HBO Max is working on a fix for playback errors on Apple TV 4K

If you've been running into abrupt "can't play title" errors when trying to stream HBO Max content on your Apple TV 4K, you're not alone. I ran into the issue last week, and found that others are also dealing with it.

The issue seems to specifically occur on Apple TV 4K devices (all generations) running tvOS 16.1, and is happening on the latest HBO Max app version 52.50.1 (released Nov 16, 2022). For some, the issue is intermittent, and can be dodged through simple troubleshooting steps like force quitting the app, logging out of the app, reinstalling it, or restarting the Apple TV.

HBO's SVP of Communications Chris Willard tells *The Verge* they're "aware and working on a fix." The company's specialized support team followed up with my own ticket to say the development team is actively investigating the issue and recommends looking for upcoming updates to help resolve this.

For me, the troubleshooting didn't help. HBO Max customer support was helpful to steer me through those attempts but eventually it had to be escalated. Shortly after, I was emailed a solution that has helped others remedy the situation — and it involves turning off HDR.

The temporary solution involves turning off HDR

Now, I don't have HDR support on my TV, but that's only part of the solution provided. What you'll need to do is this: from

the Apple TV Home Screen, go to Settings, then Video and Audio. In this section you need to change Format to SDR, set Match Content to Disable, turn off Match Dynamic Range, and also turn off Match Frame Rate.

This did not immediately work for me, but my issue went from consistent to intermittent the next day. For others with newer high-end TVs than me, losing Dolby Vision HDR would be drag.

Customer support did follow up with another solution to try: change resolution to 1080p or 720p. Thankfully I didn’t need to take that action since I’ve only had one of the errors happen since Monday. Hopefully, like me, you won’t be left out in the cold when trying to watch a Thanksgiving classic in 4K.

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