

= Bobby Eaton =

Robert Lee " Bobby " Eaton (born August 14 , 1958) is an American retired professional wrestler , who made his debut in 1976 . Eaton is most famous for his work in tag teams , especially his days as one @-@ half of the team the Midnight Express . Under the management of Jim Cornette , Eaton originally teamed with Dennis Condrey and , later on , with Stan Lane . He has also worked with a number of other tag team partners , including Koko B. Ware , Steve Keirn , and " Lord " Steven Regal .

In his career , Eaton wrestled for extended periods of time for various wrestling promotions : Mid @-@ America Wrestling , Continental Wrestling Association , Mid @-@ South Wrestling , World Class Championship Wrestling , Jim Crockett Promotions , World Championship Wrestling , and Smoky Mountain Wrestling . He has also made brief guest appearances for Extreme Championship Wrestling and Total Nonstop Action Wrestling , in addition to appearances for a considerable number of independent wrestling promotions over the years . He retired in 2015 after nearly 40 years in the ring .

= = Professional wrestling career = =

Growing up in Huntsville , Alabama , Eaton was a fan of professional wrestling , especially the NWA Mid @-@ America professional wrestling promotion . This promotion was operated by Nick Gulas , who staged wrestling shows in the Alabama and Tennessee region . Eaton 's first involvement in the sport came at the age of 13 , while attending Chapman Middle School , when he helped set up wrestling rings in his hometown . He later trained under Tojo Yamamoto to become a professional wrestler .

= = = Early career = = =

In May 1976 , at the age of 17 , Eaton made his debut in NWA Mid @-@ America . He entered his first match , a loss to Bearcat Wright , as a last @-@ minute substitute for Wright 's absent opponent . He quickly became a regular in Mid @-@ America and continued to train with the more experienced wrestlers . Before long , fans , as well as promoter Nick Gulas , noticed Eaton 's athleticism and showmanship . Gulas decided to " promote " Eaton up the ranks of NWA Mid @-@ America , giving him matches later in the show , closer to the main event . The angle that really helped elevate Eaton 's name up the card in the promotion took place after the introduction of the tag team The Hollywood Blonds (Jerry Brown and Buddy Roberts) . Eaton fought the Blonds with a variety of partners , including his old trainer Yamamoto and " Pistol " Pez Whatley . When the Blonds decided to move to a different wrestling promotion , the storyline maintained that Eaton was responsible for driving them out of NWA Mid @-@ America .

In 1978 , Eaton teamed with Leapin ' Lanny Poffo (brother of the more well @-@ known " Macho Man " Randy Savage) , and together they won the NWA Mid @-@ America Tag Team Championship from Gypsy Joe and Leroy Rochester . It was Eaton 's first title win , and he and Poffo held it for a little over a month . Eaton went on to form a team , known as The Jet Set , with George Gulas , Nick Gulas 's son . Together , Eaton and Gulas held the tag team title three times . During their time as a team , the two were involved in a storyline feud with Terry Gordy and Michael Hayes before Gordy and Hayes became famous under the name The Fabulous Freebirds .

= = = Singles competition = = =

In the spring of 1979 , Eaton started a feud with Chris Colt , designed to establish Eaton as more than just a good tag team competitor . The feud between the two was so heated that it saw Colt suspended for piledriving Eaton on the concrete floor , making it appear Eaton had been seriously injured . Eaton suffered no injuries , however . At that time , the piledriver was banned in most federations and treated as a move that could potentially paralyze a wrestler . This was done to give

the move more " shock value " . Eaton conclusively defeated Colt , earning a place as one of the top faces (good guys) in NWA Mid @-@ America . During 1979 and 1980 , Eaton worked a series of singles matches against Dennis Condrey , a man he would later team up with to gain worldwide fame .

At the end of 1979 , Eaton turned heel (bad guy) for the first time in his career by joining Tojo Yamamoto 's group of wrestlers , whom the fans hated . Although Eaton is now thought of mainly as a heel , his fans were surprised at the time . Eaton 's heel run did not last long before he rescued his former Jet Set partner , George Gulas , from a two @-@ on @-@ one attack by The Blond Bombers (Larry Latham and Wayne Ferris) to return to the fan @-@ favorite side once more . After reuniting the team , Eaton and Gulas had one final run with tag team champions and worked an intense feud with Latham and Ferris .

When Nick Gulas ' wrestling promotion closed due to dwindling ticket sales , Eaton briefly wrestled for a promotion in Georgia . Before long Eaton returned closer to home , working for promoter Jerry Jarrett 's Continental Wrestling Association (CWA) , which was centered in Memphis , Tennessee . During his early days in the promotion , Eaton faced Stan Lane several times in tag team competition . Eaton 's most successful partnership in the CWA , in terms of title wins , was with Sweet Brown Sugar (later known as Koko B. Ware) , nicknamed " the New Wave " . The two wrestlers blended their athleticism and high flying abilities to form a very successful team . The New Wave held the AWA Southern Tag Team Championship three times (twice with manager Jimmy Hart in their corner) . After achieving success as a tag team , it was decided that Eaton and Sugar should split up and feud with each other . This storyline resulted in Eaton " forcing " Sugar out of the promotion after he won a " Losers Leaves Town " match against Sugar .

Sugar 's disappearance was soon followed by the appearance of a masked man called Stagger Lee , who looked and wrestled like Sugar . The storyline of Sugar returning under the mask to fight the heels helped make the masked man instantly popular with the crowd . Eaton , along with the rest of Jimmy Hart 's stable " the First Family " , tried in vain to unmask Stagger Lee .

Eaton turned face and re @-@ teamed with Sugar , although they maintained the storyline that Eaton 's partner was actually " Stagger Lee " and not Sugar . The team regained the tag team title before losing it to The Fabulous Ones (Stan Lane and Steve Keirn) . Afterward , Eaton teamed up with The Moondogs (Rex and Spot) to face Jerry Lawler and the Fabulous Ones . During the match , one of the Moondogs accidentally hit Eaton with their trademark bone , costing their side the match . After the match ended , the Moondogs , as well as Jimmy Hart , turned on Eaton , beating him down until he was saved by Stagger Lee .

= = = The Midnight Express = = =

Soon after Eaton joined Mid @-@ South Wrestling under promoter Bill Watts , he became part of the Midnight Express . Eaton teamed with former rival Dennis Condrey under the management of Jim Cornette to form a new version of the tag team . The Express had previously been a group of wrestlers consisting of Condrey , Randy Rose and Norvell Austin , but with Eaton 's arrival , the Midnight Express worked exclusively as a two @-@ man team . To complement the nickname " Lover Boy " Dennis , Eaton was nicknamed " Beautiful " Bobby , a nickname he still uses when wrestling . At first , The Express was booked in an angle with the Mid @-@ South Tag Team Champions Magnum T.A. and Mr. Wrestling II . The highlight of the angle saw Eaton and Condrey tarring and feathering Magnum T.A. in the middle of the ring . The Express first won the tag team title when Mr. Wrestling II turned on Magnum T.A. , attacking him during the title match and allowing Eaton and Condrey to win the title without much opposition .

With Mr. Wrestling II and Magnum T.A. splitting up , the Midnight Express needed a new team to defend their newly won title against . They began a long series of matches against The Rock ' n ' Roll Express (Ricky Morton and Robert Gibson) which ran well into the 1990s and spanned several wrestling promotions . The two teams feuded throughout 1984 in Mid @-@ South Wrestling before the Midnight Express left the promotion . The Midnight Express versus Rock ' n ' Roll Express series of matches were so well received by the fans that independent promoters all over the United States

still book those two teams against each other today , 20 years after the rivalry started .

The Midnight Express had a short stay in World Class Championship Wrestling in Texas , where they feuded mainly with The Fantastics (Bobby Fulton and Tommy Rogers) .

= = = National spotlight = = =

In 1985 Eaton , Condrey and Cornette signed with Jim Crockett Promotions (JCP) and were given national exposure on JCP 's televised programs on SuperStation TBS . Shortly after joining JCP , the Midnight Express reignited their feud with the Rock ' n ' Roll Express and won the NWA World Tag team title from them in February 1986 . During the course of their heated angle , Eaton and Condrey re @-@ lost the title to the Rock ' n ' Roll Express six months later . Eaton and Condrey also had long running feuds with The New Breed (Chris Champion and Sean Royal) as well as The Road Warriors (Animal and Hawk) . The feud with the Road Warriors included a high profile Scaffold match at Starrcade 1986 , which the Midnight Express lost .

In early 1987 , Condrey left JCP for undisclosed reasons , and " Sweet " Stan Lane took his place as part of the Midnight Express . In May 1987 , after teaming for only a few months , Eaton and Lane became champions when they won the NWA United States Tag team title for the first time , a title they would win three times during their time together . A year later the team was cheered on despite being heels , as the Midnight Express won the NWA World Tag Team Title from Arn Anderson and Tully Blanchard on September 10 , 1988 . This feud was cut short when Anderson & Blanchard signed with the WWF over money issues . The Midnight Express ' run with the title lasted a little over a month @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half before the Road Warriors took the gold from them in a brutal match up , which saw the heel Road Warriors brutalize the now @-@ popular Midnight Express .

Now the fan favorites , the Midnight Express had to contend with a team thought to be disbanded forever : the Original Midnight Express , which consisted of Condrey and Randy Rose , who joined JCP after a brief run in the AWA . The duo was led by long @-@ time Jim Cornette nemesis Paul E. Dangerously , in a storyline that saw them trying to prove the originals were better than the new version . The surprise appearance of the Original Midnight Express gave Dangerously 's team the initial momentum in the feud , but soon after , Condrey left the promotion once more . This forced the bookers to bring in Jack Victory as a replacement as Condrey 's disappearance cut the promising feud short .

The Midnight Express then turned their attention to Paul E. ' s new team , The Samoan S.W.A.T. Team as well as a new version of The Fabulous Freebirds . Eaton and Lane were defeated by the Freebirds in the finals of a tournament for the vacated World Tag Team Titles . Following this loss , the Midnight Express teamed with their former enemies The Road Warriors and " Dr. Death " Steve Williams to defeat the SST and the Freebirds in a WarGames match at The Great American Bash . Following this feud , Lane and Eaton began having issues with a young new team in the NWA known as " the Dynamic Dudes " (Shane Douglas and Johnny Ace) . The Dudes admitted that the Midnight Express was one of their favorite teams and asked if Cornette would be their manager as well . Cornette agreed to manage the young team , to the displeasure of the Midnight Express . After arguing with the Express , Jim Cornette stopped accompanying Eaton and Lane to the ring , choosing to only actively manage the Dudes . At the Clash of Champions IX , the two teams met with Jim Cornette appearing in a neutral corner , forced to choose between the teams . The Express started out very aggressively , especially for a team that was supposed to be fan favorites , and when the night was over , the Midnight Express had once again established themselves as heels with Jim Cornette in their corner ; Cornette had never stopped siding with the Express .

After returning to their cheating ways , the Midnight Express started a storyline with the up @-@ and @-@ coming team of Flyin ' Brian and " Z @-@ Man " Tom Zenk over the United States Tag team title . The Express won the title from the young team in early 1990 , but lost the belts to The Steiner Brothers (Rick and Scott) three months later . After a loss at the WCW pay @-@ per @-@ view Halloween Havoc 1990 , the Midnight Express split up , as Jim Cornette and Stan Lane left the federation , while Eaton chose to remain in WCW . For the first time in almost a decade , there was

no Midnight Express .

== = Dangerous Alliance == =

For the first time since 1979 , Eaton was a singles competitor , and he faced an uphill struggle to establish himself . He wrestled his former opponents in tag team competition such as Brad Armstrong (whom he defeated at Wrestle War ' 91) , Ricky Morton and " Z @-@ Man " Tom Zenk (whom he defeated at Starrcade ' 90 , but lost to at the Clash of the Champions XIV) , but it was not until he turned face during the early parts of 1991 that he started to move up the rankings . At SuperBrawl I , Eaton defeated Arn Anderson to win the WCW World Television Championship . Eaton 's highest profile match as a singles wrestler came when he faced off against WCW World Champion " Nature Boy " Ric Flair at Clash of the Champions XV in a two @-@ out @-@ of @-@ three falls match . Eaton pinned Flair in the first fall , but ultimately lost to Flair two falls to one . His TV Title reign was short @-@ lived , as he came face to face with newcomer " Stunning " Steve Austin , who cheated his way to win the title from Eaton . After dropping out of the Television Title picture , Eaton went on to feud with The York Foundation until Paul E. Dangerously reappeared in WCW .

Late in 1991 , Paul E. Dangerously formed the faction The Dangerous Alliance . Eaton joined the group when he assisted Rick Rude , whom Dangerously had (kayfabe) brought into WCW , in defeating Sting for the United States Championship . In joining the group , Eaton became allies with Rude , Larry Zbyszko , and his two former rivals for the World Television Championship in Arn Anderson and Steve Austin . Shortly after the group was formed , Anderson and Eaton became its tag team specialists . This seemed to make sense , as both men had been successful tag team wrestlers in their careers ; Anderson himself had been a two @-@ time world champion teaming with Tully Blanchard in the Four Horsemen and had also won the belts with Zbyszko earlier in the year . Eaton and Anderson quickly won the WCW World Tag Team Championship by defeating Ricky Steamboat and Dustin Rhodes , the team to whom Anderson and Zbyszko lost the belts , for the championship and held on to the belts for five months before they lost them to the Steiner Brothers .

The Dangerous Alliance was a dominant force in WCW . At one point during 1992 , they held every title except the WCW World Title , which was held by their main opponent and arch enemy Sting . The war between the Dangerous Alliance and Sting and friends escalated until it was decided to settle it in a double ring War Games Match at WrestleWar 1992 . Sting 's team won when Sting forced Eaton to give up after Larry Zbyszko accidentally struck Eaton in the arm with a metal rod . This match would be given a 5 @-@ star rating from Dave Meltzer of the Wrestling Observer Newsletter .

In the aftermath of the War Games match , Zbyszko was kicked out of the Alliance for causing the Alliance loss . Soon after the Alliance disintegrated , Paul E. Dangerously left WCW . Eaton and Anderson continued to team after the Alliance fell apart , now managed by Michael Hayes . Eaton and Anderson worked in the tag team division until new WCW booker Bill Watts fired Eaton along with a number of other WCW regulars in a cost @-@ cutting measure .

== = Departure and return == =

When Eaton found himself without a job , he reached out to former manager Jim Cornette . Cornette had started his own wrestling federation , Smoky Mountain Wrestling (SMW) and welcomed Eaton with open arms . Eaton joined up with " The Heavenly Bodies " (Stan Lane and Tom Prichard) , and the three were booked as the top heels of the federation for a while . Eaton also won the federation 's version of the TV title , known as the SMW Beat the Champ Television Championship .

When Bill Watts was ousted from his position in WCW in favor of Eric Bischoff , Eaton was rehired . Once back on the roster , Eaton teamed up with a young Chris Benoit in Benoit 's first stint with WCW . Together they were mainly used to help establish rising teams or give established teams

opposition . Benoit and Eaton , while gelling in the ring , never showed any signs of being presented as a permanent team ; they did not have matching ring outfits or a team name .

After Benoit left to return to Japan , in Eaton 's next venture in tag teaming , under the name " Bad Attitude " , he teamed up with Steve Keirn , formerly of the Fabulous Ones . Bad Attitude 's single noteworthy moment together came when they were present as Arn Anderson turned on tag team partner Dustin Rhodes . Otherwise , the team did not get much exposure .

During this time , Eaton also made a couple of appearances in ECW due to a talent trade arrangement between WCW and ECW . His most well known appearance was at the " When Worlds Collide " show on May 14 , 1994 , where he teamed with Sabu to beat Arn Anderson and Terry Funk .

== = The Blue Bloods == =

After Bad Attitude quietly ended , Eaton was placed with British snob " Lord " Steven Regal . A series of vignettes followed , in which Regal educated Eaton on how to be a man of class and sophistication . Eaton was then shown being knighted as " Earl Robert Eaton " by the (supposed) Queen of England on WCW Main Event , April 2 , 1995 . The team made their ring debut , dubbed The Blue Bloods , on WCW Saturday Night , April 8 , 1995 . The duo was later joined by " Squire " David Taylor , with all three alternating in the ring under the name of the Blue Bloods . Originally , The Blue Bloods was supposed to be a tag team consisting of Regal and Jean @-@ Paul Levesque , with Sherri Martel as their valet , but Martel had since been placed as the manager of Harlem Heat while Levesque had left for the WWF , where he would first gain fame as Hunter Hearst Helmsley .

The Blue Bloods initially feuded with the Nasty Boys (Brian Knobs and Jerry Sags) , their complete opposites in terms of " sophistication " and presentation . They also feuded with Harlem Heat (Booker T and Stevie Ray) over the WCW World Tag Team Championship , but never took the belts , and engaged in a short " Snobs versus Rednecks " program with the Stud Stable (Bunkhouse Buck and Dick Slater) . In all of 1996 the team members made only one pay @-@ per @-@ view (PPV) appearance , as individuals in the " Lethal Lottery " during May 's Slamboree . The next year , Regal became WCW World Television Champion , but the team only appeared on PPV once together , when Regal and Taylor lost to the Steiner Brothers at World War 3 in November . Not long after , Eaton was moved out of the group , turning on and feuding with his partners after finally rejecting the snob nature of the gimmick .

The Blue Bloods storyline represented the last serious push that Eaton was given by the WCW booking team . After the run with Regal and Taylor ended , Eaton wrestled mainly on WCW 's weekend show , WCW Saturday Night , occasionally winning against wrestlers low in the rankings and losing to wrestlers above him . He also became a trainer at the WCW Power Plant and worked backstage for WCW as a road agent until he was released in early 2000 , before the Eric Bischoff / Vince Russo reboot . In July 2000 , Eaton made a surprise appearance in ECW , some time before Heat Wave .

== = Independent circuit == =

In 2003 , Eaton worked for NWA Mid @-@ Atlantic , forming a new version of the Midnight Express with Ricky Nelson . This Midnight Express version was very short lived , and Eaton instead began touring with Dennis Condrey (and sometimes Stan Lane) as the Midnight Express . This version of the Midnight Express still performs together on select independent wrestling cards in the United States .

Eaton made a one night only appearance for Total Nonstop Action Wrestling on August 13 , 2003 , as a part of a Kid Kash storyline where Kash faced off against a series of 1980s wrestling stars such as Larry Zbyszko and Ricky Morton . Eaton lost to Kid Kash in his only TNA appearance to date . On October 23 , 2015 , Eaton wrestled his last match of his nearly 40 @-@ year career , losing to Ricky Morton , also ending the 30 @-@ plus year feud between The Rock ' n ' Roll Express and The Midnight Express .

= = Personal life = =

= = = Reputation = = =

Eaton is often regarded as one of the nicest guys in the wrestling business , even though he wrestled as a heel for a majority of his career . In his 1999 book Have a Nice Day , Mick Foley praised Eaton as being one of the most underrated superstars in the business , and its nicest , commenting that " it was damn near impossible to pay for anything with Bobby around , though I will confess to not trying that hard " . This opinion was supported in The Stone Cold Truth by Steve Austin .

In addition to his personality , he is also popular with other wrestlers due to his wrestling style . Wrestling Eaton is known as " a night off " , because Eaton is so skilled that the action looks very convincing but does not hurt the opponent .

= = = Family = = =

Eaton is married to Bill Dundee 's daughter , Donna . When they first started dating , they had to keep the relationship secret from her father , as her father had forbidden her from dating the wrestlers he was booking . When Dundee found out she was dating Eaton , he relented because Eaton was such a nice guy . Eaton and Donna have three children : Dustin , Dylan , and Taryn . Dylan is a professional wrestler .

= = = Health = = =

On September 6 , 2006 Dave Meltzer reported that Eaton was hospitalized after suffering a heart attack . Two days later , after being released from the hospital , Eaton released a statement through the Wrestling Observer website saying that he did not have a heart attack but was diagnosed with high blood pressure with a hint of diabetes . Since then , he has suffered with several health issues , especially cardiac problems which have seen him hospitalized on several occasions . In June 2013 , Eaton underwent successful surgery to have a pacemaker inserted .

= = In wrestling = =

Finishing moves

Alabama Jam / Tower of London (Diving leg drop)

Signature moves

Diving knee drop

Figure four leglock

Missile dropkick

Slingshot backbreaker

Swinging neckbreaker

Vertical suplex

Managers

Jim Cornette

Paul E. Dangerously

Jimmy Hart

Jeeves

Nicknames

" Beautiful "

" Earl "

" The Sultan of Swing "

= = Championships and accomplishments = =

Georgia Championship Wrestling

NWA Georgia Television Championship (1 time)

International Wrestling Cartel

IWC Tag Team Championship (1 time) ? with Dennis Condrey

Jim Crockett Promotions / World Championship Wrestling

NWA United States Tag Team Championship (3 times) ? with Stan Lane

NWA (Mid @-@ Atlantic version) / WCW World Tag Team Championship (3 times) ? with Dennis Condrey (1) , Stan Lane (1) and Arn Anderson (1)

WCW World Television Championship (1 time)

Mid @-@ Atlantic Championship Wrestling NWA Mid @-@ Atlantic Tag Team Championship (1 time) ? with Rikki Nelson

NWA Mid @-@ America / Continental Wrestling Association

AWA Southern Tag Team Championship (4 times) ? with Sweet Brown Sugar (2) and Duke Myers (2)

CWA World Heavyweight Championship (1 time)

NWA Mid @-@ America Heavyweight Championship (11 times)

NWA Mid @-@ America Tag Team Championship (6 times) ? with Lanny Poffo (1) , George Gulas (3) , Mexican Angel (1) and Great Togo (1)

NWA Mid @-@ America Television Championship (1 time)

NWA World Six @-@ Man Tag Team Championship (4 times) ? with George Gulas and Jerry Barber (1) , George Gulas and Arvil Hutto (1) , George Gulos and The Mexican Angel (1) , and Secret Weapon and Tojo Yamamoto (1)

Mid @-@ South Wrestling Association

Mid @-@ South Tag Team Championship (2 times) ? with Dennis Condrey

NWA Bluegrass

NWA Bluegrass Tag Team Championship (1 time) ? with Dennis Condrey

NWA Rocky Top

NWA Rocky Top Tag Team Championship (1 time) ? with Dennis Condrey

Pro Wrestling Illustrated

PWI ranked him # 27 of the top 500 singles wrestlers in the PWI 500 in 1992

PWI ranked him # 91 of the top 500 singles wrestlers of the " PWI Years " in 2003

PWI Tag Team of the Year (1987) with Stan Lane

Smoky Mountain Wrestling

SMW Beat the Champ Television Championship (1 time)

World Class Championship Wrestling

NWA American Tag Team Championship (1 time) ? with Dennis Condrey

Wrestling Observer Newsletter awards

Hall of Fame (Class of 2009) with Dennis Condrey and Stan Lane as the Midnight Express

Most Underrated Wrestler (1985 , 1986 , 1990 , 1993)

Tag Team of the Year (1986) with Dennis Condrey

Tag Team of the Year (1987 , 1988) with Stan Lane

Worst Worked Match of the Year (1991) with P.N. News vs. Terrance Taylor and Steve Austin in a Scaffold match at The Great American Bash

5 Star Match (1992) War Games