

Wrestler of the Day – June 10: Magnum TA

Today might be the king of “what if’s”. It’s Magnum TA.

Magnum started under his real name of Terry Allen in 1977. I’m not sure when this first match is from but it seems to be Southwest Championship Wrestling (San Antonio) at some point in the very early 1980s.

Nick Bockwinkel vs. Terry Allen

Feeling out process to start as the announcer puts over Allen as an up and comer. A headscissor puts Bockwinkel down and they trade Irish whips until Allen runs into a knee in the corner. Nick hooks a short arm scissors followed by an armbar until Allen slams him down and grabs a headlock. That goes nowhere as Bockwinkel fires off a series of hard forearms in the corner, setting up the piledriver for the easy pin.

Rating: D+. This was a squash for the most part but it was nice to see Allen get in a good bit of offense out there. There’s only so much you can do in a four minute match though, especially when you spend about a minute in an arm hold on the mat. It’s not a bad match but it’s just a TV squash.

We’ll stay in San Antonio for this match with Buck Robley, a fairly big deal in the Mid-South territory. Not sure on the date again but it’s some point in the early 80s.

Buck Robley vs. Terry Allen

A wristlock has Terry in early trouble but he reverses into one of his own. Robley takes him into the corner, only to walk into a big hiptoss. Off to a test of strength with Allen taking over, only to be headbutted down to give Buck control again. They slug it out with Robley taking over via a hard

elbow to the jaw. Choking ensues, followed by a knee drop and piledriver to give Buck the pin.

Rating: D. While the previous match was actually entertaining despite being a squash, this was long and dull with Buck taking his sweet time and boring the fans into oblivion to get there. Nothing to see here and Allen wasn't even as game as he was in the Bockwinkel match. Really boring stuff here.

It's off to Mid-South, where Allen would have his name changed to Magnum TA due to his resemblance to Tom Selleck of Magnum PI fame. Here he is with his regular tag partner Mr. Wrestling II on January 13, 1984.

Paul Garner/Don Ralston vs. Magnum TA/Mr. Wrestling II

Magnum and Wrestling are tag champions. Magnum and Garner start us off....and here's Jim Cornette. He gets in the ring and makes fun of the champs as the Midnight Express runs in through the crowd and knocks out Wrestling with a blackjack. The Express lay out Magnum as Cornette pours some liquid on his back. They pull out a pillow and tar and feather Magnum. Ok that's AWESOME. I remember hearing about this in Cornette's shoot and it resulted in the Express almost being killed on multiple instances. This was a comedy spot in Memphis but here, it's DEAD serious.

It's off to the NWA and Mid-Atlantic in particular. Magnum would be a big deal in a hurry, earning a US Title shot on March 23, 1985.

US Title: Magnum TA vs. Wahoo McDaniel

McDaniel is very old but is US Champion here. It's in a cage and is the real push for Magnum to the solid midcard spot he held until he retired. From March of 85 if you're curious. Tony puts over the belly to belly as being really sudden and Wahoo kicks him low. Magnum fires off that great right hand of his but gets rammed into the cage. Magnum is like BRING IT ON

and takes Wahoo down for two and an eruption from the crowd. A dropkick gets two.

They chop it out and Wahoo isn't going to lose something like that. Wahoo goes into the cage again and just collapses this time. A headbutt puts Wahoo down and David Crockett, the other commentator, is getting on my nerves. Wahoo sends him into the cage again and a chop gets two. The mat isn't a regular mat but is a bunch of blue gym mats shoved together. You can see the lines between them.

Magnum kicks him in the chest to take him down as the momentum doesn't last long for Wahoo at all. He does manage to get a small package for two but Magnum is back up and punching away again. Wahoo tries to escape (I guess you can win that way) and Magnum suplexes him off the top for two. Wahoo, the old school lunkhead that he is, charges off the ropes a few times into Magnum which lets Magnum snap off his belly to belly suplex finisher for the US Title.

Rating: C-. Not bad here and it's so nice to see a full match here. Magnum was so awesome and this was the moment that launched him up the card. His real classic would be later that year (and later on the tape) against Tully in a cage. Wahoo was just old at this point but this is how you go out: you lay down for a young guy clean and give your title up to him. Perfect example of that and good to see Magnum get the title that he should have had.

Here's a title defense from Great American Bash 1985.

US Title: Kamala vs. Magnum TA

This is from the Great American Bash 1985. Kamala recently had his foot/leg amputated so the timing is appropriate. Kamala jumps him before the bell and it's on. Magnum fires off a cross body and hammers away on the big man. You know Kamala never did much other than get beaten up. I never remember him winning anything of note and he's usually just around because

he's big.

Kamala wants a test of strength but Magnum is a lot smarter than that, popping him in the jaw instead. Magnum gets knocked down by a chop and kick as Kamala takes over for token reasons. A choke somehow counts as a cover and gets two. Kamala grabs Magnum's chest in a weird claw move then splashes him twice. Magnum is on his stomach so it doesn't count. That's an old standard for moon belly man. Back to the claw which wastes more time. Magnum makes his comeback and gets an easy slam. Kamala walks into the belly to belly and we're done.

Rating: D. Kamala as usual isn't interesting. He was supposed to be this savage and all that but it just didn't work at all. He did his thing and that thing never was all that interesting. This is the definition of a house show match and the whole idea was to set up a quick match for Magnum to look good in. This was pretty weak.

The main event for Starrcade 1986 was going to be Ric Flair vs. Magnum for the World Title. That wouldn't happen due to Magnum's accident, but the match did take place at AWA Superclash 1985.

NWA World Title: Magnum TA vs. Ric Flair

I need this. Flair in the 80s may be somewhat overrated, but Flair's worst match ever is going to be a glass of water in the desert on this show. Magnum is young here but looks awesome. It's such a shame what happened to him. Flair doesn't have the big gold belt yet. Nelson: "Flair like to talk about his robes and his money and his possessions. Magnum TA likes to talk about winning the heavyweight championship of the world."

They go to the mat to start and no one can get an advantage. They try it again and Magnum takes over with a hammerlock. Back up and Magnum wins a power match in a top wristlock. They

speed things up and Magnum dropkicks him down followed by a gorilla press. Flair chops him in the corner but Magnum shrugs them off and it's back to the arm. Flair throws him through the ropes but Magnum holds on and comes back in all fired up. His dropkick misses though and here comes Naitch.

The champ hits that one armed snapmare that you'll see him do a lot. There's the knee drop but he doesn't cover. Butterfly suplex gets two. Abdominal stretch has Magnum in trouble but Flair gets caught pulling trunks so the hold has to be broken. Flair snapmares him down again but the knee misses. Magnum IMMEDIATELY throws on a figure four and the champ is in trouble. You don't need a big long beatdown. This makes perfect sense so the psychology is right there. Love it.

Ric finally makes a rope but his knee is messed up now. Magnum tries to put it on again but Flair counters. A low blow takes TA down but Flair can't capitalize. Suplex gets two for Magnum. Backslide for two. Flair pokes him in the eye and throws him to the floor. Magnum comes back with a sunset flip attempt but Flair punches him in the head to break it up. This time Flair hooks a hammerlock and puts his foot on the rope at the same time. Little things like those will always get someone booed, but for some reason no one does them anymore.

Flair stays on the arm and puts his foot on the rope but swears he didn't do it. Again, little things. Crucifix position cradle gets two. Magnum fights up and hooks a sleeper. Flair slaps at the ropes but doesn't grab them so the referee won't break it up. The sleeper was Magnum's finisher before he started using the belly to belly. A splash hits knees though and both guys are down.

Flair hits a kneecrusher out of nowhere and there's the Figure Four. Magnum turns it over so Flair lets it go. He tries to hook it again just like Magnum did earlier but Flair's is countered as well. Magnum throws him into the corner for the Flair Flip (Nelson thinks it's a DQ but the referee says Flair

flipped himself. Whatever) and they go to the floor. Flair is busted so Magnum pounds away at the cut.

Magnum is all fired up but Flair says bring it on. TA keeps pounding away at the cut and Flair is bleeding nice and strong. Big right hand gets two. Backdrop puts Flair down as he's holding back on the belly to belly so far until he knows Flair is ready. They do the awesome backslide bridge out and the fans are all fired up now. There's the belly to belly (powerslam according to Nelson) but Flair's feet hit the referee. Magnum rolls him up but Flair pulls the tights into one of his own for the pin. Nelson: "Flair wins the title!"

Rating: B+. After the AWFUL stuff that we had to sit through for the last three hours, I'd have given anything that was good a solid grade here. Good match here and after Magnum had his best match ever in about two months, seeing this again in about fourteen months would have been awesome. Very good match and every time I see Magnum in a big one, it makes me kind of sad. He'd be 52 today so he could still be somewhat active. What a shame.

Like every other wrestler of his era, Magnum would head to Memphis for a few one off matches, like this one from November 18, 1985.

Arn Anderson/Ole Anderson/Tully Blanchard vs. Jerry Lawler/Dusty Rhodes/Magnum TA

That's a HECK of a lineup. This is a Bunkhouse Match, meaning anything goes. It's a brawl to start with the good guys taking over early on. They all get in the ring with Lawler just unloading on Tully in the corner. Dusty chases Arn to the floor as I can barely keep track of everything here. Magnum dropkicks Ole into the corner and we've got belts brought in for some whipping. The Andersons are busted open as Ole knocks Dusty into the corner and the future Horsemen take over. Dusty gets the belt back and starts whipping everyone until Jerry

does the same. Rhodes goes up top for a Bionic Elbow to Ole's head for the pin out of nowhere.

Rating: C. This was WILD and exactly what the match should have been. The people in the match makes this far more interesting than it would have been otherwise as this is an all star match in 1985. You could have easily found another upper midcard face and done an awesome match in Charlotte or Atlanta with this.

Now we get the peak of Magnum's career and the culmination of his feud with Tully Blanchard. Tully and his manager Baby Doll had stolen the US Title from Magnum, setting up a feud between the two of them that lasted for months. The final blowoff was at Starrcade 1985 in an I Quit match inside a steel cage.

US Title: Magnum TA vs. Tully Blanchard

This is definitely the biggest match of the Greensboro card and has a huge feud behind it. As mentioned, Tully stole the US Title from Magnum over the summer, setting off a war between the two based off the culture clash between the two. You had Tully Blanchard who was the wrestler's wrestler. He was as technically sound as you could ask a wrestler to be, drank champagne and rode around in limousines. On the other hand you have Magnum who rode Harley-Davidson's and drank beer. As mentioned, this storyline and characters would be copied almost identically for Bret Hart vs. Steve Austin in 1997.

This is inside a cage and is an I Quit match, which means anything goes and you lose when you make your opponent say I quit. Blanchard is defending if that wasn't clear. Tully takes it into the corner to start but Magnum throws that great right hand of his to knock him down. The champ keeps taking it to the mat but Magnum turns it into a brawl. Back up and Tully starts pounding away on the ribs but Magnum comes back with some HARD punches to the face.

Magnum gets him between the ropes and the cage and rakes Tully's face against the cage. Tully comes back with an elbow off the ropes to gain control before sending Magnum into the cage. Off to a reverse chinlock but Magnum fights out, only to be kneed in the back. Back up and Magnum pelts him with more right hands. The sounds as they hit make you cringe every time. Blanchard sends him into the cage and rakes at Magnum's face as the brawling continues.

Now TA (short for Terry Allen, Magnum's real name) sends Tully face first into the cage a few times and it's off to an armbar. Tully is busted BAD already as Magnum keeps pounding away. Baby Doll screams for Tully to fight back so Blanchard gets in a right hand of his own, busting Magnum open as well. Tully gets the corded microphone and we get an iconic scene with Tully shouting at Magnum to SAY IT, Magnum shouting NO and Tully hitting him in the head with the microphone.

A top rope fist puts Magnum down but he still won't say it. They get to their feet and Magnum slugs him back down before pounding him with the mic. Blanchard rips at Magnum's eyes and POUNDS him with right hands. Magnum punches him down and tries to get Tully to quit but Blanchard kicks him down. TA punches him in the corner but Tully comes out with an atomic drop. Both guys look like they've been through a war.

Tully drops some elbows and throws the referee away. He brings in a wooden chair and immediately breaks it against the mat to get a nice jagged piece. Tully tries to drive it into Magnum's already cut forehead but Magnum knocks it away and gets the wood himself with a crazed look in his eye. He knocks Tully down again and DRIVES THE SHARP EDGE INTO TULLY'S EYE, making Tully scream that he quits and giving Magnum the title. Magnums is fired up from winning the title but looks down at Tully holding his bloody eye and becomes very stoic, realizing what he did to win the title and beat Blanchard.

Rating: A+. Not only is this the best match of the night, not

only is this the best match in the history of Starrcade, but it's in the running for greatest match of all time. This was an absolute war and it felt like these two wanted to kill each other. If you've never gotten to see this, go check it out right now as it's absolutely required viewing for wrestling fans. If you want to see a fight instead of a wrestling match, check this out.

Magnum would team up with Ronnie Garvin for the 1986 Crockett Cup. They would receive a bye to the second round.

Crockett Cup Second Round: Magnum TA/Ronnie Garvin vs. Buzz Sawyer/Rick Steiner

Ronnie vs. Sawyer to get us going but it's off to Magnum quickly. Magnum works on Buzz's arm but we're clipped to him working on Rick's arm. Go figure. Sawyer comes back in and goes nuts on him with all kinds of pounding away. Off to a chinlock and also off to Steiner. We're clipped to a bit later in the heel beatdown and a DDT by Sawyer for two.

Magnum grabs a small package for two as well as a backslide. He finally gets the hot tag to Ronnie who throws some punches and tags right back out. Magnum hits the belly to belly on Steiner and in 1986 that might as well have been a bullet to the head. Again, way too short. Is a full match over three minutes too much to ask?

Crockett Cup Quarter-Finals: Tiger Mask/Giant Baba vs. Magnum TA/Ronnie Garvin

Tiger Mask vs. Garvin starts us off but we're joined in progress again. Garvin works on the leg and it's off to Magnum vs. Baba. Baba runs him over a bit until we're off to Tiger again. Magnum gets a suplex and we're clipped to him being caught in a front facelock. Sunset flip gets two for Magnum and it's back to Baba. Garvin comes in to get smacked around a bit by the Giant and everything breaks down again. Baba's arms are frighteningly skinny. Tiger hits a dropkick and senton on

Magnum. He goes up for the cross body but jumps into a belly to belly for the pin out of nowhere.

Rating: D+. From what I could see here this wasn't that good. They were all faces which hurt things a lot. The ending wasn't bad but the match was still pretty dull. This sets up another all face final which isn't going to do this show any favors. Nothing great here but that's just the way things have been going all day tonight.

Crockett Cup Finals: Road Warriors vs. Magnum TA/Ronnie Garvin

All faces here. The winners also get a million dollars. Animal and Magnum get things going. We get some surprisingly quick stuff until Magnum takes over with a dropkick. Animal takes him down with a top wristlock and they trade arm work on the mat. Off to Hawk who puts on a chinlock...and they clip this match too. ARE YOU SERIOUS???? The whole show is about one freaking tournament and you give us a total of ONE MATCH THAT ISN'T CLIPPED??? ARE YOU KIDDING ME???

A middle rope splash misses and Garvin gets a small package for two. Off to Magnum who doesn't have as much luck with Animal who stomps away on the US Champion. Off to Animal again and it's chinlock time. Powerslam gets two as Magnum is in trouble. Magnum grabs the belly to belly for two as Hawk saves. Hot tag to Garvin and down he goes almost immediately.

Garvin tries an abdominal stretch on Hawk but punches Hawk instead. The problem with this is he punches Hawk so hard that he breaks his hand. I'm not sure if this is kayfabe or real but it doesn't really matter either way as Animal hits a pretty weak clothesline on Garvin and gets a quick pin for the tournament win and the million bucks.

Rating: D+. Apparently Garvin's hand was broken coming in. Imagine that: Ronnie Garvin does something stupid like HIT A GUY IN THE HEAD WHILE HE HAS A BROKEN HAND. Garvin's team deserves to lose after that. This match was pretty boring and

the ending didn't help things at all. Nothing to see here other than the end of a long and boring show.

Magnum's last feud was over the US Title which was held up after Magnum went a bit nuts. He fought Nikita Koloff in a best of seven series for the vacant title. Here's match #4 from the 1986 Great American Bash.

Magnum TA vs. Nikita Koloff

Koloff is up 3-0 coming into this. They stare each other down to start and fight over some lockups. Magnum runs the ropes and collides with Nikita, sending him out to the floor. Back in and Magnum sends him into the corner before fighting over a top wristlock. Koloff wins the power battle but gets countered into a hammerlock. Nikita powers out again and sends Magnum down with a back elbow to the jaw. A backbreaker and slam get two each for the Russian and he throws Magnum outside. Ivan gets in a few cheap shots before Nikita throws Magnum back in. TA comes right back in with a sunset flip for the pin out of nowhere.

Rating: D+. The match isn't all that great from modern standards as it was obvious they weren't going to go four straight for Koloff but the fans back then weren't as jaded as we are today. The story here was that Magnum was in over his head against the much stronger Nikita but hung in there until he found a way to win, giving him confidence for later in the series.

Here's the final match from WCW Worldwide on August 23, 1986.

US Title: Nikita Koloff vs. Magnum TA

Magnum is just ungodly over at this point. They fight over a lockup to start until Magnum grabs a headlock. A cross body gets two on Koloff and he gets sent out to the floor via a dropkick. Back in and Magnum cranks on the arm, taking Nikita down to the mat to drive knees into the arm. TA fights to get

the arms pinned to the mat but Nikita rolls on top. They fight over control and roll out to the floor for a bit until they head inside again for a top rope ax handle from Magnum. An armdrag into an armbar keeps Nikita in trouble as we go to a break.

Back with Magnum missing a cross body and falling out to the floor. Ivan offers a distraction so Nikita can ram Magnum's back into the apron. TA's neck gets snapped across the top rope and the Russian is in full control. A one arm slam puts Magnum down for two. We hit the bearhug for a bit until Magnum smacks Nikita's ears. Magnum's sunset flip is countered and it's back to the bearhug.

This time he fights out with a slam and fires off right hands with all he's got. A dropkick gets two but Ivan pulls Magnum to the floor. That's fine with Magnum as he piledrives Ivan on the concrete. Back in and Magnum hits his belly to belly but Krusher Khrushchev comes out for another distraction. Magnum goes after him but walks into a chain shot from Nikita for the pin and the title.

Rating: C+. This was much more about the backstory and the fans' reaction than the match itself. Koloff taking the title was unthinkable because there was no way Magnum could possibly lose something like this in the end. They had to do it this way though to set up Magnum for the World Title at the end of the year.

Magnum would wreck his car just before Starrcade 1986, ending his career forever. It's widely known that he was scheduled to win the NWA World Title at that show, which makes you wonder what was going to happen had he won the title. I doubt he would have been able to save the company, but it certainly would have been worth seeing. Magnum wasn't a great wrestler, but he had a ton of charisma which is far more important. Make sure to check out the I Quit match as it might be the best WCW/NWA match ever.

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