trick Williams. The distraction lets Dragunov hit a superplex into Torpedo Moscow to retain at 16:30.

**Rating:** B. These guys have good matches but they don't quite hit that super high level. That was the situation again here in the trilogy match, which hopefully is the last we see from these two for a bit. Hayes seems ready to move on to Williams and I'm sure Dragunov will get Baron Corbin or someone else at Deadline when there is a concept match to focus on. For now though, it was a good main event for a TV special, but not a must see classic.

Post match Dragunov leaves so Williams gets in the ring and glares down at Hayes. Williams picks him up...and we cut to the back where Baron Corbin has attacked Dragunov to end the show. Williams didn't say anything so there's your cliffhanger.

**Overall Rating:** B. This was another strong show from NXT with a string of good matches and the worst ones being completely watchable. The ending keeps us going on the way to Deadline in about five weeks so they've worried about the future as well. In other words, NXT continues its roll, as they've figured out how to make this show entertaining and keep the ball moving.

### Results

Creed Brothers b. Angel Garza/Humberto Carrillo – Brutus Ball through two tables to Carrillo

Dominik Mysterio b. Nathan Frazer – Frog splash

Bron Breaker b. Mr. Stone – Spear

Chelsea Green/Piper Niven b. Jacy Jayne/Thea Hail – Unpretty-Her to Jayne

Lola Vice b. Kelani Jordan – Spinning kick to the head

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