

Wrestler of the Day – May 15: Alex Wright

Today we're looking at another what could have been: Alex Wright.

After working in Germany for a few years, the 18 year old Alex Wright would make his pay per view debut in WCW at Starrcade 1994.

Alex Wright vs. Jean-Paul Levesque

Levesque used to be known as Terra-Rizin but now is a French aristocrat character. Wright is from Germany, is 18 years old and loves to dance. Feeling out process to start with Levesque taking over via an armbar on the mat. Wright spins out and dropkicks Levesque down before breaking a wristlock the same way. Now Alex takes over with an armbar of his own before Levesque puts on a headlock. Wright counters into a headscissors in a sequence that works so well that they do it all over again.

Back to the mat for another armbar by Wright as this match is very basic so far. Then again both guys are rookies so they don't exactly know how to work a long match yet. Levesque has enough of this wrestling stuff and punches Wright in the face to take over. Jean-Paul chokes away in the corner and takes Wright down with a spinwheel kick. A shoulder block gets a very slow two count for Levesque and he ducks a cross body to send Wright crashing into the mat.

Alex gets kicked in the head while on the floor as Heenan makes Hogan's Heroes jokes. Levesque breaks up a sunset flip attempt via a right hand before putting on a chinlock. Wright fights up and hits another dropkick for two before being put in the chinlock again. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker puts Alex down but Levesque misses a top rope elbow. Wright hits a quick

backdrop but Jean-Paul gets up and they ram heads, putting both guys down. Alex flips over Levesque out of the corner and a rollup is good for the pin.

Rating: C. This was just ok and again there was no reason for this match to be happening. Wright continued to be a guy that WCW was moments away from pulling the trigger on for years to come. The really interesting guy here though is Levesque, who soon after this was offered a spot as Steven's Regal's tag partner. Thinking he had no future with the company, he was granted his release and signed with the WWF, who gave him the same gimmick (minus being French) and named him Hunter Hearst Helmsley, which he later shortened to Triple H. In other words, WCW had Triple H, Austin and Mick Foley (Cactus Jack) and let them all go. Think about that for a second.

Wright would get a nice push around this time, including a match on Clash of the Champions XXX.

Alex Wright vs. Bobby Eaton

Wright has wrestled a few times in WCW already and is billed as undefeated. He comes out to dance music and cuts a bit of a rug in the ring. Feeling out process to start as they trade arm work as the announcers talk about Wright's recent victory over Jean-Paul Levesque, who would soon be known as Hunter Hearst Helmsley in the WWF. A big right hand sends Alex into the corner but he comes back with a headscissors followed by an armdrag into another armbar.

Wright pulls back a punch of his own but Bobby begs off so instead it's a European uppercut for two. Eaton ducks a cross body to send Alex flying into the ropes and it's off to a chinlock. Alex comes out of it with a jawbreaker followed by a backdrop. A spinwheel kick drops Eaton and a missile dropkick gets two. Bobby comes back with a swinging neckbreaker before loading up the Alabama Jam for a VERY close two. Wright quickly comes back with a suplex and cross body for the pin.

Rating: C. This was a better match than the opener but still just ok. Wright looked good out there and Eaton was very skilled at making others look better than they could have on their own. That's the kind of hand you want to have around the company so they can help out with a guy like Wright when you don't know what you're getting. It's nice to see someone young getting to shine a bit like this too.

Wright would get a TV Title shot at Slamboree 1995.

TV Title: Arn Anderson vs. Alex Wright

Wright's song is as addictive as music in wrestling can be. And then you get the theme of the Horsemen so you can't go wrong there. Wright is undefeated here. Bischoff is really annoying on commentary to say the least. And now we're laying around on the mat a lot. Bischoff is clearly not ready to be doing a show like this but to be fair, he's definitely trying and you can't ask for much more than that.

Wright uses an STFU. John Cena stole a move from Alex Wright! (To the 5-6 people that will complain about me not knowing what I'm talking about and how Chono or whoever else used it for a long time, this is what we call a JOKE. I know Cena didn't invent it and I know the real name of the move)

Wright was a guy that really could have been something if they used him right. It's weird to say that but he really was pretty good. And all of a sudden Eric is talking about the Holyfield fight from the previous night? The heck? A BRILLIANT ending here as Arn pulls back for a punch and stops when Wright ducks, hooks the head and the DDT ends it. Love that.

Rating: D+. Not bad but nothing special at all. It's ok I guess and fine for a TV title defense. Wright more or less was worthless for awhile after this though so either that was planned or they messed up. Either way, not terrible but nothing great or notable by any stretch of the imagination.

Wright would be on the second episode of Nitro against a pretty big name. Well outside of WCW at least.

Sabu vs. Alex Wright

Sabu has the music that would go to La Parka later on. This is an odd match to put it mildly. The man from Bombay (Michigan) of course does all kinds of insane spots while missing a good bit of them but whatever. Air Sabu hits the railing and we've been on the floor about 90% of this match. Back in the ring and Wright hits a GREAT missile dropkick and Sabu is knocked straight back to the floor. Heenan and Mongo argue coaching strategy which is really just killing time.

In a strange move, Sabu sets for a rana off the top but while he's up there he sits on Wright's shoulders and rolls forward to the mat so it was like a victory roll from the top. Nice one and it works for a pin. Post match Sabu puts Wright through a table and the decision is reversed.

Rating: B-. This was high spots a go-go and for this era, that was mind blowing. This wasn't anything great but it certainly did work for what it was supposed to do: showcase a brand new kind of wrestling that you didn't see otherwise in the mainstream. That's what WCW was trying to do and it worked quite well.

Over the years Wright would team with Disco Inferno on and off several times. Here's their first time together, as a random team at Slamboree 1996.

Battlebowl First Round: Dick Slater/Bobby Eaton vs. Alex Wright/Disco Inferno

Yes they're future tag champions but that wasn't until later so that's excusable. Oh look: people that are complete opposites of each other. WHO WOULD GUESS THAT??? At least Eaton is a good wrestler so that's a perk. You know, Disco Inferno is really impressive.

To have a pure comedy gimmick and put together a fairly decent resume (Cruiserweight Champion, TV Champion, Tag Champion) is saying a lot about him. He made a horrible gimmick into something which says a lot about him. We talk about Flair and Savage for the most part here. When Disco Inferno gets the hot tag, you know we have a problem. Disco starts dancing and gets blasted in the head with a boot. Yep that's it.

Rating: N/A. At least it was fast. Seriously, someone thought this was a good idea? Why? What kind of drugs were they on? I want some of them.

Wright was getting better at this point and hanging in there against better competition, such as this match from Nitro on September 30, 1996.

Alex Wright vs. Dean Malenko

Dean has Rey's mask which he stole recently. Tony tells everyone that the NWO is at the Marriott in Cleveland. This comes after Syxx could be heard ordering room service and saying the room number in the previous segment, making WCW all the stupider. After some feeling out processes, Malenko takes over with a belly to back as we take a break.

Back with Wright speeding things up and hitting a Japanese armdrag to take over. That doesn't last long as they head to the floor where Dean takes over again. Dean works on the leg but Wright starts his comeback. He and Dean both miss top rope shots but Wrights grabs a cradle for the upset pin.

Rating: C. Decent match here and for TV, this was fine. Wright still never got the push that they always seemed on the brink of with him, although he'd win the TV Title sometime in 97. This wasn't much but Dean would become Cruiserweight Champion again before too long if my memory is right.

Another match against another name far bigger outside of WCW, from Clash XXXIV.

Masahiro Chono vs. Alex Wright

Chono is a Japanese legend and a member of the NWO. Nick Patrick has officially joined the NWO and is referee here. Chono jumps Wright to start but gets rammed into the buckle a few times to slow him down. Alex moonsaults over him in the corner and drops Chono with an enziguri. The fans aren't exactly thrilled with Wright but don't like Chono either so they're not reacting to much in the match.

Chono comes back with a shoulder block and an atomic drop. Alex gets a small package but Patrick counts the slowest two in years. Chono throws Alex over the top rope but Patrick doesn't really care. Wright comes back in with a top rope sunset flip, only to have Patrick hold his shoulder instead of counting. Alex smacks Patrick but misses a cross body, allowing Chono to hit his Mafia Kick (running boot to the head) for the pin.

Rating: D+. The wrestling was just ok but the story was more important here. Nick Patrick being the evil referee worked for awhile but that was only going to carry a story for so long. Chono had a great look to him and was very successful in Japan, but his NWO run in WCW wasn't the most productive in the world.

Wright was on enough of a roll that he got a Cruiserweight Title shot on July 28, 1997's Nitro.

Cruiserweight Title: Chris Jericho vs. Alex Wright

Jericho is defending here. The opening part of the match is ignored for the sake of house show ads as Wright slaps Jericho in the corner. They fight for arm control with the champion taking Alex to the mat. Those big stretches of empty seats in the crowd are kind of distracting. A spinwheel kick puts Wright down and out to the floor, causing the match to come to a halt.

Jericho dives onto Wright but gets suplexed down to change momentum. Wright stomps Jericho down in the corner but misses a top rope knee drop. The Lionsault hits Wright's back but Jericho doesn't cover. Wright goes to the apron and gets put in a sleeper by Jericho who is in the ring. Alex guillotines him down and hits a German suplex for the clean pin and the title.

Rating: C. This was an interesting match as you had Wright losing most of the first few matches after his turn before winning the title completely clean here. The fact that it was a clean pin helps, but I'm not exactly sure what the point was in jobbing him out the last few weeks to give him the belt here. Still though, not bad.

And the rematch from Road Wild 1997.

Cruiserweight Title: Chris Jericho vs. Alex Wright

Wright is champion. Feeling out process to start with Wright running to the ropes. The fans chant gay slurs at him as the feeling out continues. Jericho charges at Wright which gets him nowhere. Some chops and right hands put Wright down on the floor and we stall some more. Back in Wright grabs a headlock which is quickly broken and Jericho hits a spinwheel kick to send Wright back to the floor.

As Alex comes back in, Jericho crotches him and hits the springboard dropkick to send him to the floor for a third time. Jericho finally gets bored and dives out to the floor to take Wright down. Wright sends him into the steps to take over and adds a suplex on the outside. Coming back in, Jericho LAUNCHES him off the top with a slam which gets two. Off to a headlock by the challenger. He goes to the arm instead as things slow down.

Wright comes back and counters a leapfrog with another spinwheel kick. The champ dances again as Dusty says a win here could drive a stake into the heart of the NWO. Ok then.

Alex takes forever to set up a moonsault and Jericho rolls away. Lionsault hits Wright's back but he adds a senton backplash before getting two. Jericho's double powerbomb gets a delayed two. Wright grabs a suplex for two and Jericho counters the German suplex into a cradle for the same. Wright reverses a rollup into one of his own with tights for the pin.

Rating: C-. It was slow paced for the most part but it was ok. The ending however sucked and it keeps up with the running theme of the night: not a horrible match but it's nothing that you would ever want to see again. It's also not great but it could have been far worse. That makes it the worst kind of match: just ok and mostly boring.

Wright would lose the title later that month but receive a TV Title shot just over a week later. From Clash XXXV.

TV Title: Alex Wright vs. Ultimo Dragon

Dragon is defending after having taken the title from Lord Steven Regal back in July. He's also a good guy now after getting rid of Sonny Onoo a few months back. Wright is fresh off losing the Cruiserweight Title to Chris Jericho a week earlier. Since Alex is now a heel, he tries poking Dragon in the eye but gets caught with a shoulder block for cheating. Dragon does his trademark headstand in the corner and kicks Wright away before firing off his kicks to the chest and thigh.

The champion stays on him with a hurricanrana but Wright powerbombs him down. There's no cover though as he would rather dance, sending Heenan into a rant about Alex's lack of focus. Alex hits a pair of backbreakers for two and we go to a break. Back with Wright getting another two off a top rope knee before they trade sleepers. A suplex from Dragon puts both guys down and they slug it out with the challenger getting the better of it. He heads up top where Dragon scores with a dropkick to knock Wright to the floor.

Dragon misses a plancha and crashes to the floor, only to pop back up and whip Wright into the barricade, setting up an Asai Moonsault. Back in and Wright counters a top rope hurricanrana into a superplex attempt but Dragon slams him into the mat to counter. A rollup gets two for the champion but Wright blocks a handspring elbow with an elbow of his own for two. They trade suplex attempts until Wright grabs his German suplex for the pin and the title.

Rating: B-. Good match here as it had a significant amount of time to get things going. Wright kept letting Dragon get back into it through not following up before finally winning it in the end off a wrestling counter. Dragon was on fire at this point and while Wright was doing ok, this was a questionable decision.

After losing the title a few months later, Wright would fall down the card a bit but was still able to hang in there against bigger names, like in this match from June 22, 1998 on Nitro.

Alex Wright vs. Eddie Guerrero

The announcers are talking about the basketball players before the bell even rings. Alex takes him down to start and stomps away before dancing a bit. Eddie comes back with a jumping back elbow and some chops in the corner but Alex pokes him in the eye. A backbreaker allows Alex to dance a bit more and get a delayed two. Eddie dropkicks him down so Alex bails to the floor for a breather. Back in and a quick suplex gets two for Wright but he misses a top rope knee drop. Eddie comes back with the brainbuster as Chavo comes out to cheer. The distraction lets Wright grab a suplex for the pin.

Rating: D. This was mainly about waiting on Chavo to show up which is fine for a story but the match hasn't been anything to see so far. Wright continues to be fun to watch and talented in the ring and Eddie is Eddie, but this match had

nothing to it at all. It gets rather dull waiting thirty seconds between moves you know?

Wright would team up with Disco again soon after this on a semi-regular basis. They had a match on Thunder on August 13, 1998.

Dancing Fools vs. Public Enemy

Tokyo Magnum is with Disco and Alex. Rocco cranks on Alex's arm to start as the announcers debate whether the match on Saturday was a street fight or a Sturgis street fight. Rock gets sent to the floor and sent into the barricade with a baseball slide. Back in and Rocco blocks a middle rope ax handle, only to be suplexed down again.

Wright of course stops to dance, allowing Rocco to get his knees up to stop a splash. Off to Disco vs. Grunge but Johnny quickly brings Rocco back in for a double flapjack. Everything breaks down and Rocco is thrown into Disco. A table is brought in but Tokyo Magnum takes the bullet for Alex, allowing Wright to pin Grunge off a neckbreaker.

Rating: D+. This is becoming one of those matches that I do not need to see ever again. We've pretty much gotten the same story every single times these four have gone at it and there's no reason to see them tell that story one more time. The matches aren't horrible but they're rapidly losing the limited interest I had in them.

Wright would get injured and miss a good chunk of 1999. He would return as Berlyn, an evil German who wore black leather and looked like the killers in the Columbine massacre. He looked so much like them that his debut was postponed until Fall Brawl 1999.

Berlyn vs. ???

The replacement is Jim Duggan of all people. Berlyn jumps him

in the corner and can't put him down with a dropkick. Duggan starts a comeback after not being on defense for the most part. Clotheslines put Berlyn on the floor. Duggan massacres him for the most part. Remember that this is Berlyn's debut. Berlyn hits a clothesline, Duggan won't stay down. They slug it out and Duggan still won't sell anything.

The fans want Flair and are rather patriotic at the same time. Off to a chinlock which Duggan at least sits still for, at least for a few seconds. Duggan fights up and stays on offense. Seriously, the guy won't stay down more than like 2 seconds off any move. He does the whole nothing hurts him walk (as opposed to standing there and letting nothing hurt him) and dear goodness help me they're trying technical stuff.

I think it would be a bit better to go out and watch a bunch of puppies get massacred. This is horrid and somehow gets even more boring. Another chinlock gets us nowhere because Duggan won't sell anything, not even with facial expressions. Duggan hammers away even more and Wall pulls back the mats on the floor. A HORRIBLE neckbreaker finally ends this. Duggan was going to take it like a Stunner so Berlyn had to say "turn around" to end it. Horrid, horrid match.

Rating: G. As in GO AWAY DUGGAN. This was awful and the majority of that can be blamed on Duggan. If he won't sell for Berlyn, how in the world can you expect the character to be taken seriously? Terrible match and oddly enough the second time this has happened to Wright.

Thankfully this character didn't last long and after several more months off, Wright would return to his original character. He would team up with Disco on a tour of his home country of Germany, where WCW held a pay per view called Millennium Final.

Tag Titles: Boogie Knights vs. Mark Jindrak/Sean O'Haire

So the non dancers are the champions here, but Disco Inferno

is hurt. Since we need to have a German win the belts though, we have Alex Wright teaming with General Rection for no apparent reason at all and he's wearing a sweatshirt despite wearing tights in the previous match. Rection isn't US Champion here as you saw a little bit ago but he's announced as it and holds up a German flag. He and Jindrak start us off.

We hear that Wright has been inserted into the Triangle Match later on to qualify for the Europe Cup with Awesome and Nash. It's weird but slowly and surely you get to understand German to an extent. Wright hits a sweet double nip up to get back up. That was awesome. They mention the Dancing Fools and Berlin but say tonight it's just Alex Wright. Now why couldn't we get this Alex Wright in America? This guy is freaking awesome.

The heels take over on Rection to set up the insanely hot tag that's coming soon. The General looks like a fat Jeff Hardy. And we hit an arm bar ten minutes into the match. That fails to make sense but it's WCW so whatever. The Seanton Bomb misses and there's the hot one. Actually make that a slight fever one.

There was a tiny pop at best. And he's getting beaten up now. This is already making my head hurt badly. I think Alex forgets to kick out of a rollup meaning that Mark has to just kind of let it go which looks completely stupid. Wright hits a missile dropkick from the top for the pin and the titles for him and Disco and a huge pop.

Rating: C-. Odd booking aside, this was all so that Wright could get a huge pop and that's fine. He's the hometown boy and he deserves a moment like this. I think it was mentioned on TV as a European match but Rection was never mentioned so there we are. This wasn't bad but it wasn't anything worth watching either. It's your standard TV match which is fine. Not a great match but a cool moment.

We'll wrap it up there as Wright was barely used in WCW after that and only wrestled occasionally in Germany after WCW closed. He was a guy that always seemed on the verge of being pushed but never was. Wright had a good look and was more than athletic enough to do some good things in the ring, but it's WCW so you know he wasn't going to get past midcard status, just like dozens of other talented wrestlers.

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