

Wrestler of the Day – August 29: Bobby Heenan

Today is the greatest manager and one of the best talkers of all time: Bobby Heenan.

Heenan got his start in the AWA where he was the top manager and occasionally wrestled. I have no idea when this took place but I would assume some point in the mid to late 1970s.

Crusher/Dick the Bruiser/Little Bruiser vs. Blackjacks/Bobby Heenan

Little Bruiser is a midget brought in to neutralize Heenan. We start with the comedy pair as Heenan drops to his knees to fight. Little Bruiser immediately dropkicks him out to the floor and we have a standoff. Big Bruiser comes in to face Mulligan and easily takes him down with a snapmare into a neck crank. Little Bruiser sneaks in for some cheap shots before Dick knees Mulligan in the ribs for two.

Off to the Crusher vs. Lanza with the Blackjacks double teaming Crusher in the corner. Little Bruiser chases Heenan around for a bit, allowing Crusher to get his hands on Heenan. Bobby gets whipped into the Tree of Woe but Little Bruiser gets him down with a kick to the ribs. It's back to Crusher vs. Lanza with Crusher going to the eyes, unlike the hero he's supposed to be. Bruiser comes in for some knees to the ribs before going after Lanza's bad knee.

Mulligan comes in to save his partner as everything breaks down for a little bit. Bruiser takes a beating but ducks Mulligan's punches to frustrate the big man. For some reason Mulligan tags in Heenan, allowing Bruiser to backdrop him for two. The fight heads to the floor with the Blackjacks being rammed together. Heenan is busted wide open so the good guys pound away at the cut. Oh man he is gushing blood.

The Blackjacks get punched again but finally save their manager from the Bruiser. Back to Crusher as everything breaks down again. The Blackjacks are thrown into Heenan and Little Bruiser is launched onto Mulligan for two. They do the same thing to Lanza for the same but finally Little Bruiser's top rope splash to Heenan is good for the pin.

Rating: D+. This wasn't great and the biggest problem was not knowing what kind of a match this was supposed to be. They kept jumping back and forth between a brawl and a comedy match and it became an issue more than once. The match would have been a lot better if it was just a handicap match but it wasn't terrible.

We'll jump to the WWF now for a rare singles match at MSG on November 26, 1984.

Salvatore Bellomo vs. Bobby Heenan

This is from 1984 and there's no story to it. Heenan just used to be a wrestler on occasion. Heenan bails to the apron of course because he's Bobby Heenan. Bellomo beats on Heenan like he stole something and flips him in the corner. Heenan takes a bunch of dropkicks, including one sending him into the post. Heenan needs a doctor. Back in and Bobby takes even more of a beating.

Bobby actually takes over with a rake to the eyes and a lot of basic stuff. Then again, what are you expecting from Bobby Heenan the Wrestler? They collide and Heenan looks dead. Bellomo drives in some headbutts but Heenan pokes him in the eyes. Out to the floor and Heenan pops him as he comes back in. A guillotine puts Sal on the floor for the third time. Bellomo tries a sunset flip but Heenan punches him in the face, drops on top of him, AND GETS A CLEAN PIN.

Rating: A+. Bobby Heenan got a clean pin. Do you realize what it means for your career when you get pinned clean in Madison Square Garden by BOBBY HEENAN??? The match sucked but totally

awesome for surprise value. This is on Heenan's DVD, mainly because I don't remember him ever winning another singles match on his own.

Heenan would manage Big John Studd and help him in some tag matches, such as this one at MSG on June 21, 1985.

US Express/George Steele vs. Adrian Adonis/Big John Studd/Bobby Heenan

This is from MSG and this show is a bit more famous because of the debut of Randy Savage on it. No one wants to start with the Animal. Barry and Adonis (not yet gay or in pink) start us off. Let the stalling begin! Before anything happens, Heenan is brought in so Windham tags Steele. Heenan DIVES to the floor to hide and it's back to Adonis. Now it's back to Windham before any contact has been made at all.

Off to Studd to meet Windham and Barry is knocked down pretty easily. It isn't often that Barry has to speed things up but he does it here as he doesn't have another option. He keeps going for the slam which doesn't work at all. A cross body gets two. Clipped to Heenan being brought in and Barry beats him down like a world champion beating on a manager.

Everything breaks down and Steele rams all three heels into the posts. Rotundo comes in and Heenan's mouth is bleeding. Mike takes Studd down and works on the arm. Clipped to Adonis beating on Rotundo. Gorilla gives us some analysis of what we're seeing and the fans chant USA. Windham finally comes in as does Steele, wanting to get his hands on Bobby. There wasn't a tag and everything breaks down. Steele goes outside and comes back with a chair which he hits the referee with for the DQ.

Rating: D. Pretty boring match here and I really don't get the point of them giving us what appears to be a focus on Steele and then having him lose his match. Then again I think they did that more than once in this series so it must be a running

theme. That doesn't mean it makes sense but it's what they're doing I guess.

Another tag match from The Big Event.

Big Machine/Super Machine/Lou Albano vs. Big John Studd/King Kong Bundy/Bobby Heenan

Ah yes the Machines. Now this was the epitome of a comedy angle that took off for a little while. The idea was that Andre the Giant was suspended for (kayfabe) not showing up for a match. Soon thereafter two new masked guys from Japan appeared: Super Machine (Ax from Demolition) and Giant Machine (duh).

Over the Summer they feuded with Heenan, Studd and Bundy with guest appearances by Piper Machine, Animal Machine and Hulk Machine. It was total tongue in cheek, kind of like Mr. America with Hogan. They were eventually joined by Big Machine who was Blackjack Mulligan when Andre could barely move.

Andre was kind of the manager and only wrestled occasionally. The angle ended about two months after this to set up Mania 3. Anyway let's get to this. We get a shot from the broadcast booth and the ring is TINY. Studd and Super Machine start us out. The Machines' strength is freaking impressive.

Ax is by far and away the smallest one. What does that tell you? Gorilla says he's been over 500 pounds before but at Mania 4 said the biggest he ever wrestled at was 440. I don't want to live in a world where I can't trust Gorilla Monsoon! Ok I'm back now I think. With Big Machine down Heenan comes in and goes for the mask. Super Machine is like screw that and drills him. Bundy was just a big fat waste of oxygen. You can tell he was just thrown into Mania. Look where he was just 4 months later. Heenan comes in again and Albano comes in also.

Super Mario beats on him for a bit but a thumb in the eye and the heels beat up Albano. Andre has had enough and just comes

in there and starts cleaning house which causes the DQ. He was just freaking terrifying when he got mad. Ax being the smallest guy by far is a freaky sight.

Rating: C-. It was a comedy match so that's fine. The Machines were just a fun team so this worked fine. Andre was fun when he could move and this was no exception. It was nothing serious and it wasn't supposed to be. Instead it was a way to make the fans laugh and it succeeded.

More Machines, from September 22, 1986.

Bobby Heenan/Big John Studd/King Kong Bundy vs. Super Machine/Big Machine/Hulk Machine

Super is Ax from Demolition, Big is Blackjack Mulligan and they're a comedy team that usually had a guest third partner that more often than not was Andre. They're here because Andre is suspended before he turned heel. Still in MSG here and it's yet again a fun match to send the fans home happy. Hogan vs. Bundy to start us off here. Slam to Bundy and the fans are exploding already. See what I mean about sending them home happy?

Off to Studd vs. Big Machine now which lasts for a second as it's back to Bundy. Off to Super now and Studd comes back in for some double teaming. You can tell that's Ax as he hammers away like he would in Demolition a few years later. They mention a pair of tags so apparently I'm not going crazy. Bundy vs. Mulligan (I think) and we get a front facelock by Bundy to give him control.

Super comes in and gets hammered down quickly as the fans want Heenan in there. Bundy vs. Ax if you're confused at the moment. The future Demolition guy avoids a splash and hits some shots but winds up back in the corner again. Hey it's Heenan for a change. He gets caught in the ribs but tries a headbutt which hurts himself. Off to Hogan now who cleans house.

Heenan gets to his corner but Bundy can't master the concept of slapping hands so Bobby takes more of a beating. It's off to Bundy and Super Machine now with the masked dude in control. Mulligan has been in here just a bit the entire match now. Bundy takes over with a splash and then he and Studd just change places. Now there's a tag or something but it's kind of confusing. The Machines do some masked magic to bring in Hogan. Slam to Studd and the leg drop ends this.

Rating: C. Again this is the same thing as before with nothing special about it but the fans loved it. Can't really complain but with a two hour tape and about 90 minutes of it being the same stuff over and over again this was a bit much. Either way though this wasn't bad and at least it's over now.

One more from the Machines on October 4, 1986.

Big Machine/Super Machine/Piper Machine vs. Big John Studd/King Kong Bundy/Bobby Heenan

Ah the Machines. Now this was a fun concept. They were supposedly a new tag team from Japan but they had zero accents whatsoever. If I remember right Super Machine is Ax from Demolition, Big Machine is Blackjack Mulligan and I think you get the other one. There was usually a third guest partner such as Animal Machine, Piper Machine or Hulk Machine. Yes it's stupid comedy but it was designed to be stupid comedy, which takes away a lot of the pain in it. This is from 86ish and we're in Boston.

Gene is just saying it's Piper and he flashes his face to the crowd. Bundy starts with Super Machine. Bundy pounds him into the corner to start but misses the avalanche. Machine gets a cross body for two and it's off to Studd and Big Machine. They collide and no one really goes anywhere. Piper wants in and the fans pop big for his tag. He takes the mask off for like the fourth time and pulls it back down. Sunset flip gets two as Piper is cleaning house.

Piper starts his usual antics and pokes Studd in the eye before slapping Heenan. Studd is like enough of this and goes for the bad knee of Piper. Bundy adds some shows and it's off to Heenan. Naturally he can't do much of anything so it's back to Bundy. Piper ducks underneath the big swings from the bald dude and turns it back to the comedy as he should.

And never mind as Bundy drills him. He tries for the mask and brings in Heenan for no apparent reason. Back to Bundy and/or Studd who destroy Piper for a good while. Another thumb to the eye lets Piper bring in Big Machine. They're doing the bodyslam challenge for 50 grand still here but apparently Heenan isn't paying. Wait wasn't that usually 15,000? Bundy misses a knee drop but they stay on Machine.

Studd gets the chinlock going as this is going way too long now. Back off to Piper which is pretty stupid. Studd meets him coming in so Piper is like screw the mask and rips it off. He manages to slam Studd for two but an accidental elbow drop from Bundy ends it seconds later. That was a big surprise indeed.

Rating: C. The crowd carries this one. It's not much of a match but the crowd was white hot the entire time. I've always had a soft spot for the Machines as they were a straight up fun gimmick. This went on too long but there are times when you need to have a goofy match to give the crowd a laugh and this is a textbook example. I'm overrating it but I had fun with it.

Heenan would also team up with the Islanders at Wrestlemania IV.

Islanders/Bobby Heenan vs. British Bulldogs/Koko B. Ware

There's actually a story here. Heenan comes to the ring in a dog handlers' outfit (remember the package from earlier?) because Matilda, the dog mascot of the Bulldogs, is back from being dognapped, presumably by the Islanders. Koko is there

because when you need a filler, you call Koko B. Ware. We start with Dynamite vs. Tama but it's quickly off to Haku vs. Davey Boy for a nice power match.

Davey slams him down a few times and it's off to a quickly broken chinlock. Back to Tama who is gorilla pressed up and down and it's back to Haku. Jesse: "Heenan seems to be saving himself." Gorilla: "Yeah for the senior prom." Did Gorilla just make a sex joke? I can feel my childhood crumbling as I type this. Koko comes in for some quick shots but it's back to Dynamite for the clothesline that Benoit copied from him.

The Kid charges into a kick in the corner and here's Heenan for the first time. He stomps on Dynamite, gets hit once in his padded suit, and runs away. That's about what I expected. Tama tries a Vader Bomb but hits knees, allowing for another tag to Koko. He pounds on both Islanders but Haku takes him right back down. Tama comes in with a top rope chop and Heenan gets his second tag. Heenan chokes a bit but misses a charge into the post. Everything breaks down and the Islanders drop Heenan onto Koko for the pin.

Rating: C. I told you Koko was worthless in this. The stuff with the tag teams was pretty solid but the rest of it was as dull as you would expect. These six man tags with the Bulldogs in there don't go that well for them but this was their last try at it. This was basically a comedy match and it was only kind of funny.

Heenan was known as the Weasel and would take part in a series of Weasel Suit matches. It's a regular match where the loser is put into the suit and humiliated. From Wrestlefest 1988.

Ultimate Warrior vs. Bobby Heenan

This is kind of a famous match. The loser wears a weasel suit. You figure out who wins this one. I'll give you a hint: he's crazy. Neither gets an entrance which is weird. We get some of Warrior's music but that's it. Heenan runs for his life

multiple times but Warrior drops to the floor so Heenan can't see him and surprises him. Yes, Warrior used his brain and it worked.

Heenan gets a foreign object and pops him with it after calling Warrior a son of a female dog. Wouldn't an object like that be fine to a guy from Parts Unknown? Heenan hits him with it like five times and can't drop Warrior. He more or less just jabs it in Warrior's throat over and over but it doesn't work at all. Warrior bangs on his chest and I think you can figure the rest out from there.

Warrior puts him out with a sleeper which makes sense here and puts the suit on him. Where does one get a weasel suit? Was there a furry convention in town? You know for being in a sleeper for about 30 seconds, he's WAY out of it. Warrior bangs on his chest once he gets it done like someone standing over his fallen prey. Ooh that was a good one. Bobby wakes up and realizes he has claws and a tail. This is like Kafka's worst nightmare.

Rating: N/A. This was for comedy more than anything else. They tried to make the match into nothing at all and that's what the best answer was. Heenan was always a good sport though and could do just about any kind of comedy so this was perfect for him. This was an idea that had been used in the AWA so having it brought back here makes sense.

Heenan managed the Red Rooster but wound up yelling at him and getting fired. Here's their showdown at Wrestlemania V.

Red Rooster vs. Bobby Heenan

There's actually a backstory: Heenan managed Rooster but said he was limited so Rooster dumped Heenan. Bobby is hurt so he brings the Brooklyn Brawler with him. Those sentences take as long to type as the match lasts as Rooster hits him once, Heenan misses a charge into the post, gets whipped into the buckle and the match is over in 30 seconds. To recap, Rooster

beat him with an Irish whip.

Tully Blanchard was scheduled to wrestle in the main event of Survivor Series 1989. Cocaine intervened though so Heenan replaced him.

Ultimate Warriors vs. Heenan Family

Ultimate Warrior, Jim Neidhart, Rockers
Andre the Giant, Arn Anderson, Haku, Bobby Heenan

Andre can barely move and it's sad to see. Neidhart and the Rockers start before anything happens and Jim is in trouble early. Here's Warrior without any music (he's IC Champion here) and a big clothesline puts Andre on the floor, which draws a countout because when the bell rang, Andre was the only Heenan Family member in the ring. We've already got the same problem the Hogan match had.

Warrior and Haku get things started for all intents and purposes but it's quickly off to Anvil vs. Arn. Andre (in blue instead of black) yells incoherently at the Warrior as he leaves. It's Haku vs. Anvil now with Haku in control. A superkick puts Neidhart down and eliminates him like it's a squash match. Off to Shawn to make Haku miss him and now it's off to Jannetty.

Haku tries a double clothesline but only hits Shawn. He picks up Marty but Shawn dropkicks Marty down onto Haku for a near fall. Off to Arn who tries a double suplex with Haku on Jannetty, but Shawn catches his partner in a nice move. Double superkicks put the wrestlers on the other team down and it's off to Marty vs. Haku. Warrior gets a tag in a few seconds later and Haku immediately goes for the eyes.

Haku backs Warrior into the corner and Heenan points to Arn for the tag in a funny bit. Arn immediately gets taken down and Marty hooks an armbar. Anderson brings Marty to the corner and brings in Heenan for a single punch before it's back to

Haku. Arn knees Marty in the back and Haku superkicks him down so Heenan can drop a knee on Jannetty for the pin. You could loudly hear them calling spots on that sequence for some reason.

Warrior comes in so here's Anderson again. There's a bearhug by the Champ and Haku gets one as well. Off to Shawn who gets knocked to the floor with a few shots. Shawn moonsaults out of the corner over Arn and Anderson is in trouble. Warrior and Michaels both punch Anderson at the same time and Arn backs away from Warrior. A splash from Shawn gets two and it's off to Haku.

That doesn't last long at all as a cross body eliminates Haku to get us down to Warrior/Shawn vs. Heenan/Anderson. Heenan tries to get in some cheap shots on Shawn which draws in Warrior. Why? Was he that afraid for Shawn's safety? Arn dumps Shawn to the floor and Heenan goes up...and then regains his sanity and climbs back down. Arn keeps asking for help from Heenan because he's getting tired so it's finally back to Bobby who runs at the first sign of trouble.

Shawn rams his head into the back of Arn's head and both guys are down. They slug it out but Shawn walks into the spinebuster (called the Anderson Drop) for the elimination. Warrior fires off some shoulders but Arn ducks and sends him to the floor. Heenan goes up again but thinks better of it again. Off to Heenan but Warrior quickly Hulks up so we see some more Anderson. Warrior fights him off as well and whips Arn into Heenan to knock Bobby to the floor. The gorilla press and splash get us down to one on one. Warrior sneaks up on Heenan and what do you think happens here? A shoulder block and splash ends this.

Rating: C-. I think it was watching the whole show before this but this was another dull match. Warrior was never in any danger and I think everyone knew it. To be fair, this would have been better with Tully out there and you can't fault the

guys for that. Heenan being in there had to turn it into a comedy match and I can't hold that against them. Still though, another dull match in a series of them tonight.

One of Heenan's last in ring feuds was with the Big Boss Man due to Heenan insulting Boss Man's mother. From November 20, 1990.

Bobby Heenan vs. Big Bossman

This was when they were feuding over Heenan running his mouth about Bossman's mother. He says he's sent mom a dozen roses and he has a Hogan wrestling buddy for Bossman. Heenan begs for forgiveness and gets hit in the head with the wrestling buddy. Heenan tries to hit him with the microphone. Bossman hits him with the nightstick a few times and is pinned in seconds.

I think you get the idea here. Heenan was the guy that could talk all day and then take a beating to save his clients for later. No he isn't a great in ring worker, but he's a great performer. He knew how to make fans hate him and could always take the beating to make the fans happy. Couple in the great talking and he was invaluable.

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