

## WWE Vintage Collection, Best of the High fliers, Dynamite , Misterio Jr., Ultimo Dragon, Sayama

WWE Vintage Collection TV Report #57 – July 5th, 2009 Shown on Sky Sports in the U.K. By Stephen Lyon. This week: For the first time in this show's history, they aired non-WWE matches, more specifically - matches from WCW. Matches on this show were: Dynamite Kid vs Macho Man Randy Savage (first ever WWF ppv, 1985); Rey Misterio Jr vs Dean Malenko (Misterio's 1996 WCW debut match); Psicosis vs Ultimo Dragon (WCW 1997); Brian Christopher vs Tajiri (WWF 1997); and Tiger Mask vs Mr Saito (WWF 1982). This was a great show.

Introduction: Show opened with 'Mean' Gene Okerlund, with the WWE Cruiserweight title belt on the desk in front of him. Hey Okerlund, does Hornswoggle know you have his belt? Okerlund announced that this week, and for the next several weeks, this show will be looking back at some of the greatest cruiserweight matches in history, in both WWE and for the first time ever, from WCW. That sounds just fine to me. Five matches aired on this show, from all manner of different tv tapings and ppv events from the past 27 years.

1) Tiger Mask defeated Mr. Saito. This was the original 'Tiger Mask' wrestling, namely Satoru Sayama. This match was taped on December 7th, 1982, in Allentown, Pennsylvania, at the WWF tv tapings. It aired on the January 1st, 1983 edition of 'WWF Championship Wrestling', and the announcers were Vince McMahon & Pat Patterson. At the time of the match, Tiger Mask was the reigning WWF Junior Heavyweight champion, but they never mentioned this during the match, nor was his belt present. Mask wrestled at a very fast pace and was many years ahead of his time. It was almost surreal to watch him wrestle in such humble, old fashioned surroundings, where there wasn't even a guardrail separating the fans from the action. Mask nipped up out of a Saito armbar and backflipped to safety. He did an amazing running plancha dive over the top rope and on to Saito on the outside, which had Vince and Patterson raving on commentary and the crowd on their feet, clapping and cheering. Back in the ring, Saito came back and gave Mask a uranage suplex for a nearfall, but the finish came when Mask came off the top rope and hit Saito with a sunset flip, to grab the pinfall win. This was a fascinating little match to watch in this early 1980's WWF tv setting. Sayama was awesome as Tiger Mask.

2) Ultimo Dragon (w/Sonny Onoo in his corner) defeated Psicosis. This match was from the WCW Uncensored 1997 pay-per-view event, held in North Charleston, South Carolina on March 16th, 1997. Announcers for this match were Tony Schiavone & Dusty Rhodes & Bobby Heenan & Mike Tenay. This was maybe the first time I've ever heard Mike Tenay's voice on a WWE tv show. Referee for this match was the late Brian 'Mark Curtis' Hildebrand. Ultimo Dragon was in his prime here, and Psicosis was still masked, wearing the big curly hair and a black gladiator-esque bodysuit. This was a very fast-paced, high-flying match. So many great moves were executed, so I'll try to run through some of the highlights. Dragon did a handstand in the corner, with his head resting on the top turnbuckle. The two traded camel clutches, before Psicosis caught him with a powerslam and nailed him with a top rope legdrop for a nearfall. Dragon tried for a side headlock, but Psicosis turned it into a sideslam. Psicosis then hit a spinning legdrop for another nearfall. Dragon was thrown to the outside, and Psicosis hit a running suicide dive through the ropes on to him. Dragon recovered to unload with a few kicks, then climbed to the middle rope and hit a picture-perfect Asai moonsault on to Psicosis on the outside. Sonny Onoo then caught Dragon with a few kicks of his own, leaving him laying, as we went to a break. Second half of the match saw Dragon hit another moonsault on Psicosis inside the ring for another nearfall. Psicosis went for a powerbomb, but Dragon turned the move into a frankensteiner. Psicosis rolled forward and had a nearfall, but then Dragon countered and scored a nearfall of his own. Dragon also went close to winning again, using a La Magistral cradle for a two count. Finish came when Dragon hit a spectacular series of moves. Dragon nailed Psicosis with a running Liger bomb, then gave him a tornado DDT from the top rope, before finally pinning Psicosis with a Tiger suplex. A tremendous match.

3) Brian Christopher defeated Yoshihiro Tajiri. This match was from the October 13th, 1997 edition of 'WWF Raw is War', taped on October 7th, 1997 from Topeka, Kansas. Announcers for this match were Vince McMahon, Jim Ross and Jerry Lawler. Before this match, Okerlund talked about how WCW was on fire with the Cruiserweight title matches during 1997, so WWE brought back their own 'Light Heavyweight' title division. He mentioned how this was Tajiri's debut match on WWE tv, but it was actually his second; Tajiri's first match on WWE tv had been on the July 14th, 1997 edition of Raw, in a match with Taka Michinoku. Here, in this match with Christopher, Tajiri was clean-shaven and rather bland-looking, wearing short blue trunks and kneepads. This was several years before he debuted his Great Muta-inspired, 'Japanese Buzzsaw' gimmick in ECW. For much of this match, J.R. and Vince ribbed Lawler on 'his son's' wrestling here, with Lawler refusing to acknowledge Christopher as his son at the time. This was a decent match, but not a patch on the other matches on this show. Tajiri unloaded with a lot of martial arts kicks on Christopher, which Lawler made fun of on commentary, saying that all Tajiri could do was 'kick like a girl'. Yeah, way to get a new guy over, Jerry. That one comment basically encapsulated why WCW's cruiserweight division was a success, and WWF's light heavyweight division ended up a failure. Christopher hit a running bulldog on Tajiri, but Tajiri tied Christopher in the ropes and clotheslined him. Christopher missed a top rope kneedrop, and Tajiri hit a standing moonsault on 'Jerry's kid' for a nearfall. Finish came when Christopher rolled up Tajiri out of nowhere, with a handful of tights for the pinfall win. A funny sidenote here was that during this match, Vince and J.R. were ripping on Hulk Hogan and his new movie, with J.R. remarking, 'You know all about them money-losers Vince, No Holds Barred – No Profit Allowed!' And the irony, of course, is that 12 years later, people (Miz) are still ripping on Vince's movies (John Cena) for losing money on WWE tv.

4) Macho Man Randy Savage (w/Miss Elizabeth in his corner) defeated the Dynamite Kid. This match was from the WWF's very first pay-per-view event – the WWF Wrestling Classic, a one night, 16 man single elimination tournament, eventually won by Junk Yard Dog. This event was held in Chicago, Illinois, on November 7th, 1985 (not the

17th, as incorrectly stated on the on-screen graphic), and the announcers for this semi-final tournament match were Gorilla Monsoon & Jesse Ventura. This match only went five minutes, but it was a high impact, stiff affair. Kid wore red tights and had blonde highlights in his hair. Kid knocked down Savage with a shoulderblock, then gave him a high backbody drop. Kid gave Savage a crossbody block off the ropes, but Savage caught hold of the ropes. Kid then missed a splash, and the two ploughed into each other with a double clothesline. Savage climbed the ropes, but Kid delivered a missile dropkick, which crotched Savage on the top rope. Kid then gave Savage a superplex off the top rope, but as Kid held on to Savage on the mat and went for the cradle, Savage hooked Kid's legs first and pinned him for the win, a move that Ventura raved about and even the heel-hating Monsoon admitted was

&quot;tremendous&quot;. I believe this was the only time Savage wrestled Kid in a singles match on tv. 5) WCW Cruiserweight Champion, Dean Malenko retained the title, defeating the debuting Rey Misterio Jr. This match was from the WCW Great American Bash 1996 pay-per-view, held on June 16th, 1996, in Baltimore, Maryland. The announcers for this match were Tony Schiavone, Dusty Rhodes and Mike Tenay. The two started quickly, with Misterio spinning Malenko around, armdragging him across the ring, then springboard dropkicking Malenko to the outside. Malenko came back in and monkey-flipped Misterio out of the ring, then tried a running baseball slide, which Misterio was able to sidestep. Malenko worked over Misterio's elbow for the most of the match, grounding him with a leg scissors. After a short commercial break, Malenko used a butterfly suplex on Rey for a nearfall. Malenko pumped on Rey's arm across his shoulder, but Rey was able to throw Malenko through the ropes to the outside. Rey then hit a baseball slide of his own, connecting with Malenko's ankle, before executing a springboard somersault splash off the top rope and on to Malenko in the aisle. He followed this up with a springboard dropkick on to Malenko, again outside the ring. Back inside, Malenko went for a powerbomb, but Rey turned it into a frankensteiner. The two traded a lot of nearfalls. Misterio also connected with another frankensteiner off the top, on to Malenko on the outside. Finish of the match came when Malenko powerbombed Misterio in the corner, then pinned him with both feet on the ropes. After the match, the crowd gave both guys a standing ovation. Absolutely fantastic match, and for Misterio Jr, after such a wonderful debut in WCW, the rest was history.

Closing thoughts: For pure in-ring wrestling content, this was probably the best Vintage Collection show there has ever been, since this series started last year. There aren't many one hour wrestling shows where you can see Tiger Mask, Dynamite Kid and Rey Misterio Jr, all in singles matches. The addition of non-WWE match footage to this show's format is an incredibly wise and extremely exciting move that I hope becomes the norm on a weekly basis from this point forward. They have this wonderful tape library at their disposal; they don't need to be resorting to showing irrelevant matches from some random Coliseum Video release like they have been doing for months now. More shows like today's please, because this was superb.

#### Match Results:

1) Tiger Mask defeated Mr Saito (&quot;WWF Championship Wrestling&quot; - taped in Allentown, PA on 07/12/82, aired on 01/01/83). 2) Ultimo Dragon (w/Sonny Onoo) defeated Psicosis (&quot;WCW Uncensored 1997&quot; - North Charleston, South Carolina: 16/03/97). 3) Brian Christopher defeated Yoshihiro Tajiri (&quot;WWF Raw Is War&quot; - taped in Topeka, Kansas on 07/10/97, aired on 13/10/97). 4) Macho Man Randy Savage (w/Miss Elizabeth in his corner) defeated the Dynamite Kid (&quot;WWF Wrestling Classic 1985&quot; - Chicago, Illinois: 07/11/85). 5) WCW Cruiserweight Champion, Dean Malenko defeated Rey Misterio Jr (&quot;WCW Great American Bash 1996&quot; - Baltimore, Maryland: 16/06/96). Please note: I DO NOT sell DVDs or tapes of any of these shows. Sorry!

I hope you enjoyed this week's report. For other reports like this one, be sure to check it out my website archive at <http://www.classicwrestlingreports.com>. It's no longer updated, but this website carries all of my previous WWE Classics tv reports that have been featured on the old WrestlingObserver.com website. As always your questions, comments and thoughts are always welcomed, and you can contact me at [slyon10yearsago@hotmail.com](mailto:slyon10yearsago@hotmail.com).

Until next week, have a good week.

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