

Wrestler of the Day – September 30: Ezekiel Jackson

Today is basically the modern day Ahmed Johnson minus the potential: Ezekiel Jackson.

Ezekiel Jackson debuted in FCW under his real name of Rycklon Stephens in 2007. We'll jump ahead to his time as Brian Kendrick's bodyguard and this match as part of their feud with Carlito and Primo. From Smackdown on December 19, 2008.

Ezekiel Jackson vs. Carlito

Carlito hammers away to start and actually has some success. Jackson drives him back into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs, only to charge into a boot to the face. Brian Kendrick trips him up from the floor and Ezekiel runs Carlito again with raw power. We hit the bearhug on Carlito but he slaps his way out. Jackson just glares at him and nails Carlito with a clothesline. The veteran is sent outside but has to block Sliced Bread #2 from Kendrick. Back in and a high cross body gets two on Jackson but he forearm's Carlito out of the air and ends him with a release Rock Bottom.

Rating: D+. Not a terrible match here with Carlito being the veteran that was in way over his head and not being able to fight off a monster like Jackson. Big Zeke was still new at this point so it was a good way to help introduce him to the WWE. Not much to see here but it could have been far worse.

Here's some slightly better competition on Smackdown, April 3, 2009.

Jeff Hardy vs. Ezekiel Jackson

Extreme Rules. Jeff hammers away to start but walks into a slam. He sends Jackson into the middle buckle and nails the slingshot dropkick, only to have the Twist of Fate shoved away. A hard shoulder block drops Hardy and we hit the bearhug. They head to the mat with the hold still on but Hardy

fights up with some elbows to the head. The Whisper in the Wind drops the big man and a running clothesline puts him on the floor. A plancha takes out Jackson and Kendrick before a Twist of Fate and Swanton end Jackson back inside.

Rating: D+. That bearhug dragged the match way down and the ending was the only way they could go. Jackson was getting a push but there's a big difference between a push and beating the second biggest star in the company. It's a watchable match, though I have no idea why this was Extreme Rules.

Jackson would go to ECW and get a title shot at the 2010 Royal Rumble.

ECW Title: Christian vs. Ezekiel Jackson

Christian is defending and man that ECW ring announcer has an annoying voice. Regal is with Jackson here. According to Striker, Jackson went to Columbia Law School. Now there's a factoid that fell through the cracks. Jackson shoves Christian into the corner and then does it again into the ropes so the champion slaps him in the face. After a brief chase, Christian dropkicks Jackson out to the floor.

The springboard plancha takes Jackson out and we head back in. Christian finally gets caught in the corner and pounded on before having the Killswitch easily blocked. Instead Christian chokes away on the ropes and hits another shot to the face. Jackson throws Christian to the floor where Regal tries to throw him back in, earning himself an ejection. Off to a neck crank back inside which Jackson picks up into a kind of cobra clutch slam for two.

A vertical suplex gets two for Big Zeke and it's time for more choking. A sunset flip is easily blocked by Jackson and it's back to the chinlock. Striker tries to figure out what a peep is, as he knows it as a something made of chocolate. Some shots to the face get Christian out of trouble for awhile, or at least until a clothesline to the back of the head gets two.

Jackson hooks both of Christian's arms back for another hold before putting the champion on top. The superplex is blocked and Christian hits

a top rope back elbow for two (LOVE that move). Jackson's big clothesline misses and a middle rope dropkick gets two for the champion. A spinwheel kick gets two on Jackson but a swan dive misses and gives Zeke a near fall as does a backbreaker.

The tornado DDT gets ANOTHER two for Christian so Jackson takes his head off with a clothesline. Off to a sleeper from Christian when the Killswitch doesn't work but Jackson counters into a powerslam position to ram Christian's back into the buckle. Christian slides down Jackson's back and grabs the Killswitch out of nowhere to retain.

Rating: C+. Trim two minutes out of this and it goes WAY up in quality. The period of near falls went on too long without getting any significant heat from the crowd. Jackson would get the title in a little over two weeks on the final episode of ECW because if there's one man that should be the final ECW Champion, it's a musclehead that could barely get through a five minute match most of the time.

Here's the rematch on the last episode of ECW on SyFy on February 16, 2010.

ECW Title: Ezekiel Jackson vs. Christian

This is under Extreme Rules and Christian brought a shopping cart of weapons. Christian gets him to the floor and here's Ryder to be a dick. He gets beaten up like a little kid and Tiffany bounces down to the ring to take down Rosa. Back from a break and it's all Big Zeke. Christian hits the Pendulum Kick into a trash can lid into Zeke.

Regal and Zeke set up a table but get it knocked into their faces. Some WEAK kendo stick shots give the advantage back to the Canadian. This was far better on the first viewing. Regal interferes and breaks up the Killswitch and Jackson slams Christian through a table to completely kill the history of ECW forever. Until TNA redoes it soon and kills its corpse.

Rating: C-. It's ok but the ending was again fairly clear. You knew Vince was going to go with the big title change to end

things and that it would be fairly stupid. The match was ok at best but with three interferences for Jackson it became watered down and overbooked. Glad to see they kept with the original ECW vision on that one.

After some time back in FCW, Jackson would return like any monster should. From Raw on November 1, 2010.

Zack Ryder vs. Ezekiel Jackson

My mind is still blown and this is after a break. Yep it's over in 20 seconds with the release Rock Bottom.

And again from Raw on November 22, 2010.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Alex Riley vs. Ezekiel Jackson

If Riley wins then Miz is in the tournament, I think. Very smart booking here. More or less this is Riley's punishment for the DUI. Take a guess how this ends. Hint: it involves Riley being pinned very fast.

Jackson would join Wade Barrett's Corre and be the man that could slam Big Show. From Smackdown on May 7, 2011.

Big Show vs. Ezekiel Jackson

Show is on Raw but he's a tag champion so he can be on both shows. All of the Corre is here with Jackson. Kane comes out to even the odds a bit because those two vs. Corre has gone SO well in the past right? We ring the bell after a break which helps my timing a lot. Well I'd assume it rang just as we came back as they don't seem to have done much but were locked up when we came back. Hindrances all around.

Show uses technical stuff of all things and gets a front facelock. Jackson is like screw that and backdrops Show with ease. Jackson rams into Show and a slam gets two. Off to a chinlock as I think Jackson has a minor hernia. Suplex gets Show out of the hold as this is better than it sounds. Show fires off some clotheslines to set up the chokeslam. Corre tries to get involved but Kane fights them off...kind

of. Everything breaks down into a brawl until we get back into the ring. Jackson gets a boot and a big clothesline for the pin at 3:32 shown.

Rating: C+. Not bad here as the battle of the big men worked pretty well here I thought. Jackson's power is scary stuff as he was throwing Show around even better than Cena does and almost at the level Lesnar was. I probably overrated this but this was one of the better battles of the big men I've seen in awhile.

And an eight man tag at Wrestlemania XXVII.

Corre vs. Big Show/Kane/Kofi Kingston/Santino Marella

Corre is the sequel to Nexus and is made up of Barrett/Slater/Gabriel/Jackson. Barrett is IC Champion and Slater/Gabriel are tag champions. Santino and Slater start things off but after a quick hiptoss from Marella here's Big Show. Matthews: "He's certainly not unorthodox." Yeah actually he is, given how big he is. Everything breaks down and Kofi kicks Barrett's head off. In all the calamity, Santino Cobras Slater into the WMD for the pin in just over 90 seconds. This would be the replacement for MITB for the Mania payday.

The team would split soon after this and Jackson wanted some gold of his own. Here's his second chance at the Intercontinental Title at Capitol Punishment.

Intercontinental Title: Ezekiel Jackson vs. Wade Barrett

There's the required USA chant from the idiot fans. Jackson almost gets the Rack about a minute in but Barrett hits the floor to hide. Barrett gets a big boot in the corner to take over for two. Boss Man Slam gets two also. Pumphandle slam works on the second attempt and Barrett keeps his dominance going. A running big boot misses though and Jackson starts his comeback.

Another charge misses for Barrett but he blocks the slams. Wasteland hits and it only gets two. Barrett's face is great as he is SHOCKED. There's the USA chant again to waste some intelligence. Here come the

slams and Jackson is all fired up. Torture Rack goes on and we have a new champion.

Rating: C-. Not much here as Jackson did what he needed to but it was still pretty boring. Not sure where he goes with it either but he needed to win a title to validate himself I guess. Barrett has already proven himself so the title doesn't mean much to him anymore. Not bad but kind of dull overall.

Here's one of his few defenses from Smackdown, on July 15, 2011.

Intercontinental Title: Ezekiel Jackson vs. Ted DiBiase

New ring announcer tonight who looks a bit better in a blue dress than Chimmel does. DiBiase hits Jackson and that doesn't go well for him. Out to the floor as Booker rambles about his Fave Five as is his custom. Jackson is rammed into the post which gets two in the ring. Cody is watching and the referee, the former Nunzio, is really loud here.

DiBiase takes over and throws on a chinlock. The following clothesline is countered by Jackson. How has no one else ever countered that? Apparently Ted has blown all of his money and it's implied that it was on Maryse. Here come the slams but DiBiase counters into a Dream Street attempt but Jackson shrugs it off and slams Ted again. Rack doesn't work but the second attempt does with the submission coming at 3:45.

Rating: C. See, this is what Jackson needs more of: wins where he gets in some trouble but eventually uses the power game to make his comeback and set up his finishing stuff. Nothing fancy here and it worked just fine. Also helps when he actually, you know, wins his matches instead of losing them.

Here's a one off match from August 5, 2011 Smackdown, which I happened to be at live.

Ezekiel Jackson vs. Zack Ryder

Cody and Ted are banned from ringside. Cole hates Ryder so I'm really not sure if he's face or heel here. Ryder takes over and gets some kicks to

the head. Front facelock doesn't work at all and Jackson catches a middle rope cross body to start up the slams. Rack and we're done at 2:30 with the tapping coming on Jackson's head.

Jackson would fall down the card in a hurry, including this match on Smackdown, December 30, 2011.

Ezekiel Jackson vs. Drew McIntyre

Jackson has some hair now. We get Drew's full entrance and I miss his song. Big Zeke controls with power for a few moments but Drew takes over pretty quickly. Jackson beats him down more and this match isn't going to last long. A big boot by Drew gets two. Northern lights suplex gets two. Jackson backdrops him and the fans don't care. Side slam gets two for the power man. Torture Rack is countered and Drew gets a boot up in the corner. It gets two even with his feet on the ropes. Drew argues with the ropes and Jackson rolls him up (with a big handful of tights) for the pin at 3:52.

Rating: D-. Terribly boring match here and I have no idea what the point of it was. Drew has fallen so far in the last year and a half that it's almost scary. I don't get the point in having Jackson use the tights but maybe it'll be addressed in the future. Jackson is pretty worthless as he isn't interesting at all and now he has to cheat to win matches over Drew Freaking McIntyre? Not a good match at all.

Then it all starts crashing down. Here's a rematch after Jackson lost the night before on Raw. From the Live Smackdown Special on February 21, 2012.

Ezekiel Jackson vs. David Otunga

For the dozen of you that demanded the rematch! Lillian screws up a bunch of the entrance for Otunga and Laurinits. Otunga gets in him in a dragon sleeper position and pounds away on the chest but Jackson runs him over with a shoulder. He hits the clotheslines and a splash in the corner, followed by a backbreaker. There's the Torture Rack but Otunga makes the

ropes. Otunga guillotines him on the top and the spinebuster ends this at 1:21.

Time to put over someone new. From Smackdown, June 1, 2012.

Damien Sandow vs. Ezekiel Jackson

Sandow's Titantron graphic has a theme of a curtain being pulled back like at a theater. Sandow says he won't be in this match and goes to leave but Jackson pulls him back in to get us going. The Torture Rack is countered and Sandow goes psycho. Russian legsweep puts Jackson down and the neckbreaker ends it at 1:36. Sandow gets in the Thinking Man position during his cover. I'm liking the 2012 Genius a bit more.

We'll wrap it up with his one match in TNA under the name Rycklon Spephens (his real name) as one of Dixie Carter's hired guns.

Ethan Carter III/Rhino/Rycklon Stephens/Gene Snitsky vs. Team 3D/Tommy Dreamer/???

This is a hardcore war but entrances are staggered every 90 seconds and the win can't take place until the last man enters. It's Carter vs. Dreamer to get things going and both have weapons. They quickly head outside with Dreamer's knees being sent into the steps. Back in and Dreamer hits a quick suplex with a Singapore cane before driving in a bunch of right hands in the corner. Rhino comes in to make it 2-1 and nails Dreamer with the trashcan lid. A bad looking spinebuster sets up some cane shots but D-Von ties things up with a trashcan. D-Von takes over with a few shots of his own and we take a break.

Back with Snitsky giving the Carters an advantage (and looking to weigh about 400lbs) until Bully Ray runs out to even things up again and clean house. Ray looks up at Dixie and Mo as the ECW guys keep dominating. Stephens comes in to complete Team Dixie and clean house with a chair. The heels destroy everyone until the big mystery partner is Al Snow.

The fans want Head (and have a bunch of mannequin heads of course) as Al beats up everyone again. Ray nails a top rope cross body (didn't look bad either) to take out the mercenaries. Spud tries to make a save but gets

What's Up from Head. Snow moonsaults onto every heel not named Rhino as this just keeps going. Not that it matters as 3D ends Rhino at 17:37.

Rating: D+. This was just WarGames minus the cage and a lot of the talent. There wasn't much to see here and Al Snow was about as uninteresting of a partner as there could have been. Also, I didn't need a second hardcore match in an hour but this show is an ECW tribute show anymore so you have to have it.

Ezekiel Jackson is a guy that was all look and little skill. He was nowhere near as bad as some guys though and had a great look, but you can only go so far on that. Jackson didn't have a varied offense and a Torture Rack and release Rock Bottom is only going to get you so far. He could have been better with some smaller muscles and more training. Also keeping him as a bodyguard or monster would have been a better fit. Still though, not the worst.

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