

Wrestler of the Day – January 6: Konnan

Today's name is one that you've probably seen in various promotions from around the world: Konnan.

Despite being born in Cuba, Konnan is most closely associated with Mexico, including representing the country in the Pat O'Connor Memorial Tag Team Tournament at Starrcade 1990.

Pat O'Connor Memorial Tag Team Tournament Quarter-Finals: Chris Adams/Norman Smiley vs. Konnan/Rey Mysterio

Adams and Smiley are British and the #5 seed while Konnan and Mysterio are from Mexico and the #4 seed. There's a lot to talk about here. First of all, Adams is most famous as a trainer, having taught Steve Austin to wrestle, as well as popularizing the superkick as a finishing move in North America. Smiley would be much more famous as a comedy character later on in WCW. Konnan was nothing of note at this point but soon would become the biggest star in Mexico. Mysterio isn't the famous version but rather the original here and the uncle of the more famous one.

Mysterio and Smiley start things off but Konnan comes in as well, only to get caught in a double armdrag. Adams comes in as well and things get very fast paced in a hurry with the Mexican team being dropkicked out to the floor. Mysterio comes back in to pop Adams in the face with a right hand, only to be superkicked HARD out to the floor. Rey tries to remember what planet he's on so he brings in Konnan instead. Konnan climbs the top rope with a wristlock on Smiley to send him flying, only to get caught in a rolling cradle for two.

This is going too fast to be able to keep up with. Konnan gets caught in

the British corner and jumped by Adams who puts on a chinlock. Mysterio comes in sans tag for an attempted double team but Smiley dropkicks both of them down. A superkick sends Konnan into a German suplex by Smiley but it's Mysterio making the save again.

Adams comes back in to crank on Konnan's arm some more before clotheslining him down for no cover. Back to Smiley but Mysterio comes in again without a tag to elbow Chris down. Konnan takes Adams into the corner and sits him on the top rope facing the crowd before hitting a kind of reverse suplex down for the pin to advance.

Rating: B-. This was a very fast paced and exciting match with all four guys moving faster than anyone else would have at this point. Konnan would go on to become a huge star in Mexico while Mysterio's nephew would become one of the biggest stars in the world. Good match here though which would have had the crowds going nuts six years later or so.

Konnan would become the most popular wrestler in Mexico, leading to a match on American pay per view on a AAA show called When Worlds Collide. Konnan was in the main event, a cage match against veteran Perro Aguayo.

Perro Aguayo vs. Konnan

Aguayo is an old guy (49) who was betrayed by the young guy. Aquayo took Konnan's mask while Konnan took Aguayo's hair. This is the rubber match and it's inside a cage, escape only to win. Konnan was the most popular guy in Mexico but turned heel in a huge deal and drew huge money. The previous two matches were three years ago it seems and then they were a tag team. Konnan turned heel and here we are.

Konnan, a pure power guy, throws Aguayo around to start. Perro fires off some kicks to get going and pounds away in the corner. He goes up but

comes crashing back down via an electric chair drop. Konnan takes over with a pair of hot shots into the cage. The fans are totally behind Aguayo who is busted. Perro takes over again and keeps going for covers for no apparent reason.

They fight up to the corner and slug it out with Aguayo sending him down. We hear about the three way feud with Perro, Konnan and Cien Caras which kickstarted the AAA promotion. Aguayo takes over but is pouring blood. He really likes that double stomp move. Konnan fires off a low blow and takes over. We get an inset shot of Eddie (mostly bald) and Spicolli watching this on a monitor. Perro is in control so here they come.

Aguayo hits about the third double stomp of the match so far. Now he's climbing but Konnan makes a stop. Here are Eddie and Louis with a cup of something that they throw in the face of Aguayo. They throw Konnan some brass knuckles and Konnan hits the PowerDrop (Razor's Edge into a sitout powerbomb) to kill Perro dead. The knuckles are thrown out but it's not like keeping them secret means anything.

Konnan kicks him down again but Perro fires off some right hands to take over for about 3 seconds. Here are the knuckles again and Guerrero is trying to get in. Konnan hits a low blow and throws the knuckles out again. Konnan goes up and here are Los Dynamite Brothers (Cien Caras and his brothers) for the save. They chase off Eddie and Spicolli and Caras knock Konnan down off the top of the cage. The 5th double stomp is enough for Perro to escape and win the match.

Rating: B-. Fun enough cage match here to close things out. The run-ins at the end make sense and Perro winning when we got things down to one on one was a nice touch. You can't really fault the ending for being Aguayo standing up to win everything and stop the young guy, especially since

he's the big legend face. This was fine.

A few years later, Konnan would go on to WCW where he would become US Champion. Here's a title defense from SuperBrawl 6 in 1996 against the man that Konnan took the title from: One Man Gang.

US Title: Konnan vs. One Man Gang

So like I mentioned in the Starrcade review, Gang won the title and Konnan took it from him. Here's your rematch. Konnan actually cared at this point and it was very apparent. He's moving all over the place at this point and doing all kinds of weird and big spots that are working really well. To be fair though, I could give Gang a run for his money I think.

Konnan runs around and beats up Gang for about two minutes, as in the first two minutes of the match, but Gang gets one shot in and Dusty proclaims that Konnan has barely been on offense. That's just amusing. A side slam is called a side salto. Apparently Gang has been called one of the best men in the business for years. What kind of undiscovered years are those Tony? Konnan is selling well too here which is helping a lot also.

Let's show the WCW NASCAR driver for like 30 seconds. Not like we can have anything of note going on in the ring at the moment. There was a WCW Motorsports? Since when? Gang hits his splash and pulls him up. That should more or less seal this one. Gang goes to the middle rope (called the very top by Tony) and misses to ZERO, I mean ZERO reaction. Konnan goes up and hits a front flip onto Gang for the pin. Wow this was bad.

Rating: D-. Again, One Man Gang as a title contender? What in the world were they thinking??? This was again just bad and the crowd was deader than Konnan's career. Terrible match.

Eventually Konnan would join the Wolfpack and feud with the NWO Black and White, such as in this tag match from the July 16, 1998 episode of Thunder.

Diamond Dallas Page/Konnan vs. Curt Hennig/Scott Hall

Hennig starts with Konnan but it's off to Page before any contact. They lock up and fight to the floor where Hennig slaps him in the back of the head. Back in and Page grabs a swinging neckbreaker. A second attempt sends Hennig running to the floor and it's off to Hall vs. Konnan. Hall grabs the arm for the driving shoulders before slapping Konnan in the back of the head. That must be an AWA move.

Konnan fights up and shoves Hall down to slow the pace. Back up and Konnan grabs a quick X Factor before Hall gets punched back and forth like a pinball. Page comes in but can't hit the Diamond Cutter but clotheslines Hall down to set up a Konnan chinlock. They get up again and Hall can't catch a cross body. Instead he lifts Konnan up for a fallaway slam to take over. Off to Hennig for a knee lift before he suckers Page in.

Hall breaks up a hot tag attempt with an elbow to the back and puts on a reverse chinlock. Scott lets go of the hold and lets Konnan up before a double clothesline puts both guys down. Now it's the hot tag to Page who punches both Hall and Hennig from corner to corner. Hall gets in a cheap shot though and Hennig drops Page with a right hand for two. A great dropkick and right hand both get the same and we take a break.

Back with Page pounding on Hennig in the corner before Hall sneaks in behind him for the fall away slam. Off to the abdominal stretch on Page's bad ribs before it's back to Hennig for more stomping. Hall comes back in for a clothesline and sleeper but Page counters into one of his own. Scott suplexes his way to freedom and both guys are down again. The double tag brings in Konnan vs. Hennig as everything breaks down. Rude gets in a cheap shot on Konnan and it's a PerfectPlex for the pin as Page Diamond Cuts Hall on the floor.

Rating: C+. The match was fine but it was at the end of a very long show. They did the formula stuff here and that's a good idea for old school guys like Hall and Hennig. It doesn't really advance anything but it's nice to see the factions at war actually in a match for a change. Decent enough stuff.

After the decline of WCW, Konnan would tour with some indy companies for awhile before joining up with TNA. He would be part of the rap group known as 3 Live Kru with Ron Killings (R-Truth) and BG James, the latter of whom would team with Konnan for a world tag team title shot at Victory Road 2004.

Tag Titles: 3 Live Kru vs. Team Canada

Team Canada here is Bobby (Robert) Roode and Eric Young while 3LK is Konnan and Road Dogg. They use the Freebird rule to fight and will use it if they win the belts here, along with Ron Killings. Anyway, this is the finale of a long feud between them which of course didn't end here. We start with Roadie and Roode. For the life of me I do not get the hype on this guy. He's ok and that's it.

People to this day think he could be a main event guy. Why? Tell me one thing that he could do that would validate him as a main event guy. And I don't mean a line like just watch him or how can't you see it. Pretend I'm stupid and tell me what it is that this guy has that makes him a big star. Konnan is in now with Young and these two just amuse me to no end.

We have a guy that no one cares about that tries desperately to play up the gimmick of being from another country which makes him interesting when he's just bland as heck otherwise and no one cares about him, and then we have Eric Young. We hit the formula portion of our event with the heels working over Roadie to build up Konnan for the hot tag.

Does anyone else see this sucking harder than a Diva wanting to get a job? I miss Scott D'Amore. The guy was a fat joke but he was a decent talker and heel manager. Nothing great here but it's kind of like the first Mania where the tag titles changed: it allows you to have a title change so the show is memorable and has some impact to steal a pun from myself.

Konnan finally gets the tag after a heel miscommunication (remember folks: TNA is breaking NEW ground!) spot and cleans

house. It of course turns into a brawl with Roadie being fine after having his ass handed to him for about 4 minutes. D'Amore tries to use the hockey stick but Killings comes in for the save and a BAD looking X-Factor gives the Kru the titles.

Rating: C. It was average, plain and simple. This match could have been on any TV or house show or PPV and it would have been fine. At seven minutes long they didn't have much time to get anything substantial going but still, this wasn't much but it was fine for what it was I suppose.

Konnan would eventually become the manager for the team known as LAX before leaving TNA in 2007 over a benefits dispute. He would return to Mexico with AAA where he has been ever since.

Overall Konnan is a guy with talent but he was always a far bigger star in Mexico than he was in America. On a more personal note, he also used to be paid to post on the WrestleZone Forums (along with Kevin Kelly and Disco Inferno) and revealed himself to be, shall we say, not the nicest person in the world. I spoke to him a few times and while he would answer questions about his career, he didn't seem that interested in much else. Still though, he brought a different style to American wrestling which was a nice change of pace that was part of an evolution of the business in the mid nineties.

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