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BOXING NEWS



The ultimate guide to
an unmissable rematch

Richard J. Slone

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WILDER vs FURY II

BOXING NEWS

Est. 1909



OWN A PIECE OF BOXING HISTORY

What a World's Champion has to say.

I have just had handed to me an advance copy of "Boxing," and in a word I must say I am delighted with it. I must, however, disagree with that part of the Editorial Ideas in which you say that this first issue is not as good as future ones will be. If they are to be better than this, then—gee whiz!—they will be good.

JAMES J. CORBETT.

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Photos: KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES & AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES



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Harry Woods

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BOXING NEWS



Photo: MIKEY WILLIAMS/TOP RANK



Cover artwork
RICHARD T. SLOANE

CHASING HISTORY

Why it's too soon to rate Wilder and Fury alongside the legends of the game



Matt Christie
@MattCBoxingNews
Editor

IT'S all about history these days. Making it. Going down in it. And whoever wins Saturday's night's mouth-watering rematch between Tyson Fury and Deontay Wilder in Las Vegas will take their place in it, we're told, alongside the greatest fighters in history.

It's been a long old journey for Fury, the UK's favourite Traveller. He's always engrossed

us, from his days as an amateur, when his sheer size turned heads, right through a professional career that for many years, don't forget, struggled to be taken seriously. He punched himself in the face, mid-fight, to become a YouTube sensation. He was gifted a decision against John McDermott. He struggled to get himself in shape. But at some point around 2013 to 2014, when he defeated Steve Cunningham, David Haye gave him the slip and he trounced Dereck Chisora in a truly masterful performance, he exhibited his true championship potential.

Even so, his 2015 victory over long-time heavyweight leader Wladimir Klitschko surprised pretty much everyone. In an alien German land, he boxed the perfect fight to take the world heavyweight crown. It should have been

the start of a long reign. Yet his fortunes plummeted. The mainstream press, new to Tyson Fury, took an instant dislike to his obscure charm. News of a failed performance enhancing drug test broke. The Klitschko rematch was aborted and Fury descended into alcohol and cocaine abuse that gave his lifelong enemy, depression, very much the upper hand. They were dark, dark days. Photos of him in a bad way, obese and lost, were everywhere. Irrespective of the mistakes he made, the subsequent turnaround in Fury's fortunes should only speak exceptionally highly of the man.

By the end of 2018, after two nondescript comeback wins, he got into the ring with Deontay Wilder and, bar the odd lapse in concentration, showed the world – a more appreciative world this time – exactly what he was about. The way he rose from the brink in the last round was truly historic stuff. He deserved more than the draw he received in Los Angeles that night. Yet the sense of injustice has only taken Fury to greater heights. Today, he stands tall as one of the most recognisable men on the planet, the 'people's champion' with millions of pounds in the bank.

All he needs to do now is to score his first official victory against a proven world class opponent since he ousted Klitschko a little over four years ago.

Waiting for him is another man whose legacy hangs in the balance. Plenty are calling Wilder the greatest heavyweight puncher in history. But the tag speaks of how lightly 'history' is regarded by those who only live in the present day. Without

question, Wilder has truly bewildering power and may well whack harder than any other champion who came before. But to put Deontay above the likes of Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano, Sonny Liston, George Foreman and Mike Tyson (who between them, can boast the scalps of Jersey Joe Walcott, Archie Moore, Floyd Patterson, Joe Frazier and Larry Holmes, among many others) is perhaps premature when the most accomplished fighter Wilder's stopped is Luis Ortiz. That's not to blame Wilder, of course, it's more a plea for some perspective – and patience.

Let's say Wilder fails to land a glove on Fury for 12 rounds. Will we still call him the greatest puncher who ever lived? Imagine Fury gets flattened inside 15 minutes. Will his name still be up there with the leading legends of the game? Probably not, but the winner will see their standing soar regardless.

Whatever happens we should be thankful that this fight is taking place. Wilder needs Fury and Fury needs Wilder. The winner will then need Anthony Joshua and Joshua will need the winner. Waiting below is Oleksandr Usyk, Dillian Whyte, and Joe Joyce or Daniel Dubois. The list, for the first time in a long time in the heavyweight division, goes on and on.

Fury and Wilder have achieved considerable feats so far but, when it comes to making history – really making history – they're only just getting started.

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Coming next time

● **THIS** time next week we'll likely be toasting a new leader in the heavyweight division (presuming Deontay Wilder and Tyson Fury don't fight to another draw). We'll have the full story from behind the scenes in Las Vegas.

● **WE** examine the upcoming bill in Frisco that sees Mikey Garcia return against Jessie Vargas and the fascinating collision between Kal Yafai and Roman Gonzalez.

● **ALSO** on the bill in Texas is Jay Harris. We talk in detail ahead of his shot at Julio Cesar Martinez.

● **AVAILABLE** to download from February 25 and the print edition is in stores on February 27.

On the website

● **FOLLOW** our updates from Sin City where Tyson Fury and Deontay Wilder go to war.

● **FOR** all the news you need, read *Boxing News At Five*.

Available on the App Store

Available on Android

'I'VE NEVER FELT A PUNCH...'

Photo: ESTHER LIN/SHOWTIME



Okay, I was knocked down heavy last time but he couldn't finish me. I'll finish him next time...



Tyson Fury

The Gypsy King

THE biggest mistake I made last time was not making Deontay Wilder pay when he was hurt. I didn't know what I had in the tank last time. I'd never done 12 rounds in my comeback. It's a long time. This time, I know I can do the distance and we're not getting hurt. I'll throw everything but the kitchen sink at him and he won't know what hit him.

I learned he can be hit, and he can be hurt quite regularly. That's the biggest thing that I learned about Deontay Wilder. Nothing I didn't already know. Before I fought him, obviously I didn't know what he was like in a boxing ring, and after I fought him, I know what he's like. And I think there's nothing to worry about. He's got a big right hand and

that's it. He's a one-dimensional fighter, and I'm going to prove that.

So, there's no stress to me going into the fight. I've been 12 rounds, outboxed him quite comfortable, took his best shots, got up, fired back into him. The one who should be concerned is Deontay Wilder because, with him being a one-trick pony, he's a knockout artist, but he knocked me down twice in two rounds, nine and 12. And he had over two minutes in each round to finish me and he couldn't finish me. It was like on *Mortal Kombat*. They said, "Finish Him!" and then couldn't finish him. So yeah, he's the one who should be concerned. He's landed the two best punches that any heavyweight in the world could ever land on somebody else, and the Gypsy King rose like a Phoenix from the ashes, got back to my feet and hurt him in the end of the round. So yeah, it's going to be pretty difficult for Wilder, not me. This is heavyweight boxing. I've been hit.

I've been hurt. I've been put down in my career, but it's not when we get put down. It's what happens when we get back up and keep moving forward.

He's got over 40 professional fights but if he doesn't know about boxing now, at 34 years old, he's not going to know it. I thought his boxing IQ was okay, but it wasn't up there with the likes of someone like Wladimir Klitschko. But he was decent. He's always looking dangerous. He always looks imposing and dangerous, so you can never write somebody off like that, that's for sure.

You know I've felt the power. Ain't so bad. He can't be the biggest puncher in history because he couldn't knock the Gypsy King out, could he? I took his best shot flush on the chin and I got back up. He punches hard, but I've never been hit by the likes of someone like Earnie Shavers. I didn't get hit by George Foreman. I didn't get hit by

Rocky Marciano or any of those top guys. I didn't get hit by them, so I can't comment. So to say it's the biggest puncher in history, I'm not really sure because I didn't get hit by all the guys in history. But, you know, I don't think he punches harder than Wladimir Klitschko. Wladimir has a massive knockout punch and won a lot more fights than Wilder has.

Make no mistake, all heavyweights punch hard and we can all knock anybody out. Wilder, I don't think it's so much his power, it's the speed it lands at, which can be tricky when you don't see it coming. But then again, even a guy who's got no knockout ratio, if he hits you and you don't see it coming, then he's going to put you down. But as for feeling punches in fights, I'm not familiar with it because I don't feel any punches when I'm in the ring because the adrenaline is flying high when you're in a fight. You don't feel the punches ever.

I've got to get a knockout because I don't want to leave anything unturned this time. I don't want another controversial decision. My own destiny lies in my own two fists.

HE HAD OVER TWO MINUTES TO FINISH ME AND HE COULDN'T



LETTER OF THE WEEK

JIMMY THUNDER, 1966-2020



I WAS saddened to hear that Jimmy Thunder passed away at age 54 in New Zealand on February 12, due to complications of a brain tumour. He was a real good guy and a true professional. It was my pleasure to be associated with Jimmy. He was a good fighter who gave the fans a lot of exciting fights when we promoted him, especially on the Tuesday Night Fights series on the USA Network, where he had one of the fastest knockouts in boxing history when he KO'd Crawford Grimsley in 13 seconds. Included in his record, that read 35-14 with 28 knockouts, were wins over three former world heavyweight champions in Tony Tubbs, Trevor Berbick and Tim Witherspoon. My heartfelt condolences go out to Jimmy's family.

Artie Pelullo, President of Banner Promotions

RESPECT RIGONDEAUX

DURING the recent Guillermo Rigondeaux-Liborio Solis fight, it became apparent to me that boxing doesn't always appreciate its stars until they've hung up their gloves. After Rigo abandoned the ill-advised tactics he deployed in round one of holding his feet and countering from behind a high guard, the vintage Rigo appeared. From the second round onwards he laid on a masterclass, in my opinion. Solis couldn't lay a glove on him and very nearly didn't hear the final bell after tasting Rigo's sniper-like left hand. At times the crowd booed. Would the crowd have booed other defensive masters, such as Floyd Mayweather, Pernell Whitaker or Willie Pep? Rigo, the smaller man on the night against Solis, is still one of the best operators in the bantamweight/super-bantam divisions. He should be appreciated as one of the greatest

defensive boxers ever to lace up a pair of gloves. Had he stayed in the unpaid code, he would undoubtedly have topped the Olympic podium in 2008 and maybe even 2012. At 39, he is certainly coming to the end. Perhaps when he is finished everyone will appreciate his greatness.

Jamie Ingleby

HEADING FOR THE HALL?

WITH Bernard Hopkins, Juan Manuel Marquez and Shane Mosley set to be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame later this year, it got me thinking, if Deontay Wilder demolishes Tyson Fury in their upcoming rematch, will he be Hall of Fame worthy? Wilder has successfully retained his world heavyweight title on 10 occasions so far and he's arguably the biggest puncher of all time. I believe he's currently heading in the right direction.

Mike Hills

CULT HERO:
Thunder in his
days as a fringe
heavyweight
contender

Photo: HOLLY STEIN /GETTY IMAGES



THE PANEL

HOW DO YOU SEE THE REMATCH BETWEEN DEONTAY WILDER AND TYSON FURY UNFOLDING THIS WEEKEND?



Michael Conlan

Featherweight contender

It's a hard one. My heart says Fury and my head says Wilder. Fury needs full concentration without any mistakes this time. We know he is the better boxer but if Wilder lands like he did in the last round of the last fight, I think this time it's game over.



Gareth A. Davies

Sports journalist

It's the same fight all over again: puncher vs boxer. I suspect it will be a cagier fight at the start, but Fury will use educated boxing and more pressure this time. The cut eye from the Otto Wallin fight is a concern. A one-eyed Fury gets nailed by Wilder. The key is, can Wilder get a fitter Fury into a position to nail him?



Miles Shinkwin

Former English champion

I'd love to see Fury win but think 24 rounds is a long time in a ring with a puncher like Wilder. Heart says Tyson points but is overruled by my head that says Wilder within six.



Mickey Helliott

Manager and promoter

If Tyson Fury can use his reach, movement and boxing brain, he will win a clear decision. Wilder clearly has the power to hurt Fury but if they fought 10 times I'd expect Fury to win at least seven of them.

HOW WOULD A FIGHT BETWEEN RYAN GARCIA AND JORGE LINARES GO AT THIS STAGE?

Michael Conlan

I think that's a great fight. Linares still has enough in the tank to beat Garcia, in my opinion. Garcia hasn't faced anyone near Linares' level yet and Linares also has the speed to match him. Interesting fight and, in my opinion, one or two too soon for Garcia.

Gareth A. Davies

Timing is everything in boxing and 21-year-old Garcia versus 34-year-old Linares would be a bull versus matador fight in a loaded lightweight division fast becoming a beacon for fan-friendly contests. Garcia hunts, Linares boxes, and the young fighter gets a late stoppage.

Miles Shinkwin

Garcia has passed all tests so far with flying colours and it's no secret that Linares isn't the fighter he was but would be a great test for Garcia right now. Safe bet is Garcia on points but never write off a man with the talent of a Linares.

Mickey Helliott

I think it is too early to put Garcia in with Linares. There has been a real buzz around Garcia and he clearly has talent, but he's never been in with anyone even close to Linares, quality or experience-wise. I'd prefer to see Garcia have a few more 'stepping stone' fights before he gets pitched in like that.

10 COUNT

10 MOMENTS TO CONSIDER AHEAD OF WILDER-FURY II

Aside from the 12 rounds they shared in 2018, there are other revealing moments in their careers

1. FURY SHOCKS WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

Few gave Fury a chance of beating Klitschko when the pair met in Dusseldorf in 2015, yet 'The Gypsy King' used his range and size to bamboozle the world heavyweight champion en route to a decision win.

2. WILDER RUINS LUIS ORTIZ'S DREAMS – TWICE

Though seemingly trailing on the cards whenever in the ring with Ortiz, this hasn't stopped Wilder leaving the Cuban defeated on the canvas twice.

3. FURY RECOVERS TO STOP STEVE CUNNINGHAM

As with Wilder and Ortiz, there was a sense Cunningham, a former cruiserweight champion, had Fury's number when they met in 2013. He decked the Brit in the second round, heavily, but was slowed and eventually stopped by Fury in the seventh.

4. WILDER GOES 12 WITH BERMANE STIVERNE

Wilder had stopped all 32 of his opponents when he faced Stiverne for the WBC heavyweight title in 2015. But Stiverne proved a tougher test than most, forcing Wilder to hear the scorecards for the first time.

5. FURY SCRAPES BY JOHN McDERMOTT

You won't hear much about this one these days, but in 2009 John McDermott appeared to outbox Fury for 10 rounds, only for referee Terry O'Connor to do the dirty on him to the tune of a 98-92 scorecard.

6. WILDER STRUGGLES BEFORE SPARKING SZPILKA

Before Szpilka ended the night on the canvas, out cold following a Wilder right hand, he showed plenty of talent and spirit and gave Wilder much to think about.

7. FURY TAKES DERECK CHISORA'S ZERO

When Fury and Chisora met for the British and Commonwealth heavyweight titles in 2011, both were unbeaten and dreaming of world honours. In a fun fight, Fury prevailed after 12 rounds.

8. WILDER BLASTS DOMINIC BREAZEALE

Wilder's 2019 fight against fellow American Breazeale offered fans the perfect opportunity to compare him with rival champion Anthony Joshua. Joshua, of course, took seven rounds to get rid of Breazeale whereas Wilder got the job done inside a round.

9. FURY IS CUT TO PIECES BY OTTO WALLIN

In what was supposed to be a routine fight, Fury ended up getting more than he bargained for against the unheralded Wallin in 2019. Cut badly around both eyes, he had to settle for going the distance and escaping with a win.

10. WILDER THRASHES AUDLEY HARRISON

Stopping Harrison inside a round isn't one of Wilder's top 10 best wins but was arguably a breakout one. At the time, back in 2013, Wilder was relatively unknown, and Harrison was the first scalp of note on his record.

HAPPY FACES IN THE

Photo: HOLLY STEIN/GETTY IMAGES

FADING FORCE:
Dokes goes through the motions at the end of his career



Michael Dokes yearning for the big payday against Mike Tyson was chasing the impossible dream – just like everyone else



Steve Bunce

@BigDaddyBunce

Voice of boxing

It was another gathering of boxing's wide-eyed dreamers, hopeful, bruised, threatened and lonely, all on a promise of a few quid.

HEY walked in from the street sheltering from a hail storm, huddled near the door, nervously laughing, one in shorts, one in a coat borrowed from a homeless shelter, one under a hood and as they stood and nodded at each other they were taking pictures in their minds.

At Hero, a fancy latte of a new boxing gym, in Manchester last week I sat with Ben Ridings, looking hard at the tattoo of a cross-like dagger under one eye and the word blessed scrawled across his cheek and jaw. He is a young dad, but the baby and mother were nearly lost. "That's what I am, I'm blessed – they are living," he told me. Both living and doing well now.

Ridings is one of eight super-middles in the next *Ultimate Boxer*, scheduled for April 3 in Altrincham; Ridings joins a veteran or two, a fishmonger, a Love Islander, one of the Eubank clan, fighters with stories from boxing's dark and comic side. One took up boxing when he left prison, one lives in Dubai, one is from Brazil, five are unbeaten and they all need the money. It is the same story in any gym, in any city and in any

decade when there is a prize on offer, a big fight to be made. And money that can save or change a life.

In 1995 when Mike Tyson had been released the heavyweights in Las Vegas started to pray with a brutal mix of delusion and hopeless desire. They all wanted Tyson's golden lottery ticket, the chance to be in the opposite corner for his comeback fight, the chance to make a lot of cash. They got fit, they made plans and they made calls to anybody they knew in the Tyson industry.

I found Michael Dokes at Johnny Tocco's gym, built on the site of his bar, that summer, punishing his body to try and make it look and seem like he was once the heavyweight champion of the world and not some desperate crack addict. In 1993 it was Dokes who had locked himself in a plane toilet

WRONG PLACES

as it came in to land in New York; a conference for his horrible fight with Riddick Bowe was scheduled, but first Dokes needed his pipe and his rock – it was possibly heroin. The fight lasted 139 seconds.

Inside Tocco's and beyond the "Private Gym – Not Open To The Public" sign, Dokes seemed to be walking on water as he hit a bag, standing in a huge puddle of his own sweat and sin – it was always a furnace inside that gym. Dokes was muttering as he let his fast hands go and he still looked good. It was, I knew, an illusion. Dokes needed to believe he would get the call to be Tyson's dance partner.

"Mike's a good guy, always cool with me," Dokes told me. "Man, I'm waiting for Don [King] to call me and give me Tyson – I'm perfect, Don knows it, but Tyson is scared." At that point Dokes had not fought since the Bowe loss and was a fixture at Tocco's, panhandling anybody that could get in to watch. Tocco would lock and close the doors when he had to, when he was paid to; Hagler and Tyson would work in confinement in his sweat-pit.

Dokes tried his best to perform magic

for me with his words, he told me that his heart was back in the sport, that he was clean, that he still had a lot to offer. I had to listen. He then bummed a lift with me in a cab back to the MGM – it was a fight week and that meant old fighters, fallen fighters, the troubled could walk the carpeted casino floors, get recognised, get a free drink, maybe a meal. It will be the same during the Tyson Fury and Deontay Wilder week – the city is a magnet for old boxers, the men we once worshipped. In the days before Floyd Mayweather's last fight, Leon Spinks had an illegal pitch in the MGM and was charging people 20 bucks for a selfie. He made, and quite rightly, a nice big of change.

Dokes had asked me what I thought he would get for a Tyson fight. We were eating Chinese food from a plastic plate at the MGM at the time – my treat: I told him a million, I lied. It was the answer he wanted and he "borrowed" fifty bucks from me. He never got the fight –

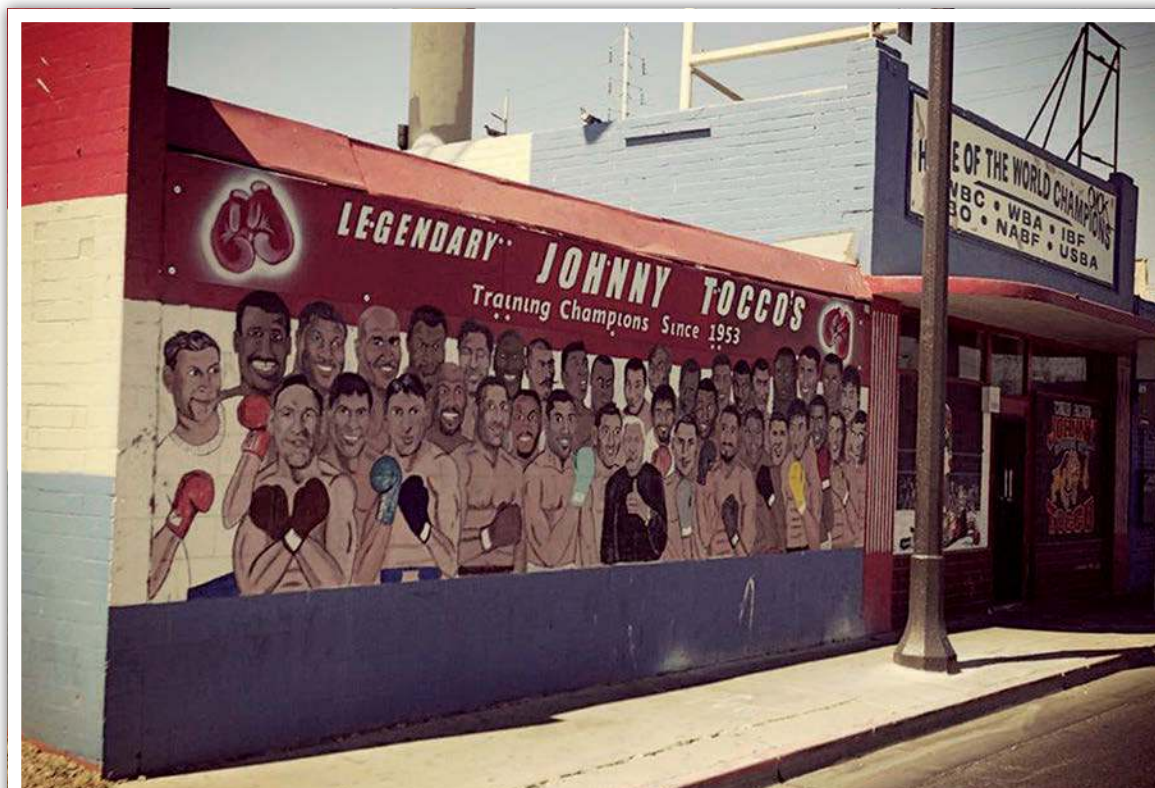
he was never going to get the fight, but he believed that day, he really believed.

Tocco's gym was where Sonny Liston had spent the last sad years of his life, beating bags to death for fun and living in a twilight. And, yes, Tocco did talk to me about Liston in his tiny office, the one with the faded Polaroids tacked to the wall; snaps of Liston at family

barbeques, Liston laughing, Liston standing with utter menace, but at child's birthday party. "He loved kids, why do you think he's buried with all the kids?" Tocco asked. That is, in my business, a sacred memory. Liston in death is surrounded by children in the cemetery.

A couple of years later Dokes was sentenced to 10 years for beating his girlfriend. Nobody could recognise her after his fists had done their damage. He was ruined, his legacy and reputation gone. He was released in 2008, dead by 2012. Another fallen member of the Lost Generation. It goes without saying that he never paid me back the money.

DOKES LOCKED HIMSELF IN A PLANE TOILET... HE NEEDED HIS PIPE AND HIS ROCK



DECORATED WALLS: Johnny Tocco's gym in Las Vegas can tell countless stories

THE RACE FOR CANELO

The narrative that Smith and Saunders are running scared from Alvarez is unfair, writes George Gigney as he examines the boxing media week

WEBSITES

THE search for Canelo Alvarez's next opponent continues, despite offers being made to super-middleweight world titlists Callum Smith and Billy Joe Saunders.

Speaking to Sky Sports, Eddie Hearn – who promotes Smith and Saunders – confirmed that both fighters have turned down offers. He said: "There is a market rate that has been established, unfortunately for [Canelo's promoters] Golden Boy. Callum and Billy Joe are not even asking for that market rate."

"I don't know which one Canelo prefers. But I do know both Callum and Billy Joe want the fight. The one who gets the fight? Probably the one who takes it for the least money."

Hearn finds himself in a tricky position, given that he's part of the reason the 'market rate' is so inflated after DAZN flooded the market with money, spending millions on B-level fights. Both Smith and Saunders deserve a big fight and either would be a credible foe for Canelo – we don't know the figures, and they should be fairly rewarded, but it would be a shame if both men lose out on the fight.

Oscar De La Hoya – Canelo's promoter – spoke to ESPN and unfairly brandished Smith an "idiot" for not accepting the offer.

"Callum Smith turned down the fight and he would have made three to four times the money he has ever made and he turned it down," he said.

"I wish him all the best and hopefully he can make the same money somewhere else. But Callum Smith, the most dangerous fighter out there at super-middleweight, is out there and he's bragging how he wants to fight the best

and he turns it down? What's wrong with these fighters? What's happening with the legacies? It's all business now."

It's been all business for a while, and these are worrying signs for DAZN. All three fighters box on the network in the US, yet an agreement can't be made. Something's gotta give. Also, De La Hoya's argument that a fighter should accept a potentially unfair deal because of legacies and fighting the best is an old and tired one; they're prizefighters and should always fight for the biggest prize possible.

On a brighter note, Hearn indicated that should neither Smith nor Saunders end up fighting Canelo, then they'll unify against each other instead, which would be lovely.

Eddie also found time to weigh in on the upcoming Deontay Wilder-Tyson Fury rematch, telling talkSPORT that he's now picking Wilder because of some rumours he's apparently heard from Fury's camp about how his training is going. He wouldn't be drawn on what those rumours were, and maybe it's just the cynic in me but I usually

assume Hearn has an ulterior motive when he comments on fights he's not promoting. In this case, with Fury being the betting favourite, Hearn's comments only make the fight more interesting.

It's time to mention Conor McGregor again, because Manny Pacquiao has signed with the company which manages the UFC star, Paradigm Sports Management. Back in January, ahead of his return to the octagon, McGregor spoke about Pacquiao and mentioned how "we almost signed him." At the time it wasn't clear what he meant, but perhaps he was referring to this management deal.

Or, this deal is just another step towards the pair meeting in a crossover boxing match. Who knows? Either way,

**'WHO GETS
CANELO?
PROBABLY
WHO TAKES
IT FOR THE
LEAST MONEY'**

Photo: AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES



Paradigm have worked wonders for McGregor, so it seems Manny's in good hands.

The New York State Athletic Commission finally saw sense and altered their punishment for Ivan Redkach for biting Danny Garcia during their January 25 fight. They're no longer demanding his \$300,000 purse and reduced his suspension to six months, though he still has to pay the \$10,000 fine.

Thomas Hauser – who has covered the debacle in great detail over at BoxingScene – justly called the commission out on their rash decision, and the dangerous precedent it sets. They handed down their punishment with minimal evidence and no due process.

Gary Russell Jnr continued to score *Boxing News* brownie points when he slammed the WBC's 'franchise' titles, just



a week after promoter Bob Arum had praised them.

"I think that's a way to manipulate and politics is playing a big part in that," Russell said. "I think that's a way of hiding fighters and allow[ing] fighters to pick and choose who they wanna fight. You know, I think the sport of boxing is getting weak."

Fair play to him – as a legitimate WBC world champion, his words carry weight.

▶ YOUTUBE

BT Sport continued their Wilder-Fury 2 promotion by confirming that John Fury – Tyson's father – is in fact one of the scariest men on the planet. He was part of a roundtable discussion about the rematch alongside David Haye, Paulie Malignaggi

and Steve Bunce which, for the most part, he dominated.

There were times he looked like he was ready to punch everyone at the table – particularly Haye, who he repeatedly disagreed with – though it all came from a deep loyalty to his son. Because of this, the discussion doesn't serve particularly well as an analysis of the fight, though that doesn't mean it isn't an entertaining watch.

BT also released a *Tyson Fury Resurrection* featurette looking at his tumultuous 12th round against Wilder and the parallels it drew with his life outside the ring. With the likes of Mike Tyson and George Foreman involved, it's an interesting video, and it also produced extended interviews with the protagonists, including referee Jack Reiss, who described his decision to allow Fury to continue as the best of his career.

📺 BROADCASTS

ITV aired the first instalment of a three-part documentary about Fury and his mental health struggles outside of the ring. It was riddled with errors (calling Wladimir Klitschko unbeaten before he lost to Fury, the inference that Tyson failed a drug test due to cocaine abuse and the notion that Tom Schwarz was a top contender) but even so, it's a sobering watch, mostly so when Fury recounts the day he left home with the intention of taking his own life. It's staggering to see how far Fury has come, but his brother Shane provided a valid reminder: "When he says depression doesn't leave you he means it. He can be happy one minute and sad the next. That's the real Tyson."

THIRD FIGHT?
Golovkin is yet to be mentioned as a potential foe for Canelo in May

Photo: DAVE THOMPSON/MATCHROOM BOXING



REUNITED:
Warrington [right]
and Hearn are
back together

MAKING HIS MOVE

Warrington
rejoins
Matchroom
after leaving
Queensberry

IBF featherweight champion **Josh Warrington** will no longer be promoted by Frank Warren and Queensberry Promotions after the conclusion of their promotional agreement.

The popular Leeds fighter joined Queensberry from Matchroom Boxing in late 2016 and in May 2018 boxed Lee Selby for the IBF featherweight title he currently holds. He won that fight, against the odds, and has since defended his belt three times, including notable wins against Carl Frampton and Kid Galahad.

Now 30-0, Warrington is on the hunt for unification fights at featherweight and has recently been touted as a possible

opponent for WBO champion Shakur Stevenson.

"I am happy to say that we delivered for Josh on every level and helped him realise his goals in the sport," said Frank Warren. "We all wish Josh every success for the future and will always remember the great nights we enjoyed in Leeds."

Minutes after Warrington's departure from Queensberry was announced, Matchroom released a statement of their own, laying claim to Warrington on what is effectively a free transfer.

"I'm ecstatic to welcome Josh Warrington back to Matchroom," said promoter Eddie Hearn. "We had some amazing times helping to build Josh

in Leeds and now we reunite at a time when he is the king of the division.

"Josh has some of the most loyal and passionate supporters in sport and we look forward to delivering nights they will never forget. There is so much more for Josh to accomplish and today starts a new chapter in the thrilling Josh Warrington story."

Meanwhile, the man himself said: "It's great to be back with Matchroom, Sky and now DAZN and I'm very excited about the future. I have enjoyed my time at BT [with Queensberry] but now I'm looking forward to going on to achieve my dreams of both fighting in the USA and unifying the division."

WHEN STARS COLLIDE

A potential
Pacquiao-
McGregor fight
seemingly
edges closer

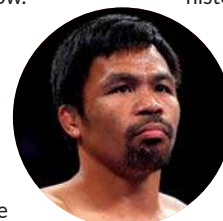
MANNY PACQUIAO has signed a deal with Paradigm Sports Management, adding further fuel to the fire that is a potential Manny Pacquiao-Conor McGregor boxing match.

Paradigm, a name unfamiliar to most boxing fans, also represent UFC superstar McGregor, which is why the announced link-up has got many excited – or simply curious – about the prospect of Pacquiao and the Irishman finally sharing a boxing ring in 2020.

This fight has, for better or worse, been teased for some time now.

"We're very excited to announce that Manny Pacquiao has signed with PSM for full-service representation!" said a post on the Paradigm Twitter account. "Manny is one of the greatest boxers of all time & we look forward to working with Arnold, Ping and the rest of the

team back in Manila to maximise his historic career."



Whether it should or shouldn't happen – it shouldn't, by the way – is a moot point given the amounts of money at stake here. All we can say for (almost) certain is that Pacquiao joining forces with McGregor's business team is surely no mere coincidence.

HASKINS HANGS 'EM UP

Chris Sanigar
confirms the
retirement of
his long-time
charge

HAVING made his pro debut in 2003 and having won every title possible from English through to world, **Lee Haskins** has now announced his retirement.

We have had him in the gym since he was 14, so it has been a journey of 23 years. He says I have been like a dad to him. I believe him because he always did the opposite to what I told him! There would be times when I would bellow down the phone, "Where are you?" and he would respond, "I'm on my way to the gym." He only lived two miles away and he would turn up three days later.

He would be the first to admit that he wished he had applied himself better in the early days, but we still had some glorious nights. People did not realise how hard he punched and numerous

opponents said to me that it took three or four rounds to get used to the power. The shot he hit Ryosuke Iwasa with would have knocked a horse out.

He won five British title contests and retires as an undefeated British super-flyweight and bantamweight champion. He won the EBU title twice and in his losing contest to Stephane Jamoye it was voted European Fight of the Year.

In his losing IBF championship bout against Ryan Burnett he showed tremendous courage to box the seventh to 12th rounds without being able to use his leading hand. This was due to a freak injury to his neck that damaged the nerves that went down his arm.

Sadly Lee was not favoured by the TV promoters and that, plus his fear of

flying, limited him to only a few big pay days. Thankfully he managed to pay for his house outright and helped purchase his mother's house. He is property rich and a little light on cash but he has a job for life with us in the gym.

He is 37 and married to school sweetheart Claire, who is expecting their fourth child. His son Anton has recently turned professional and is 1-0, so the Haskins journey will continue.

The Bristol Mayor, Marvin Rees, has already said that the city council would like to have a commemorative evening for Lee at our City Hall.

Lee will be applying for a Trainer/Second's licence, so I am sure you will hear a lot more of the Haskins story in the years to follow.

Photo: ACTION IMAGES/JASON CAIRNDUFF

DECORATED:
Haskins can look
back on a career
packed with
achievements



RINGSIDE REST & CARE

Help continues
to come in from
the boxing
fraternity

FIRSTLY, many thanks go to Tony Wicking who, having read about what we are trying to achieve, has made a very generous donation and is supporting us in any way that he can. Secondly, Steve Graysmark has pledged that he will be supporting us this year and will be holding an auction every month, with all proceeds going to Ringside Charitable Trust – a very generous and fantastic pledge! The first item auctioned was a boxed,

signed Frank Bruno glove.

Scottish support is coming from John "Jock" McInnes, who is taking part in a four-day, 72km trek in the Sahara desert. Jock needs our support to allow him to take part. Please help if you can! Contact mcinnes1984@outlook.com.

One of our ambassadors, Michael Watson MBE, will be at Worldwide Signings in Romford Shopping Hall on March 21 between 12 and 2pm.

Tickets are £10, including a signed photo. There is a champagne reception and Q&A, plus autograph and photo opportunities. For tickets please ring Andy Brace on 0790 850 5071.

Finally, many thanks to all of you who have signed a standing order payment each month to Ringside Charitable Trust. The names of all donors will be engraved on a magnificent trophy, which will be on display in the hall of the building.

SICK AND TIRED:
Edwards is
disheartened by the
business of boxing



'IT'S THE MOST CORRUPT SPORT IN HISTORY'

John Dennen asks Charlie Edwards about the darker side of boxing



HARLIE EDWARDS has had a tumultuous run of championship fights. He won the WBC flyweight title as an underdog but last year was dropped by Mexico's Julio Cesar Martinez and then halted by a blow on the deck. He has not fought since but here speaks to Boxing News about his plans for 2020, his contractual

situation as well as confronting the darkest side of the sport.

Have you set goals for 2020?

I've got a few things I want to do. I'd love to fight in America. I'd love to fight over in Dubai and I'd love to become a two-weight world champion, of course.

When are you boxing next?

I'm back out in April [the 18th] on an MTK show at York Hall. I'm currently not in contract with Matchroom. [As he considers options he still] wanted to get out, get back in the ring, get back to winning ways and I didn't want to be stalled or anything. I've been advised not to jump into something straightaway. Now having become a world champion there's going to be more people that want to work with me and there's already offers there on the table. I do believe Eddie [Hearn] still does want to work with me, I've been told.

I need a fight date, I need something to prepare myself for and put my head into.

I'd rather not achieve anything than achieve something that would be false. You'd know deep down that you haven't achieved anything at all.

It's only going to be a pound under bantamweight, to keep my world ranking, in the super-flyweight I'm ranked number three in the world with the WBC.

Then it's about seeing what offer works best for me, the career path and the money more than anything. I've become a world champion. Now it's time to secure my future.

How did you feel seeing Julio Cesar Martinez go on to fight for the title you vacated?

Whatever happens in this sport of boxing, at the end of the day, it is strictly business. The longer I've been in this sport, I've learned along the way that it is a conveyor belt kind of money-making avenue. So I couldn't put too much emotion into it. To be fair I watched him against [Cristofer] Rosales and he's a great fighter.

I won the first two rounds outboxing him [Martinez], but I just could keep him off. [Edwards' world title fight with Martinez was ruled a no contest eventually, after the Mexican struck Edwards while he was on the deck.] Really it shows, I'm a great boxer, don't

be too hard on yourself. What he done to Rosales was crazy. He walked him down and bullied him. That never ever happens to Rosales. It shows what a great fighter he is, he's with the Canelo camp. He's probably with one of the best teams in the sport of boxing right now. It hurt that I had to give the title up [because he needed to move up in weight]. We might meet again and next time we meet again in a higher weight division where I'm in my prime at that weight division and I'm at my strongest, then who knows? That could be another legacy sort of fight.

You don't know what's in the future. All I can do is give him props. He's a great fighter.

He failed a test for clenbuterol, but gets to be cleared by the WBC, fight for a world title, work with Eddie Hearn again. How does that sit with you?

It hurts because I know how bad I was on the scales and my life was on the line. And that's the reason why I moved up.

Later on, it comes out about the drugs, it hurt, of course it hurt. But at the end of the day, it is what it is. Boxing's the most corrupt sport in history. It has been for years and years and years. There's no point grumbling over it. There's no point. Me having negative energy towards it, all that's going to do is kill my own happiness with the sport and make me not want to do it. So it is what it is. I know I'm clean. I know I do everything right. That's all I can ask of myself.

So many more people are failing drug tests left, right and centre... If they want to make their money, they'll do it at all costs. It's sad but it's what we're involved in.

After a while do boxers who are doing the right thing start thinking to themselves, if you can't beat them, join them?

Lately it's been drug test after drug test failed... They get two fights back, three fights back. They start winning again and everyone's forgotten about it. It's crazy. The thing is, nothing in life is fair. So you can't expect things to be fair in sport

either.

As a fighter is it easy to resist that temptation?

I think it comes down to the person. It comes down to the reason why they're doing it, what they want to achieve out of the sport. What their goals and aims are.

I could not for the life of me do that. Because it would take everything I've work for from the age of 11 away from me and all the achievements I've earned, it would be false. I'd rather not achieve anything than achieve something that would be false.

You'd know deep down that you haven't achieved anything at all.



POWER: Martinez readies himself to attack Edwards' body

'THEY FAIL A TEST, THEN THEY START WINNING AGAIN AND IT'S FORGOTTEN'

Photo: MIKEY WILLIAMS/TOP RANK



Simply unmissable

Deontay Wilder-Tyson Fury II is as big as it gets and picking the winner is a very difficult task. **Matt Christie** examines the evidence and makes his case

Photo: ACTION IMAGES/ANDREW COULDRIDGE



UNREAL:
It is still mind-boggling that Fury actually got up

WORTH THE ENTRANCE FEE:
The Wilder-Fury rematch will be broadcast by BT Sport Box Office

anticipation is greater.

Though most observers believed Fury deserved to beat Wilder in December 2018, the reaction to the draw was nothing like the outcry after Holyfield was gifted the same result against Lewis in 1999. But the need for a sequel way back then was merely to tie up loose ends, as opposed to any desire for seconds: Lewis vs Holyfield, episode one, was disappointing and rather dull; Lewis proved his superiority to such an extent that the outcome of episode two was all but a foregone conclusion beforehand. Put it this way, though the replay exceeded expectation,

nobody would have been asking for it if justice had been served for Lewis in the first place.

Wilder-Fury II is different.

The opener, though not a thrill-a-second barnburner, was laced with more tension than a good horror film. You knew something might happen at any moment, but you didn't know what and you didn't know when. And even for those who

felt Fury won, of which I was one, the two knockdowns he suffered on foreign ground were enough to leave the outcome in the balance and the draw just about justifiable. Consequently, the rematch, set for the MGM Grand on Saturday night (February 22), is a bona fide must-see. And the winner? Well, you might as well toss a coin.

There are compelling cases from both sides. Wilder, the WBC heavyweight champion, cites the two knockdowns he scored in Los Angeles as evidence that he's already broken Fury beyond repair. More unconscious than hurt, Fury miraculously found his feet but there may yet

be truth in Wilder's claim that Tyson hasn't been the same since he was cannonballed in that stunning final round. Wilder – who floored his rival in two of the last four sessions – insists it will merely be case of picking up where he left off.

The counter arguments are easy to construct. Fury, 29-0-1 (20), went down twice but got up twice. In truth, though he lost the ninth and 12th rounds, he'd regained control by the end of them. The lapses in concentration fixed, Fury simply went back to work. Nobody else has taken those punches from Wilder and heard the final bell, let alone regained their faculties and fought back. Luis Ortiz may argue

otherwise, but no fighter came closer to defeating Wilder or outfoxed him so effectively. Throw in the fact that Tyson was having his first fight at world class in over three years (the pitter-patter warm-ups against Sefer Seferi and Francesco Pianeta don't count), and still came so close to winning, then the evidence really starts to build in the Briton's favour.

Indeed, if part one is all the evidence you're using to formulate your opinion on who wins part two, watching Fury bamboozle Wilder for long periods make a cast iron case. A popular train of thought, for very good reason, is that if Fury stays active and switched on for 36 minutes then he will win the fight.

Such thinking will not be lost on Wilder. Though he insists it's Fury who has the biggest hangover from their December 2018 date, Wilder's own mind will be swirling with memories of frustration. He may not admit it but he will be acutely aware, in a way that he wasn't before, that he's embarking upon the trickiest assignment of his entire 42-0-1 (41) career. Boxers remember those lonely moments in ➤

TYSON FURY SAYS

'IT'S not about what Deontay Wilder does. It's about what I do. I don't think about the opponent. I've got to concentrate on what I do... Wilder wasn't my toughest opponent. It was one of my easiest fights. Apart from the knockdowns, it was pretty one-sided.'

★★★★★ MAIN EVENT

★★★☆☆ UNDERCARD

I

T'S a common narrative in the promotional drive for this weekend's return between **Deontay Wilder** and **Tyson Fury** that this is the biggest heavyweight fight since

Lennox Lewis and Evander Holyfield last came to blows. But Wilder-Fury II might be even bigger. Without question, among those who know the sport, the

► the ring when they realise their opponent is on a completely different level to anything they've encountered before. Old tricks don't work. Honey punches miss and counters come back before you can blink. Indeed, the wayward punches he threw at Fury will haunt him just as much as the punches Fury landed on him.

However, what nobody should do is underestimate the mental resolve of Deontay Wilder. Boxers of lesser fortitude would have found a way to avoid this return and, perhaps even more tellingly, gone nowhere near Luis Ortiz again after the Cuban gave Wilder fits in 2018 (Ortiz was stopped in 10 after a titanic battle). Yet the "Bronze Bomber" went back to work with Ortiz last year in a voluntary defence that, until the astonishing one-punch finish in round seven, highlighted exactly why the American should stay away from slick and tricky boxers, of which Fury is king. But dig deeper and you'll find reasons to back the champion here.

Lost in the overused spin that 34-year-old Wilder is a one-dimensional slugger is the truth that a 95 per cent KO ratio from 43 bouts is a heck of a feat. Okay, he has a habit of overreaching with his right hand and is off target more frequently than on, but, for evidence of his quality, watch how he gets into position to bang. A master of cutting off the ring, Wilder is intelligent and unlike so many others who are reliant on their power, he never loses heart if things are not going his way. Wilder stalks and watches and learns. Patience oozed from him as he waited for the opportune moment to land the defining bomb against Ortiz in their rematch. He knew the opening would come. He likely knows the opening will come on Saturday night, too.

Tyson is not lacking in self-belief himself, of course. For all the hot air he spouts there is a considered and thoughtful fighter beneath, one who boxes beautifully going backwards and one with underrated power when he decides to use it. And if you're going to cite Wilder's improvement in rematches (as well as showing off his education against Ortiz, he walloped Bernane Stiverne in a round after going 12 with him in their first contest) then you have to do the same with Fury: In 2010 he halted John McDermott in nine rounds, a year after being lucky to get the decision over 10, and in 2014 he pummelled Dereck Chisora in 10 one-sided sessions, three years after going 12 with him.

Technically, Fury is better than any heavyweight. Expect him to again jab high to nullify the threat of his rival's right. Tyson's left arm is just as effective when outstretched and artfully blocking Wilder's view of the target. Rolling the shoulder and feinting with his head are other skills he's mastered as he keeps his chin out of danger. Fury, 6ft 9ins, is very hard to hit cleanly when he's on his game. Logic dictates that he'll again look to control the distance and pace, that he'll move away at angles and smother in close so not to allow Wilder, two inches shorter, to set himself or load up.

But logic, at least Tyson Fury logic, also tells

us to expect the unexpected. He insists he's going for the knockout this time. And though it's tempting to write that off as mind games, such an approach from the Englishman shouldn't be discounted completely. He felt he was robbed last time. He will also remember moments when he wobbled Wilder and how cheated he felt by the judges after conserving more than enough energy to go the full 12. But for Fury to win, be it by KO or on the cards, he cannot allow his concentration to lapse for even a second.

Asking anyone to fight a perfect fight is a huge ask, particularly when bogged down with the pressure of facing the Alabama assassin. Fury made only three obvious mistakes in the first

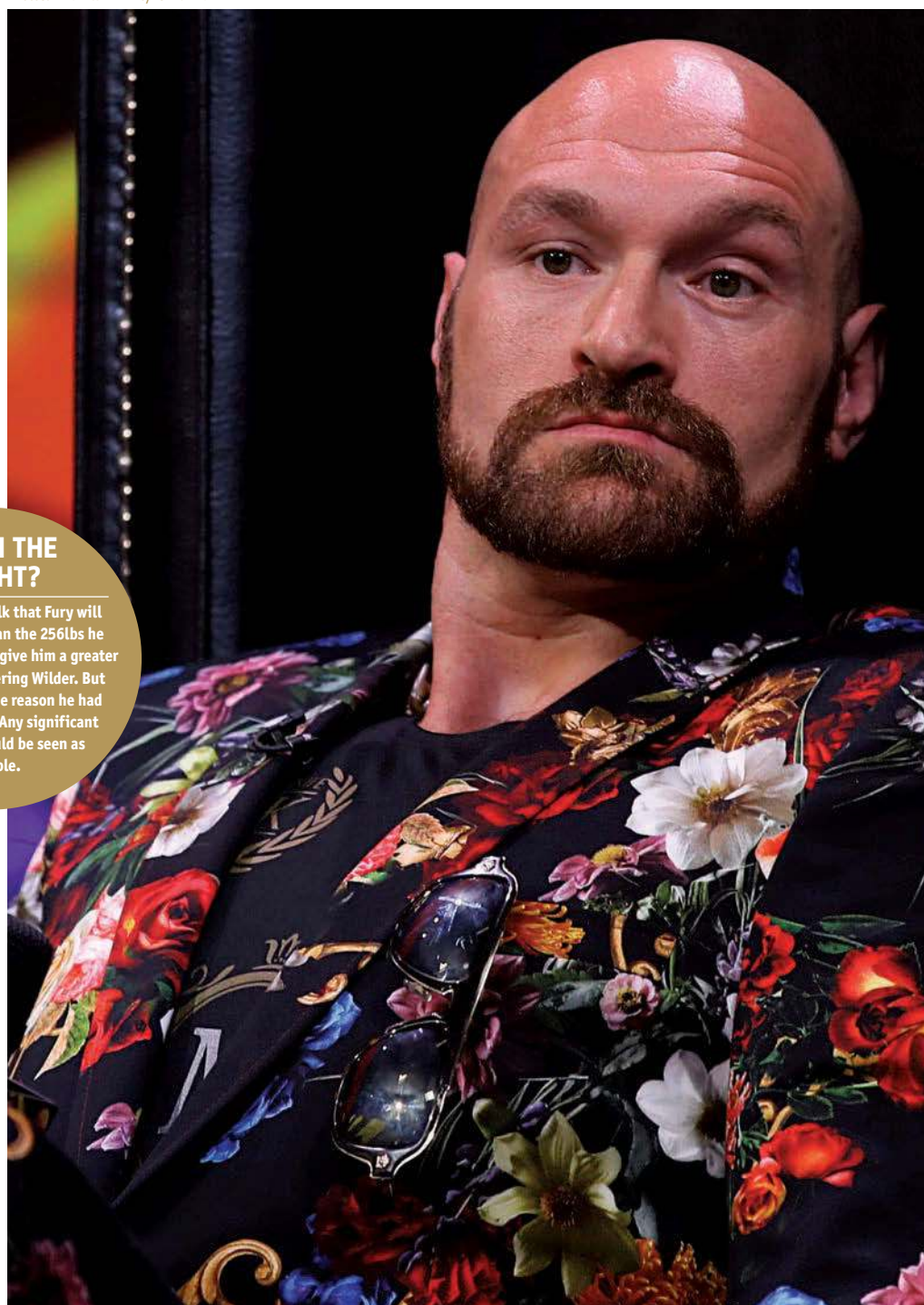
fight. He stood too long in the pocket early on and took a right hand that bruised his face. A further two errors left him on the deck. Wilder doesn't carry such a burden. His imperfections are all part of his game.

It would be a more straightforward call to pick Fury, probably on points, if this rematch was an immediate one. The first contest was almost a perfect storm for the Englishman; written off by many after his time out of the ring, Tyson craved salvation and respect. To recreate that drive will be difficult: After signing with promoter Bob Arum, Tyson found himself taking a lucrative detour that involved thrashing the hapless Tom Schwarz in two rounds, being hideously cut

Photos: MIKEY WILLIAMS/TOP RANK

WORTH THE WEIGHT?

THERE has been talk that Fury will come in heavier than the 256lbs he weighed last time to give him a greater chance of overpowering Wilder. But mobility was a huge reason he had success last time. Any significant weight gain would be seen as a gamble.



during a gruelling 12-round win over the unfancied Otto Wallin, earning extra dough in the WWE and swapping his coach Ben Davison for Kronk veteran, Javan "Sugar" Hill Steward. The official line on the switch is Fury wants to be more aggressive but sacrificing the calming and intelligent influence of Davison – who engineered the perfect plan to beat Wilder in 2018 – is a huge risk. The Wallin cut has healed but the scars are fresh and must also be referenced as a potential danger for the

WILDER, PERHAPS MORE THAN FURY, CAN IMPROVE IN FIGHT TWO

he needs to dominate. He looked poor against Wallin but, in fairness, Tyson has always struggled to thrive against mediocre opposition. However, even the slightest erosion of his reflexes will lead to defeat against Wilder, who appears to be at his peak, not only physically but also mentally.

Wilder, perhaps more so than Fury, can improve in fight two. Though he wasn't particularly wild in the Staples Center, he allowed Fury to be comfortable for too long. If Fury needs to retain concentration for 12 rounds to win, then Wilder's key to success has to be to break it. There was an absence of body work from Wilder last time and that is something he can and should address. Though hitting Fury clean to the

challenger here.

Fury, 31, will tell you he is now match fit in a way that he couldn't have been 14 months ago, that he's sharp and explosive and ready to unleash the combination punching

face is difficult, he does open his body up while on the move. Wilder, then, must take advantage.

Davison's work in the first fight shouldn't be discounted. He kept Fury on track throughout, in the build-up and during the fight. Whether his new coach can do the same, particularly when Tyson's mind starts to wander, is unknown. Certainly, their relationship is fresh and untested.

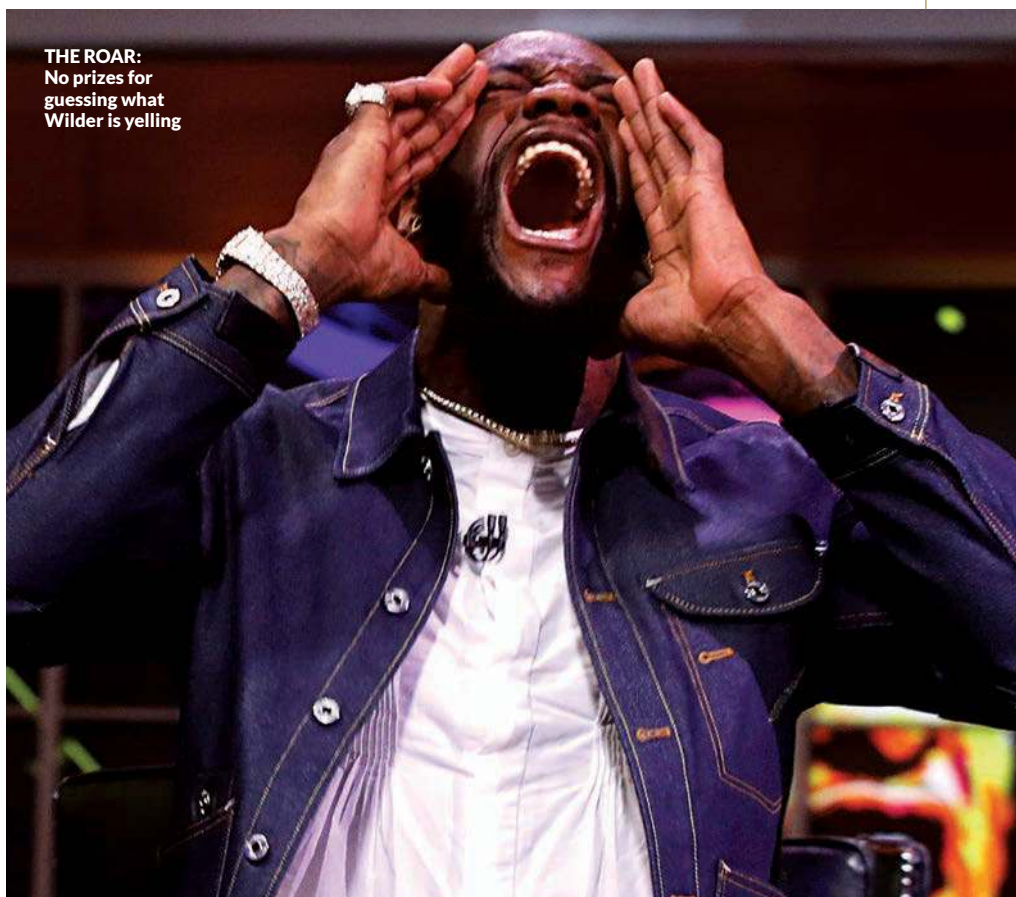
The feeling, and it's only really a feeling, is that Wilder, applying pressure, will have more success in the early going and Fury, though he will again prove a nightmare for the champion, will slowly start to unravel. One day Wilder's punch will fail him but, for now, it is too potent to withstand. The fight-ending smash will land at some point after the sixth.

What we want more than anything, and what the sport needs, just like it needed in 1999, is a definitive winner. Though Anthony Joshua looms large, the victor can take their place atop a division readying itself for a historic decade.

THE VERDICT The most important fight the division has staged this century.

THOUGHTFUL:
Fury is convinced
he has the beating
of Wilder

THE ROAR:
No prizes for
guessing what
Wilder is yelling



REST OF THE BILL

CHARLES MARTIN, 27-2-1 (24), faces fringe contender **GERALD WASHINGTON** in an eliminator for the IBF heavyweight strap Martin meekly surrendered to Anthony Joshua almost four years ago. From St Louis, but now training in California with Manny Robles, Martin is 4-1 since being thrashed by Joshua. The lone loss, a gutsy points defeat to Adam Kownacki, showed there was more to Martin than just tight shorts and a nondescript title reign. Expect him to have too much for Washington, 20-3-1 (13), and score a stoppage in the second half of their 12-rounder... Filipino **JEO SANTISIMA**, 19-2 (16), takes a humongous step up when he challenges brilliant Mexican **EMANUEL NAVARRETE**, 30-1 (26) for the WBO super-bantamweight belt. Navarrete has been in spiteful form of late and that should continue against his raw and untested opponent... Morecambe's **ISAAC LOWE**, 17-0-3 (6) gets another showcase on cousin Tyson Fury's undercard. He should be too good for Mexico's **ALBERTO GUEVARA**, 27-5 (12).

Tyson Fury and the SugarHill Gang

Photo: JOHN MCCOY/GETTY IMAGES

DIFFERENT DIRECTION:
Fury is working with a new training team

A major talking point of the build-up so far is Fury's coach being replaced by Javan 'SugarHill' Steward. Andy Lee, now part of Fury's team, discusses the switch with **Elliot Worsell**

LIKE so many relationships, it began with a phone call. More accurately, a call to arms. The call was received by Andy Lee, a former WBO middleweight champion, and made by Tyson Fury, a former WBA, IBF and WBO heavyweight champion. It was unexpected if not unusual. Unexpected because it had been some time since they last spoke yet not entirely unusual because Fury and Lee had long been supporters of one another and in both coming from traveller backgrounds have more than just their profession in common.

Still, when his phone started to ring, Andy Lee was surprised to see Tyson Fury's name appear on its screen. Confused, too, once the initial wave of small talk subsided and he got to wondering what had inspired Fury to reach out to him. "Andy," Fury eventually said, "I need a new coach."

Of all the potential paths their conversation might have taken, this was one Lee didn't see coming. As far as he was aware Fury was happy with Ben Davison, his current coach, and, moreover, was in the early stages of preparing for a February 22 rematch with Deontay

Wilder in Las Vegas. Fury elaborated by saying, "I need to bring somebody into the camp with a bit more experience," but still Lee was confused. "Okay," he replied, "but what about Ben?"

The answer to this question was not only the key to the riddle but crucial in terms of putting Lee's mind at ease. "Because whenever I've been around Ben or listened to Ben, he's very impressive," Lee told *Boxing News*. "When I've watched them together, I've always thought it's a great relationship they have."

Fury told Lee not to worry. He confirmed Davison would still be involved and then moments later the two of them, Fury and Lee, were discussing several potential coaches the former world heavyweight champion could draft into his training camp to add some extra flavour to his preparations.

"We talked about coaches we both knew, mostly in America but also in England," Lee recalled. "We talked through everybody and the one person

I said after a while was 'SugarHill' (Javan Steward). Tyson then said, 'Andy, that is exactly who I was thinking.'"

Lee thought the two of them would hit it off and that their personalities would blend well. But Fury, having briefly worked with SugarHill during his time at Emanuel Steward's Kronk

**'I COULD TELL
EARLY ON THAT
TYSON FURY
LIKES TO SIT AND
TALK AND HAVE
A DEBRIEF'**

gym in Detroit, suspected this anyway. "He will also work well with Ben," Lee added. "He will have you punching correctly, your balance will improve, and you'll be a lot more imposing."

With Fury sold on the idea, Lee was asked to call SugarHill on the "Gypsy King's" behalf. Then, days later, Lee received further contact from Fury, this time in the form of a text message. By now Fury and SugarHill had agreed to work together but Fury wanted more. Specifically, he wanted to double down on the old Detroit magic.

"As an infant of a coach, training two guys at



very different levels to where Tyson is, to get a chance to work with a guy who is going to be heavyweight champion of the world is a priceless experience," said Lee, 35, who lived with SugarHill during his years in Detroit. "Even though I have commitments to other boxers, and I'm a husband and a dad, I just couldn't say no."

If this all sounds too smooth to be true, it's because it was.

"But then whatever happened between Tyson and Ben happened," Lee went on. "I haven't asked Tyson about it and I don't really want or need to

know. All I did was send Ben a message saying, 'I'm sorry we're not going to be working together.' I was looking forward to it."

Lee's own work with Fury began in Los Angeles, where the pair spent some time together while SugarHill dealt with his other boxers, and has since continued in Las Vegas, where Lee has been based since Monday, February 3.

"I won't say anything while SugarHill is teaching or training Tyson," he said. "I won't even have a word in between rounds. I will talk after the action has stopped and say my piece."

"It's a collaborative effort. Tyson knows himself what he needs to do. I'm coming in having never trained or worked with him before in this kind of role. So, you have to take on board what he says and how he feels."

"He's as much of an asset as anyone because of his boxing brain. He's really, really attuned and has a depth of knowledge about how he fights. He's also been in there with Wilder. That's an insight that's invaluable. So, you have to take that into account as well."

The impression one gets is that SugarHill ➤

► has been doing much of the heavy lifting inside the ring, while Lee ensures Fury's mind is exactly where it needs to be when away from the ring. Whatever the particulars, though, it's safe to say this: as disciples of Emanuel Steward, both SugarHill and Lee are conduits of greatness.

"A lot of the work we do is in the gym but a lot of the work that I do anyway is outside, sitting around the table talking," said Lee, who was trained by Steward until the Kronk legend passed away in 2012. "Tyson, from what I could detect early on, likes to sit around and talk and have a debrief, and a big part of the job is talking things through and affirming what we're doing."

"What really impressed me with Tyson is that he is extremely focused and serious about his training. You see him from the outside and he's always joking and messing around in interviews. But when he's training he is so focused and switched on."

"You'd be surprised how many fighters, big-name fighters, cut corners even at this level and don't do what he does in training. They say one thing but are doing another. I've seen it. I've been around it. They bring in easy sparring, they cheat on their diet, or they just don't train. But Tyson's doing everything correct and that's all you can ask for, isn't it?"

"He is also eating unbelievably well; he hasn't had one day when he's had a treat or a bar of chocolate or a can of Diet Coke. He used to drink Diet Coke all the time."

"I'm touching wood here but it's going extremely well, the training camp. Everyone is in good spirits and it's all very calm and peaceful. It's harmony. There's no chaos. It's just a good feeling. We're enjoying going to the gym every day."

That three old friends are enjoying catching up and reminiscing about old times should come as no surprise. Nor will SugarHill's appointment come as any great surprise to those aware of his ability as a trainer (and indeed the fact he is Emanuel Steward's nephew).

"It's his attention to detail," Lee said of his friend. "He won't overcomplicate anything. He keeps the focus on very good, sound basics. It's all based on good balance. He puts a lot of emphasis on repetition and practicing even the simplest of things over and over. It might be a feint and a jab or a feint and a one-two and he'll have you repeating it. You think it's Boxing 101, the stuff you would learn as a kid, but he will drill it until it is absolutely right. Also, he's got a good personality. He keeps the mood light and has fun outside the gym. It seems a good fit so far and Tyson is very committed to the learning."

In many ways they are all learning. Fury, 29-0-1 (20), is learning from two men he knows well, yet with whom he has never previously worked, and Lee and SugarHill, meanwhile, are learning what it's like to collaborate on a project with a WBC world heavyweight championship up for grabs should they get it right.

"I've watched the first fight countless times, and

Photo: MINAS PANAGIOTAKIS/GETTY IMAGES

TEACHER:
SugarHill (left),
pictured with
Adonis Stevenson



**'IT'S HIS
ATTENTION TO
DETAIL. HE KEEPS
THE FOCUS ON
VERY GOOD,
SOUND BASICS'**



WATCHFUL:
Lee keeps a close
eye on Fury



other fights of his, and no matter what you say about his technique, Wilder gets it done," said Lee. "He's winning all these fights by knockout and you have to respect that. If you switch off at any moment, he will take you out.

"But the two knockdowns Tyson suffered in that first fight occurred when he wasn't looking at Wilder. The first happened when he was almost stuck in the corner and bobbing to get low and his head kind of got stuck down there. He then got caught behind the head. That can happen.

"When Tyson had his back to the ropes, he was very switched on defensively, very alert, but when he got the centre of the ring in the 12th round he just had that little lapse because he was in the centre of the ring. Again, he dipped down and turned away. He couldn't see the punch because he wasn't even looking in the direction of it.

"It sounds very simple, but this time Tyson will need to keep his eyes on Wilder. So long as Tyson keeps his eyes on him, even if he gets hit, the brain will subconsciously recognise and prepare him for what's coming. He will react. If you don't see it, you can't react."

For as much as this was an opportunity too good to refuse, Lee is not the type to kid himself, or anyone else, or preach from a script designed only to deceive. Instead, he says what he sees and speaks only what he believes and, in this case, says what he has seen in Fury these past few weeks has not only encouraged him but justified his decision to join the camp.

"I have spoken to Tyson before other fights, and even before the [Wladimir] Klitschko fight, and he was always very disparaging about himself," Lee said. "He would be putting himself down. He would say to me, 'I'm s**t and I'm going to get knocked out. What am I doing this for? F**k it, I'll just take the money.' But this time he has been unwavering in his belief in himself. He's convinced he's going to knock Wilder out and that he's going to put it on him. People think it's a joke. They think it's reverse psychology for us to be putting this message out there. But that's what he's training for.

"I don't see any reason why he can't do it, either. He's huge, he has all the ability, and now he has the technique and is learning in this camp how to punch correctly, the way he should as a big man. I don't think you'll see the flicking.

"It would be stupid to disregard the style that has taken him to this point already. No one else

can do what he does. No one else can perform with that frame the way he does. But I think what you're going to see is a mix of that with correct punching behind it and him not looking to pull away from punches or get out before they have even landed. He will be looking to commit to punches and then get back on defence."

Even a momentary lapse in this department – defence – can turn victory into defeat in the presence of Wilder, as poor Luis Ortiz can attest. However, where Fury is concerned, almost as vital as defence is momentum, which now, unlike before, he has in abundance.

"Ahead of the first fight he was coming back from almost three years off and had two comeback fights that weren't really fights," said Lee. "Since then, he has had a dominant win against [Tom] Schwarz and a really competitive fight against [Otto] Wallin. More importantly, he's had consistent training. Think about where he was previously. He was weighing something like 24 stone at one point and came down to fight Wilder within six months of his comeback. Now he's had over a year of training, fighting, being a boxer and having the mindset of a boxer. He's only going to be better. There will obviously be some fear there but if he beats Wilder – by any means, but especially if he knocks him out – where does that put Tyson? It puts him in the conversation as one of the greatest heavyweights of all time. The way things are in this day and age, with social media and the news, he will be a superstar. I think that's his motivation."

This Saturday the relationship between SugarHill and Andy Lee will be as congenial and laidback as their respective demeanours. It will see SugarHill adopt the role of head coach between rounds, the one tasked with delivering instructions to Fury, and Lee, also in the corner, offer his input during the process of rounds unfolding. "SugarHill will be the only voice you hear in the corner," Lee wanted to make clear, even if aware his and SugarHill's voices, though different in accent and tone, will ultimately relay the same message, one passed down from a place higher up.

"After the first training session we were lying in the ring and I said to SugarHill, 'Isn't this crazy? Here we are after all these years, training together and getting ready to win the heavyweight championship together.' He then said, 'Yeah. Emanuel would have loved this.' **BN**

View from the corner

Martin Bowers

Trains Daniel Dubois, current British and Commonwealth heavyweight champion

Dominic Ingle

Trains Kell Brook, former world welterweight champion, Kid Galahad, former world featherweight title challenger, and Liam Williams, current British middleweight champion

Jim McDonnell

Has trained James DeGale, former world super-middleweight champion, and Danny Williams, former world heavyweight title challenger

John Scully

Has trained Chad Dawson, former world light-heavyweight champion, and Jose Antonio Rivera, former world super-welterweight champion

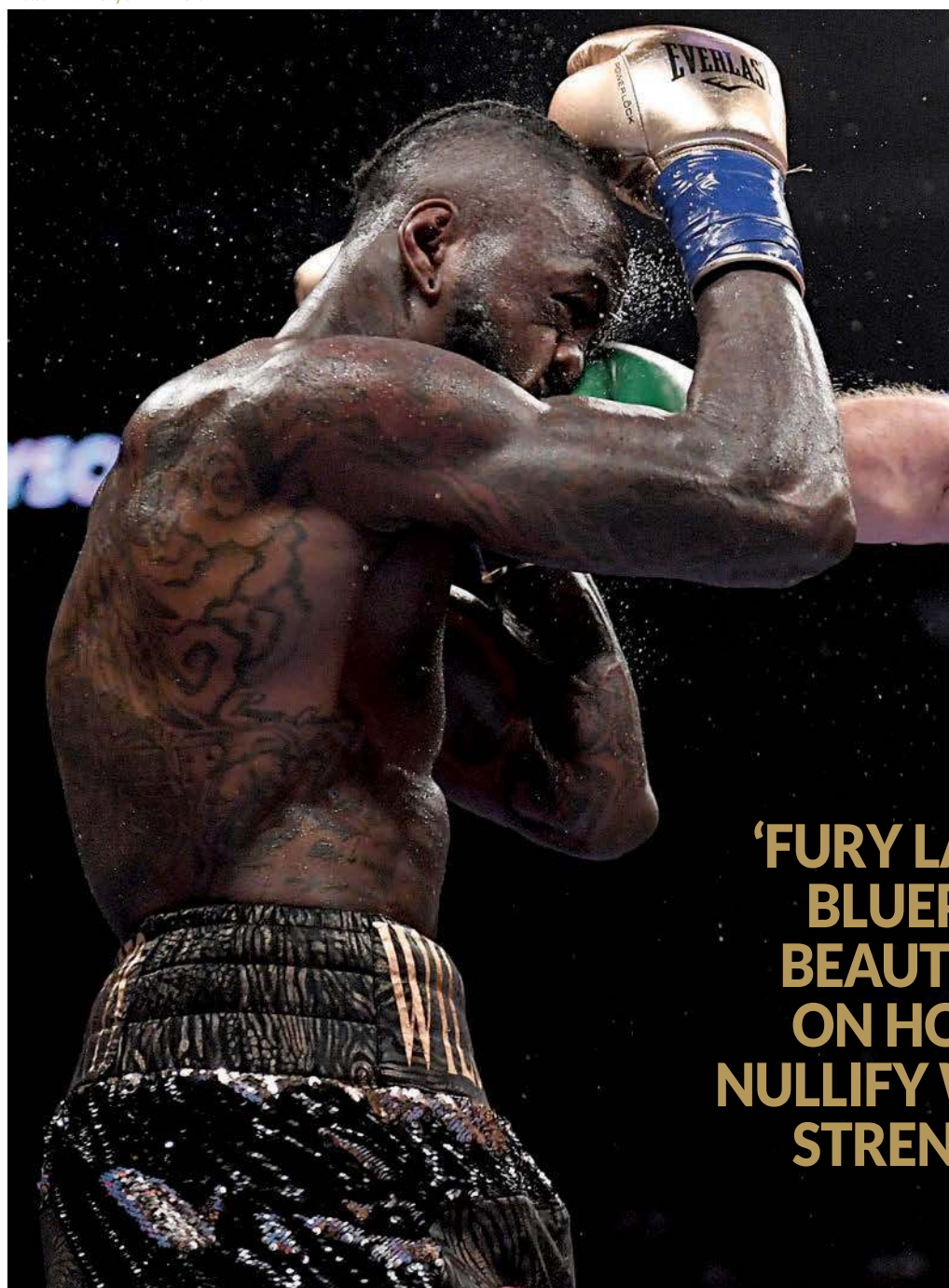
I AM IN DEONTAY WILDER'S CORNER...

Martin Bowers: Fury's a nightmare to prepare for. You can't go into a fight

against him with just one specific game plan, otherwise you'll come unstuck. If you go after him, he can make you look silly. If you stand off him, he can make you look silly. With Wilder's power, it's s**t or bust for him. He can't be too kamikaze but he's got to throw lots of shots and try to catch Fury. He's got to keep trying to get him on his back foot, put him under pressure and find a gap. He can't just sit back and look for an opening. He's got to create an opening. He's got to actively pressure him into making a mistake and not just hope that he does.

Fury could easily come out in the first round and be southpaw, so I'd definitely make sure Wilder has both orthodox and southpaw sparring partners during camp. But as everyone

Photo: HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES



'FURY LA
BLUE
BEAUT
ON HO
NULLIFY
STREN

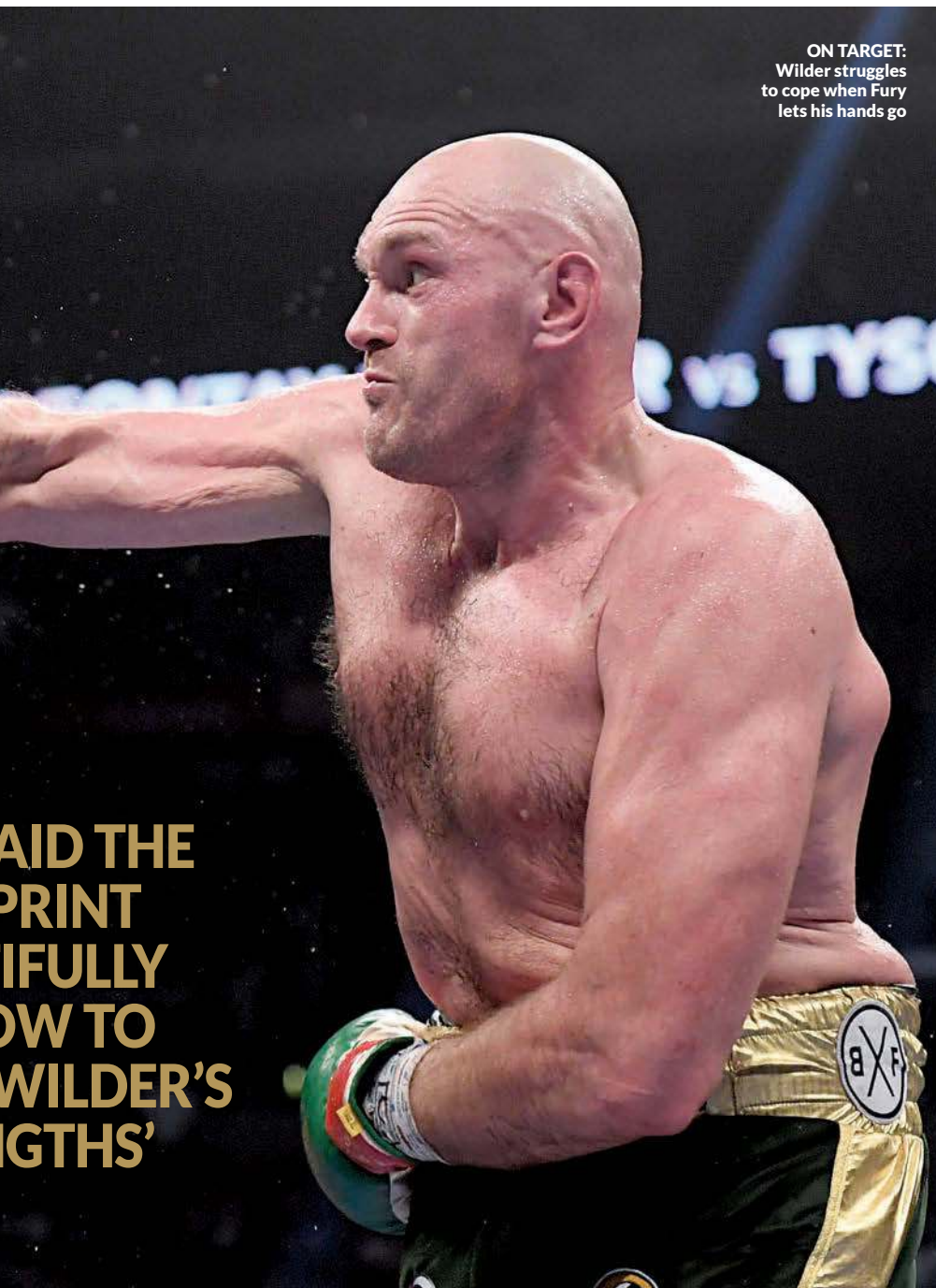
knows, the one thing that Wilder's got is that get-out-of-jail card. It only takes one split second and one slight lapse in concentration from Fury and it's lights out. That's all Wilder can hope for. There's no way in a million years that Wilder can outbox Fury.

Dominic Ingle: Wilder's not going to outbox Fury. The only way he's going to win is by taking a risk and jumping on him a bit more. You're

never going to beat Fury if you stand off him. Sometimes you need to take a chance and get on top of him. Although he knocked Fury down twice, Wilder didn't land too many of his big shots. He's got to be brave in the rematch. He's got to force the issue and make it a bit dirty – like Marco Antonio Barrera did against Naseem Hamed. He can't give Fury time to think.

Wilder used to be more erratic – just running

er: Wilder vs Fury II



ON TARGET:
Wilder struggles
to cope when Fury
lets his hands go

SAID THE
PRINT
IFULLY
OW TO
WILDER'S
IGHTHS'

out there and throwing everything at his opponents. Now he's got a more balanced style, although he doesn't actually do a great deal. Against Fury he was composed, because he had to be. But he's got to be a bit more aggressive this time. He's got to try to keep close to Fury, though it doesn't seem to be his way these days. He's got a long reach but he's not the best of boxers. He's often losing fights before he lands

the big shot. He's got to land more of those shots in the rematch.

Jim McDonnell: It seems to be in Fury's DNA to respond to violence with violence, which is dangerous when you're fighting someone like Wilder. I don't think for one second that Wilder can win this fight on points, because Fury's talent and pedigree means that he can outbox anyone. Wilder's not going to outpoint Fury. It's all on

the KO for him. He's got to turn this into a fight instead of a boxing match. He's got to make it personal in the build-up, push Fury's buttons and get inside his head. He's got to goad him into getting involved in a fight, rather than just sticking to his boxing.

There are some technical mistakes that Fury makes. If you're aware of what those mistakes are, then you can take advantage of them – especially if you're a massive puncher like Wilder. If Fury gets brave and gets involved, he could walk on to one. Even if Wilder catches you on the top of the head, you'll be all over the place. He's just so heavy handed. It's up to Wilder to force the action and make things happen. He can do that by letting his hands go, but also by getting under Fury's skin.

John Scully: If I was training Wilder for the Fury rematch, I'd put a lot of emphasis on his left jab. Many times it'll be a thing where Wilder overextends himself trying for the knockout and he ends up off balance and not putting his punches together as smoothly as he might. If he were to come in behind more deliberate double and triple jabs, I think he could offset and negate a lot of Fury's awkwardness. I think jabs up top and hard right hands to the body would enable Wilder to more frequently get himself into a position to come back up to the head with shorter punches that'd surprise Fury.

Definitely when he's on the inside it must be a scenario where Wilder digs into Fury's body with purpose. Letting Fury escape unscathed from every potentially draining inside physical encounter would be a huge mistake on Wilder's part. Both guys will need to make certain adjustments from their first fight in order to come out on top, but despite the fact that he came very close to winning by knockout last time, Wilder's the one who needs to have the mentality to alter his approach in order to be successful.

IF I AM IN TYSON FURY'S CORNER...

Martin Bowers: Fury's just got to concentrate and stay switched on for the full 36 minutes. I'd tell him not to f**k about, not to look out at the crowd during the fight, not to wave to the audience, not to show out to the corner, just to focus on Wilder. He can't afford to switch off for a single second. If he hadn't have got caught those two times in the first fight, he'd have won it. That's what I'd drill into him. If he concentrates, he's going down in history. If he doesn't concentrate, he's going down in a heap.

Aside from the two knockdowns, I think the way Fury boxed in the first fight will give him great confidence going into the rematch. Even getting up off the floor twice will give him great confidence, although he wouldn't want to go through that again. He's probably the ➤

Photos: HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

'FURY HAS TO AVOID THAT BIG SHOT FROM WILDER. THAT'S REALLY ALL HE'S GOT TO DO TO WIN'



SHOWBOATING:
Fury raises his arms
and taunts Wilder



► only person on the planet who could've got up the second time, to be fair. I'd be saying to him ahead of the rematch, do you really want to go through that again? If you don't, then you need to stay switched on. He can't drift off. He needs to stay in the moment.

Dominic Ingle: Fury's just got to avoid that one big shot from Wilder. That's all he's really got to do. The fact that Wilder's so used to knocking everyone out, yet Fury got up from two knockdowns against him, that's got to put doubts in Wilder's mind. And you've got to appreciate Fury's durability and stamina by getting up from that big shot in the final round. He's seen everything that Wilder's got now. Wilder bases



AGGRESSOR:
Wilder corners
Fury by the ropes

someone to fight Wilder, there are similarities to when I trained Danny Williams to fight Mike Tyson. Tyson had that punch power and fear factor like Wilder. It's no secret that Wilder's probably the biggest puncher ever. Fury will be well aware of that. It'll all come down to his mental preparation. Going back to Mike Tyson, a lot of his opponents were so terrified of him that they were beaten before the first bell. That's why when I was training Danny for that fight, we did a lot of mind drills to get his mindset right.

Fury always talks a good fight but I'm sure there'll be some fear in him. That's not a negative though. It's a plus. Having fear of Wilder's power will make him extra sharp from the get-go. We all know he's got the skills and ability to beat Wilder, but it only takes one split second to get knocked out. Concentration is everything for Fury in this fight. He can't even think about switching off for a nanosecond, because Wilder's power and timing is unreal. He's got to tie Wilder up, bend a few rules and just rack up the points.

John Scully: This is one of the most interesting, must-see heavyweight fights of the last 20 years.

Tensions will be even higher than they were for the first fight and both fighters will have to overcome what the other brings to the table in order to win.

Wilder's supernatural punch power makes any bet against him an extremely risky one. Nevertheless, Fury has no real reason to not do exactly what he did last time – that being making himself a difficult target, being loose and relaxed, while outwardly exhibiting confidence and putting unexpected punches together fluidly.

Fury laid the blueprint beautifully in the first fight on how to nullify Wilder's strengths. For long stretches of the fight Wilder looked completely lost and out of sorts. Fury would be very wise to keep Wilder turning in circles

and looking for him, implementing dozens of head and shoulder feints in the process, not letting him get set to throw his big power shots. Fury should also think about getting off first, punching at Wilder before he gets a chance to set himself. In the first fight, Fury had great success with that at times and should definitely make it a focal point of his approach in the rematch.

FINAL PREDICTIONS...

Martin Bowers: The second time around, the boxer should beat the puncher. Fury's an enigma but I think he'll win. Even though he stopped John McDermott and Dereck Chisora in his only two previous rematches, I can't see him stopping Wilder. I'd be very surprised if he did. I think he'll win a decision.

Fury on points.

Dominic Ingle:

Wilder's got it all to do because Fury's very good defensively. I don't think Fury's going to get dropped this time. I think he'll avoid the big shot, outbox Wilder and win on points.

I can see him being

super cautious and on edge, because he knows what Wilder can do with his power.

Fury on points

Jim McDonnell: I'm going to go for a Fury points win, but I wouldn't bet my house on it. Wilder's such a dangerous puncher so it's almost impossible to predict with any certainty what will happen. Fury will have to come through some tough moments, but I think he can get the victory. **Fury on points.**

John Scully: If I had to put some cash on a winner, I'd somewhat hesitantly predict that man to be Fury. I think he may be able to avoid Wilder's bombs, fight an even smarter fight this time around – with more punches thrown in combinations – and come away with a unanimous decision. **Fury on points BN**

most of his fighting on power, so if Fury nullifies that then it'll take a big part of his game away.

Fury knows how to slow people up and calm situations down in the ring. He's a very clever and experienced boxer who rises to the occasion. He's able to improvise and he's got a good boxing brain. He would've definitely learned lessons and taken things on board from the first fight, which he'll be able to take into rematch. He needs to be a bit more mobile than last time and torment the life out of Wilder. He's not a massive puncher – although he can punch a bit – but he's a very good boxer. If Wilder doesn't get him with the big bombs, everything favours Fury.

Jim McDonnell: I think that with training

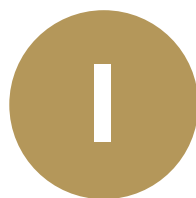


ALL SQUARE:
But all of our experts expect to see just Fury
celebrating at the end of their rematch

Photo: ACTION IMAGES/LEE SMITH

Deontay Wilder
explains and
demonstrates
how he hits so
hard, writes
Elliot Worsell

The Tip of the Whip



IN 2013, Deontay Wilder told me he was all muscle, bone and skin. He then showed me the tip of his whip.

Nowhere near as sinister as it sounds, certainly less sexual, and entirely unrelated to cars, the whip in question was the technique behind a punch responsible for a 100 per cent knockout ratio and the tip, according to its owner, was the part of that punch that set it apart from those of others.

"Get back," Wilder said, snapping into an orthodox stance beside a heavy bag, as if about to set off a firework. "Watch."

Doing as I was told, what then followed was the revving up of a right arm, locked and loaded, and the letting go of a punch – a cross to most, an arrow released from a bow when belonging to Wilder.

Whoosh.

Thwack.

Almost comical in its execution, Wilder made all the requisite noises before a right hand left its mark on a bag, the single object in the gym capable of standing up to it. "Back home we talk about my punches as being like a whip," the heavyweight from Alabama, then 27, said. "And the most painful part of the whip is the tip. That's where I do my damage – right at the end of my punches. The tip of the whip."

Frank Joseph, a boxing agent, had earlier held pads for Wilder and now rued a sudden inability to hold steady a cup of coffee. As he waited for two trembling hands to return to normal, he rapped an endorsement over the repetitive beat of Wilder abusing the heavy bag. "You can tell how hard he hits just by looking at my f**king hands," Joseph moaned, offering left and right as evidence. "Whenever you hold pads for anyone

with a dig, you'll feel it afterwards. But I've never had the full-on shakes like this before. His power is frightening."

I glanced down to find specks of coffee on the gym floor, poetically intermingling with the sweat falling from Wilder's forehead. "My power is totally natural," Wilder stopped hitting the bag to say. "I really don't try to knock guys out. I've just always been able to punch hard and have always been strong. Even back when I was a 185-pound footballer, I'd lift as much as the biggest guys on the team. There I was, this little, skinny guy, doing everything the bigger guys were doing. Nobody could believe it."

That day, and for much of that month, Wilder, brought over to spar David Haye ahead of his ill-fated fight with Tyson Fury, was going to do as he pleased. He hit things. He swaggered about the place. He preached. He yelled. He illuminated otherwise drab rooms with sound and colour. But best of all his punch power, once boxing's Loch Ness monster, now, thanks to 29 consecutive knockouts, boasted newfound authenticity, which was likely what enabled him to showcase his wares in a London gym without any fear of being pulled up for shoddy technique, beating up soft opposition, or simply making so much damn noise – "BOMB SQUAD!" – wherever he went.

Rest assured, it wasn't always like that.

Two years earlier, in fact, when Wilder first arrived in London to spar Haye ahead of the Englishman's fight against Wladimir Klitschko, the six-foot-eight puncher would never have imagined holding court in the gym and teaching and preaching and going on about the tips of whips and dancing between rounds of sparring as though he happened to be at a family cookout with Cameo's *Candy* on the playlist. No, that Wilder, then 25, was a different proposition altogether. Raw and unsure of himself, he ➤

FINDING THE TIP:
Wilder measures
Ortiz in their
rematch



Photo: ACTION IMAGES/LEE SMITH



WILD ANIMAL:
Audley
Harrison
crumples

➤ was full of basketball player athleticism but still in the process of figuring how to transfer it from hardwood to canvas. He was erratic. He was excitable. He was reckless. He kept Haye on his toes without treading on them or lifting him off them.

Outside the ring, he was congenial and well mannered. He was grateful for the opportunity. He was relatively unknown, approached only because of his size and amateur achievements (an Olympic bronze medal in 2008 was no mean feat), and behaved accordingly, travelling with no airs and graces, and acquiescing to Haye's demands, at least in terms of social niceties, respectful of the fact it was his gym and city. He was a delight.

But in two years something had changed. By 2013 Wilder was different. Still a delight, the difference now was that you heard him before you saw him. There was a "BOMB SQUAD!" on every corner – a brave and dangerous mantra in this day and age – and Wilder arrived not as a sparring partner but as someone intent on showing how much he had improved and, in turn, showing everyone why he would soon become



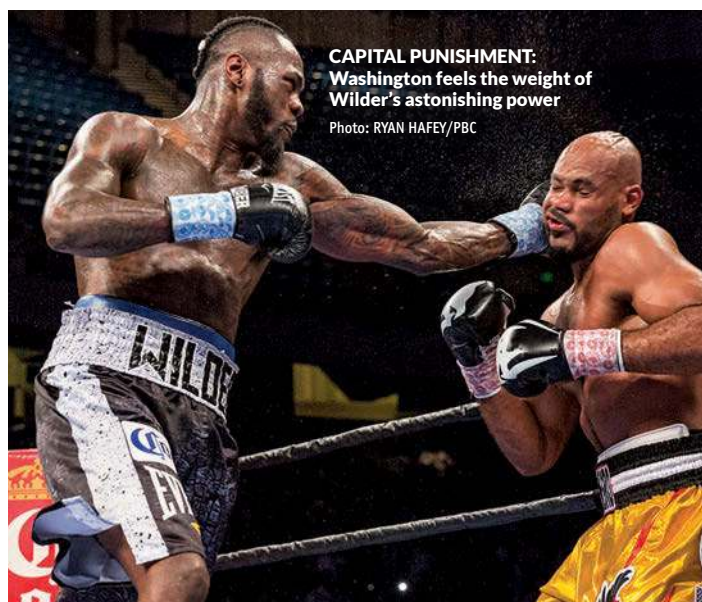
BANGING THE DRUM:
Wilder ploughs into Molina

Photo: STEPHANIE TRAPP/SHOWTIME



NO MATCH:
Kelvin Price
provides target
practice

Photo:
ACTION IMAGES/
LEE SMITH



CAPITAL PUNISHMENT:
Washington feels the weight of
Wilder's astonishing power

Photo: RYAN HAFEY/PBC

TRAINERS:
Jay Deas celebrates while Mark Breland
looks unsurprised by another bombing

Photo: RYAN HAFEY/PBC





Photo: AMANDA WESTCOTT/SHOWTIME



POWER TELLS:
Ortiz reels back as
Wilder gives chase



LONG ARM OF THE LAW:
Wilder's gargantuan
reach in full effect
against Szpilka

Photo: STEPHANIE TRAPP/SHOWTIME

America's next world heavyweight champion.

To this end, when he sparred, which Wilder did regularly that summer, he sparred like no heavyweight I had seen. Fists of thunder, veins of ice, he would nonchalantly rattle through rounds with Haye, Mariusz Wach and Filip Hrgovic as if the only repercussion of a misstep would be a grazed knee. For as serious as those men took the sessions, Wilder would be getting buck wild, whooping and hollering during rounds, winding up punches, forever loose. He would take to goading his sparring partners, begging for more, and would even attempt to inspire and motivate them if he sensed they were flagging, almost affronted by their indolence. "Come on, Champ, let's go!" he would spit through his gum

shield. "This is The Champ's camp!"

So impressive was Wilder second time around you would search hard for flaws and mistakes if only to readdress the balance. You would become heartened, for example, whenever Haye landed a stiff right hand, or whenever Wach got up in his grill, attached his chin to his chest and accosted Wilder against the ropes. Sensing trouble, your eyes would then stray from the American's gloves, and what he did with them, to focus instead on his legs, those spindly stilts

propping up a 225-pound body, and you would begin to wonder how many rounds Wilder would last in a kickboxing contest, when these legs would be treated like footballs, or even in a competitive boxing match, when opposing

someone large enough and good enough to crack him clean on the jaw. You would interpret the image of two legs smaller than yours as a sign he was human.

"I always say, 'Don't judge a book by its cover,'" Wilder explained when this was later put to him. "My legs look skinny, I know, but it's all muscle. I'm all muscle, bone and skin. Think of someone like Thomas Hearns. That dude never had the biggest legs in the world but, boy, could he bang."

Unable to argue, you then find yourself going back to Wilder's competition, or lack thereof, in order to make sense of his confidence and record. You tell yourself that once he shares the ring with someone decent he will surely come over all flustered and unsteady – perhaps even come unstuck.

"Styles make fights," was Wilder's answer to this concern. "But so far in my career I've cancelled out all the styles I've come up against by hitting too damn hard. Once you get hit by my shots, style goes out the window, man. Someone like [Sergey] Liakhovich might look effective and durable against other guys, but he hadn't tasted power like mine. And you saw what happened to him."

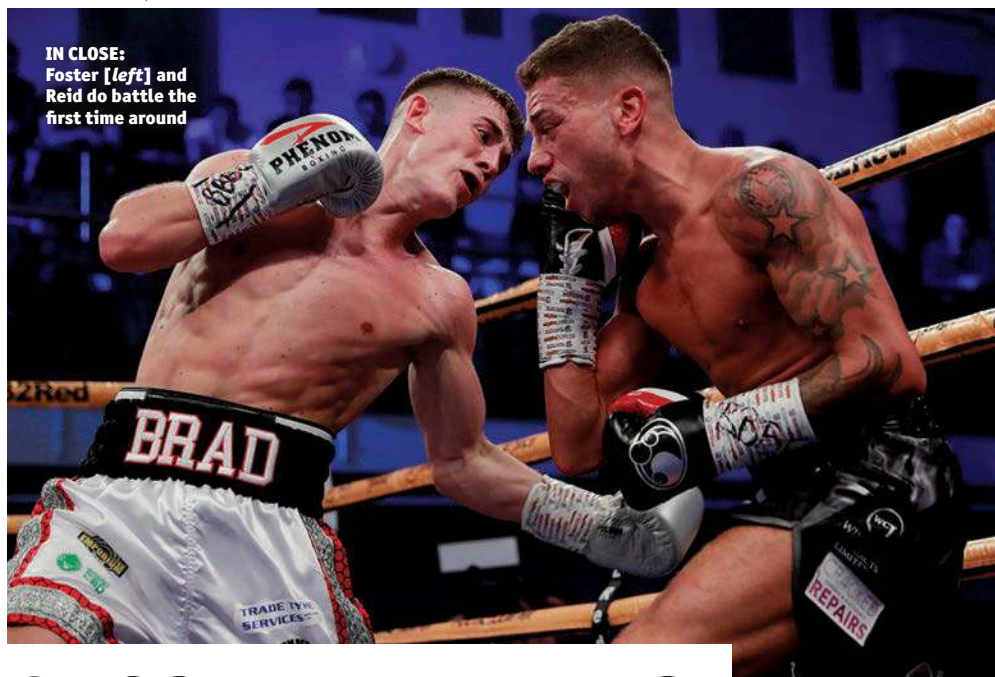
We did. If in need of reminding, what happened to Liakhovich was this: he was gone in 104 seconds, curled into the fetal position upon sampling a right hand. A position hardly exclusive to him, we have also since seen what has happened to Bernane Stiverne, Artur Szpilka, Gerald Washington, Johann Duhaupas, Luis Ortiz (twice) and Dominic Breazeale when struck by the tip of Wilder's whip.

As for Wilder, what has happened to Wilder, 42-0-1 (41), is this: he has become WBC world heavyweight champion and a man of whom highlight-reel knockouts are expected. He is the same size, but all grown up. He is better today than he has ever been. He shouts even louder. He is somehow hitting even harder.

Some, in fact, now go so far as to call Wilder the hardest punching heavyweight of all time. He, though, continues to call himself a natural, attributing otherworldly knockout finishes to little more than muscle, bone and skin. **BN**

'I'VE CANCELLED OUT ALL THE STYLES BY HITTING SO DAMN HARD'

Photo: ACTION IMAGES/ANDREW COULDRIDGE



IN CLOSE:
Foster [left] and
Reid do battle the
first time around

SECOND HELPING

Matt Bozeat
examines
the return
between
Foster and
Reid for
domestic
super-
bantam
titles

★★★★☆ MAIN EVENT
★★★★☆ UNDERCARD

THERE'S another rematch this weekend, at the York Hall in Bethnal Green, where British and Commonwealth super-bantamweight champion **Brad Foster** defends against mandatory challenger **Lucien Reid**.

Their fight at the venue last September ended in a majority draw. One judge had Reid up by four, the others had it level at 114-114, six rounds apiece.

The consensus at ringside was Foster was fortunate to hang onto the belts he won in the space of 10 weeks earlier in the year.

BT Sport had Reid up by a couple at the final bell and *Boxing News* also had the challenger winning.

The scorecards showed a different story. Reid won the last two rounds on all the cards to grab a share.

The rounds were messy and hard to score. Both were nicked after accidental head clashes and coach Alan Smith told Reid during the middle rounds that "one or two clean punches" would be enough to win the sessions.

That is the sort of fight it was and Smith felt his fighter pinched enough of the early and late rounds to get the decision.

The Foster camp, headed by father and trainer Martin, feel Reid should have been told off for holding and believe he is vulnerable to body shots.

Certainly there was a moment in the ninth when Foster, who broke a knuckle during the fight, found space on the inside and dug in some hard shots downstairs that Reid obviously felt.

This time, Foster, 11-0-2 (4), surely needs to get closer more often and work. In a cheeky story, manager PJ Rowson claimed the champion from Lichfield,

Staffs, has been sparring journeymen ahead of this because "he needs to deal with people who want to hold."

From the challenger's camp, Reid, 8-0-2 (4), said he thought Foster would try to avoid the rematch and now it's happening, he predicts a knockout. By way of a response, Rowson said: "We

hope Lucien comes to fight – and not hold."

So it's simmering nicely.

From Hackney, Reid turned pro in 2015 believing that because of his amateur pedigree, he would be pushed on quickly and become British champion within a year.

That he didn't, he says, is down to "politics," but there have been cuts and changes in trainers that have slowed his progress as well.

The Foster camp say the champion will

ALSO ON THE BILL

THE likes of Willy Hutchinson, Louie Lynn, Dennis McCann and Ryan Garner aim to maintain their unbeaten pro ledgers.

be better this time because he will have learned from the experience – and will be refreshed.

The first fight was Foster's third scheduled 12 rounder in the space of only six months – and he was just 21 at the time.

Smith did his homework ahead of that first fight. He reckoned Foster had looked good against Leon Gower and Josh Wale when they came to him and the plan for Reid was always to move, not engage and pick clean, eye-catching punches.

He so nearly pulled it off.

This time, it promises to be equally tight and Reid can nick it on points.

Also at Bethnal Green, there's a 10-round eliminator for the British super-middleweight title, held by Lerrone Richards, between Welsh southpaw

Kody Davies, 10-0 (3), and **Umar Sadiq**, 9-1 (6).

The styles may gel. Davies likes to get on the front foot, while the 6ft 3ins tall Sadiq stands off and waits for the chance to counter.

Both have boxed Zak Chelli and on that formline, the pick has to be Davies.

Chelli outpointed Sadiq over eight in a clash of willing novices after both were shaken up in a dramatic last and Davies went on to beat him over 10, up at 175 lbs.

Down in the second, Davies was wary for a couple of rounds after that, but once he got on the front foot again, he got on top and pulled away in the second half to win unanimously.

Davies says he only went up to light-heavyweight because there was nothing else on offer at the time and that he makes 168lbs comfortably. He looks the more robust of the two and has more fire in his belly.

If he isn't boxing, Davies is getting up at the crack of dawn to work long days on building sites for his father, while Sadiq has the option of going back to work as an accountant.

Davies is also driven on by the memory of his late sister and can win by stoppage in the second half.

THE VERDICT A necessary rematch, but don't expect any fireworks.

TALE OF THE TAPE

BRAD FOSTER		LUCIEN REID	
@BradFosterBox		@LucienReidy	
Oct 22, 1997/22	DOB/AGE	Oct 19, 1993/26	
Lichfield	HOMETOWN	West Ham	
English	NATIONALITY	English	
5ft 6ins	HEIGHT	5ft 5ins	
11-0-2 (4)	RECORD	8-0-2 (4)	
Orthodox	STANCE	Orthodox	
Dec 5, 2015/18	DEBUT/AGE	May 30, 2015/21	
31	KO PERCENTAGE	40	
1	FIGHTS IN LONDON	8	

THE GOLDEN CONTRACT

Daniel Herbert looks ahead to the tournament semi-finals (over 10 rounds) at featherweight and super-lightweight, which take place this Friday (February 21) at York Hall, Bethnal Green (MTK Global). Sky Sports Action televise in the UK, ESPN+ in the US

FEATHERWEIGHT



JAZZA DICKENS

LIVERPOOL

Age: 28 **Record:** 28-3 (11)

Best win: Unanimously beat gritty Josh Wale for the British title, albeit nearly five years ago.

Worst performance: Stepped out of his league and suffered a broken jaw in a two-round loss to brilliant Cuban Guillermo Rigondeaux.

BN says: Highly experienced southpaw Dickens comes into this on a run of six wins, but may be just a little too shopworn to prevail against fresher foes.



TYRONE McCULLAGH

DERRY

Age: 29 **Record:** 14-0 (6)

Best win: When he survived a knockdown to unanimously beat undefeated Scottish hope Joe Ham for the Celtic 122lb belt.

Worst performance: Being taken the full four rounds by soft-chinned Aleksandrs Birkenbergs suggested he's more boxer than banger.

BN says: Not turning pro until he was nearly 25 has left him relatively fresh, and his southpaw stance also helps make him a dark horse.



RYAN WALSH

CROMER

Age: 33 **Record:** 25-2 (12)

Best win: His fifth-round British title defence stoppage of James Tennyson, who subsequently went on a real tear up at 130lbs.

Worst performance: Was considered by many extremely fortunate to keep his national crown via split decision against Lewis Paulin last year.

BN says: Paulin's portsided stance and movement troubled Walsh, but at 33 he boasts bags of experience and a stout chin.



LEIGH WOOD

GEDLING

Age: 31 **Record:** 23-1 (13)

Best win: As recently as four months ago, took the unbeaten record of David Oliver Joyce on a seventh-round stoppage.

Worst performance: Floored and stopped in six by Gavin McDonnell, although that was six years ago and at 122lbs.

BN says: Two knockdowns of the tough Joyce reminded all that the Nottinghamshire boxer has the fight-altering power to handle anyone in this tournament.

SUPER-LIGHTWEIGHT



OHARA DAVIES

HACKNEY

Age: 28 **Record:** 20-2 (15)

Best win: Dropped unbeaten Scouser Tom Farrell five times en route to a dominant sixth-round stoppage in 2017.

Worst performance: After talking a good fight, crumbled to a two-knockdown, seven-round stoppage by Josh Taylor – although it doesn't look so bad now the Scot's world champion.

BN says: Definitely the puncher in this line-up, but the Londoner hasn't always backed up his words in the ring.



TYRONE McKENNA

BELFAST

Age: 29 **Record:** 20-1-1 (6)

Best win: In 2018 he pipped Scottish prospect Lewis Benson over 10 rounds on his own patch in Glasgow.

Worst performance: Floored twice and outpointed by Jack Catterall, although their 10-rounder was still close on the cards.

BN says: Very tall at 6ft 1in, and a southpaw to boot, this experienced Northern Irishman has the tools to provide nightmare opposition.



MOHAMED MIMOUNE

TOULOUSE

Age: 32 **Record:** 22-3 (3)

Best win: Back in October 2017, he shockingly outpointed Sam Eggington for the EBU crown up at welterweight.

Worst performance: Outpointed by compatriot Kamal Mohamed in an early-career (2013) eight-rounder; he later avenged the setback.

BN says: Had to get off the deck to stop Darren Surtees, but this tall Frenchman has the southpaw awkwardness plus skill to win the tournament.



JEFF OFORI

TOTTENHAM

Age: 29 **Record:** 10-1-1 (3)

Best win: His quarter-final against Kieran Gething ended in a draw, but his incessant pressure earned him the referee's casting vote.

Worst performance: Was convincingly outboxed by smart southpaw Alfie Price for the Southern Area belt down at 135lbs in September.

BN says: Strong and very fit, but his stocky 5ft 7in physique may put him at a disadvantage against naturally bigger foes.

★★★★★ OUTSTANDING ★★★★★ GOOD ★★★ FAIR ★★ DISAPPOINTING ★ RUBBISH

Reporters' star ratings for main events and undercards are based on in-ring entertainment, competitiveness and whether overall expectation was met

FEIGENBUTZ PLANTED

Plant demands Benavidez unification after latest victory, writes Sean Nam

🇺🇸 NASHVILLE, TN

FEBRUARY 15

★★☆☆☆ MAIN EVENT

★★★★☆ UNDERCARD

NASHVILLE slickster **Caleb Plant** calls himself the sport's greatest super-middleweight, but in order to make that claim a matter of public record, he will need to test himself against men far more formidable than the **Vincent Feigenbutzes** of the world.

In an energised hometown debut, Plant performed a flawless vivisection of Feigenbutz, pasting the poor, near-anonymous German with fluid, eye-catching combinations all night en route to a 10th-round stoppage win. This was the 27-year-old's second successful title defence of his IBF belt, since he wrested it from Jose Uzcategui last year in a mild upset.

Postfight, Plant stated that his biggest priority is to unify belts with WBC titleholder David Benavidez. "Everyone knows I want that unification fight with David Benavidez," Plant said. "You know who the best 168-pounder is. If you want that, you've got to come see me. I want

that fight; I've been asking for it and I'm tired of waiting."

A win over the young and talented Benavidez would certainly mean something, to say nothing of the other belt-holders in the division, including Billy Joe Saunders and Callum Smith. Feigenbutz, after all, was a late starter who skipped out on pursuing an amateur career altogether. His lack of education showed in the ring.

Plant controlled the bout from the opening bell, working behind his jab, before settling into one aesthetically pleasing combination after another that had Feigenbutz tottering around the ring like a pinball. By the fourth round, Plant had displayed every punch in the textbook, including a nifty uppercut that continually split his opponent's high guard. To his credit, Feigenbutz, bloody-nosed from the second round, flashed something of an iron chin, as he never once went down. But he sure took a beating.

The signature moment of the fight arose in the sixth round, when Feigenbutz went after Plant with a barrage of punches, many of which missed. Afterward, Plant simply shook his head, stuck out his tongue, and blew a reproachful kiss.

On the undercard (TGB Promotions), shades of the infamous ending to the Julio Cesar Chavez-Meldrick Taylor 1990 super lightweight title bout sprang to life when Arizona's **Abel Ramos**, down big on the cards, stormed back in the waning seconds of the 10th and final round to score a sensational – and no less controversial – stoppage over **Bryant Perrella**, who had hitherto been in control of the fight.

With 20-odd seconds remaining, Ramos uncorked an uppercut that immediately put Perrella, of Fort Myers, Florida, on his back. Perrella got up on wobbly legs only to go back down again, courtesy of a right hand.

But just as in Chavez-Taylor, the referee played an outsize and tendentious role. With a second remaining on the clock, referee Jack Reiss asked Perrella to walk to his left. Perrella complied, but he stumbled as he did so, at which point Reiss decided to wave off the bout.

The official time of stoppage was 2-59 of the 10th round.

It was Perrella's bout to lose. Working behind his southpaw jab, Perrella fought intelligently off the backfoot as he continually circled to his right and mixed in hard left hands and uppercuts. Ramos seemed lost in there, greatly fatigued at one point, but still managed to pull off the monumental stoppage, with some help from Mr Reiss, of course.

In a battle between southpaw lightweights, the veteran got his hands raised. Working behind a two-fisted attack to the body, **Diego Magdaleno** bruised his way to a unanimous points decision over 24-year-old hometown favorite **Austin Dulay**. In the seventh round, Magdaleno dropped Dulay for the lone knockdown in the fight with a body shot. In the same round, he had a point taken away by Mr Reiss for straying low with a punch.

Judge Benoit Roussel had it 97-91, while Mike Fitzgerald and David Hudson both had it 96-92, all in favor of Magdaleno.

Dulay started sharp, but Magdaleno, last seen getting stopped by lightweight titleholder Teofimo Lopez, got on track in the third round. Dulay had no answer for Magdaleno's onslaught to the body.

THE VERDICT A clash with Benavidez would offer a far better insight into Plant's true credentials.

Photo: STEPHANIE TRAPP/TGB PROMOTIONS



FULL RESULTS

Caleb Plant (166 3/4lbs), 20-0 (12), w rsf 10 **Vincent Feigenbutz** (165 1/4lbs), 31-3 (28); **Abel Ramos** (145 3/4lbs), 26-3-2 (20), w rsf 10 **Bryant Perrella** (146 3/4lbs), 17-3 (14); **Diego Magdaleno** (134 1/2lbs), 32-3 (13), w pts 10 **Austin Dulay** (134 1/2lbs), 13-2 (10); **Rau'shee Warren** (117 1/2lbs), 17-3 (4), w pts 10 **Gilberto Mendoza** (114 3/4lbs), 15-8-3; **Roney Hines** (223 3/4lbs), 8-0 (5), w pts 4 **Johnnie Langston** (210lbs), 8-2 (3); **Tyler Tomlin** (139 1/2lbs), 5-0 (3), w pts 4 **Jose Zaragoza** (139 3/4lbs), 2-2-1; **Jose Miguel Borrego** (145 1/4lbs), 17-2 (15), w rsf 3 **Joaquim Carneiro** (145 1/4lbs), 26-13 (23); **Leon Lawson III** (154 1/4lbs), 13-0 (6), w rsf 1 **Francisco Castro** (156lbs), 28-13 (23).

Photo: PHILIP SHARKEY



DOMINANT:
Antwi punishes
Zeledon

ANTWI ACES IT

Knockdowns
seal clear win
over Zeledon



Simon Euan-Smith
RINGSIDE

⊕ BETHNAL GREEN
FEBRUARY 15

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW
★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

SAMUEL ANTWI (Stockwell), the former Southern Area welter champion, floored Spain-based Nicaraguan **Alexander Zeledon** twice in the final session and took referee Lee Every's 60-52 verdict at York Hall. Despite the wide scoring, Zeledon put up a decent show for five rounds, coming forward and looking to unload. His tactics earned him two warnings for headwork but, despite the occasional tangle, it was watchable, and competitive.

In the sixth a two-fisted attack had Zeledon grabbing for safety, and he finally dropped to his knees by the ropes. Another burst, ending with a right to the body, put him down for 'nine', and when he got up he was under more pressure.

Featherweight **Rhys Edwards** made it

10 straight wins with a clear decision over Sandhurst's aggressive **Jonny Phillips**. Phillips used sensible tactics, always looking to rush in and land in close, but Edwards (Tonypany) generally managed to keep it at long range, picking up points with the jab. Phillips launched some spirited attacks but Edwards stayed composed and took referee Kieran McCann's 59-55 verdict.

After winning his first nine (and becoming Southern Area heavyweight champion), **Dominic Akinlade** lost three in a row and didn't box for well over two years. In his first outing since July 2017 Akinlade well outpointed Swindon's **Phil Williams**, referee McCann scoring 39-37. Akinlade (now based in Maidstone) successfully targeted Williams' body, but Williams took everything and never stopped trying to pressure. Generally Akinlade proved hard to tag, though there were some decent exchanges in the final round.

Also on a comeback (his last bout was in December 2018), Nigeria-born **Larry Ekundayo** beat Sheffield's **Nathan Hardy**, referee Jeff Hinds scoring 60-54. Ekundayo (Stoke Newington) quickly found the target with rights to the head, one staggering Hardy in the opener – but Hardy regrouped

and never looked in serious trouble again.

Sole 'away' winner on this Priority Promotions show was Sheffield's **Karim Khan**, who shocked debutant **Joe Fisher** with a third-round stoppage. Going in, Khan was 0-11, and the taller Fisher had the better of the first two, scoring well with long jabs. Khan occasionally switched stance, and there were some decent exchanges in the second, but Fisher seemed to be landing more. But in the third Fisher walked onto a left hook that dropped him by the ropes. He was up at 'five' but staggering around the ring, and referee Hinds called it off at 2-25.

There was a happier debut for **Marc Osborne** (Leighton Buzzard), who breezed to a win over Trowbridge's experienced **Dan Blackwell**, referee Mark Bates scoring 40-36. Osborne used his height and reach advantages while Blackwell was content to cover up – he did start coming forward in the second but was caught by jabs. Blackwell was forced to back off in the last two sessions.

Battersea's **Ben Vickers** halted **Tyrone Williams** (Balham) in just 2-18 of a scheduled four. It was Williams' first outing since May. Both began by using the jab, but a right to the head sent Williams staggering into the ropes, and Vickers' follow-up had him sinking down on one knee in his own corner. Referee Bates waved it off at once.

Hackney's **Frank Arnold** got off the floor to outscore **Johnson Tellez** (Spain via Nicaragua), referee Bates scoring 58-55. A left clip had Arnold over in the first, but he was up quickly and dominated the bout with accurate southpaw jabbing.

Southpaw **Fred Evans** (Cardiff) beat another Spain-based Nicaraguan, **Wilmer Gonzalez**, in a messy affair. Referee Every scored 59-55. Styles clashed, and Evans received a severe warning in the fourth for using the elbow.

There were 60-54 wins for Plaistow's **Ryan Robinson** over South Ockenden's **Thomas Barrett** (McCann) and **Alireza Ghadiri**, an Iranian based in Maida Vale, over Spain-based Nicaraguan **Jose Aguilar** (Hinds). Elsewhere, Chelsea's **Connor Marsden** defeated **Stu Greener** (Devizes) by 59-56 for Mr Every.

Mr Hinds had **Anees Taj** (Watford) beating Lithuanian **Dmitrij Kalinovskij** by 39-37, and Mr McCann scored **Harley Benn** (Hornchurch) a 40-36 winner over Braintree's **Dylan Draper**.

THE VERDICT Antwi and Edwards move on, while Akinlade and Ekundayo make solid comebacks.

FULL RESULTS

Samuel Antwi (153 1/2lbs), 12-1 (5), w pts 6 **Alexander Zeledon** (151 1/2lbs), 5-22-3; **Anees Taj** (197lbs), 2-0 (1), w pts 4 **Dmitrij Kalinovskij** (197 3/4lbs), 13-65-4 (5); **Ryan Robinson** (170 1/2lbs), 6-0 (2), w pts 6 **Thomas Barrett** (169lbs), 0-2; **Frank Arnold** (128 3/4lbs), 7-0-1 (1), w pts 6 **Johnson Tellez** (127 3/4lbs), 10-52-5 (7); **Rhys Edwards** (128 3/4lbs), 10-0 (4), w pts 6 **Jonny Phillips** (131 3/4lbs), 5-4 (2); **Dominic Akinlade** (233lbs), 9-3-1 (4), w pts 4 **Phil Williams** (253lbs), 3-21-1 (1); **Larry Ekundayo** (151lbs), 16-1 (3), w pts 6 **Nathan Hardy** (152lbs), 9-30-4 (3); **Connor Marsden** (135 3/4lbs), 4-1 (1), w pts 6 **Stu Greener** (140lbs), 2-4 (1); **Ben Vickers** (210lbs), 2-0 (1), w rsf 1 **Tyrone Williams** (203 3/4lbs), 1-2 (1); **Harley Benn** (153lbs), 8-1 (1), w pts 4 **Dylan Draper** (146 3/4lbs), 1-42; **Alireza Ghadiri** (127 1/2lbs), 3-0, w pts 6 **Jose Aguilar** (132 3/4lbs), 16-74-5 (6); **Fred Evans** (165 3/4lbs), 7-1, w pts 6 **Wilmer Gonzalez** (172lbs), 20-17-1 (13); **Karim Khan** (157lbs), 1-11 (1), w rsf 3 **Joe Fisher** (156lbs), 0-1.

STAYING ON SCRIPT

Garcia and Linares impress as they remain on collision course, writes Jack Hirsch

ANAHEIM, CA

FEBRUARY 14

★★★★☆ MAIN EVENT

★★★★☆ UNDERCARD

THE broad smile on Oscar De La Hoya's face was in appreciation of the Valentine's Day gift that lightweights **Ryan Garcia** and **Jorge Linares** delivered to his company, Golden Boy Promotions. Having already reserved the Staples Center, in Los Angeles, for a summer showdown between the two, it was crucial for the fighters to stay on script and take care of business at the Honda Civic Center. That they did while delivering outstanding performances in the process.

Garcia, a prohibitive favourite, reached into the archives of boxing history for his one-round demolition of Nicaragua's **Francisco Fonseca**. "Watched video of Sugar Ray Robinson. It was the perfect left hook," Garcia said referring to the fight in which Robinson knocked out Gene Fullmer.

Garcia intent on imitating one of his idols, could not have paid a finer tribute to him. As Fonseca, a battle tested two-time title challenger, threw a long right, Garcia took a gentle step back and

connected with a short left hook that was eerily similar to what was called the perfect punch at the time Robinson landed it.

Fonseca crashed on his back, his head hitting the canvas, out cold. Referee Raul Caiz Sr. Immediately stopped the scheduled 10 rounder at 1-20.

Garcia had every right to be ecstatic, and inside he was. But in a refreshing display, he refused to celebrate until he was certain Fonseca was okay. When he got his confirmation a minute later, Garcia's jubilation came to the surface.

Garcia stole the show, but it was Linares' night as well. The Venezuelan's fourth-round knockout of Mexico City's **Carlos Morales** not only revived his career, but sent out a message to the 21-year-old Californian, that he would be anything but a stepping stone when they meet. Of course, that remains to be seen, but the thought that former three-weight champion Linares' best days were behind him was rendered premature on this night.

Morales who had gone the 10 round distance with Garcia 17 months ago, fought confidently and stung Linares with an uppercut in the second round. But, as they say, class tells. Morales hung in well until late in the third, when a short right dropped him. Morales got up midway

through referee Thomas Taylor's count. Still in shock between rounds, Morales told his corner he never saw the punch land.

Linares was focused, on point and getting better as the match went along. Working behind the jab, he targeted the body and penetrated Morales' defense while applying constant pressure.

In the fourth Linares forced Morales to the ropes, faked a punch downstairs, then came over the top with a slashing right to the jaw. Down went Morales where he was counted out by referee Raul Caiz Snr at 209 of the round. It was scheduled for 10.

"I can demonstrate more," said Linares in the ring afterwards.

He will need to against Garcia, but what we saw on this night was that Linares is still a championship-calibre fighter.

Alexis Rocha, after being given a unanimous 10-round decision over Georgia's **Brad Solomon**, said, "It was definitely a pretty close fight." Yet judges Rudy Barragan 100-89, Max De Luca 99-91, and Chris Migliore 97-92, turned in lopsided scores in his favour.

Close rounds or not, there is no way Rocha should have been given the decision by those margins. A much better case in fact can be made that Solomon deserved the nod. But Rocha deserves credit for not only indirectly discrediting the judges' scoring but also closing the show in good fashion, by dropping Solomon a minute into the 10th round. Ray Corona refereed.

Las Vegas' **Blair Cobbs** loves to imitate wrestler Ric Flair and play the role of the villain. When he left the ring after being given a split 10-round decision over **Samuel Kotey** the crowd booded. But Cobbs deserved to have his hand raised. The Baltimore-based Ghanaian took too long to get started. Cobbs' speed enabled him to race to a big lead before Kotey began firing punches and forcing the action.

In the ninth, Cobbs had a point deducted by referee Jerry Cantu for going low. Carla Caiz scored 95-94 for Kotey but was overruled by fellow judges Zachary Young and Alexandro Rochine both scoring 96-93 Cobbs.

THE VERDICT Bring on Garcia against Linares.

CLASSY: Garcia makes sure Fonseca is okay before celebrating

Photo: TOM HOGAN/HOGAN PHOTOS/GOLDEN BOY



FULL RESULTS

Ryan Garcia (135lbs), 20-0 (17), w rsf 1 **Francisco Fonseca** (135lbs), 25-3-2 (19); **Jorge Linares** (135lbs), 47-5 (29), w rsf 4 **Carlos Morales** (135lbs), 19-5-4 (8); **Blair Cobbs** (146lbs), 14-0-1 (9), w pts 10 **Samuel Kotey** (146 1/2lbs), 23-3 (16); **Alexis Rocha** (146 1/2lbs), 16-0 (10), w pts 10 **Brad Solomon** (147lbs), 28-3 (9); **Evan Anthony Sanchez** (147lbs), 7-0 (6), w rsf 1 **Daniel Evangelista** (146 1/2lbs), 20-12-2 (16); **Tenochtitlan Nava** (127lbs), 8-2 (1), w pts 6 **Anthony Casillas** (122 1/2lbs), 8-2 (4); **Alejandro Reyes** (134 1/2lbs), 3-0 (2), w pts 6 **Nelson Colon** (134lbs), 4-2 (3); **Bektemir Melikuziev** (167 1/2lbs), 5-0 (4), w rsf 1 **Oscar Cortes** (168lbs), 27-6 (14).

CORCORAN CRUISES

Bendana is no match for unbeaten prospect, writes Philip Sharkey from ringside

⊕ WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA

FEBRUARY 17

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

THE Essex Sporting Club's (Tom Burling and Mo Prior) inaugural black tie event was a star-studded affair, with former champions Colin McMillan, Derek Williams, Michael Watson, Terry Marsh, Jason Matthews, Jimmy Batten and James Cook all in attendance at Cliffs Pavilion. The evening was raising funds for the Ringside Charitable Trust, and spokesman Dave Harris gave an impassioned speech stating their aims.

Simon Corcoran remained unbeaten with a comprehensive 60-54 drubbing of Spain-based Nicaraguan **Josue Bendana**. Starting as a southpaw but having more success leading with his left, the youngest pro of the famous Wembley boxing brothers cruised to victory.

Acton's **Kingsley Egbunike** returned to winning ways after his early loss in the Ultimate Boxer tournament in September. He went over old ground in besting **Kristaps Zulgis** by a score of 60-54. The Basildon-domiciled Latvian fared better this time – he was stopped in the fourth round previously – with the weights more equal than before.

Photo: PHILIP SHARKEY



UNDEFEATED:
Corcoran extends
unbeaten run
against Bendana

However, he spent the majority of the bout in reverse gear.

The most impressive performer on the four-fight bill was Streatham southpaw **Chris Bourke**, who displayed patience and an excellent shot selection. Coming off a spectacular one-punch KO of Louis Norman, he knows that the flattener is built up from stinging jabs and effective body shots. Consequently, Spanish-Nicaraguan **Rafael Castillo** was unable

to make an impression. The visitor was defeated 40-36 on referee-for-the-evening Chas Coakley's card.

In a hastily arranged show-opener, Derby's **Nathan Junior** bagged his first victory (40-36) over Maidstone's winless **JJ Smith**.

THE VERDICT Well done to Burling and Prior for supporting the Ringside Charitable Trust.

FULL RESULTS

Simon Corcoran (144lbs), 5-0, w pts
6 Josue Bendana (142lbs), 10-20-4 (6); **Nathan Junior** (179lbs), 1-7-1, w pts
4 JJ Smith (175lbs), 0-2; **Chris Bourke** (126 1/4lbs), 7-0 (5), w pts
4 Rafael Castillo (128lbs), 14-57-3 (6); **Kingsley Egbunike** (157lbs), 5-1 (1), w pts
6 Kristaps Zulgis (155lbs), 5-14-3 (2).

BAKER KEEPS BUSY

Andy Whittle sees Kane tick over ahead of English title shot

⊕ WALSALL

FEBRUARY 14

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

JUST 24 hours after learning that he'd have home advantage for a second tilt at wresting the English lightweight title away from Derby's Myron Mills on April 10, Brummie **Kane Baker** stayed busy at Banks' Stadium (Black Country Boxing). A 58-56 victory came his way at the conclusion of an enjoyable tussle with Telford's **Dean Jones**, who kept it competitive.

Germany-based heavyweight **Emir Ahmatovic** had stopped five out of seven going into a scheduled four against lighter Nicaraguan **Walter Palacios**. With former British and Commonwealth champion Scott Welch in his corner, the early signs suggested that the bearded Serbia-born puncher would likely be on for another inside-the-distance victory.

Palacios might well have boasted a decent enough record but half of his 20 wins had come way back in the '90s. Even taking into account a seven-year sabbatical he hadn't tasted victory since 2009. With more than a little venom behind his shots Ahmatovic hurt Palacios twice in the opener, left him grimacing in

the next and finished the job 42 seconds into the third. Having been counted after only the ropes kept him upright, Palacios waved a glove and turned away.

In what was a great learning fight, Telford's **Liam Davies** went in with Evesham's **Brett Fidoe** and banked his seventh straight success. I scored the first round level and gave the last round to Fidoe, but the right man got the nod. The score at the finish read 39-37 to Davies.

Wolverhampton's **Clayton Bricknell** returned to winning ways with a 39-37 triumph over Rednal's **Daryl Pearce**, who did enough to take the third round on the card of referee-for-the-night Chris Dean.

Another Telford boxer, debutant

Ryan Whitehead, went in with still-winless local **Kearon Thomas** over four and impressed en route to a shutout 40-36 win. Thomas finished with a slightly bloody nose.

THE VERDICT Baker warms up well for his rematch with Mills.

FULL RESULTS

Kane Baker (137lbs), 13-6, w pts
6 Dean Jones (136lbs 7oz), 1-24; **Emir Ahmatovic** (235 1/2lbs), 2-1-1, w rsf
3 Walter Palacios (212lbs), 20-22-2 (11); **Liam Davies** (123 3/4lbs), 7-0 (2), w pts
4 Brett Fidoe (126 1/2lbs), 13-59-5 (6); **Clayton Bricknell** (141lbs 10oz), 3-2-1, w pts
4 Daryl Pearce (143lbs), 1-8; **Ryan Whitehead** (165lbs 14oz), 1-0, w pts
4 Kearon Thomas (165lbs 2oz), 0-7-1.



HEAVYWEIGHT

over 200lbs/14st 4lbs

1. **ANTHONY JOSHUA** 23-1 (ENG)
2. **TYSON FURY** 29-0-1 (ENG)
3. **DEONTAY WILDER** 42-0-1 (USA)
4. **ANDY RUIZ JNR** 33-2 (USA)
5. **DILLIAN WHYTE** 27-1 (ENG)
6. **KUBRAT PULEV** 28-1 (BGR)
7. **JOSEPH PARKER** 26-2 (NZL)
8. **DERECK CHISORA** 32-9 (ENG)
9. **OLEKSANDR USYK** 17-0 (UKR)
10. **MICHAEL HUNTER** 18-1-1 (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHT

200lbs/14st 4lbs

1. **MAIRIS BRIEDIS** 26-1 (LVA)
2. **KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI** 31-2 (POL)
3. **YUNIER DORTICOS** 24-1 (CUB)
4. **ARSEN GOULAMIRIAN** 26-0 (FRA)
5. **ILUNGA MAKABU** 27-2 (COD)
6. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK** 58-4-1 (POL)
7. **THABISO MCHUNU** 22-5 (RSA)
8. **NOEL GEVOR** 24-2 (GER)
9. **KEVIN LERENA** 25-1 (RSA)
10. **ALEKSEI PAPIN** 11-1 (RUS)

LIGHT-HEAVYWEIGHT

175lbs/12st 7lbs

1. **ARTUR BETERBIEV** 15-0 (RUS)
2. **CANELO ALVAREZ** 53-1-2 (MEX)
3. **SERGEY KOVALEV** 34-4-1 (RUS)
4. **OLEKSANDR GVOZDYK** 17-1 (UKR)
5. **DMITRY BIVOL** 17-0 (RUS)
6. **ELEIDER ALVAREZ** 25-1 (COL)
7. **JEAN PASCAL** 35-6-1 (CAN)
8. **JOE SMITH JNR** 25-3 (USA)
9. **MARCUS BROWNE** 23-1 (USA)
10. **BADOU JACK** 22-3-3 (SWE)

SUPER-MIDDLEWEIGHT

168lbs/12st

1. **CALLUM SMITH** 27-0 (ENG)
2. **BILLY JOE SAUNDERS** 29-0 (ENG)
3. **CALEB PLANT** 20-0 (USA) *[above]*
4. **DAVID BENAVIDEZ** 22-0 (USA)
5. **JOHN RYDER** 28-5 (ENG)
6. **LIONELL THOMPSON** 22-5 (USA)
7. **AVNY DIRRELL** 33-2-1 (USA)
8. **ANVI YILDIRIM** 21-2 (TUR)
9. **JUERGEN BRAEHMER** 52-3 (GER)
10. **FEDOR CHUDINOV** 22-2 (RUS)



MIDDLEWEIGHT

160lbs/11st 6lbs

1. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN** 40-1-1 (KAZ)
2. **JERMALL CHARLO** 30-0 (USA)
3. **SERGIY DEREVYANCHENKO** 13-2 (UKR)
4. **RYOTA MURATA** 16-2 (JPN)
5. **DEMETRIUS ANDRADE** 29-0 (USA)
6. **CHRIS EUBANK JNR** 29-2 (ENG)
7. **ROB BRANT** 25-2 (USA)
8. **WILLIE MONROE JNR** 24-3 (USA)
9. **KAMIL SZEREMETA** 21-0 (POL)
10. **LIAM WILLIAMS** 22-2-1 (WAL)

SUPER-WELTERWEIGHT

154lbs/11st

1. **JEISON ROSARIO** 20-1-1 (DOM)
2. **JULIAN WILLIAMS** 27-2-1 (USA)
3. **JARRETT HURD** 24-1 (USA)
4. **ERISLANDY LARA** 26-3-3 (CUB)
5. **BRIAN CASTANO** 16-0-1 (ARG)
6. **JERMELL CHARLO** 33-1 (USA)
7. **TONY HARRISON** 28-3 (USA)
8. **LIAM SMITH** 29-2-1 (ENG) *[above]*
9. **PATRICK TEIXEIRA** 31-1 (BRA)
10. **TERRELL GAUSHA** 21-1-1 (USA)

WELTERWEIGHT

147lbs/10st 7lbs

1. **ERROL SPENCE JNR** 26-0 (USA)
2. **TERENCE CRAWFORD** 36-0 (USA)
3. **SHAWN PORTER** 30-3-1 (USA)
4. **MANNY PACQUIAO** 62-7-2 (PHL)
5. **DANNY GARCIA** 36-2 (USA)
6. **KEITH THURMAN** 29-1 (USA)
7. **YORDENIS UGAS** 25-4 (CUB)
8. **EGIDIJUS KAVALIAUSKAS** 21-1-1 (LTU)
9. **RAY ROBINSON** 24-3-2 (USA)
10. **SERGEY LIPINETS** 16-1 (RUS)

SUPER-LIGHTWEIGHT

140lbs/10st

1. **JOSH TAYLOR** 16-0 (SCO)
2. **REGIS PROGRAIS** 24-1 (USA)
3. **JOSE RAMIREZ** 25-0 (USA)
4. **VIKTOR POSTOL** 31-2 (UKR)
5. **IVAN BARANCHYK** 20-1 (BLR)
6. **PABLO CESAR CANO** 33-7-1 (MEX)
7. **KIRYL RELIKH** 23-3 (BLR)
8. **JOSE ZEPEDA** 31-2 (USA)
9. **EDUARD TROYANOVSKY** 28-2 (RUS)
10. **MARIO BARRIOS** 25-0 (USA)



LIGHTWEIGHT

135lbs/9st 9lbs

1. **VASYL LOMACHENKO** 14-1 (UKR)
2. **TEOFIMO LOPEZ** 15-0 (USA)
3. **LUKE CAMPBELL** 20-3 (ENG)
4. **RICHARD COMMEY** 29-3 (GHA)
5. **JAVIER FORTUNA** 35-2-1 (DOM)
6. **YVAN MENDY** 44-5-1 (FRA)
7. **RANCES BARTHELEMY** 27-1-1 (CUB)
8. **DEVIN HANEY** 24-0 (USA)
9. **GERVONTA DAVIS** 23-0 (USA)
10. **LEE SELBY** 28-2 (WAL)

SUPER-FEATHERWEIGHT

130lbs/9st 4lbs

1. **MIGUEL BERCHELT** 37-1 (MEX)
2. **RENE ALVARADO** 32-8 (NIC)
3. **JAMEL HERRING** 21-2 (USA)
4. **JOSEPH DIAZ** 31-1 (USA)
5. **TEVIN FARMER** 30-5-1 (USA)
6. **LEO SANTA CRUZ** 37-1-1 (MEX)
7. **ANDREW CANCIO** 21-5-2 (USA)
8. **MASAYUKI ITO** 26-2-1 (JPN)
9. **SHAVKATDZHON RAKHIMOV** 15-0 (RUS)
10. **JASON SOSA** 23-4-4 (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHT

126lbs/9st

1. **GARY RUSSELL JNR** 31-1 (USA)
2. **JOSH WARRINGTON** 30-0 (ENG)
3. **KID GALAHAD** 27-1 (ENG) *[above]*
4. **CAN XU** 18-2 (CHN)
5. **SHAKUR STEVENSON** 13-0 (USA)
6. **TUGSTSOGT NYAMBAYAR** 11-1 (MNG)
7. **OSCAR ESCANDON** 26-5 (COL)
8. **CLAUDIO MARRERO** 24-4 (DOM)
9. **EDUARDO RAMIREZ** 23-2-3 (MEX)
10. **JESSIE MAGDALENO** 27-1 (USA)

SUPER-BANTAMWEIGHT

122lbs/8st 10lbs

1. **EMANUEL NAVARRETE** 30-1 (MEX)
2. **REY VARGAS** 34-0 (MEX)
3. **MURODJOH AKHMADALIEV** 8-0 (UZB)
4. **DANIEL ROMAN** 27-3-1 (USA)
5. **TJ DOHENY** 22-1 (IRL)
6. **RYOSUKE IWASA** 27-3 (JPN)
7. **ISAAC DOGBOE** 20-2 (GHA)
8. **BRANDON FIGUEROA** 20-0-1 (USA)
9. **RONNY RIOS** 32-3 (USA)
10. **TOMOKI KAMEDA** 36-3 (JPN)

BANTAMWEIGHT

118lbs/8st 6lbs

1. **NAOYA INOUE** 19-0 (JPN)
2. **JOHN RIEL CASIMERO** 29-4 (PHL)
3. **NONITO DONAIRE** 40-6 (PHL)
4. **NORDINE OUBAALI** 17-0 (FRA)
5. **EMMANUEL RODRIGUEZ** 19-1 (PRI)
6. **JASON MOLONEY** 20-1 (AUS)
7. **LUIS NERY** 30-0 (MEX)
8. **TAKUMA INOUE** 13-1 (JPN)
9. **CARLOS CUADRAS** 39-3-1 (MEX)
10. **JOSHUA GREER JNR** 22-1-1 (USA)



SUPER-FLYWEIGHT

115lbs/8st 3lbs

1. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA** 40-3 (MEX)
2. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI** 47-5-1 (THA)
3. **KAZUTO IOKA** 25-2 (JPN)
4. **KAL YAFAI** 26-0 (ENG)
5. **JERWIN ANCAJAS** 32-1-2 (PHL)
6. **FERNANDO MARTINEZ** 11-0 (ARG)
7. **ANDREW MOLONEY** 21-0 (AUS)
8. **GIDEON BUTHELEZI** 22-5 (RSA)
9. **FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ JNR** 33-4-1 (MEX)
10. **ISRAEL GONZALEZ** 25-3 (MEX)

FLYWEIGHT

112lbs/8st

1. **CHARLIE EDWARDS** 15-1 (ENG)
2. **JULIO CESAR MARTINEZ** 15-1 (MEX)
3. **KOSEI TANAKA** 15-0 (JPN)
4. **ARTEM DALAKIAN** 20-0 (UKR)
5. **MORUTI MTHALANE** 39-2 (RSA)
6. **CRISTOFER ROSALES** 29-5 (NIC)
7. **VINCENT LEGRAND** 31-0 (FRA)
8. **GIEMEL MAGRAMO** 24-1 (PHL)
9. **MAXIMINO FLORES** 25-4-2 (MEX)
10. **JAY HARRIS** 17-0 (WAL)

LIGHT-FLYWEIGHT

108lbs/7st 10lbs

1. **KEN SHIRO** 17-0 (JPN)
2. **HIROTO KYOGUCHI** 14-0 (JPN)
3. **CARLOS CANIZALES** 22-0-1 (VEN)
4. **ELWIN SOTO** 17-1 (MEX) *[above]*
5. **FELIX ALVARADO** 35-2 (NIC)
6. **EDWARD HENO** 14-1-5 (PHL)
7. **REIYA KONISHI** 17-2 (JPN)
8. **TETSUYA HISADA** 34-10-2 (JPN)
9. **TIBO MONABESA** 20-1-2 (IDN)
10. **AGUSTIN GAUTO** 14-0 (ARG)

STRAWWEIGHT

105lbs/7st 7lbs

1. **KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART** 20-0 (THA)
2. **WANHENG MEENAYOTHIN** 54-0 (THA)
3. **WILFREDO MENDEZ** 16-1 (PRI)
4. **VIC SALUDAR** 20-4 (PHL)
5. **BYRON ROJAS** 27-4-3 (NIC)
6. **JOSE ARGUMEDO** 23-4-1 (MEX)
7. **PEDRO TADURAN** 14-2-1 (PHL)
8. **NKOSINATHI JOYI** 29-5-1 (RSA)
9. **JOEY CANOY** 15-4-1 (PHL)
10. **GINJIRO SHIGEOKA** 5-0 (JPN)

POUND-FOR-POUND

The best of the best

1. **CANELO ALVAREZ** 53-1-2 (MEX)
2. **VASYL LOMACHENKO** 14-1 (UKR)
3. **NAOYA INOUE** 19-0 (JPN)
4. **TERENCE CRAWFORD** 36-0 (USA)
5. **OLEKSANDR USYK** 17-0 (UKR)
6. **ERROL SPENCE JNR** 26-0 (USA)
7. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN** 40-1-1 (KAZ)
8. **ARTUR BETERBIEV** 15-0 (RUS)
9. **LEO SANTA CRUZ** 37-1-1 (MEX)
10. **MIKEY GARCIA** 39-1 (USA)

- If a fighter has been inactive for over a year, he will be removed from the rankings, unless he has a fight officially scheduled. Once removed due to inactivity, a fighter cannot be reinstated until he has fought again.
- Each fighter is ranked on the results they have achieved in their own specific weight division (excluding the pound-for-pound list).
- Each fighter is ranked in the division in which their most recent significant fight took place. With regards to catchweight fights, common sense will (hopefully) prevail.
- If a fighter is suspended for failing a drug test, he will be removed from the rankings. He will be eligible for reinstatement after completing a ban, but will be removed indefinitely if he reoffends.

Photo: MIKEY WILLIAMS/TOP RANK

FEBRUARY**FRIDAY 21****York Hall, Bethnal Green (Sky Sports Action 7.30pm & ESPN+)**

The Golden Contract: Super-lightweight semi-finals (Ohara Davies; Mohamed Mimoun; Tyrone McKenna; Jeff Ofori); *The Golden Contract: Featherweight semi-finals* (Ryan Walsh; Jazza Dickens; Leigh Wood; Tyrone McCullagh); Elliot Whale v Carl Turney; William Hamilton v s/o; Inder Bassi v Paul Cummings; Burim Ahmeti v Ryan Hibbert. (Promoter: MTK Global).

Metrodome, Barnsley

Josh Wale v Iddi Kayumba; Kash Ali v Josh Sandland; Cheyenne Hanson v s/o; Perry Howe v Elvis Dube; Sufyaan Ahmed v Ricky Leach; Keanen Wainwright v Connor Oliver. (Promoter: Dennis Hobson Promotions).

Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Taunton

Dean Dodge v Sean Davis; Paul Roberts v s/o; Alex Jones v Naheem Chaudhry; Rob Green v s/o; Dylan Courtney v Nathan Halton; Paddy Nevin v s/o; Shane Medlen v s/o. (Promoter: Priority Promotions).

Holiday Inn, Warmsworth

Josh Padley v Jordan Ellison; Ryan Stevenson v s/o; Cameron Kaihau v Kevin McCauley. (Promoter: Boxing Connected).

Miccosukee Indian Gaming Resort, Miami, Florida (Telemundo)

Saul Juarez v Jonathan Gonzalez; Robeisy Ramirez [pictured] v Rafeal Morales. (Promoter: All Star Boxing).

Dynamo Palace of Sports in Krylatskoye, Moscow, Russia

Aslambek Idigov v Ryan Ford; Islam Edisultanov v Evgeny Terentiev; Aпти Ustarkhanov v Andrey Sirotkin; Rizvan Elikhanov v Roger Guerrero; Ramzan Baysarov v Narong Bunchan; Aпти Davtaev v John Napari; Adlan Abdurashidov v Jose Luis Prieto; Movsur Yusupov v Makhmud Musalov; Mekhdi Abdurashedov v Wicket Sengprakhon. (Promoter: Akhmat Promotion Company).

SATURDAY 22**York Hall, Bethnal Green (BT Sport 1 8pm & ESPN+)**

Brad Foster (holder) v Lucien Reid (British super-bantamweight title); Kody Davies v Umar Sadiq; Willy Hutchinson v s/o; Louie Lynn v Brayan Mairena; Dennis McCann v Pablo Narvaez; Sam Noakes v Des Newton; Ryan Garner v Jamie Quinn; Muhammad Ali v Stefan Sashev; Alex Bishop v Eligio Palacios; Henry Turner v Rhys Saunders; Eithan James v Michael Mooney. (Promoter: Queensberry Promotions).

Doncaster Dome

Jamie Hughes v Dan Cooper; Lewis Booth v Tom Young (vacant Central Area welterweight title); Maxi Hughes



v s/o; Dec Spelman v s/o; Jay Carrigan-McFarlane v s/o; Conner Kelsall v s/o; George Rhodes v s/o; Taylor Watkins v s/o; Jack Roberts v s/o; Levi Kinsiona v s/o; Jimmy Hanrahan v s/o. (Promoter: Steffy Bull Promotions).

Holte Suite, Villa Park, Birmingham

David Seymour (holder) v Matt Windle (Midlands Area flyweight title); Ryan Hatton v s/o; Dilbag Singh v s/o; Conah Walker v s/o; Cathy McAleer v s/o; Kirstie Bavington v s/o; Danny Quartermaine v s/o; Max Mudway v s/o; Nathan Bendon v s/o. (Promoter: Tommy Owens Promotions).

Oldham Leisure Centre

Mark Heffron v Ondrej Budera; Jack Rafferty v Ismael Molina Moreno; Sean Fennell v Dean Jones; Omar Dusary v Taka Bembere; Zak Miller v Robbie Forster; Connor Burton v Nabil Ahmed; Connor Ward v Qasim Hussain; Mathew Fitzsimons v Joe Beeden; Rob Parry v Lewis van Poetsch; Dan Booth v s/o. (Promoter: Black Flash Promotions).

MGM Grand, Las Vegas, Nevada

(BT Sport Box Office 12am & FOX Sports PPV & ESPN+ PPV)

Deontay Wilder (holder) v Tyson Fury (WBC heavyweight title); Emanuel Navarrete (holder) v Jeo Santisima (WBO super-bantamweight title); Charles Martin v Gerald Washington; Sebastian Fundora v Daniel Lewis; Subriel Matias v Petros Ananyan; Amir Imam v Javier Molina; Isaac Lowe v Alberto Guevara; Rolando Romero v Arturs Ahmetovs; Gabriel Flores Jnr v Matt Conway; Vito Mielnicki Jnr v Corey Champion. (Promoter: TGB Promotions & BombZquad Promotions & Top Rank & Queensberry Promotions).

FRIDAY 28**The Halls, Norwich**

Michael Walsh v Amani Bariki; Connor Vian v Sergio Gugliotta; Joe Steed v Richard Samuels; Bernardo Marime v Lee Hallett; Liam Goddard v s/o; Owen Blunden v s/o; Stevi-Ann Levy v s/o. (Promoter: Shamrock Promotions).

Grand Central Hall, Liverpool

James Metcalf v Fernando Valencia; Nick Ball v s/o; Andrew Cain v s/o; Carly Skelly v Claudia Ferenczi; Connor Butler v s/o; Harry Woods v Kearon Thomas; Michael Hedges v Lee Connelly; James Heneghan v Scott Williams; David Thompson v Kevin McCauley; Jonathan Walsh v Chris Adaway;

Jack McKinlay v Michael Likalu. (Promoter: Black Flash Promotions).

Allianz Cloud, Milan, Italy (DAZN)

Daniele Scardina v Andrew Francillette; Francesco Grandelli v Carmine Tommasone; Maxim Prodan v Michele Esposito; Dario Morello v Andrea Scarpa. (Promoter: Matchroom Boxing & OPI Since 82).

Paramount Theatre, Huntington, New York

Carlos Takam v Fabio Maldonado; Cletus Seldin v Humberto Martinez. (Promoter: Star Boxing).

Sam's Town Hotel & Gambling Hall, Las Vegas, Nevada (Showtime)

Malik Hawkins v Keith Hunter; Richardson Hitchens v Nick DeLomba. (Promoter: Mayweather Promotions).

Osceola Heritage Park, Kissimmee, Florida (Telemundo)

Yomar Alamo v Kendo Castaneda. (Promoter: All Star Boxing).

Palladium, Worcester, Massachusetts (UFC Fight Pass)

Jamaine Ortiz v Luis Ronaldo Castillo. (Promoter: CES Boxing).

VESTED *INTEREST*

Meet the personalities
at the heart of the sport
With JOHN DENNEN

IRELAND ANNOUNCE THEIR

Ireland set their team for the first Olympic qualification event



IRELAND have announced their team for the European Olympic qualification event. They won't have far to travel as the Copper Box in London hosts the event from March 14-24. So the Irish squad can expect good support in the arena.

"We have some really good athletes pushing each other for places, so it has been a challenge to select our squad, but we have picked the best team to compete at the first qualifier in London," said Bernard Dunne, Ireland's High Performance director.

"We would be looking for some good performances from our team. We have two opportunities to qualify, London and Paris [the final qualifier in May], so we will review the squad post London."

"Preparations have gone well so far, and we head to Italy on Monday for a sparring camp which will then lead us into the qualifier," he added. "They've worked extremely hard to get to this point, so if they perform to the best of their ability in London, then that is all we can ask of them."

Their full squad is as follows:

MEN'S SQUAD

52KGS BRENDAN IRVINE

(St Paul's, Antrim)

Irvine is a veteran of Ireland's unfortunate but talented team from the last Olympic Games. He has done well in European level competition in the past, winning a silver medal at the 2017 European championships. He has however had to overcome injury to win his place on this squad.

57KGS KURT WALKER

(Canal, Antrim [pictured])

The reigning gold medallist from last year's European Games in Minsk, he is one of Ireland's leading hopes to qualify at this first opportunity. The able featherweight can be expected to resume his rivalry with Britain's Peter McGrail at some stage of this competition in London.

63KGS GEORGE BATES

(St Mary's, Dublin)

A national champion, Bates will represent

Ireland in the new lightweight division, which will prove to be highly competitive internationally. This new lightweight category combines the best of the 60 and 64kgs divisions that preceded it. Armenia's strong Hovhannes Bachkov, a 2016 Olympian, will probably be the man to beat at the Copper Box. He has a host of major medals, including winning the European championships and the European Games as well as a World bronze. France, Russia and more will all be strong in this weight class too. A battle awaits all the boxers here.

69KGS AIDAN WALSH

(Monkstown, Antrim)

Aidan Walsh travels to this tournament with his sister Michaela also on the team at featherweight. Walsh did reach

the final of the Commonwealth Games in 2018. He was handily outboxed by England's Pat McCormack then. McCormack also eliminated him in the preliminary stages of the World championships last year but Walsh is young, still only 22, and improving.

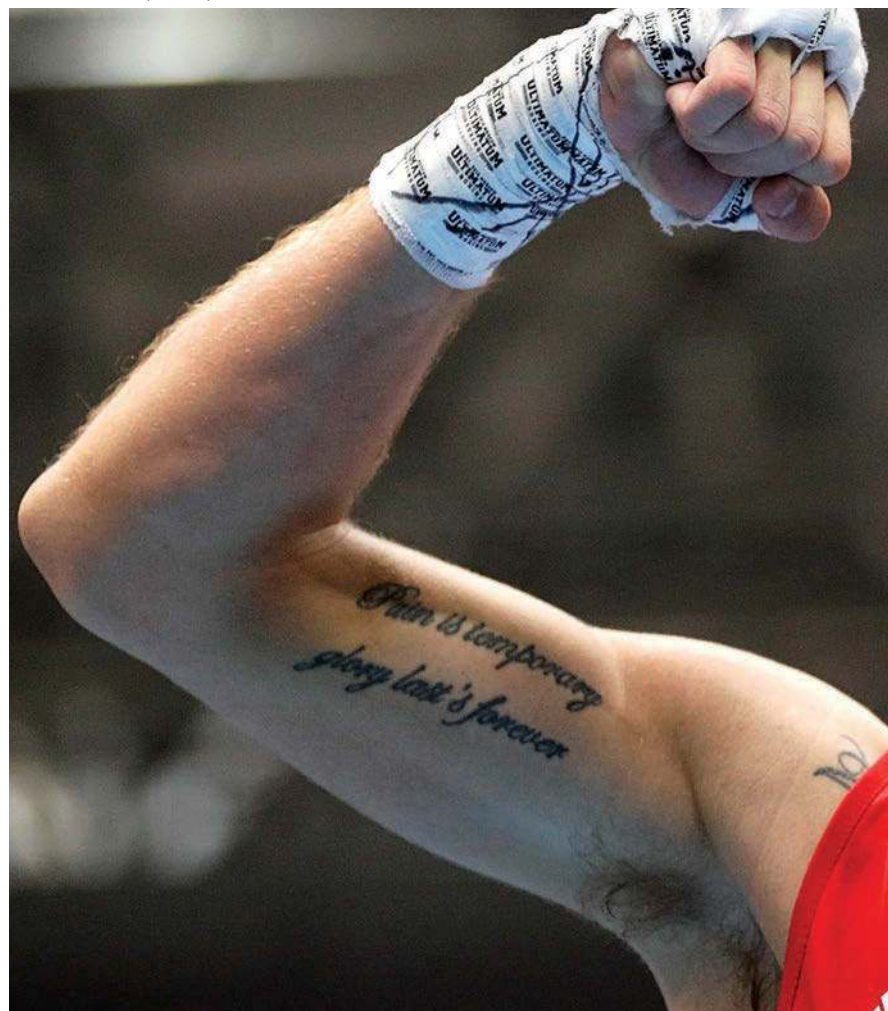
75KGS MICHAEL NEVIN

(Portlaoise, Laois)

Ireland did have options at 75kgs. Gabriel Dossen is a talent, picking up a silver medal at the recent Bocskai tournament. But ultimately Michael Nevin is more proven. He did well as a Youth boxer and secured a bronze medal at the recent European Games.

Six Olympic places are available in this division at the Copper Box and Nevin ought to be in the frame.

Photo: ACTION IMAGES/REUTERS/VALENTYN OGIRENKO



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MISSION
2020

**KHADIJA
EL-MARDI**

FROM Morocco
STANCE Orthodox
TITLES World
championship
bronze, All Africa
Games gold

THE first Olympic qualification event begins on Thursday (February 20). With the Asian Olympic Qualification Event being rescheduled for Jordan at the start of next month, due to the outbreak of the coronavirus in Wuhan, the African region qualifier takes centre stage now. It will run in Dakar, Senegal from February 20-29 with the best boxers of the continent, 221 athletes from 39 nations, will be competing at the Dakar Arena for 33 Tokyo 2020 Olympic quota places. There will be three places at Tokyo 2020 up for grabs in each of the six men's divisions from flyweight up to light-heavyweight and also in the women's flyweight category. In male heavyweight and super-heavyweight, as well as female feather, lightweight, welter and middle there will just be two qualification places available in each of those divisions for the upcoming Games. Moroccan middleweight Khadija El Mardi should play a starring role. The 2016 Olympian was the only boxer from the region to medal at the World championships last year but the whole Moroccan team will be confident in this event. Go to the Olympic channel website to watch the action.

OLYMPIC HOPES

81KGS EMMETT BRENNAN (Dublin Docklands)

For many years Joe Ward has been Ireland's star man, making the light-heavyweight berth his own. While Ward was unfortunate at the Olympics themselves, he had excelled in tournaments across the continent. There were high hopes for him in this cycle but Ward turned professional, leaving big boots to fill. Emmett Brennan is the man to step into them.

91KGS KIRIL AFANASEV (Smithfield, Dublin)

Heavyweight and super-heavyweight are the divisions with the least Olympic quota places available in this competition. The boxers here have to

reach the semi-finals to be sure of a spot at the Tokyo 2020 Games.

Kiril Afanasev has gained international experience but has the tough task on taking on the rugged competitors that populate this weight class. Russia, Britain and even Bulgaria will all be a threat here.

91&KGS DEAN GARDINER (Clonmel, Tipperary)

Dean Gardiner is an experienced campaigner. He has featured in European championships and over the years has boxed against some of the continent's finest super-heavyweights, Magomedrasul Majidov, Frazer Clarke and Guido Vianello included. At his age, 31 now, Gardiner won't get too many more shots at Olympic qualification.

WOMEN'S TEAM

51KGS CEIRE SMITH (Cavan)

In the qualifier at the Copper Box Russia's Liliya Aetbaeva and Turkey's Buse Naz Çakıroğlu are likely to be the dominant boxers in the women's flyweight division. Ceire Smith was good enough to reach the last 16 in the World championships but Çakıroğlu has beaten her before, so the draw will be interesting to see here.

57KGS MICHAELA WALSH (Monkstown, Antrim)

Michaela Walsh rose to prominence by giving Olympic champion Nicola Adams a hard bout in the Commonwealth Games final all the way back in 2014. Featherweight now is a division that suits her well and she has already medalled in European competition. At this tournament she could play a starring role.

60KGS KELLIE HARRINGTON (St Mary's, Dublin)

Being the heir to Katie Taylor is a heavy burden to bear. But Kellie Harrington seems up to the task. She has a World gold medal in her trophy cabinet already and saw off the challenge of Amy Broadhurst to get picked for the first qualification event. She however cannot afford to miss this opportunity.

69KGS CHRISTINA DESMOND (Fr Horgan's, Cork)

Desmond took a big win at the Worlds, beating England's Sandy Ryan in her opening bout in Russia. She progressed to the quarter-finals there, but the next leap for her is to reach the medal stages of a major competition.

75KGS AOIFE O'ROURKE (Castlerea, Roscommon)

O'Rourke did win the European championships in 2019. That is a significant achievement but not as huge as it would have been in another year as that particular competition was preceded by a European Games, and quickly followed by the World championships. It meant Lauren Price and Nouchka Fontijn, the key boxers at 75kgs, were rested for it. They will both feature at the qualifier in London, making the competition in this category particularly fascinating.



AMATEUR SCENE

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YOUTH CHAMPS ABANDONED

Photo: ANDY CHUBB/ENGLAND BOXING



SOME OF THE ACTION:
Khan beats Hewitt
in the quarter-final

Disgraceful incident of large-scale disorder forces the Youth championships to be called off in Coventry, writes **John Dennen**

A SHOCKING violent incident forced England Boxing's national amateur Youth championships to be abandoned halfway through the semi-finals on Saturday (Feb 15).

Fighting erupted between a

number of people at the Sport Connexion in Coventry, the venue that was hosting the Youth championships. The police were called to the situation on Saturday afternoon and described it as large-scale violent disorder. Four people were hospitalised with injuries, which are not believed to be life-threatening or life-changing.

No arrests have yet been made but the police are looking to identify those involved and are appealing for information from the public.

"This was a terrifying ordeal for members of the public who were at the arena at Sports Connexion this afternoon and witnessed this large-scale violent disorder," superintendent Pete Hill from the Warwickshire Police said. "We will not tolerate incidents of this nature and are working hard to establish the circumstances surrounding this incident."

"I would urge anyone who may have witnessed this incident, has video footage of the incident or has

information that could help with our investigation to please get in touch."

England Boxing will be working with the police as well as looking into the matter themselves.

"We utterly condemn [these] events and the background to them and will continue to work with the relevant authorities, including with representatives of the National Police Chiefs Council, to eradicate the impact it has on our competitions," England Boxing said in a statement. "Those with videos or information are asked to forward it to Warwickshire Police."

"We share with all boxers, coaches, officials and genuine spectators a huge sense of disappointment that the competition has not been allowed to run its course after the hard work put in by so many, not least the boxers themselves."

England Boxing are looking into their options for the possibility of rescheduling what's left of the competition, saying they will take into account the wishes of the boxers, timings, their other championships and competitions, and other associated factors.

Everyone involved in the event, especially the boxers who progressed and their clubs, will be bitterly disappointed as the disastrous incident that has seen the championship disbanded at this stage. It's to be hoped that the event can be continued. But this kind of disorder has absolutely no place in the sport.

On Friday (February 14) the quarter-finals were completed. Among the results **Sahil Khan** beat fellow England boxer **William Hewitt**. Merridale's Khan outpointed his 52kgs rival, defeating the Leigh boxer on a split decision. Moss Side Fire lightweight **Kai Hardiker** had halted all four of his opponents on his way to the quarter-finals. In the Youth Cadet 60kgs category he met **Jay Bunclark** of Ingle's and took a unanimous decision victory. **Shelby-Marie Lee** of Minster won unanimously against the 2018 European Junior champion, Newbiggin's **Alex Brown** at 48kgs.

TRAGIC LOSS

Andy Gill has passed away

ANDY GILL, a successful amateur boxer in the past and long-time member of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Ex Boxers' Association, has died at the age of 62. His funeral will be held on Monday February 24, at 12.30pm at Easthampstead Park Crematorium in Bracknell (RG40 3DW).

The tragic death of Andy, the brother of Stuart Gill of the Golden Ring boxing club, has come as a great shock.

"He was not only a terrific boxer as a Royal Marine but a tremendous supporter of the association," said Tony Bevel, chairman of the Royal Navy Ex Boxers' Association. "He was

Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Combined Services champion at lightweight in 1977.

"He represented the Navy on numerous occasions and he boxed Terry Marsh... The Navy and Royal Marines are mourning the loss of a great member. He came to every reunion, a big family man. He'll be sadly missed."

Coach Sab Leo hails the recent performances from the Hoddesdon squad

HODDESDON BOXING ACADEMY provided a feast of top quality amateur boxing at the Paringdon Sports Centre in Harlow. Box-offs for the Home Counties national Youth championships featured along with a bumper undercard of the best up-and-coming talent that the Hertfordshire club has.

Kyle Quinn and **John Hedges**, both aged 17, advanced to the quarter-finals with superbly controlled displays against quality opposition **Bilal Safari**, of The Ring, and **Jimmy Stevens**, Pinewood ABC.

Flyweight Quinn used his feet well to evade swinging punches from Safari, before landing composed and accurate straight shots. He scored throughout the three rounds to win a well-deserved decision.

Hedges overcame an awkward opening round before landing confidently with big looping uppercuts to the body of Stevens, also winning on a split decision.

Joshua Sholoye, 17, produced a punch perfect performance to join them in the next round, as he outwitted very game opponent **Mohammed Naziri** (Oxford ABC) in the 69kgs Home Counties final.

Of the 21 contests that featured on the January 31 show, Hoddesdon Boxers also competed in two England Boxing Title Belt bouts. **Jawad Illiyas**, 17, captured the National Youth 56kgs Belt as he outboxed **Kai Bryan** (Sudbury ABC).

The Central Area 56kgs Title Belt was contested by another Hoddesdon boxer, **Alex Head**, who won a hard-fought points decision over Billericay's **Tom Browning**



WINNING:
Ilyas and
Head with their
Title Belts

PROMISING FUTURE

After imposing a standing eight count in the opening round Head also secured the second round but came under pressure from the advancing Billericay boxer. Head hung on to win.

Elite boxer **Lorenzo Grasso** made a welcome return to the ring after two years out, figuring in a pulsating fight and one of the best contests of the evening. In the opposite corner was another

boxer who had been out of the ring for several years, Finchley's **Omar Chaima**. The opening exchanges were fast and furious but it was Chaima who had the upper hand in the first round. Grasso worked to the body from the second round onwards, successfully slowing down his opponent who started to box on the back foot and off the ropes more often. They both let their hands go and at the bell

gracefully acknowledged the other's contribution to such a great bout. Chaima had his hand raised after a split decision

"It was a great night with outstanding performances from everyone boxing out of the home corner. The support was amazing and the venue was packed to capacity. It's a very promising future for the 'HodBox' Team," said head coach Sab Leo.

ENGLAND OVERCOME WALES

Gareth Jones sees a squad of young English boxers defeat Wales in team matches over two days in Cardiff

ENGLAND'S two southpaws claimed split decisions over Wales' lefties in four successes to guarantee the visitors' victory in Cardiff on February 8 and 9.

Jimmy Dean Wood, from Kent Gloves, edged out Cardiffian **T. J. Price** in two all-action encounters, while technical skill from **Joshua Rose** outpointed **Harvey Williams**,

from Dyffryn.

The best home boxer was Cardigan's **Mikey O'Sullivan**. Beaten twice by Repton's **Luke Rodda** last August, he saw off Rodda in two decisions to claim full revenge. And Pembrokeshire's **Ffion Wilmott**, beaten on the Saturday by **Jocelyn Kilkenny**, improved dramatically to come out on top the next day.

RESULTS

(Welsh names first) **Saturday: Wales 4 England 5. Schools: 38: MIKEY O'SULLIVAN** outpd Luke Rodda split. **47: Ffion Wilmott** outpointed by **JOCELYN KILKENNY** split. **Juniors: 39: SAAD ABDULLAH** outpointed Cain Alexander split. **42: Cory Jones** outpd by **THOMAS VAREY** unan. **45: Harvey Williams** outpointed by **JOSHUA ROSE** split. **55: Harry Williams** outpointed by **AARON BIRD** split, **DANNY THOMAS** bt Muhammad Ali w/o.

57: ELLE TAYLOR outpointed Ashleigh Lane split. **67: Tom (T.J.) Price** outpointed by **JIMMY DEAN WOOD** split. **Sunday: Wales 2 England 4. Schools: 38: MIKEY O'SULLIVAN** outpd Luke Rodda split. **47: Ffion Wilmott** outpointed Jocelyn Kilkenny split. **Juniors: 39: Saad Abdullah** outpointed by **CAIN ALEXANDER** split. **45: Harvey Williams** outpointed by **JOSHUA ROSE** split. **57: Nicola Twome** outpointed by **ASLEIGH LANE** unan. **67: T.J. Price** outpointed by **JIMMY DEAN WOOD** split.

INCOMPARABLE

Sammy McCarthy was one of the most popular British boxers of the 1950s



T the time of his passing – last Monday (February 10), aged 88 – “Smilin’ Sammy” McCarthy was our oldest former British

champion.

He had fought in the age of Robinson, Marciano, Moore, Sadler and Pep – an era of one world champion per weight, when boxing enjoyed mainstream popularity and British titlists were household names. Sammy was among the best-known British champs of the 1950s – his immaculate boxing style and unpretentious manner made him a hit with the fans. But to anyone lucky enough to have known him – even just briefly, as I did – he was so much more than the sum of his fights.

Intelligent, softly spoken, warm and articulate, Sammy was the antithesis of the non-boxing fan’s stereotype of a former pro boxer. When I interviewed him for my book, *Fighting Men of London*, I was dazzled by his openness and sincerity. He told me: “I always thought as a little boy that the more you could fight the more masculine you were. But of course you realise when you get a little older how ridiculous that is. I always wanted to box but I was always very frightened, very nervous. But I overcame it the way you overcome

things, I started doing it.”

Born in Stepney, east London, on November 5, 1931, Sammy started boxing after returning from war evacuation in 1945. As a senior amateur he went from success to success and was British boxing’s “Golden Boy”. Each time he fought a dozen coaches were laid on for his army of devotees. There was even a Sammy McCarthy fan club.

After turning pro at age 19, he reached 20-0-1 in his first 18 months and then beat the reigning British featherweight champion, Ronnie Clayton, in a non-title fight. It took another 18 months for McCarthy to get his shot, and in the meantime he lost decisions to three world-class operators: Hogan “Kid” Bassey, Ray Famechon and Jean Sneyers. He was none the worse for these losses, however, and stopped Clayton in eight to claim the British belt in June 1954.

Sammy lost his crown in Belfast the following January to Billy “Spider” Kelly, but a sleepless night (caused by a horrendous overnight sea crossing) and an injury to his right fist meant he was not at his best. Moving to lightweight, McCarthy beat the reigning British champ, Frank Johnson, emphatically in his first fight at the weight. However, Johnson’s crown wasn’t on the line and Sammy lost a title challenge to Frank’s successor, Joe Lucy, in June 1956. Having

defeated some of Europe’s finest feather and lightweights, Sammy retired the following year, aged 25.

Sammy refused to make excuses for any ring defeat, even when an obvious external factor would have served as an alibi. Glorifying his achievements, or diminishing those of others, was just not his style. After legal transgressions and prison time (part of the McCarthy enigma and utterly at odds with his character), Sammy’s final years were spent largely in the service of others. As Vice President and a hugely popular member of the London Ex-Boxers’ Association, he routinely visited other ex-fighters and senior members of his beloved East End community who were unwell, often stranded in hospitals or care homes. Indeed, such was his devotion to this duty, it was rare to be able to reach the ex-champ on his house phone during the day.

I once asked McCarthy how he acquired his famous nickname, “Smilin’ Sammy”, and he told me, candidly: “I used to smile a lot, the reason being, I was so nervous and it was a defence thing.” I then asked why he still smiled just as radiantly and he replied: “Even on my lowest day I think it’s wonderful to be alive. I’m just happy to be here.”

Sammy McCarthy, British boxing hero and thoroughly decent human being, will be dearly missed.



Alex Daley

@thealexdaley

**Historian
& author**

SADLY MISSED

Saying goodbye to two highly admired advocates of the EBA movement



Simon Euan-Smith

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**EBA
correspondent**

I WAS so sorry to hear of the recent deaths of Sammy McCarthy and Dave Roden. Both were very much liked and respected in the boxing community, and both were popular members of their local EBAs.

Sammy, of course, was a former British featherweight champion, and you’ll have read Daniel Herbert’s comprehensive tribute to him last week [plus Alex Daley’s above]. I met him many times – he was a Vice-President of the London EBA, always attending meetings until prevented by his illness. He’d attend functions, as well, both LEBA’s and other Associations’ – I recall him coming to Croydon’s Annual Dinner several times. He was called “Smilin’ Sammy” for a reason – I never saw him without that smile as he walked around, greeting everybody and warmly shaking

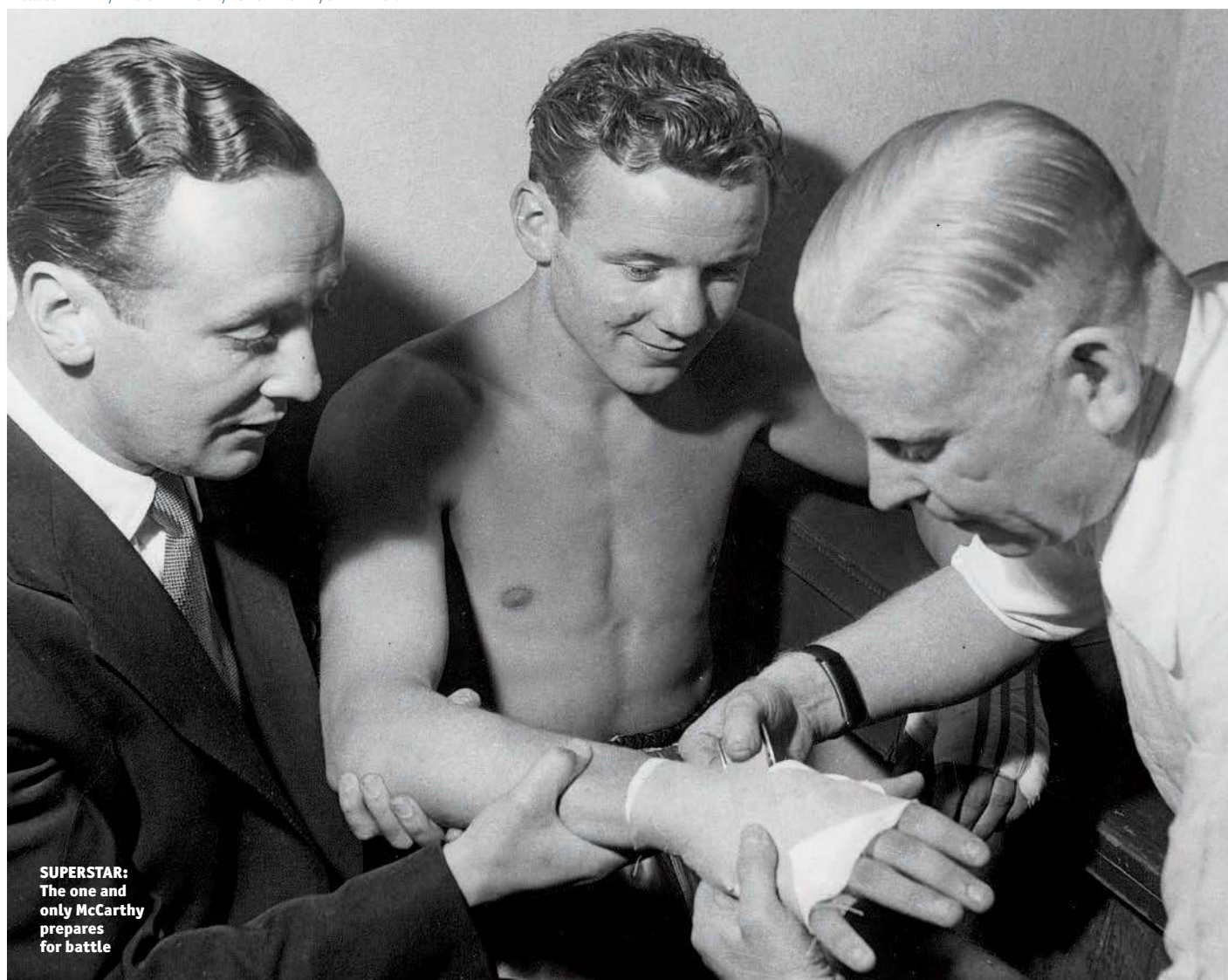
their hands. My thoughts are with his family, and he’ll be very much missed.

Dave Roden was a member of the Central (Midlands) EBA – “a valued member,” Secretary Paul Nutting told me. “He wasn’t a regular attendee at the meetings, but if assistance was required in any way, Dave was one of the first to offer his services and valued advice, and indeed helped the EBA on several occasions over the years. He will be sadly missed throughout the Midlands boxing community.”

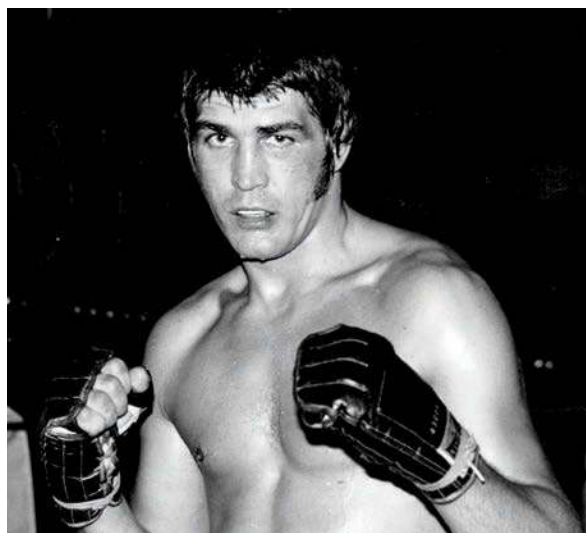
I saw Dave several times during his 19-bout career (11 wins). I also covered him a few times, including his last bout – a 10-round points loss to Rocky Campbell at the Mayfair Suite, Birmingham, in September 1974 for the vacant Midlands Area heavyweight title. After that Dave turned his attention

to managing and promoting. Just over a year after hanging up the gloves, he put on a show at Digbeth Civic Hall, featuring the comeback of big-hitting welterweight Jackie Turpin, who had been battling the BBBofC for three years to get his licence reinstated. I was sent to cover it for BN. Handing out the press passes was Dave’s wife, Pat – and when I told her my name she told me, in no uncertain terms, what she thought of my report of the Campbell fight! I’m sure everyone will join me in sending condolences to Pat and daughter Justine.

Turpin duly did the business that night, halting Dennis Harbon in two rounds – but sadly his comeback wouldn’t last. Nineteen days later I was at Wolverhampton Civic Hall to see Jackie floored and halted in three rounds by Jim Devanney. He never



SUPERSTAR:
The one and only McCarthy prepares for battle



GREATLY MISSED: Roden generated respect as a fighter and a man

boxed again. I'd been thinking about Jackie in the light of the item in last week's Yesterday's Heroes, regarding Peter Richards. The first show I ever attended was at Wembley in September 1967 - Scotland's Walter McGowan fighting Thai Chartchai Chionoi for the WBC flyweight title. (McGowan lost on a cut eye in seven rounds after dominating the fight.) On the undercard Turpin halted Richards in three rounds, in what would be Peter's last bout.

In the same piece, Miles Templeton mentioned Gary Chippendale, whom I saw a couple of times at Bristol's Colston Hall - a points win over Louis Onwuna in November 1968 and a third-round stoppage of Len Gregory the following March. He was a popular fighter who always gave good value. I was very sorry to hear both Peter and

Gary have been suffering with health problems, and wish them both well.

Croydon EBA enjoyed a lively AGM, with several ideas to be considered for the future. In my Secretary's Report I paid tribute to those who had passed on during the year - and said that, by and large, it had been a good 12 months for the Association. Our Sunday Roast Lunch in October had been a success - it was a shame that only two members of other EBAs made it, but it was well-supported by Croydon. I'm continually stressing the importance of EBAs supporting one another - but it's equally vital to support your own Association, and the success of Croydon's lunch is proof of that.

EMAIL simonoldtimers@googlemail.com with your ex-boxer association news.

HARRY WOODS

Paul Wheeler talks to a man who cherishes his England vest

When and why you started boxing:

I started at Kirkby ABC when I was 11. I went to the gym with a couple of mates because my grandad always had a big interest in boxing.

Favourite all-time fighter:

My favourites are Julio Cesar Chavez, Marvin Hagler and, from the recent era, Andre Ward.

Best fight you've seen:

Probably the first Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo fight.

Personal career highlight:

Getting my England vest as an amateur. I wanted it as a junior but finally got it as a senior. I'd say that's been my proudest achievement so far.

Toughest opponent:

Peter Mullenberg. He went to the 2016 Olympics. I boxed him at the Eindhoven Box Cup in 2017. I lost a close fight on points, but it was a good experience for me.

Best and worst attributes as a boxer:

My strengths are my jab and my ability to work on the inside. Back in the amateurs, I was always looking to immediately hit back whenever I got caught. I was too focused on just trying to hurt my opponent.

Training tip:

Work as hard as you can and put everything into it.

Favourite meal/restaurant:

There's an Indian restaurant in Liverpool that I like called Mowgli.



'I WAS TOO FOCUSED ON TRYING TO HURT MY OPPONENT'

Best friends in boxing:

Everyone at the Everton Red Triangle gym.

Other sportsman you would like to be:

I'd like to give MMA a go, though I might not be good at the grappling side of it!

Last film/TV show you saw:

[TV series] *After Life*.

Who would play you in a film of your life:

I'd pick Leonardo DiCaprio.

Have you ever been starstruck:

I don't really get starstruck.

Last time you cried:

I'm not much of a crier, to be fair. Watching that *After Life* was quite emotional though.

Best advice received:

When I boxed Peter Mullenberg, I always remember one of my mates watching the fight, Luke Wilkinson, shouted out to me in the last round: 'It's only three minutes, H!' That's just always stuck in my head.

Something not many people know about you:

I've got a qualification in Business Analysis.

'I REMEMBER HIM SHOUTING, 'IT'S ONLY THREE MINUTES!''

FAST FACTS

Age: 24 Twitter: @Harry16Woods Nickname: n/a Height: 6ft 1in
Nationality: English From: Liverpool Stance: Orthodox Record: 3-0 Division: Super-middleweight Titles: n/a Next fight: Woods takes on Kearon Thomas over four rounds in his hometown of Liverpool next Friday (February 28).

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