

NXT War Games 2020: Still Undisputed



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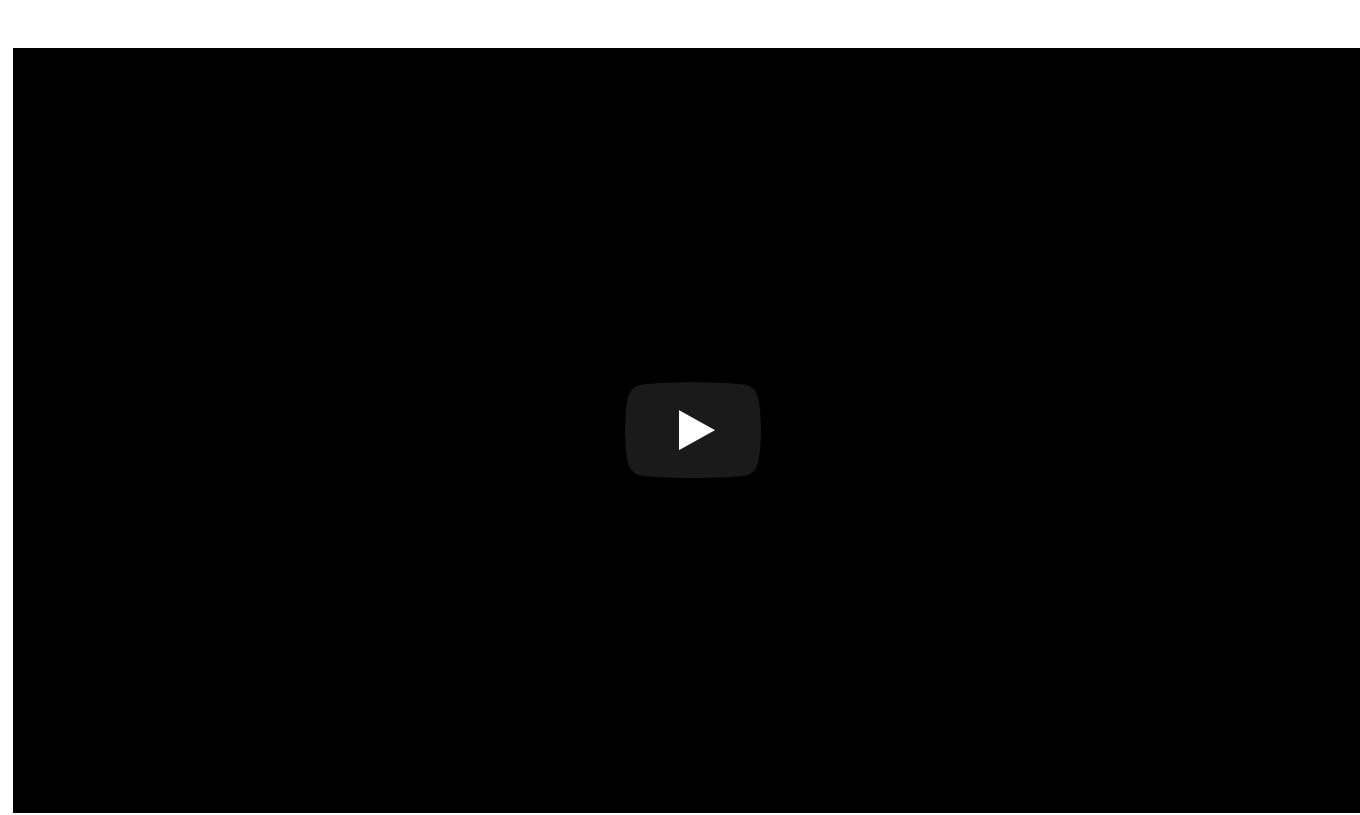


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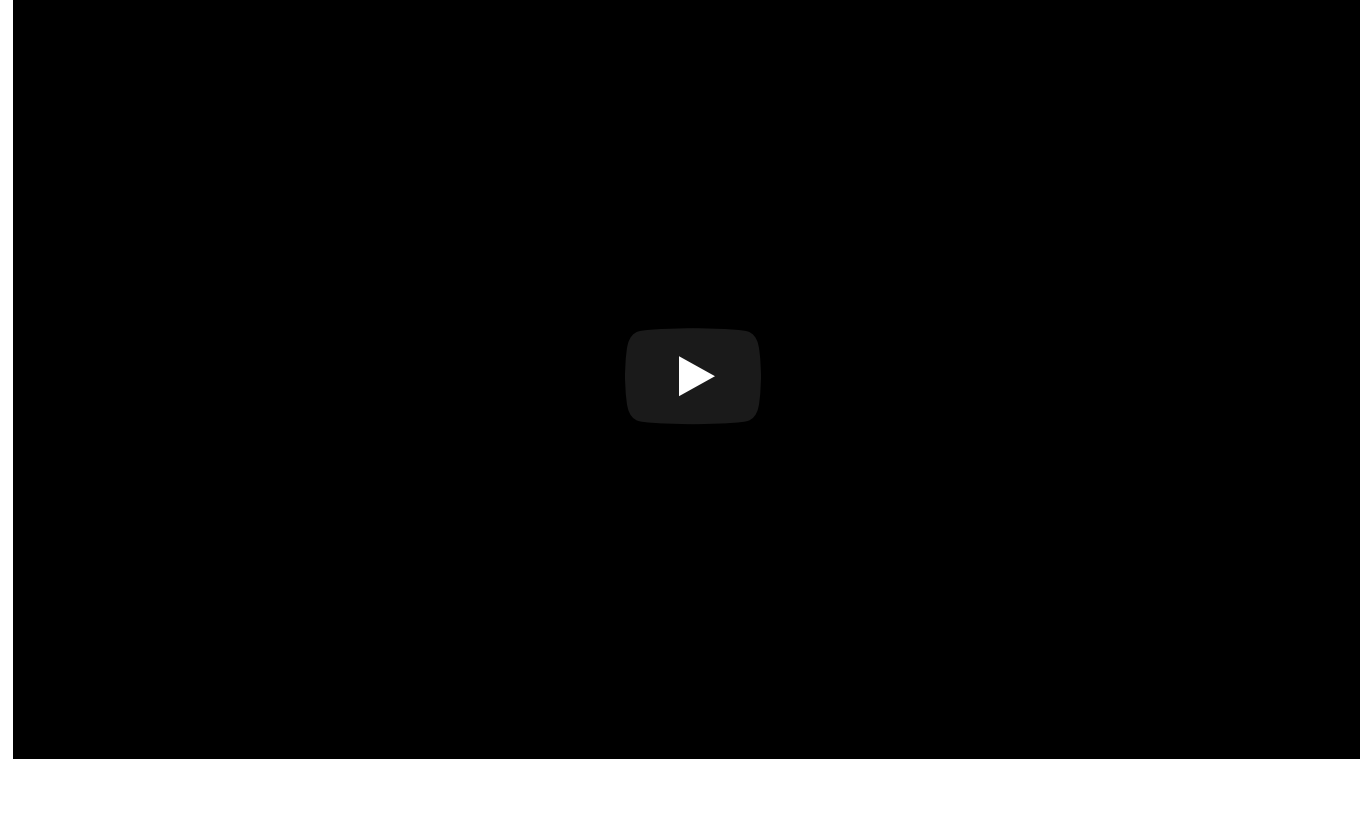
Women's War Game Match: Candice LeRae, Dakota Kai, Raquel Gonzalez, & Toni Storm vs. Ember Moon, Io Shirai, Rhia Ripley, & Shotzi Blackheart: I know that some people may have been puzzled that the babyface team got the advantage (myself included). However, they structured the match in a way where they tried to balance it out from a psychological standpoint. Dakota Kai goes in first for Team LeRae, but you find yourself rooting for her to overcome the 2 vs. 1 advantage. That's why they sent Raquel Gonzalez in second.

With keeping Io Shirai out of the cage, that allowed the heel team to get some offense in. Thus, the big trashcan dive from the NXT champ shortly after. What I appreciated is that the women didn't hold back on the brutality of the match. An eclipse on two chairs. A Storm Zero onto of a trashcan. Shoji Blackheart's backslash onto Candice LeRae from the ladder. Once everybody got in the cage, the match became a continuance of big spots as many War Games matches have.

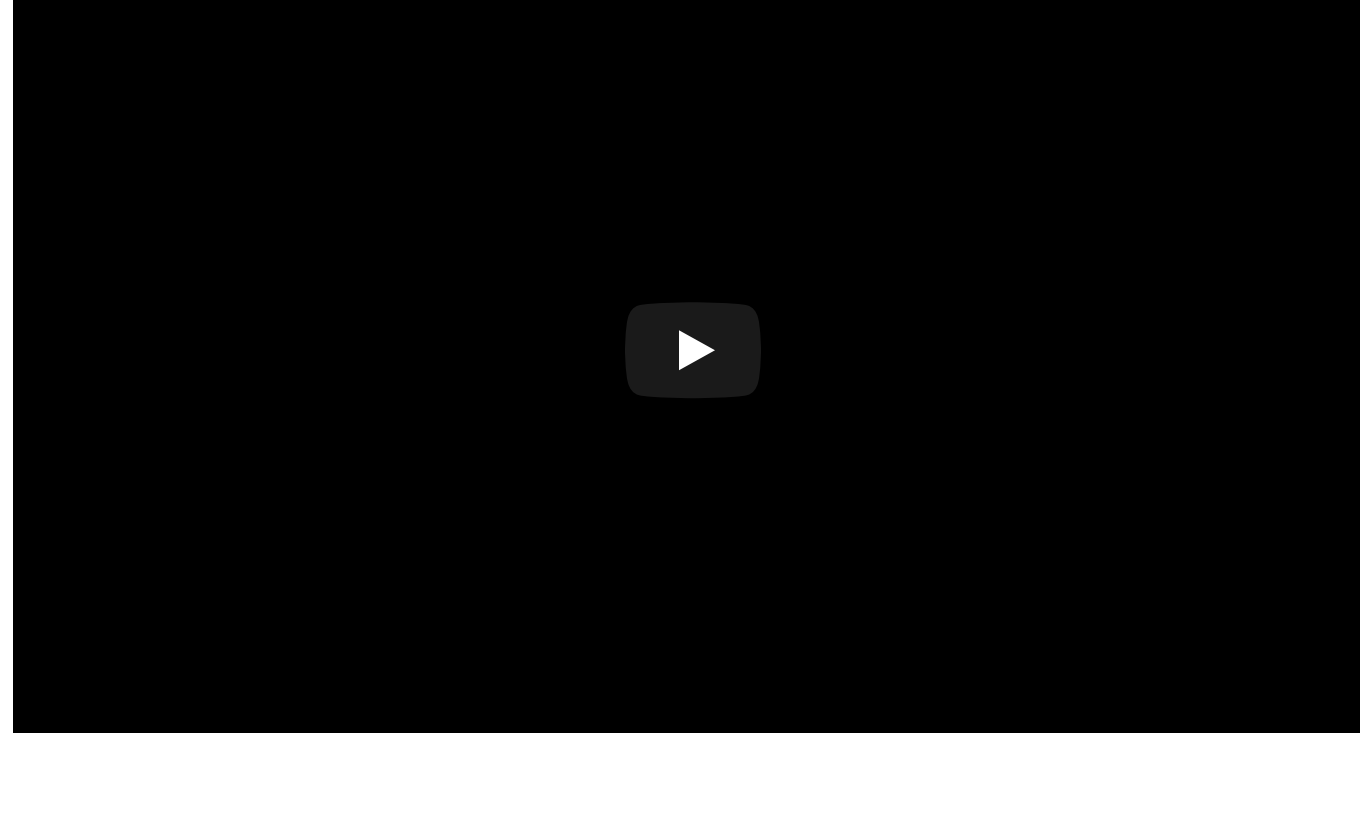
The NXT women's division is one of the best divisions, men and women, period. This match served to give each woman participant their moment and quarter off as a call back to their own personal feuds. Gonzalez getting a clean pin over Shirai was not expected — especially in the manner that she did, but I'm not mad at it. Gonzalez presents a unique challenge for Shirai to overcome with her size. While I think Toni Storm is next in line for the title, this will be a good feud to bridge to that point.



Timothy Thatcher vs. Tommaso Ciampa: Following the women's war game match, you needed something completely different to roll into. Thatcher vs. Ciampa was the change in pace. Both men beat the absolute hell out of each other in a stiff competition that featured well-timed strikes, some submissions, and blood. Thatcher continues his “close, but no cigar” motif in searching for that big win. Ciampa gets the W, but I'm not sure why that didn't go the other way because it didn't really help either guy.



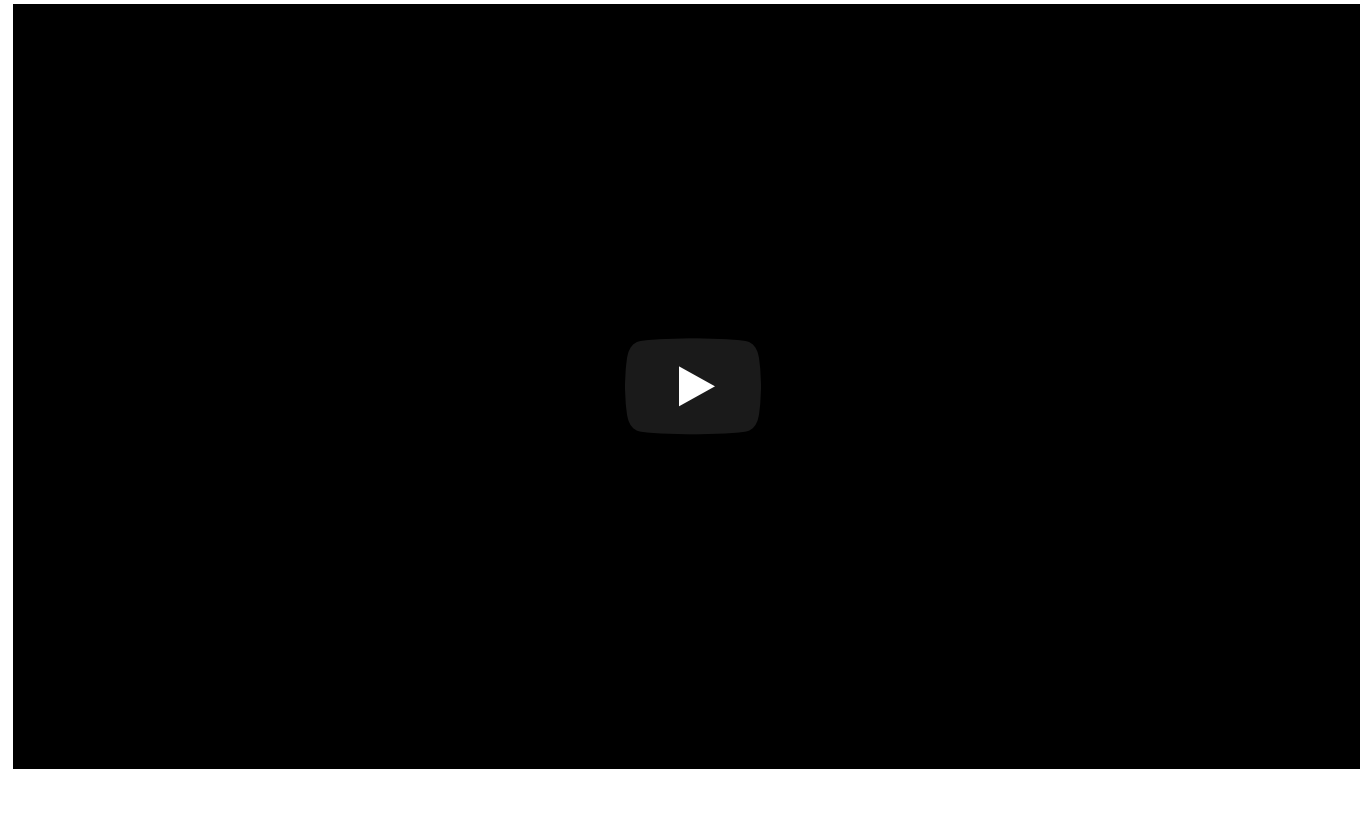
Cameron Grimes vs. Dexter Lumis (Strap Match): Overall, this match was fine. Both of these men tried to find ways to utilize the strap as offense that came off well. It just felt like this feud came to its natural conclusion at Halloween Havoc and it went a blow-off match too many here.



Damian Priest vs. Johnny Gargano vs. Leon Ruff for the (NXT North American Championship):

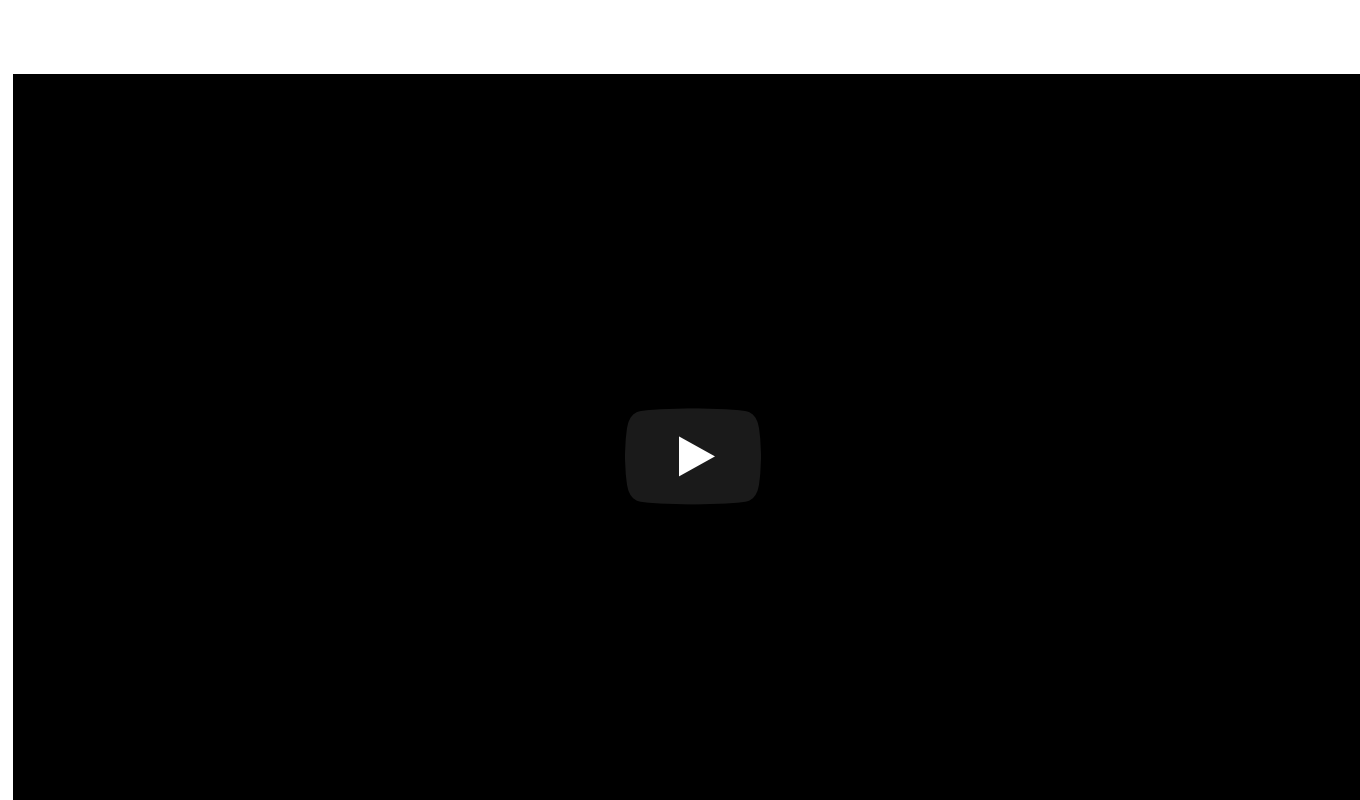
The good part of this match was that it continued the story of the overall feud. Leon Ruff really wants to show that he belongs as champion and that his reign is no fluke. Damian Priest is apprehensive about him getting involved. That blew over when Ruff attacked him and got a Razor's Edge for his troubles. The medical angle only made him look stronger as the underdog babyface champion.

Johnny Gargano is now a three-time North American champion and I'm not sure where that goes from here. Priest is a star, and he continually showed his athleticism throughout the match. The six Ghostface figures may have been overkill, but where will Austin Theory fit in as being a beneficiary of being under the wings of Gargano?



Danny Burch, Oney Lorcan, Pat McAfee, & Pete Dunne vs. Undisputed ERA (Adam Cole, Bobby Fish, Kyle O'Reilly, & Roderick Strong) (WarGames Match): This match told an overall story as to where the women's war games match was a collection of individual stories that manifested within War Games. The inclusion of Pete Dunne within Team McAfee was brilliant. Given his history with the Undisputed Era, he came off as the silent, strong force of the heel group.

Pat McAfee, in his second match ever was well set up for some of the biggest spots of the match. Kyle O'Reilly getting the pinfall was key. Since his championship match with Finn Balor, he's been the de facto head of the Undisputed Era. The Era are victorious again in their fourth consecutive War Games match and get revenge on a group that helped them turn into the good guys.



Quick Thoughts:

- Finn Balor is back on Wednesday, and we got a Karrion Kross tease at Wargames. I don't think that NXT goes down that route yet. What would be cool is if they set up a Balor/KUSHIDA matchup for the title at New Years Evil. Reward KUSHIDA for going on a tear for the past couple of months
- Coming out of NXT War Games, I'm not really sure where the future is going. There's a lot of moving, go Gargano/priest, but a lot of NXT's old guard picked up wins. Do you go Gargano to shake things up? There is considerable time before the big Wrestlemania takeover, so you can set up some legitimate storylines. It felt good to see Undisputed Era on the winning side again, but what do you do with a group that has done it all? KOR's main event run is one example, but who else will be able to challenge them to get people to engage in their babyface run?

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