

AWA All-Star Wrestling – January 8, 1984: A Nice Big Ending Angle

AWA All-Star Wrestling

Date: January 8, 1984

Location: KMSP-TV Studios, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Commentator: Ron Trongard

It's another one of these as I have a pretty good pile of them to go through, mostly in chronological order. I don't really remember much from last week's show other than a blooper and a long midcard match with a guy named Milkman. This show wasn't awful though so maybe this will be good. Let's get to it.

No blooper to open this week as we go straight to the opening video.

Rooster Griffin vs. Greg Gagne

They fight for control and go to the mat quickly as Rooster cheats a lot. After nearly breaking Rooster's neck on a leapfrog, a pair of dropkicks beats Rooster.

Rating: D. Somehow that took four minutes. Gagne was the boss' son and really not that good. Therefore he was pushed forever and almost made world champion in 1988. Now he wasn't as bad as he's made out to be, but he's the guy that wouldn't be there unless his daddy owned the place.

But the AWA shirt!

The High Fliers say they're ready for the Sheik's men soon. Sheik's arm is all healed so it's time to take him out. Talking isn't the High Fliers' strong suit.

Craig Carson vs. Steve Regal

No not that Regal. Regal is the heel here and Carson is a jobber. Carson throws him around and Regal complains a lot. We're into the familiar AWA style (granted most 80s promotions did this) of waiting around for a long time for the pin. Regal wins with a vertical suplex of all things. This is 2/3 falls. Ok then.

However instead of going to the second fall, we go to a Nick Bockwinkel interview. He has a clip of Blackjack Mulligan who says he's coming to Minnesota. He's a mercenary and will come after his partner Lanza later. Bobby Heenan has called him and Mulligan is replacing Blackwell in the match we had set up last week.

Bockwinkel praises Mulligan and says he's not used to being seen as a 245 pound weakling but that's what it's going to look like when he hooks up with Mulligan. Crusher and Mad Dog say they don't care about how big their opponent is because they'll chop him down to the size of a midget.

I don't think we're getting the second fall. Here's another promo from Billy Robinson and Brad Rhengians who get Saito and Ventura at the same upcoming show. They think they can win.

Rock N Roll Buck Zumhofe says he's ready for Regal and he'll win with the power of rock n roll.

Apparently we don't get the second or third fall.

Rating: D. The match was nothing of note but I'm really confused as to why they talked about how that was just the first fall and specifically said it was two out of three. First of all it was pretty much a squash so it's not like a second fall really would have changed much, at least not based on what we saw. The match was boring on top of all that.

Black Panther vs. Ken Patera

Patera is a world tag champion and is a Sheik here. He's

blonde and works over the shoulder of the Panther and we're in Squashville here. Backbreaker gets two as does an elbow. A suplex ends this. Is that a special move in the AWA or something?

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Here's Verne Gagne to talk about the big tag match coming up. He also talks about the new head coach at the University of Minnesota. Blackjack Lanza pops up to talk about how he wants to beat up Heenan.

Baron Von Raschke/Kenny Jay vs. Masa Saito/Jesse Ventura

Baron is a replacement for some guy that had travel issues. Saito breaks a board with his head pre match. Jay vs. Saito to start but it's off to Jesse very quickly. Same with the Baron but Saito chops him down. Off to Jay who gets caught in the Tree of Woe by Jesse. He gets stomped for awhile until Baron comes in and hammers on everyone. Jay is still stuck upside down. There's the Claw on Jesse as Jay is finally down. And it's a double DQ so it doesn't matter. It's too short to rate but it's more of a brawl than a match.

Saito and Ventura destroy both guys post match. Jim Brunzell finally makes the save but takes the salt to the eyes. Greg Gagne makes the real save and chases both guys off. After it takes forever to get them to leave, here's promoter Wally Karbo who says Saito won't keep getting away with this. Ventura and Saito come in and Karbo leaves. He says that wasn't their fault and that they'll do their thing. The High Fliers come in and say they want Ventura and Saito to end this. The whole angle took like ten minutes.

Overall Rating: C-. Better show this week, mystery second fall aside. The ending angle was something fun as we had a violent ending that sets up future matches and a big feud between the

Far East West Connection and the High Fliers. The rest of the show was pretty worthless though.

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Best of the WWF Volume 2 – Three Title Changes

Best of the WWF Volume 2

Host: Gorilla Monsoon

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Gene Okerlund, Gorilla Monsoon, Jesse Ventura

This is a weird time for the WWF as it's pre-Hogan dominance (although he was champion) and Sammartino is out of the picture. Backlund had just lost the title as the people have turned on him harder than they have on Cena today. There are some historical moments on this tape though which is a big rarity in this series. Let's get to it.

Coliseum Video opening and all that jazz.

Gorilla looks WEIRD with some hair on his head.

Tag Titles: Tony Atlas/Rocky Johnson vs. Adrian Adonis/Dick Murdoch

We have, in order, Abraham Washington's sidekick, Rock's dad, a not yet gay man and a guy formerly known as Captain Redneck who was a real life member of the KKK. Atlas and Johnson are champions. This is from a TV taping in Hamburg, Pennsylvania

from April of 1984. Adonis vs. Johnson gets us going. The champ armdrags everyone in sight and takes over with an armbar on Adonis.

And there's no commentary for awhile. Kind of a nice change of pace actually. Adonis cartwheels away from a monkey flip but walks into a slam and armbar. Off to Murdoch and he's earned an armdrag as well. Atlas comes in and I like getting to see some of their stuff. I don't get to see much from the pre-Hogan era so this is pretty cool. The challengers get Atlas in the corner and pound away on him.

This is before the tag team formula was perfected so things are a bit different than what you'd likely be used to. Headbutt by Atlas puts Murdoch down but Adonis cheats to keep control. Off to Rocky who dances about and beats up everyone. Well not his partner. Or the referee. The fans either for that matter. Gee maybe he isn't beating everyone up. Atlas and Murdoch fight to the floor as everything breaks down. In the melee, Adonis rolls him up with an O'Connor Roll (while standing on his head. Take that Ziggler) for the pin and the titles.

Rating: C. The match was fine but what surprised me the most was how short it was. Unless there was some clipping that I missed (and I don't think there was), this was six minutes long at most. It's very rare to see quick title matches like this back in the day but it was pretty entertaining while it lasted.

Intercontinental Title: Pedro Morales vs. Don Muraco

This is from MSG in January of 83. Morales had taken the title from Muraco over a year ago. See, back then title reigns were VERY different. The title was introduced in 1979 and Ricky Steamboat was the 11th reign in 1987. In 8 years, the title changed hands 10 times. Think about that. Of the first ten reigns, the shortest was five months. Today, that would be a

long reign. Back then it was by far the shortest. Three of the first ten lasted over a year. Think about that for a minute and now compare it to today.

As for this match, Muraco jumps the champ in the corner but Morales fights back quickly. Morales rips half of the shirt off Muraco and the challenger is in trouble. Corner sunset flip gets two for Morales. Muraco has a sleeve of his shirt still hanging off his arm. Pedro knocks him to the floor and this is all Morales so far. Muraco does a Flair Flop off the apron to the floor.

Pedro goes up top but doesn't dive onto him as Don hides under the floor. That was pretty smart. Muraco tries to hide as Morales stalks him. Boot to the back of the head and it's all Pedro. Gorilla criticizes him for not going for the kill, which is pretty good analysis. And there's a low blow by Muraco and both guys are down. Still using the t-shirt, Muraco chokes Pedro with it in the corner, only to get low blowed as well.

Ok NOW the t-shirt is finally gone. A running knee in the corner misses for Morales though and he might have blown it out. There's a lot of blowing in this match. Muraco moves in on it with a leg snap out of the corner. Clipped to a spinning toe hold being countered by Pedro. Morales, ever the genius, tries a backbreaker (despite sending Muraco's shoulder into the post on the counter) and reinjures his knee. Boston Crab (Pedro's finisher) is quickly broken by the ropes. Pedro tries a slam but the knee buckles and Muraco falls on top for the pin and the second title change in two matches on this tape.

Rating: C-. Not great or anything but again it's really cool to see these rarities as you always hear about how these legends held titles but you never see how they won them. Pedro was far better in the 70s than 80s as he was washed up at this point, but he could still put people over, which is what he did here. Decent stuff, although a lot of stalling hurt it.

Killer Kowalski vs. Pedro Morales

Talk about legends. Now Kowalski was the big time brawler of his day. He also trained HHH so there's his biggest contribution to wrestling more than likely. This would be about 8 months after Pedro lost the world title, putting it in late July of 74. We're in MSG here of course. Jesse Ventura is alone on commentary here. That's a new one on me. Kowalski used the Claw on various body parts so he uses it on the leg here. Pedro's leg problems seem to be a theme on this tape.

Clipped to more leg work. Jesse doing play by play is a very odd thing. He doesn't shut up but keeps things fresh somehow. It's more like a radio broadcast. The Claw is something that needs a good announcer to put it over because just from a visual perspective, it looks really stupid. Pedro comes back with some left hands and grabs Killer by the ears. Back to the knee and Pedro is in trouble again. How did this guy win the first triple crown?

They trade punches to the ribs and Morales takes over. Jesse is surprisingly good at play by play. Morales is left handed if that gives you a better mental picture of this. Morales grabs the Claw on the ribs. Clipped to a double stomp by Kowalski. This commentary has been recorded far later as Jesse talks about Kowalski like he's retired, which he would have been. Kowalski bites the face and Pedro bites back. Killer takes him down but misses a double stomp. Off to the Claw on the stomach again and Pedro is in trouble. They brawl to the floor and it's thrown out. WEAK.

Rating: D. I love old school stuff and I've always liked Pedro, but this was boring. The Claw is one of those moves that works as a quick finisher but having it in there all the time like this got really boring after awhile. At least it wasn't very long. Kowalski is a guy that seems like he'd be better in quick spurts. This match felt like it would have been better for a live crowd, which is fine, but it does bring

into question why it's on a tape.

Jamaica Kid/Billy the Kid vs. Sky Low Low/Little Brutus

MIDGET TIME!!! This is from I'd assume the 70s and it's joined in progress. Clipped almost immediately and I have no idea who is who out there. The fans seem to be laughing more than watching. Low Low gets out of a crucifix hold from Billy and it's a decent power display all things considered. Clipped again to a chase scene. Where's my Benny Hill music? Apparently this is from 1970. Oh dear. Sky goes up and gets caught in the ropes, falling down to the apron. He looked like a baby. There's some miscommunication between the kids and we're clipped again. Sky pins Billy off a shoulder from Brutus. No rating, obviously.

Jamaica Kid taunts the winners post match and has to jump into the arms of the referee. WAIT THIS IS TWO OUT OF THREE FALLS??? WHY??? And we're clipped...to another match? Cool with me man.

Sky Low Low/Little Brutus vs. Joey Russell/Sunny Boy Hayes

It's a chase scene and a "comedy" match. These guys can't even hit each other with punches. Clipped and Sky won't come in against let's say Hayes. The only date I can find on this is "the 70s". Sky cheats so I'd presume they're heels. That's good for the pin, thank goodness.

Great. Another 2/3 falls match. Brutus beats Russell up a lot and it's a dog pile on the referee. Sky kicks him and it's COMEDY! And again they just stop showing the match and again I smile.

Chief Jay Strongbow vs. Professor Toru Tanaka

The ring is very small here. They start with a crisscross as Gorilla talks about a different style, which means more rest holds. Alfred Hayes is the commentator here. This is joined in

progress as we're told it's five minutes in after about 90 seconds. Tanaka hits the ropes, Strongbow says stop, Tanaka stops, Strongbow hits him. It's a different time. Tanaka works on the arm but Strongbow hits a pair of headscissors to send Tanaka down.

Tanaka hooks a top wristlock which goes on for awhile. Strongbow chops him down but Tanaka goes back to the arm. This is as exciting as it sounds. Jay hooks a headscissors on the mat and this is just going nowhere. Clipped to Tanaka choking as Jay tries to get up. Oh it's a nerve hold. My mistake. Strongbow comes back with his war dance and it finally wakes up a bit with a brawl. Tanaka tries the salt but it gets caught and that's a DQ. Oh joy.

Rating: D. Yeah I get that this is a different era and all that, but that doesn't mean it's an interesting one. This was a lot of laying around in a hold while we waited on anything to happen. Also, could they really not just have it end with a big chop (Jay's finisher) or something? Did it have to be ANOTHER match thrown out?

And now for a musical interlude. No really.

Mean Gene sings Tutti Fruti with Captain Lou on piano, Hogan on bass and a bunch of other musicians playing other stuff. Gene is playing piano also. Hulk gets to solo on bass. This is out of nowhere and goes as quickly as it came.

Intercontinental Title: Tito Santana vs. Paul Orndorff

This is from September 1, 1984 in St. Louis. I know because there's a graphic that says September 1, 1984 in St. Louis. Orndorff is a top heel here but not quite Piper's levels. Tito is a house of fire to start. Must have had the extra hot sauce on his taco today. The fans chant Paula and there are even signs. Technical stuff to start as they fight for control. Top wristlock by Tito and he finally gets him down.

Back to the mat and Tito cranks on the arm. Orndorff tries to fight out but we need to work on that arm some more. Clipped to the armbar still on but the two guys on their feet now. Orndorff grabs an atomic drop and Tito is in trouble. Knee lift puts Santana on the floor. Outside now and there's another atomic drop. Tito's shoulder is bleeding a bit. Orndorff actually does the RVD thumb point.

Tito comes back in with a sunset flip but Paul punches him in the head to stop him. Off to a chinlock which doesn't last long. Tito hits him with some shots but a suplex puts him right back down. Cross body gets two for Tito. The fans are way into this. Santana starts hitting him in the kidneys and a knee lift puts Paul down. Orndorff tries a middle rope splash but it eats knees.

Tito gets all fired up and pounds Paul down with what Jesse would call that firey Latin temper of his. Boston Crab is countered but Paul goes into the buckle anyway. That gets two but Tito gets his head taken off by a clothesline. That gets two and this is a VERY slow referee. Orndorff stomps away in the same style that Lance Storm used. Paul gets in another shot but time runs out at about 14:30 shown so a lot must have been cut.

Rating: B-. Fun match but I'd have liked to see the full version. It's not quite the classic that it's hyped up as here but this was still pretty fun. Orndorff was better than he was given credit for but he was caught between two legendary feuds so his stuff with Hogan is often forgotten, which is a shame.

We look at some surprising finishes. First up: Rocky Johnson vs. Magnificent (Don) Muraco. Muraco is busted open but Muraco throws the referee in the way so Johnson hits him for a DQ. I'm assuming that saved the title for him.

Freddie Blassie vs. Bobo Brazil in what has to be from the early 60s. They fight with Blassie on the apron and Bobo

headbutts him down. Blassie's foot is tied in the rope and it's a countout. Bobo headbutts him again during a post match handshake. What a jerk! Blassie hits the referee because he didn't want to do the Twazzle.

Andre beat a jobber but the masked jobber jumped him post match. Andre ripped the mask off and it's....a jobber.

Moondogs vs. Tony Garea/Rick Martel with Monsoon as referee. This is for the tag titles and it's a Texas Deathmatch, which we would call a street fight. Abdominal stretch to Moondog King and then Rex jumps off the top onto Monsoon. The champs retain off a double backdrop.

Tag Titles: Tony Garea/Rick Martel vs. Mr. Fuji/Mr. Saito

This is from 81 and Garea/Martel are still champions. In Philly here and Albano is managing the challengers. Fuji vs. Martel to start and Fuji gets tossed around a lot. Off to Saito after Fuji can't do anything with either champion. Martel hits a body press for two. Back to the armbar and Fuji is back in trouble already. Off to Garea who stays on the arm. The challengers finally get in some shots to take over.

Fuji does his usual cheating and down goes Garea to a chop. Back to Saito who chokes away. It's weird hearing Pat Patterson with that thick accent on commentary. Garea gets in a knee but can't make the tag due to Fuji. There's a nerve hold and the challengers do the switch without the tag. Garea gets in a few shots but a dropkick misses, meaning no tag.

Back to Saito who gets two off a slam. Middle rope knee gets the same. Saito cranks on a front facelock and Martel finally slaps and runs in for some help. It actually works and Garea makes the hot tag. House is cleaned and everything breaks down. Albano slips Fuji the salt as Martel goes up. Fuji throws it at Martel in mid air and Martel's cross body is rolled through for the titles to Japan.

Rating: B-. Solid old school style tag match which worked quite well. The ending spot looked great with that dive being timed perfectly. It makes sense that Martel is in trouble so he couldn't hold Saito down as well. Vince morphed into Mr. McMahon as he ranted on the end of that too.

Overall Rating: C+. This is just barely better good than bad. The historical stuff with an unheard of three title changes for one of these tapes is very cool and some of the matches were quite good too. The midget stuff though and some of those matches though were just dreadful but overall, it's more good than bad which is more than you can ask for most of the time in these things. Good stuff.

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