

# The Curious Case of Karrion Kross



Murjani Rawls [Follow](#)  
Jul 20 · 4 min read



Photo Credit: WWE

On last night's edition of WWE Raw, you had the returns of John Cena and Goldberg and the triumphant MITB cash-in from Nikki A.S.H. to become the new Raw Women's champion. However, there was a debut a particular that turned a lot of heads. (more so, the result of that debut). Karrion Kross, the current NXT champion, made his way down the ramp to the main roster ring with fans. His entrance had the same apocalyptic style as it did in NXT. Well, kind of. Scarlett Bordeaux was absent. The black and white filter and smoke were nowhere to be found. The insignia of "the end is here" and "fall and pray" was gone. The fans were quiet. Granted, there might not be a huge subset of crossover from people who watch both RAW and NXT, but this is a champion, after all. If it felt not so much to you, you weren't alone.

Add the ingredients of Jeff Hardy returning with his theme, "No More Words," in front of a live audience and the deck was stacked against Kross. The loss was just the icing on the cake. People were notably confused. How could the NXT champion lose in their first main roster match against a wrestler who was losing a lot of matches on Main Event? Does it put a damper on the outlook of the brand as a whole? Depending on whom you talk to, NXT is either considered the third brand of the WWE or a talent funnel for the main two shows.

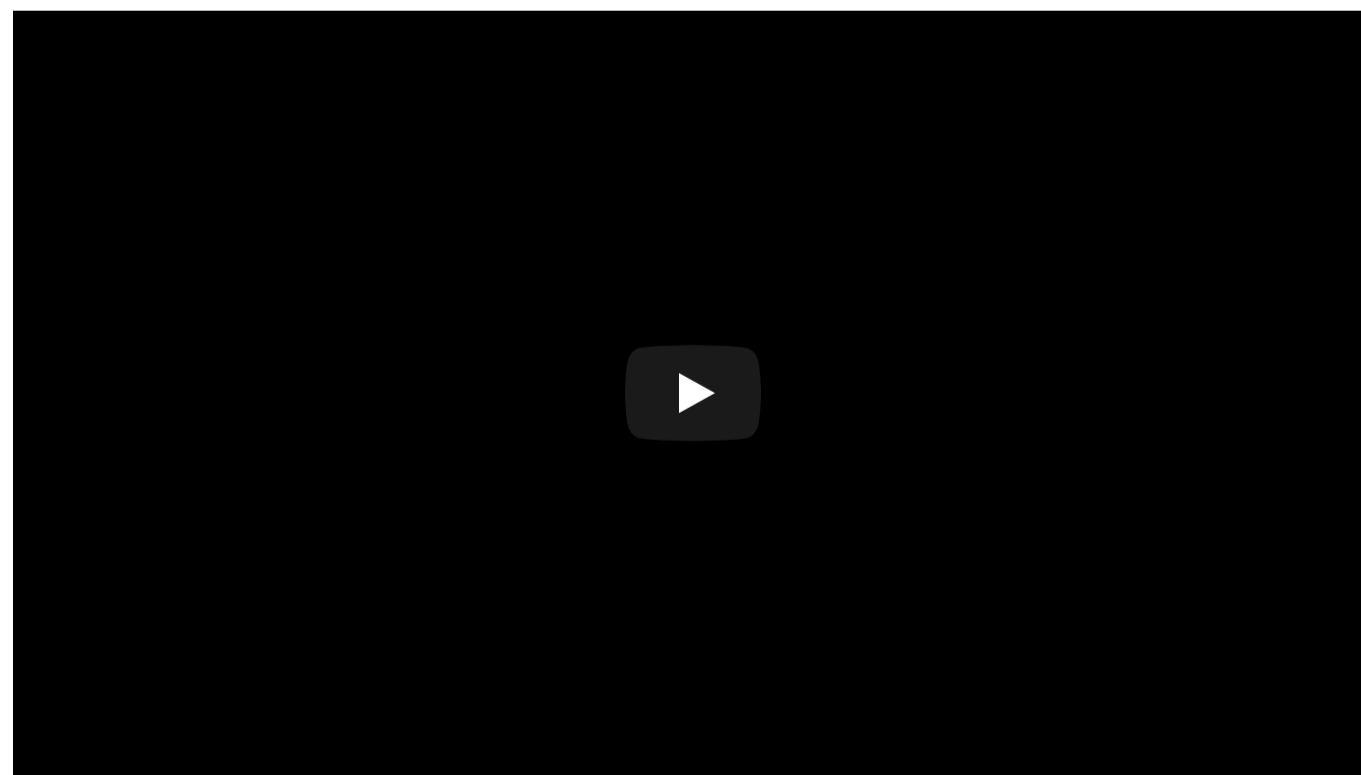
For one, it's Jeff Hardy. Secondly, this might be the microcosm of Kross's second NXT title run. Karrion Kross debuted in NXT on the April 6th, 2020 show with Bordeaux watching Johnny Gargano after his match with Tomasso Ciampa. From there, he had decisive wins against Leon Ruff, Bronson Reed, Ciampa, Dominik Dijakovic, and finally, Keith Lee for the NXT title at NXT Takeover XXX. Unfortunately, he would separate his shoulder during that match and had to relinquish the title. It was the shortest title reign in NXT history. All the hype and momentum that he gained (especially with beating Keith Lee) had died down for a bit.

From there, the returning Finn Balor would win the title. He would go on to have phenomenal matches with the likes of Kyle O' Reilly, Adam Cole, and Pete Dunne. Kross would return to beat wrestlers like Damian Priest and Santos Escobar, but something was different. In his time away rehabbing, you had a champion that was more akin to NXT's work rate. Kross's brooding and powerful style were more of a contrast. Perhaps more suited for the main roster. When it came time for Kross to beat Balor at Stand and Deliver, it wasn't met with the optimism like his first win.

Then, there were the weeks that followed after where it seemed like every promo was there to one-up him. Well, Adam Cole came back, and we heard how that turned out. There was [Johnny Gargano's promo](#) before their championship match at Great American Bash. Oh, and [the five-way promo](#). Even with definite wins that included a rematch win against Balor or a title defense against the four top contenders in NXT, something wasn't clicking. It felt like NXT was trying to build a monster that fans didn't mesh with. Maybe there aren't wrestlers who are meant to stay with the black-and-gold brand for a long period of time.

So, looking at what happened at last night's RAW, it seemed like more of the same. If this is a true call-up, they'll have to get the title off of Kross. It could just be he relinquishes it. Maybe he'll even lose it to Joe, based on his attack at the end of the show. Given the reaction, fans do care to an extent. But it is more about Kross the character or about the NXT brand and how the immediate loss makes them look? Paige immediately won the Divas title when she made her debut. Finn Balor quickly won the WWE Universal Title while beating the likes of Seth Rollins and Roman Reigns to get there. Kevin Owens immediately beat John Cena with his main roster debut at 2015's Elimination Chamber.

So, there is precedent there. While the debut was not ideal, it could just be a blip. Kross will have to acclimate himself to a RAW brand that is heading full swing into Summerslam. That takes time and familiarity with the main roster audience. Is it the end of the world? Not necessarily. Is it a little concerning? Time will tell.



Nxt

WWE

## Learn more.

Medium is an open platform where 170 million readers come to find insightful and dynamic thinking. Here, expert and undiscovered voices alike dive into the heart of any topic and bring new ideas to the surface. [Learn more](#)

## Make Medium yours.

Follow the writers, publications, and topics that matter to you, and you'll see them on your homepage and in your inbox. [Explore](#)

## Write a story on Medium.

If you have a story to tell, knowledge to share, or a perspective to offer — welcome home. It's easy and free to post your thinking on any topic. [Start a blog](#)