

Wrestler of the Day – December 18: Dick Slater

Today we're looking at the man who might have been the inspiration for Heath Slater: Dick Slater. That might not be inaccurate actually as they were both from the south/country, both guys were known for their punching (Slater was a Golden Gloves Champion) and...well they're both named Slater.

Slater got started back in the early 1970s in Georgia. We'll start things off in All Japan in 1981.

Dick Slater vs. Tiger Jeet Singh

Singh destroys a bunch of seats on the way to the ring so Slater throws a chair at him. He brings a chair inside but Tiger jumps him from behind and chokes with a scarf. Slater is pulled up against the post as the choke continues. The referee can't break it up and for some reason it's not a DQ yet. He finally lets go and the brawl is on with Slater in big trouble. Now Slater starts choking him with something as they head inside. Singh starts wrapping the leg around the post before throwing in a small table.

Dick takes it away though and hammers away in the corner before throwing Singh at the table. Back to the floor with Singh hitting him in the jaw with what appeared to be a bottle. They get back in to slug it out with Slater getting the better of it and dropping some elbows to the chest. He cranks on a spinning toe hold but Tiger's manager Bobby Heenan throws a SWORD in. Singh nails Dick in the head a few times with the heel of the sword to finally throw the match out.

Rating: C-. Quite the wild brawl here with a freaking SWORD being used to end things. Singh is a guy I've heard a lot about and the few times I've seen him have impressed me well enough. This wasn't much of a match but it was an entertaining enough brawl to carry things on.

It's off to the States now with Slater at the first Starrcade.

Wahoo McDaniel/Mark Youngblood vs. Dick Slater/Bob Orton

Slater and Orton put Flair out with a broken neck and McDaniel and Youngblood are Flair's friends, here for revenge. Youngblood and McDaniel are both Native Americans so they come to the ring in big headdresses. Before the bell Dusty Rhodes is introduced to the live crowd for no apparent reason. Wahoo and Slater start things off with McDaniel quickly throwing him over the top and out onto the apron.

Back in and Wahoo works on the arm before it's off to Mark for some arm work of his own. We cut to an overhead camera view which is pretty disorienting. Slater is slammed down but comes back with a quick rollup for two. Mark puts on a hammerlock as we go back to the overhead view. Slater is kicked to the apron again but comes back in with a Russian legsweep for two. Orton comes in with a knee to the back and it's Youngblood in trouble.

A gorilla press backbreaker has Youngblood down again but Bob misses an elbow. After a quick chase on the floor, Orton brings Slater back in after only a brief rest on the apron. Actually scratch that again as the tag doesn't count for some reason. It's very clear that the tag team formula hasn't been invented yet. A crisscross results in a backbreaker to Youngblood and a tag off to Slater. There's a gutwrench suplex for two on Mark and he falls to the floor for some stomping by Orton.

Youngblood breaks the count by a second but the punishment to the back continues with a reverse chinlock. Orton lets go on the hold and stomps him in the face for good measure. Slater comes in and breaks up a tag before suplexing Mark down for two. Back up and they bang heads, allowing for the hot tag to Wahoo. He cleans house with an atomic drop on Orton and a big chop for good measure.

Everything breaks down and it's Wahoo getting double teamed for a change. A belly to back suplex gets several two counts for Dick before it's back to Orton. Bob misses a headbutt and it's off to Mark who speeds things up almost immediately. Wahoo is sent to the floor and Youngblood has to fight off both villains on his own. After a quick double beating, Orton hits Youngblood with the superplex for the pin.

Rating: C. Not a terrible match here but the majority of it was Slater and Orton toying with Youngblood and McDaniel which doesn't make for very entertaining action. I'm not sure what sort of revenge this gets for Flair and it makes the Native Americans look pretty lame. Also this is the fourth straight loss for the good guys here.

And again at the second Starrcade in 1984.

Mid-Atlantic Title: Ron Bass vs. Dick Slater

This is the other fallout match from the attack on Steamboat as it was Bass helping and Slater who was tied up in the corner. Bass is defending and is also half of the Mid-Atlantic tag champions with Black Bart. Slater knocks Bass to the floor to start and it's time to stand around. Slater chases Dillon into the ring and out to the floor as we're still waiting on any significant contact.

Back in and Slater suckers Bass into the corner before putting on the move of the night with a headlock. Back up and we go right back into the headlock as we wouldn't want this to get too exciting. Bass bails to the floor but gets pulled back inside very quickly. Back in and Bass rams Slater into the buckle and caught in the ropes where Bass punches him back and forth like...something that pops right back up when it goes down.

Slater comes back with some right hands and a boot over the face. After Slater is sent to the floor, Bass pounds him down but Slater starts Hulking Up. It's short lived though as during the comeback, Slater hits the referee. Dillon comes in and gets beaten up as well but after a slam and legdrop to Bass we get the DQ.

Rating: D+. This wasn't as horrible as some of the other matches, but again this was nine minutes of punching and headlocks. That's one of the major problems with this show: everything is so basic and low level that it's almost impossible to get interested in anything. Also great job here of having Slater get revenge: by losing.

Off to the WWF with Slater at The Big Event in 1986.

Iron Mike Sharpe vs. Dick Slater

Oh yeah Slater is the rebel. No one cares. Sharpe is up there with Horowitz and Brawler in the jobbing hall of fame. Mike likes to talk a lot. The announcers talk about how great Sharpe is. Really? From what I've read he was completely OCD so having this many people in the audience must have driven him insane. There really isn't much here as it's really a glorified squash for Slater who would never mean much in national wrestling, at least not in this company. He was ok in other companies but he's at his best in ring stuff here, which isn't saying much at all.

Monsoon wants to know why Sharpe has had his arm in a cast kind of thing for over 8 years and Valiant just starts screaming at him that he should go out to dinner with Sharpe and ask him because Valiant doesn't know. That came out of nowhere. Anyway, Slater hits an elbow from the top and jackknifes (it's a king of rollup, not the powerbomb) him for the win.

Rating: D. Did we really need six minutes of these two guys? I certainly wouldn't think so. This wasn't interesting or particularly good but a jobber got beat up so there we are.

Slater was on Saturday Night's Main Event VIII.

Don Muraco vs. Dick Slater

Slater, a southern mainstay, was the Rebel (meaning he wore Confederate attire) for a cup of coffee around this time. Muraco hammers away to start and grabs an airplane spin, only to have Slater slip down the back and hammer away. A top rope elbow to the head gets two with Fuji making the save. Fuji keeps cheating by tripping up Slater, setting up a clothesline from Muraco for the pin (with feet on the ropes). This was about it for Slater and it's easy to see why.

Back to WCW at Clash VIII where Slater actually got a decent push.

Sting/Ric Flair vs. Great Muta/Dick Slater

Funk is nowhere in sight and Slater has an arm injury of his own coming in. Sting and Muta get us going with Sting avoiding some kicks to the face and taking Muta down with a clothesline. Muta bails to the floor for a meeting with Gary Hart as Ross is looking around for Funk. Back in and Sting armdrags Muta down but the Japanese villain takes him into the corner for some quick kicks to the ribs. Sting grabs the arm again and brings in Flair to a nice reaction.

Slater comes in and gets chopped in the corner before Flair kicks him onto the ropes. Ric runs Muta off the apron and goes up top for an elbow to the top of Slater's head. Muta comes in without a tag and kicks Flair to the floor, following up with a big plancha. All four guys brawl on the floor until Flair and Sting get back in the ring for a breather. Back in with Flair chopping on Slater's chest as Gary Hart is seen with the branding iron that hurt Funk's arm.

Sting gets the tag and goes to work on Slater's bad arm before it's back to the Flair for the same. The heroes tag again and Sting gets two off a suplex. Back to Muta who walks into a gorilla press from Sting and a belly to back from Flair. Muta gets in a shot to Flair's back followed by the handspring elbow to put the Nature Boy in trouble. Slater comes in with right hands and chops before ramming Flair face first into Muta's feet.

Muta sends Ric to the floor where Slater hammers away before throwing him back in for kicks to the chest. Flair gets caught in a nerve hold but comes back with a suplex, allowing for the hot tag off to Sting. Everything breaks down and Muta takes a quick Stinger Splash to set up the Scorpion Deathlock but Gary Hart comes in with a roll of coins to knock Sting silly behind the referee's back.

Muta can only get two off that though so he powerbombs Sting for another near fall. Back to Slater who catapults Sting's throat into the bottom rope and stomps away. Sting gets sent to the floor and into the barricade for good measure. Slater tries a sleeper but Sting quickly jawbreaks his way to freedom. A backdrop is finally enough for the tag to Flair as everything breaks down again. Muta sprays yellow mist in Sting's face and Slater comes in to hit Flair in the face with his cast, busting the world

champion open and finally drawing the DQ.

Rating: B. This was a heck of a tag match with Flair and Sting working together due to a nice combination of power and technical abilities. Slater wasn't the best replacement for Funk but there had to be a way to keep the tag match for the pay per view. The ending was there to keep the feud alive which is what TV is best used for at times.

We'll jump ahead again to Worldwide on August 10, 1991.

Dick Slater/Dick Murdoch vs. Sting/Rick Steiner

Slater and Murdoch are the Hardliners and are doing a collectors' agency gimmick. They've recently injured Scott Steiner so Sting is standing in to avenge his buddy. Rick and Slater get things going with Steiner going after the arm, just like the Hardliners did to Scott. It's off to Sting to work on the arm some more with the good guys in full control.

Murdoch comes in to walk into an armdrag as well but he goes to Rick's eyes to escape. Now the Hardliners start in on the arm as we've got a theme going here. Steiner backdrops Slater and makes the hot tag to Sting as everything breaks down. The Hardliners double team Sting so Rick brings in a chair to clean house for the DQ.

Rating: D+. This was mainly backstory and angle advancement as Rick was out for revenge for his brother. It's not a very good match but at least it didn't last long and had a logical ending that would keep things going in the feud. Believe it or not, the Hardliners never went anywhere.

As usual, Slater would stick to tag team matches, including at Clash of the Champions XX.

Dick Slater/Greg Valentine vs. Bobby Eaton/Arn Anderson

This is an odd match as everyone is a heel. Slater and Valentine have Larry Zbyszko (with a broken arm) in their corner. Arn and Valentine get things going but everything quickly breaks down with Anderson and Eaton being sent to the floor. Back in and Slater gets in a cheap shot from the apron to take Arn down and things start to break down again. Bobby gets caught in a swinging neckbreaker from Slater followed by a Russian

legsweep for two.

Back to Anderson for a spinning arm lock on Dick but it's quickly back to Valentine. Anderson and Eaton take him into the corner but Greg fights out with some chops. Valentine takes him into the corner with Arn being put down on the mat for a stomping. Eaton comes around the ring and jacks Slater's jaw before breaking up Valentine's Figure Four. Anderson scores with the spinebuster for two as everything breaks down again. Zbyszko accidentally hits Valentine with the cast, allowing Eaton to drop a middle rope Alabama Jam for the pin.

Rating: D+. The match wasn't bad but it's some incredibly strange booking. The fans didn't have anyone to cheer for in the match and the whole thing was kind of bizarre as a result. It's not a terrible match but it's a good explanation for why heels and faces need to be balanced out.

We'll switch things up a bit at Clash of the Champions XXIII.

Ron Simmons vs. Dick Slater

Slater is a replacement for an injured Paul Orndorff, who was supposed to defend his newly won TV Title against Simmons tonight. Orndorff is at ringside and immediately draws Paula chants from the crowd. Simmons jumps Slater to start and hits a quick atomic drop to send Slater into the corner. A hard slam and shoulder give Ron a two count and Slater bails to the floor.

Slater comes back in for a test of strength and actually holds his own before breaking up a sunset flip. Ron loads up a three point shoulder block but Orndorff trips him up to give Dick control. Slater clotheslines him down and mistakenly thinks he gets the pin, allowing Simmons to get up and powerslam Dick for the pin.

Rating: D+. The match didn't have time to get going and it was clear that they didn't have a chance to set up anything important. This was just a placeholder until Simmons could get his hands on Orndorff for his title shot and everyone knew it. Slater wasn't bad but he could have been any warm body for the match.

A few years later, Slater would hook up with Bunkhouse Buck to win the Tag Team Titles. Here's one of their few defenses from Fall Brawl 1995.

WCW Tag Titles: Bunkhouse Buck/Dick Slater vs. Harlem Heat

The talented tag team is challenging here. The idea here is more about the managers though as apparently they like each other. The match is going to suck though. Oh and along with this, we only have Arn/Flair and War Games. We're an hour and five minutes into the show. That simply can't be a good sign. I also have issues with a guy names Dirty Dick. Also, they gave THESE TWO the tag titles after like 5 months of Heat vs. Nasty Boys?

I don't like the Nasties, but they're light years ahead of these morons. Booker and Slater start so at least the one good wrestler in the match is starting us off. Slater is one of those good old southern boys that allegedly was really talented but never shook either the southern stigma or the lack of talent to get over. Crowd is deader than Booker's career at this point. Again I love how two hicks like this are supposed to be trained wrestlers.

There's something amusing about that. Yeah the idea here is that Sherri has a bump on the head and isn't herself. Somehow this was put on national TV as a mainstream wrestling company with angles like that. Wow indeed. Apparently Dick Slater is one of the best wrestlers in the history of the sport. I can barely laugh at how stupid that is.

On the floor the managers are playing this messed up cat and mouse game that is just rather creepy. The fans prove they're still alive with a short and incomprehensible chant. It's weird hearing them talk about Booker as a power guy. That's most odd indeed. Heenan seems like he wants to talk about Buck being undressed. Ok then. The heels are controlling most of the match here.

You can tell the match itself is pretty awful as I've barely

talked about it. I'm trying very hard to think of anything else to talk about so that I don't have to actually pay attention. Fact: I used to have this tape and this match cured my insomnia over a summer. I didn't sleep regularly for a month but this match put me to sleep in five minutes. That's saying something. We talk about WarGames to kill some time.

This match needs to end BADLY. And trust me, since this is WCW< I'm sure that will mean both possible things. Stevie gets the I guess you could say hot tag to get the crowd to do nothing at all. And here is that finish as Parker and Sherri get into the other ring and kiss. At the same time the Nasty Boys are here and rip Slater's boot off to smack him in the head with it to give the Heat the titles. While this is happening, Sherri and Parker are still kissing. I hate this show.

Rating: F+. This was just terrible. The ending sucked and the match was worse. Who thought that Buck and Slater were the best options? Seriously, the American Males were on the preshow. They're not the best in the world by any stretch of the imagination but they're better than Buck and Slater. It's stuff like this that is freaking idiotic and gave WCW the bad name it had.

We'll stick with the tag team theme as Slater entered the Lord of the Ring (Battlebowl) competition 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??? Everyone in theory, as the same idea happened about four times in this show. 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.

Battlebowl Round Two: Dick Slater/Bobby Eaton vs. VK Wallstreet/Jim Duggan

Duggan and Wallstreet start fighting before the match so of course the others go and break it up. My headache is now even worse. This is like some abortion of a comedy match and it's just bad. Duggan randomly yells and he and Slater ram into each other and sell it like death. Duggan punches Wallstreet and Eaton rolls him up to make the finals. Thank goodness it's over. I guess this was just building to the epic Duggan vs. Wallstreet showdown.

Rating: G. This was an insult to my intelligence as a human being. This might be the worst WCW show ever. And it's not like you can make fun of it like Uncensored. This is just terrible.

Battlebowl

DDP, Barbarian, Dick Slater, Bobby Eaton, Rocco Rock, Johnny Grunge, Ice Train, Scott Norton

And yes, one of those guys gets a world title shot next month. Let that sink in for a bit. Just a regular battle royal here with the winner being Lord of the Ring. Almost immediately we see the problem here: there is no feuding at all. Think of any battle royal you've seen. You have people with feuds or angles or whatever to pair off and a lot of random fighting. Here it's just the random fighting with 8 midcard guys.

Scratch that. You have DDP, two tag teams and three jobbers. DDP hits the floor but the referee misses it so he goes back in. We actually go split screen for a one ring battle royal. Wow. Rocco is out. Ice Train yells at the crowd. No one cares. Eaton is out and he punches the tar out of Parker. Nice shot. Slater is out too. I hate this show. Norton is out. DDP, Ice Train, Johnny Grunge and Barbarian are the final four.

Diamond Cutter to Barbarian. And to Ice Train. And to Grunge. Page pins Grunge...because you can do that. And he pins Ice Train. He gets two on Barbarian. Oh I hate this show. Diamond Dallas Page vs. Barbarian is the co-main event of a PPV. Barbarian hits a SICK tombstone on DDP. That looked as bad as the jumping one at Mania this past year. Oh look it's a sleeper. The flying headbutt misses and a Diamond Cutter ends it. Wow that was uninteresting stuff.

Rating: F. The second biggest star was Barbarian. Let that sink in. I don't need to say anything else. The title shot was revoked tomorrow night due to one foot hitting the floor, making this whole show entirely pointless. Apparently being gone about 2 months is now being on the shelf for six months. Wow.

We'll wrap it up on Nitro, August 12, 1996 with Slater as half of Rough and Ready.

Dungeon of Doom vs. High Voltage/Rough & Ready

The Dungeon is Morruss/Sullivan/Faces of Fear. The other team is comprised of four guys that aren't important enough to list off. Sullivan is in street clothes. Morruss starts vs. Kaos and High Voltage double teams him to take over. The Faces of Fear run over Rage (part of High Voltage) and this breaks down quickly. Very rarely in this are there only two people in the ring at once. Sullivan hits a running knee to Rage while he's in the Tree of Woe and it breaks down again. Meng kicks Rage's head off for the pin. This was just a squash.

Slater is a guy that needed the right circumstances to really make things work. He was out of his element at the end of his career and it showed really badly. By the time the 90s rolled around, he was really just a veteran that could work a watchable match. Back in the territory days though, the guy was a beast with one heck of a right hand. As usual, the 80s get it better than the 90s.

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