

Wrestler of the Day – February 1: Jack Brisco

Today we'll be getting a good old American and my favorite old school wrestler: Jack Brisco.

Jack started off as an amateur wrestler at Oklahoma State University and would win an NCAA Championship. After kicking around what would become the Mid-South territory, Brisco would head to Florida and dominate the territory for several years. Brisco's greatest achievement saw him win the NWA Title from Harley Race in 1973 and would hold it for over a year. Here's a title defense from that first reign in Japan against Japanese legend Giant Baba.

NWA World Title: Jack Brisco vs. Giant Baba

2/3 falls. Baba drives him down by the arm to start as the audience is silent. The Giant cranks on the arm in the slow start to the match. Brisco goes after the leg and they hit the mat for a bit. Baba leans up and puts on a chinlock but Jack goes back to the leg lock. The chinlock breaks Jack's grip again and they get back to their feet...before going back to the leg lock on the challenger.

Jack stands up and ties his legs into Baba's before leaning forward for a few two counts. Baba finally kicks him away but Jack casually takes him down and works over the leg even more. When he realizes that's only getting him so far, Brisco tries to keep Baba's shoulders down for a pin but Baba slips out and gets on top of Jack. He pulls on Brisco's arms to work over the upper body before adding a boot between Jack's shoulders for more pressure.

The hold stays on for a few minutes until Brisco tries to run away, only to drive his own shoulder into the buckle. It breaks the hold but Baba

comes back with a series of chops and a dropkick, followed by a Russian legsweep for the pin and the first fall. Brisco is dragged to the corner by a few men and looks like he was hit by a bus.

The second fall begins with a swinging neckbreaker from Baba for two before Jack grabs both of the Giant's legs to slow him down. Baba is taken down and a knee drop gets two before the champion grabs a chinlock. Giant finally fights up with a top wristlock and scores with a big boot to the face for two. Brisco looks terrified but comes back with a belly to back suplex and the figure four to tie things up at a fall apiece.

Baba is badly limping as we start the third fall. He hides in the corner until Brisco is tired of waiting and drives in knees to Baba's injured leg. A big elbow drop on the leg has Baba cringing but he chops his way out of another figure four attempt. He kicks out of another and gets his second wind. A few knees to the face and a second Russian legsweep get two but Brisco comes back with a knee crusher. Out of nowhere Baba hits a quick running clothesline for the pin and the title to send the crowd into....nothing resembling a frenzy.

Rating: C-. The match wasn't bad but the first fall was pretty dull stuff. Baba was a different kind of big man as he really just wrestled like a normal sized guy but happened to be huge. Brisco got so much better when he was fired up but the first fall didn't do the match any favors.

Brisco would get the title back a week later and hold it for another year before losing it to Terry Funk in Florida. Jack would be in Japan a lot over his career, primarily in All Japan. Here's a match against Abdullah the Butcher in the 1981 Champions' Carnival, a major tournament in Japan.

Jack Brisco vs. Abdullah the Butcher

Butcher jumps Brisco during the entrances and won't let him in as the streamers are thrown into the ring. Jack is sent into the post but

finally scores with some shoulders through the ropes as the opening bell rings. The fans actually cheer for Brisco as he scores with some hard left hands. Butcher will have none of that though and sends Jack outside but Brisco hits him in the head with the bell to get a breather. Back in and more left hands have the bloody Butcher in trouble but he headbutts Jack right back to the floor. They head into the crowd where the fist fight continues and I can't see anything until it's a quick double countout.

After several international tours as world champion, it was back to Florida where Jack would dominate the territory again, including this \$5000 challenge match against Buzz Sawyer from some point in 1981.

Jack Brisco vs. Buzz Sawyer

Brisco snaps off a series of armdrags and Buzz rolls to the floor. Back in and it's a hiptoss into a short arm scissors on Sawyer with Jack rolling him around the ring without breaking the hold. Sawyer still can't break the hold as Gordon Solie tells us that the winner of this gets a shot at NWA World Champion Ric Flair soon after this. Back up and Jack cranks on the arm as Flair comes out to watch the match. Brisco cranks on an armbar until Sawyer counters into a hammerlock of his own. Some stomps to the arm have Jack in more trouble and he can't hiptoss out of the hold. Sawyer lets him up and tries a powerslam, only to have Jack fall on top of him for the pin out of nowhere.

Rating: D. This was pretty awful with the arm work eating up most of the match and then the ending coming out of nowhere. I guess the idea was to set up the idea of Flair being able to lose the title on a moment's notice, but it could have used a better match leading up to that ending.

Brisco would move on to the Mid-Atlantic territory for an awesome feud with Roddy Piper. The Hot Scot refused to fight Brisco for his Jack's Mid-Atlantic Title unless he was paid \$10,000. After months of Brisco going after Piper, here's the showdown from July of 1982.

Mid-Atlantic Title: Roddy Piper vs. Jack Brisco

Brisco shoves Piper away to start and a hiptoss sends Poper to the floor. Back in and Roddy tries some amateur stuff and is just in over his head. Roddy tries to pull the hair and is easily sent out to the floor before heading back inside for a brawl. Jack grabs a headlock before drilling him with a hard clothesline and we hit the headlock again. They fight over rollups with the headlock still applied but Roddy can't break it up.

Piper gets back up and rams Jack face first into the buckle a few times but STILL can't escape. Jack tries to climb the corner with the headlock for a takeover but gets countered with a belly to back suplex to break the hold. Piper grabs a front facelock and actually has Brisco in trouble for a change. He rolls Jack over for a cover but gets caught with his feet on the ropes like a good villain is supposed to.

Brisco is sent face first into the buckle but comes back with some right hands from the knees. Piper throws him out to the floor and then back inside for a slugout followed by a sleeper from Roddy. Brisco almost breaks the hold and Piper pulls him back down by the hair to get it back to the mat. Jack comes back with a belly to back suplex and both guys are down. Now it's Brisco with a sleeper of his own and Piper is in big trouble until he rakes the eyes. Piper is rammed face first into the buckle and they slug it out with Roddy being knocked to the floor where he finds a roll of coins to knock Brisco silly for the pin and the title.

Rating: B-. I was really digging the drama here as Piper was finally backed into a corner and had to fight, which was something he did as well as anyone else. This is what a veteran like Brisco is supposed to do: put over a rookie like Piper at a level that he's never been able to reach on his own.

One of Brisco's last major appearances before his retirement in February of 1985 was at Starrcade 1983, defending the Mid-Atlantic Tag Team Titles with his brother Jerry against Ricky Steamboat/Jay Youngblood.

Tag Titles: Ricky Steamboat/Jay Youngblood vs. Brisco Brothers

The Brothers would be Jerry, who you might remember as one of Vince's Stooges in the Attitude Era and the legendary former world champion Jack. They're defending here against the guys they took the belts from. Jack and Steamboat start things off in what sounds like a dream match. It's a feeling out process to start with neither guy being able to get any kind of advantage to start. Steamboat does some fast leapfrogs but Brisco grabs the ropes to avoid a chop. Mosca, the big guy mentioned earlier, is referee here.

Jerry comes in to work on the arm for a bit before it's back to Jack for an armbar. Jerry comes in again and pounds away in the corner but Ricky chops him down and tags in Jay. Youngblood counters a slam into an armdrag on Jerry before bringing Steamboat back in to pound on the arm as well. Jay jumps off the top onto the arm as well but it's off to Jack again to drop Steamboat throat first onto the top rope.

A quick suplex gets two for Jerry and he hooks a short arm scissors to keep Ricky in trouble. Ricky escapes in an impressive power display by lifting him off the mat and dropping him down on his back. Hot tag brings in Jay and things break down. The Briscos double team Youngblood to take over again but Jerry can only get two off a suplex. Jerry tries his abdominal stretch cradle but Jay kicks out again. He tries again but rolls Jay into the corner for another tag to Steamboat and the future dragon cleans house. A double chop puts Jerry down and Steamboat slams Jay down onto Jerry for the pin and the titles.

Rating: C+. Nice tag match here to give Steamboat and Youngblood their fifth tag titles. Yeah even back then there were teams who would get a bunch of titles in just a few years. Anyway, the Briscos would be retired

soon after this while Youngblood would die in 1985 due to injuries suffered in the match. Good stuff here though.

Jack would join up with his brother in the WWF in 1984 as he was almost done with his career. Here's one of his only matches in the company, from November 3, 1984.

Jack Brisco/Jerry Brisco vs. Steve Lombardi/Charlie Fulton

Jack and Steve get things going with Lombardi being grabbed by the arm before it's off to Jerry to stay on that arm. Off to Fulton vs. Jack with the Brisco cranking on the Fulton's arm again. The Brothers change a few more times to work on the arm with Jerry beating up both jobbers like it's nothing. Jack puts Lombardi in the figure four and we're done quick.

Unfortunately Jack Brisco is one of those older generation wrestlers who doesn't have a lot of full matches available online. At the same time though, he's one of those guys that you often hear listed among the best of all time. If you want to see a guy that can build up a match into something special with patient and skill, you'll find no better than Jack Brisco. If you have time to watch his stuff, check him out and go to school.

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