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'I'M QUITE GOOD AT FOOTBALL, DESPITE MY SIZE. I WAS A CENTRE-HALF WHEN I PLAYED'
Danny Whitaker

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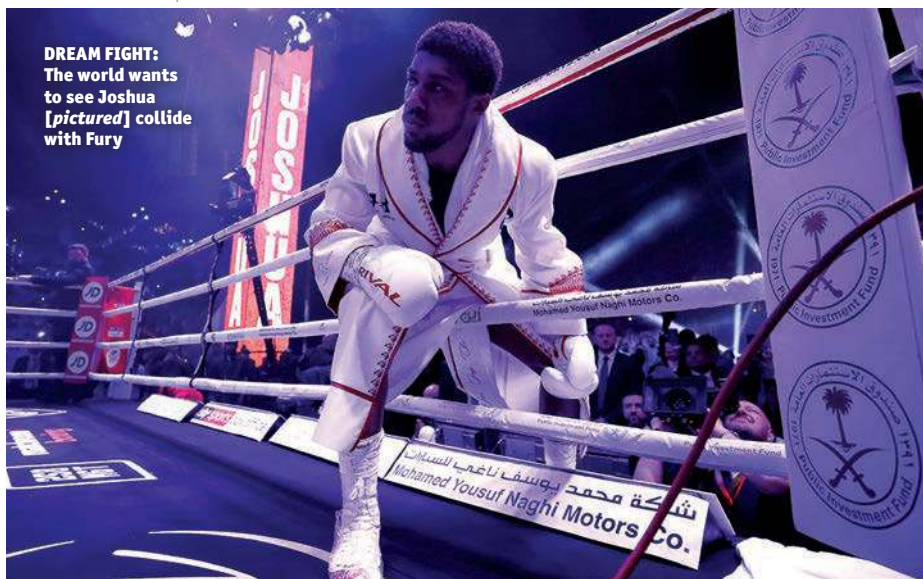
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BOXING



Photo: RICHARD HEATHCOTE/GETTY IMAGES



DREAM FIGHT:
The world wants
to see Joshua
[pictured] collide
with Fury



Cover photography
MARK ROBINSON/MATCHROOM
& KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/
GETTY IMAGES

BOXING DAY

A vision of Tyson Fury vs Anthony Joshua illustrates why this fight must happen



Matt Christie
@MattCBoxingNews
Editor

IT'S here, at last. *Boxing Day*. You open your eyes and look at the time. It's just gone 6am and your stomach is already in knots. Trying to go back to sleep is futile. In approximately 16 hours, Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury will be in a boxing ring with only each other for company.

On the television, with every click of the remote control, interviews and specials featuring the two heavyweights can be seen. Channels and programmes that would never normally mention the sport of boxing are positively giddy with excitement. *Boxing Day*, the heavyweight superfight's infectious tagline, is everywhere. The UK will stage the bout at Wembley Stadium and is drunk on expectancy.

Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister, is urging everyone to watch while imploring the best man to win. Every single newspaper has images on their front pages of Fury and Joshua alongside stories on the biggest fight Britain has ever produced.

The contest is all anyone is talking about. Taxi drivers, old ladies on buses and children in the park bicker about who is going to win. A-List celebrities take to social media to offer their

opinion on who will be the last man standing. Boxing has never had it so good. As the morning becomes afternoon, street parties are underway. Banners that read Happy Boxing Day can be seen in pub windows. And away from the hysteria and the carnivals and the irresistible merriment, the two fighters are getting ready for their defining moment.

At 4pm the undercard begins. Fans who have been lucky enough to get tickets chant the names of the two fighters as they walk down Wembley Way. Promoters Eddie Hearn, Bob Arum and Frank Warren are already at ringside, bristling with nervous energy. The media take their seats, too. Today is not a day to arrive just before the main event. This atmosphere is one that must be cherished for as long as it lasts.

By 8pm images of the two boxers walking into the stadium are displayed on the big screens. The crowd boo and cheer and sing and laugh. Fury is wearing a bright green two-piece, blue suede loafers without socks or a shirt and breaks into song. Joshua nods to the camera wearing customary tracksuit, a smile and clutches a bottle of water. A commentary team, including analysts from BT Sport and Sky Sports, do their best to focus on the supporting cast who fight in the ring.

Then it's time. *Boxing Day*. The Stadium goes black before fireworks illuminate the night sky and *Sweet Caroline* hurtles through the stomachs and ears of all in attendance. Joshua enters first, *Seven Nation Army* blares

from the sound system and heightens the atmosphere. Then it's the turn of Fury to make his way to the battleground. He's jovial, sitting in a replica Rolls Royce that drops him off near the ring as Chumbawumba provide the soundtrack. Tyson wears a bowler hat and makeshift suit and laughs and blows kisses to the crowd.

Fury is introduced first. Michael Buffer lingers on the last letter of his surname. Concentration carves lines in Joshua's face.

For the first time in a long time, Buffer's claims that what we're about to see will decide the world heavyweight championship, the real undisputed inarguable world heavyweight championship, are completely true.

Joshua removes his long, elegant Muhammad Ali-esque robe. Fury dispenses with his suit and hat and struts to centre ring. The noise in the stadium is astonishing, its volume so loud and intense it's all-consuming. The referee's final instructions are swallowed up in the hullabaloo. The commentators can barely hear their own voices. The teams of each fighter offer final words of advice before dispersing. All that's left to do, after months of talking and positioning and anticipation, is to let battle commence.

There is a brief silence. The first bell sounds. Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury walk away from their corners and towards each other.

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Coming next time

● **OUR verdict on the Manchester bill** where Scott Quigg and Jono Carroll collide, and there's interest on the undercard from Zach Parker, Hughie Fury and Anthony Fowler.

● **WE look ahead to two New York bills** where Michael Conlan and Shakur Stevenson appear on separate cards.

● **AVAILABLE to download from March 10** and the print edition is in stores on March 12.

On the website

● **HOW to throw the most important punch in boxing.**

● **REFLECTING on the night when Frank Bruno lost to Mike Tyson for the first time.**

● **TOP 10 boxers in every Olympic weight class ranked.**

● **WE talk to Michael Conlan about his next fight.**

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

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'WHYTE WILL STOP POVETKIN'

Photo: JAN KRUGER/GETTY IMAGES



Dillian is closing in on the top three heavyweights, but Tyson Fury is the number one



Dave Allen

**Heavyweight,
18-5-2**

EAVYWEIGHT boxing is all about getting the timing right and I think fighting Alexander Povetkin, who is now 40 years old, is the right fight at the right time for Dillian Whyte. I say that not only because Povetkin seems like he is on the downward spiral now but

also because I still don't think we have seen the best of Whyte yet. This makes me think Whyte will stop Povetkin. He should have a lot of hunger to go out there and make a statement.

Povetkin will look at the shots that have put Whyte down in recent fights, especially in that Joseph Parker fight, and look to replicate that success with his own

combinations. But I'm not sure if he is still firing the way he was in years gone by. As for Whyte, it has been a slow rise to the top of the division but he's getting there. I think Tyson Fury, Anthony Joshua and Deontay Wilder are above him and the rest at the moment, mainly because of their size, but he is closing on them and just needs to keep on winning.

Beneath the top three you've got Whyte, you've got Povetkin, you've got [Kubrat] Pulev, you've got [Luis] Ortiz, all vying for that number four spot. There are so many of them and they're all so good as well. With Whyte, though, I think he's the only one with the potential to improve. All the others have had their chances and perhaps had their days. With Dillian, I can still see him eking out more. I've seen him in the gym and I genuinely think he is good enough to take that number four spot and then challenge one of the top three names. Whether he can beat them or not remains to be seen, but I think he will soon be considered the best man without a belt. In terms of the number one,

though, it has to be Fury after his win against Wilder.

I remember back when Tyson boxed Wladimir Klitschko I was telling everybody he would beat him. I sparred Wladimir in late 2014 and I said then, 'He can't beat Tyson in a million years, this fella.' But the rematch with Wilder was the first time I had any doubts when it comes to Tyson. Wilder's power has that kind of effect on you. You start thinking it can make a dent in everything and everybody. Going into it, I expected Fury to try to outbox him from a distance again. When they said he wouldn't do that, I didn't believe it. But now the whole world knows Tyson can basically do whatever he wants in there.

Tyson's the best pound-for-pound fighter on the planet. In terms of ability, he is right there with the [Vasyl] Lomachenkos and [Terence] Crawford. He's so intelligent. He's also super strong, super tough and will always have size in his favour. I really don't see who beats him. He can put you where he wants to put you and he can do whatever

he wants to you. Saying that, I give Joshua a better chance of beating Tyson than anyone else in the world.

I sparred Joshua before the Olympics in 2012 and also in 2015 and we did hundreds and hundreds of rounds. Joshua can do a bit of everything as well. He can box on the back foot and he can come forward and knock you out. I give him a chance because he can punch, he's got a lot of power, and he has very good hand speed. But I just feel he might be a little bit too basic for Tyson. I don't mean that disrespectfully, but Tyson is super skilled and unorthodox whereas Joshua is a great athlete with a basic boxing style. I don't see how the man with the basic boxing skills wins that fight.

When I sparred Tyson, he didn't just use his size to stay at range and outbox me. He would swarm me and smother me, and it was really impressive. He had all the answers. He could do everything. He has an unbelievable all-round game and is an impossible man to face.



LETTER OF THE WEEK

UNSUNG HERO



I'd like to pay tribute to one of British boxing's unsung heroes, journeyman William Warburton, who announced his retirement earlier this year after 201 professional contests. Always a pleasure to have on the bill, William went the distance with many good names. He caused more than a few upsets too, and I'm glad to say that I was there to witness a few. The fact that he was only stopped three times speaks volumes in itself. On January 30 in Glasgow, I announced William for, unbeknown to me, the last time, in what would be his final bout. It was fitting that it ended with his arm being raised. I wish William all the best for the future and hope that we'll still see him on the boxing circuit in some role.

Craig Stephen, Master of Ceremonies

DOUBLE SUCCESS

ON behalf of the Boxing Writers' Club,

Photo: MARK RUNNACLES/GETTY IMAGES

I'd like to congratulate *Boxing News* on their spectacular double success at the SJA Awards. As anybody who has had anything to do with our sport will confirm, the real rewards only come from hard work, commitment, dedication and a passion for boxing. *Boxing News* – its editorial team and its contributors – have those attributes in abundance. It's heartening to see their combined efforts recognised at the highest level within the sports journalism community. Our sport could not wish for better representation than that offered by *Boxing News*. Keep punching hard at those laptops.

David Smith, Boxing Writers' Club Secretary

THE TWO TYSONS

AFTER his incredible mauling of Deontay Wilder, if Tyson Fury were to retire now how would he compare to his namesake, Mike Tyson? I personally think Fury is

greater. Coming back from adversity to defeat the most feared puncher in the sport is an awe-inspiring achievement. And let's not forget his win over Wladimir Klitschko in Germany too.

Mike, on the other hand, always seemed to buckle in the face of real adversity. Although his youngest world heavyweight champion record is likely to never be bettered, it's a struggle to find great wins on his résumé. Besides Trevor Berbick, Tony Tucker, Larry Holmes and Michael Spinks, one really does struggle for examples of great victories from Mike, yet criticism directed at him is often met with confused uproar and aggressive ranting. His highlight reels are indeed intoxicating, but I'm afraid too many people are blind drunk from them.

James Glossop

RESPECTED:
Warburton has retired after over 200 bouts



THE PANEL

WHAT IS THE BETTER TYSON FURY WIN – BEATING WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO IN 2015 OR BEATING DEONTAY WILDER IN 2020?



Dave Allen

Ex-C'wealth title challenger
I think Tyson beating Klitschko is the bigger win. They are both great wins but Klitschko was such a dominant champion at the time and Tyson, because of this, was a big outsider. Not many expected him to win that night.



Mickey Helliott

Promoter and manager
The conclusive nature of the Wilder win against an unbeaten, recognised world champion in his prime makes it the better result.



Derek Williams

Former European champion
Fury has done exceptionally well in beating Klitschko and Wilder in their own backyards. Both fights were great accomplishments but, for me, the Wilder victory was slightly better because Fury totally dominated and stopped him.



Alan Hubbard

Boxing journalist
Both were phenomenal performances, especially away from home, but I give the Wilder win the nod because he was apparently invincible whereas Klitschko had been caught, hurt and beaten earlier in his career. Fury worked them both out, but the shock tactics flummoxed and flattened Wilder.

HOW MUCH INTEREST DO YOU HAVE IN SEEING KUBRAT PULEV CHALLENGE ANTHONY JOSHUA?

Dave Allen

I personally think it's a very good fight. Pulev is a very good fighter with a fantastic jab, good power and an ability to win fights by any means possible – which means being boring if he has to be. He isn't the most exciting opponent but he's a big challenge for Anthony and one that people must take seriously.

Mickey Helliott

Pulev is unbeaten in over five years but was disappointing in his only venture into genuine world class against Wladimir Klitschko. I can't say Joshua-Pulev is a fight I'm getting very excited about, but "AJ" has to stay active while waiting for the Fury fight and doesn't want to be getting stripped.

Derek Williams

I am not that interested in seeing Joshua against Pulev. This is heavyweight boxing, but I'm not sure if Pulev has enough firepower to create any fireworks. If Joshua is back to himself mentally, he should win easy.

Alan Hubbard

Fury's giant shadow now towers over everything. Fury beating Wilder has done "AJ" a huge favour by creating far more interest in his otherwise ho-hum fight with Pulev than there might have been.

10 COUNT

ALL HAIL THE GYPSY KING

Listing Tyson Fury's 10 best performances

1. WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

Nobody gave Fury a chance of dethroning Klitschko when the pair met in Düsseldorf in November 2015. Fury was unproven; Klitschko had reigned for a decade. Yet after 12 rounds the world heavyweight titles had changed hands.

2. DEONTAY WILDER II

Fury told everybody who would listen that he was going to walk down Wilder in the pair's rematch and chase a stoppage win. He then did just that, dropping and stopping Wilder in the seventh round.

3. DEONTAY WILDER I

Despite a two-and-a-half-year layoff and some farcical comeback fights, Fury shocked plenty when he outboxed Wilder for most of their first fight in 2018. The fight ended in a draw, however, due to two heavy knockdowns scored against Fury.

4. DERECK CHISORA II

Fury's clinical and precise dissection of Chisora in 2014 was an early sign of his comfort and adaptability in the ring. Switching styles and stances, he forced Chisora to retire after 10 rounds.

5. STEVE CUNNINGHAM

On what was Fury's US debut, he was decked heavily in the second round and struggled getting to grips with Cunningham, a former cruiserweight champion, before ending matters in the seventh.

6. DERECK CHISORA I

With both undefeated, the meeting of Fury and Chisora for the British and Commonwealth titles in 2011 was quite the occasion. It was also a relatively competitive fight, one Fury edged on the scorecards after some entertaining back-and-forth rounds.

7. CHRISTIAN HAMMER

Seeing as Hammer went on to beat David Price and Erkan Teper, Fury's eighth-round stoppage was a win that improved with time. That said, Fury's issues with UK Anti-Doping regarding a failed drug test around this time provide an asterisk.

8. OTTO WALLIN

Little was known about Wallin when he was plucked from obscurity to face Fury in 2019. Yet he pushed the favourite hard for 12 rounds and cut him open, causing Fury to gut it out to get the win.

9. MARTIN ROGAN

In 2012, Fury and Rogan met at a lively Odyssey Arena in Belfast, with a vacant Irish heavyweight title up for grabs. Boxing as a southpaw from the off, Fury would stop Rogan inside five rounds.

10. JOHN McDERMOTT II

Fury struggled against McDermott in 2009, winning a fight many believed he lost, yet rebounded in style the following year to stop McDermott inside nine rounds.

Photos: ADRIAN DENNIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

THE OTHER SIDE, NOT THE DARK SIDE



Why we shouldn't fear or judge white collar boxing



Steve Bunce

@BigDaddyBunce

Voice of boxing

there to ease the stress of saving people. They shared the road to their boxing

In a lost corner of Hammersmith just metres from the swollen Thames, a colourful group of boxers gathered for a Sunday service to tell their stories, face their demons and some stood nervously shaking to celebrate their second chance.

Bridget was there to change her life, Michael was there because he had changed his life and Tess was

redemption with a brutal honesty, often missing when professional boxers sit down, praise their management, predict destruction and tell you not to miss it. Nobody told me not to miss the show at Clapham Grand on Sunday March 15.

It makes sense that the increasingly loose boundaries of "white collar boxing" have moved and shifted and settled many times since the dizzy and obscene height in the nineties; back then genuine Masters of the Universe, banking and investing millionaires and billionaires, fought each other in London, New York and Shanghai. There was one show in London about 25 years ago – I think Alan Lacey promoted it – dubbed something vulgar and bold like Billions v Billions, where the tickets were 10-grand each. That was the peak of the real white-collar revolution. To be

honest, I'm not quite sure what this new version is, but I like it.

They lose four stone, get respect, fight for belts and titles and in eliminators over three rounds with bigger gloves and head guards. They are matched with each other after a four-hour sparring session that takes place at the headquarters above a row of shops at Clapham Junction. I have been to that wonderful afternoon and it resembles a packed amateur boxing club, sweaty walls, dozens skipping, three-deep at the ring, wet body outlines on the mats, bags continually swinging and a hundred boxers all eager like children with their gum shields clasped between their teeth, waiting to be told to climb through the ropes. It is mad to witness.

However, they are not amateurs. They are men of 46, women of 38,

boys of 19. They teach English as a foreign language, work as sommeliers in the finest Mayfair restaurants, they are plumbers, they do 12-hour shifts in casualty, they enforce the law at doors in pubs in Tooting that only the fearless go to. They are brave by the way, never think less of them because of their route to the ring. And, it seems to me, they are all trying to hold together something from a selection of their broken lives. It is white collar boxing for 2020 and the art is matching the men and women fairly – that is an amateur boxing trick.

The belts, the eliminators, the titles are a natural addition in a boxing world swamped with baubles of cheap gems and idiocy. They hold their belts like newborns.

Some of the younger boxers talk about taking “the boxing” forward, perhaps joining an amateur boxing club and even thinking about turning professional. That is the legitimate path, but many find the white-collar circuit late in life, possibly their 40s, most often it seems to me in their 30s and occasionally in their late 20s. Those are ages that make the transition from a keep-fit gym with a hanging bag, to the boxing ring and fighting three torrid rounds difficult.

On Sunday I sat with men that were shaking, struggling to find a way to control their fear on the day. I sat with one kid who looked about 10 and was soon dubbed Harry Potter. Others were calm, this was not their first rodeo. “I just love to fight, I love it,” Big Michael told me. “You get nicked for doing this on the street.” He was talking from experience and he was not the only one.

And then there was Bridget. Bridget Irene Boyle, just 17 and at the conference with Peter McDonagh, the former fighter. “Watch this,” McDonagh told me and showed me a clip of Bridget swarming all over a much taller girl. “She can really fight.”

She is known as the Iron Lady, but she is still a girl. She has so far fought under cage, K-1, Muay Thai and wrestling rules. But, it is the boxing she loves. “When I was six and seven I would watch Jack Dempsey with my dad and that was it – I just wanted to be a boxer, a world champion and change my life forever. I can do it, I know I can do it. I begged him to take me to a boxing gym

and he told me that I would regret it and that it would take over my life – it has, but I don’t regret it.” Bridget fights at the Grand with McDonagh taking care of her and she probably needs a wise, careful head like McDonagh to watch over her. McDonagh, by the way, is in talks with book and movie people to deliver his life story.

“When I walk to the ring I’m thinking of my kids and I’m thinking what it would be like to tell them that I lost – that motivates me,” said Michael. “I took up boxing when I was pregnant with my second child,” said Tess, who works as a nurse. “I have a new four-week old baby and I’m doing this for him.” “My eldest

is 22 and she loves me boxing.” It went on like that.

There was also a lot of darkness, bad years on bad streets before they changed. The boxing arch was their route out. They will never get an invite to Sheffield with the GB squad, but that is not why they fight. They fight because it helps them survive and that is boxing’s greatest magic trick.

‘I JUST WANTED TO BE A BOXER, A WORLD CHAMPION AND CHANGE MY LIFE FOREVER’



THE RIGHT DECISION

Deontay Wilder retaining the services of Mark Breland shines a good light on the former WBC heavyweight champion, writes George Gigney

WEBSITES

IT'S old news by now, but it's still worth mentioning Deontay Wilder's baffling excuse for his punishing loss to Tyson Fury; the costume he wore to the ring. The former champ claimed to Kevin Iole of Yahoo Sports that the 40-pound piece of kit sapped all his energy as he walked to the ring wearing it, leaving him a lamb to the slaughter.

In the ring immediately after the right, Wilder was mainly magnanimous in defeat, but just a few days later he was spouting this drivel. It also throws into contrast Anthony Joshua's admirable behaviour after his loss to Andy Ruiz last year - no excuses, besides mention of health concerns that he refused to detail.

Unsurprisingly, he was berated everywhere online and things only got worse when clips from old interviews resurfaced showing Wilder claiming he regularly trains wearing a 45-pound weighted vest and also berating other fighters for making excuses after losing. The internet remains undefeated.

Thankfully, Wilder showed more sense when he followed up this news with confirmation that Mark Breland will remain a part of his team after throwing in the towel against Fury. There had been rumblings that Wilder was going to fire Breland for his act of compassion, but Deontay has wisely kept the veteran trainer on board. It would've been a worrying sign if he had fired Breland, particularly as it would leave Jay Deas in charge after he claimed he wouldn't have thrown the towel in, despite the shellacking Wilder was receiving.

Barney Ronay - an excellent writer - cast his eye on Fury's new cult of personality for *The Guardian*, exploring the question of just how Fury, according

to Ronay, became "the most popular English sports person" right now, given that just a few years ago he was Public Enemy Number One. There's plenty I disagree with in the piece - particularly the notion that Fury could be a "Muhammad Ali figure for angry white bald men" - but it's an interesting exploration into the continuing mystery of Fury and his incredible career.

In the same vein, *VICE* ran an article about Eddie Hearn, focusing on why - according to the writer - he is more famous than a lot of the boxers he promotes. Strangely, they attribute a lot of this fame to the notorious 'NoContextHearn' Twitter parody account which, while funny and very popular, came along well after Hearn had

established himself as somewhat of a celebrity. More fittingly, the writer picks up on how Hearn has embraced the digital age; "He is both the first YouTube promoter and the first promoter of YouTubers," they write.

The New York Times ran a lengthy piece titled "How New York City Lost Boxing," which ended

up being a slightly misleading headline. The article is centred around fledgling heavyweight Pryce Taylor, who recently missed out on a place at the upcoming Olympic Games, and his struggle to successfully turn over.

The writer rightfully picks up on huge rent prices in the city as a key reason for so many boxing clubs disappearing, but also lays a lot of the blame at new boutique boxing gyms aimed at keep-fitters. OK, yes, these expensive gyms certainly help to push out traditional boxing clubs, but they're not the main reason. Beside the rents, there's also the problem that there are far fewer professional cards in New York nowadays after the state athletic commission ramped up the costs of getting insured.

'HE COULD BE A MUHAMMAD ALI FIGURE FOR ANGRY WHITE BALD MEN'

Photo: JOHN GURZINSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



The article also picks up on the sad reality that a lot of free boxing programs for youths in the city have shut down because of rising costs. So many boxing greats began their journey in the sport by simply walking into their local gym to try it out - there are now fewer places than ever in New York for young people to do so.

In Northern Ireland, Carl Frampton and Paddy Barnes are working to help prisoners aged between 18 and 21 to discipline and rehabilitate themselves through boxing in a new initiative at Hydebank Wood College. The programme is the first of its kind in the UK and, should it become successful, would further prove the benefit boxing can have on society. Kudos as well to



Frampton and Barnes for giving up their time for such a worthy cause.

PODCASTS

After announcing their new training partnership, Josh Taylor and Ben Davison sat down with Frampton and Chris Lloyd for the TKO with Carl Frampton podcast. Taylor explains that Davison's work with Billy Joe Saunders was part of the reason he decided to team up with him after splitting with Shane McGuigan.

Davison, inevitably, was asked about Fury's win over Wilder and told of how he gave Tyson time to decompress after the win before contacting him, knowing how hectic things can be. He also spoke

to those around Tyson first, asking them how he was doing, given how badly he spiralled after his win over Wladimir Klitschko. Those are the signs of a good friend and an emotionally intelligent man - a rare thing in boxing.

YOUTUBE

Eddy Reynoso - trainer of Canelo Alvarez - told Ellie Sechback that his charge has signed to fight WBO super-middleweight champion Saunders in May. This came as a surprise to many, as WBA champion Callum Smith appeared to have emerged as frontrunner to get the Canelo fight. However, speaking to IFL, Hearn quickly refuted that a deal was

officially "done" although had also been told by Reynoso that Saunders is next.

Several reports have claimed that Wilder-Fury II garnered roughly 800,000 pay-per-view buys in America - a figure short of their broadcast hopes. If those reports are accurate, it will be interesting to see what approach is taken for the trilogy fight which, given Fury's dominance in the rematch, surely won't sell as well. Viable concerns about the cost of PPV in the USA have since been raised.

However, Bob Arum - speaking to Ringside73 - claims that the official US PPV figures haven't been finalised, and also stated that the fight shifted 800,000 buys in the UK, a solid figure for a 4am card.

THE END:
Wilder is pulled out
of the Fury rematch

KEEPING THE FAITH

Sheldon Purdy is so confident he can win a world title he's willing to pay the world champion to fight him, writes **Matt Bozeat**

ONLY Sheldon Purdy believes Sheldon Purdy can be a world champion – and that might be enough. His manager, trainer and even his wife wondered what Purdy was doing when he splashed out £5,000 to bring Wicha Phulakhao over from Thailand to fight him in Leicester last November. Phulakhao had twice challenged for the WBA strawweight title and by contrast, Purdy went into the eight-rounder as a 34-year-old novice of five fights who hadn't boxed for 20 months.

"Ever since I started putting Sheldon on my shows, he's never fought who I wanted him to fight," sighed manager Carl Greaves. "He does it his way."

"His natural weight is around 7st 7lbs [105lbs] and he says there's nobody really around at his weight in this country, apart from Ross Murray [set to box Kyle Yousaf for the vacant British flyweight title in Barnsley on March 20].

"He knows he hasn't got long left, so he wants to get up there quickly. Nobody gave him much chance against the Thai..."

As it turned out, Purdy did know what he was doing.

"Sheldon boxed the kid's head off," is how Greaves remembers it.

Purdy won six of the eight rounds on the referee's scorecard and next is an even more ambitious – and expensive – match.

His opponent in a 10-rounder at Leicester City FC's King Power Stadium on Saturday, March 14 is Alexis Diaz, a 32-year-old from Venezuela ranked No 10 by the WBA at strawweight.

Again, it is a fight Purdy has arranged – and paid for – himself.

He says negotiations were lengthy. "His representatives don't speak any English," said Purdy, "and every time they sent me a message, I had to go on Google to find what it meant and what Spanish words I needed to reply."

"I've got to pay out for a translator when they get here."

On top of all his other costs.

"It's going to be £8,000 for his purse, flights and hotels," said Purdy.

"I'm hoping to sell more tickets than I've ever sold before and I should get some sponsors to help cover the cost."

Purdy explained his thinking.

"I could fight flyweights over here who are 10-0 and beat them," he said.

"I know I'm good enough to do that, but I won't be remembered for doing that. If I beat this guy, I will get so much more recognition. I haven't got that long left in boxing, so I might as well see how far I can get."

To pay for the Diaz fight, Purdy is working seven days a week as an electrician and should he win, he then plans to reopen e-mail negotiations with WBA champion Thammanoon Niyomtrong.

"We agreed a purse of \$25,000," he said. "I know he usually gets \$15,000 for title defences. Then other people got involved and he came back and asked for \$77,000. I went back with \$25,000 and they said: 'No.'"

"I will go back to them after the next one."

It's hard to make a case for Purdy winning his next one.

Only Niyomtrong and former IBF

'WHAT'S THE POINT IN ME FIGHTING JOURNEYMEN AT MY AGE?'

Photo: DAN KELLY



strawweight champion Jose Argumendo have beaten Diaz in his 27-fight career – and he has 17 inside-the-distance wins on his record.

Unlike most of Purdy's opponents, Diaz is, at 5ft 4 1/2ins, a similar size.

"This is another step up," said Purdy, who stands around 5ft 6ins tall.

"He's a really good fighter. My opponents are usually a lot smaller than me and I look to control the distance, but he's a similar height and reach."

"This is a completely different fight to the ones I'm used to."

"He has a high workrate and I will definitely know I've been in a fight afterwards."

"But he's beatable. I will look to make him think, make him hesitate and then the gaps will appear."

WHAT A SCALP:
Purdy gets the nod over the experienced Wicha Phulakhao



"I know he's only lost to world champions and I expect to beat him as well.

"I'm going to shock everyone."

Should that happen, Purdy, 5-1 (1), then plans to take the WBA title off Niyomtrong and target WBC champion Wanheng Menayothin (also known as Chayphon Moonsri), who's won all 54 fights and is on course to rub Floyd Mayweather Jr out of the record books if he keeps winning until he retires.

"I believe I can beat anyone at my weight and if you're a boxer, you have to believe that," Purdy said.

"The goal is a unification fight with Moonsri – and I know I can beat him.

"He's 5ft 11ins tall, has a good double jab and works the body well. But he has to get to me – and that's not going to be

easy for him.

"I'm around six inches taller and I can make it difficult for him. He would probably think it's an easy fight for him, but he won't know anything about me because there's not much footage of me on the internet."

To fill in the gaps in Purdy's story, he was born in Zimbabwe and moved with his family to Leicester when he was two years old.

He only took up boxing after watching the Floyd Mayweather-Oscar De La Hoya fight in 2007 and as an amateur with Belgrave ABC, he won the ABA Novice light-flyweight title in Class A in 2011, outpointing Sam Cantwell in the final.

Purdy turned pro with Clifton Mitchell, who was concerned he was too light. In a good publicity stunt, Mitchell organised a

sponsorship with a curry house to enable Purdy to eat his way up to 8st (112lbs).

He still lost his professional debut, to Kevin Cogan, and disappeared for four years to concentrate on work. The itch to box wouldn't go away and Purdy got his licence back after convincing the British Boxing Board of Control he wasn't returning at 30 for the wrong reasons.

"How ironic is that?" smiled Purdy.

"The Board thought I was coming back for money – and boxing has cost me thousands.

"Perhaps it's not the smartest thing to do when I have a wife [Tammy] and young son [Romeo] at home, but I believe I can compete at this level.

"Anyway, what's the point fighting journeyman at my age? I may as well go for it and see how far I can go."

Taylor will defend his titles in Scotland with a new coach, writes John Dennen

JOSH TAYLOR, the holder of the WBA and IBF super-lightweight belts, has set his next fight and decided on his new trainer.

Taylor will return to Scotland on May 2 to defend his titles at the Hydro in Glasgow against mandatory challenger **Apinun Khongsong**. BT Sport will screen in the UK and ESPN+ in the United States.

"I've seen a couple of fights of him," Taylor said of Khongsong. "He's tall, he's rangy, he looks like he punches quite hard. He's pretty wild with his punches and punches quite hard. He's definitely going to have a little bit of danger and a bit of a threat so I'm going to have to keep on my toes and focus really on this fight at hand, as always because I never really look past anybody. I'll be treating this like it's my world title challenge, like when I was going to fight [Ivan] Baranchyk."

He will have a new trainer in his corner. After a trial period he has linked up with Ben Davison, who takes over as Taylor's coach. This will be their first camp together and allow them to form a bond before going on to pursue Taylor's ambition - to take on Jose Ramirez for the undisputed super-lightweight crown.

"Every trainer's got their own methods and their own ways of training. You need a little bit of time to adjust and gel with the trainer and his methods, and the way he catches the pads or the way he trains or things like that," Josh said. "You need

a bit of time to gel and get used to each other."

"You've got to connect with the person," he continued. "So you need a little bit of time. So it wouldn't have been wise for me to do that and then go straight into the Ramirez fight, I'd like to get a fight with my new coach under my belt first."

Ramirez will defend his WBC and WBO world titles against Viktor Postol the following week, May 9, in Fresno. Victory would set Ramirez up for a fascinating undisputed clash with Taylor, if the Scot is successful in his fight.

"It'll be huge, it'll be massive this fight, the Ramirez fight, it'll be absolutely massive.

That's what I'm gearing towards, that what I'm aiming for. Become undisputed king of the division, be the first guy to do it in Britain since Ken Buchanan. That's my goal at the minute, that's what I want to do and that's what I'm gearing towards," Taylor said.

But he adds, "If I make a mistake, for example if I make a mistake or underestimate Khongsong and if it goes wrong, then that's all my plans done. So I need to focus and keep my feet on the ground and fully focus all my attention to Apinun Khongsong and make sure I win that fight before I go for the Ramirez fight and then focus on him. Then you're up to 147lbs and the big fights up there. So I need to keep myself tunnel vision focused."

Charting a course to these major bouts is why Taylor joined new promoter Top Rank. "They've got all the big names and the big draws. So I just feel it was best move for me at this time in my career. I'm happy with the decision that I made and

looking forward to seeing what the future holds," Josh said. "I just think they've got the biggest platform; ESPN. When you go to America ESPN's the biggest channel. It's got the biggest platform, the biggest audience. I just thought it was a no brainer. I can still fight in the UK, I'm not tied down to just fighting in America. I can still fight in the UK and also I've got the backing of Top Rank to get the big fights made in America as well. I think I've got the best of both worlds. I think I've done the best deal for myself as possible."

Becoming undisputed would open up a wealth of options for Taylor, whether it be further defences or moving up to

welterweight maybe for a lucrative bout with someone like Amir Khan or more appealing, one of the toughest challenges in the sport against Top Rank promoted Terence Crawford.

"Maybe a big fight at 140lbs again or you vacate and move up and go up to 147 and chase the big fights there, chase

the massive fights up there. I'm looking forward to it, looking forward to what happens. I've got the short term goal. The short term goal is to beat Khongsong, beat him, do a job, take care of business and then it's to fight Ramirez and beat him as well," he said.

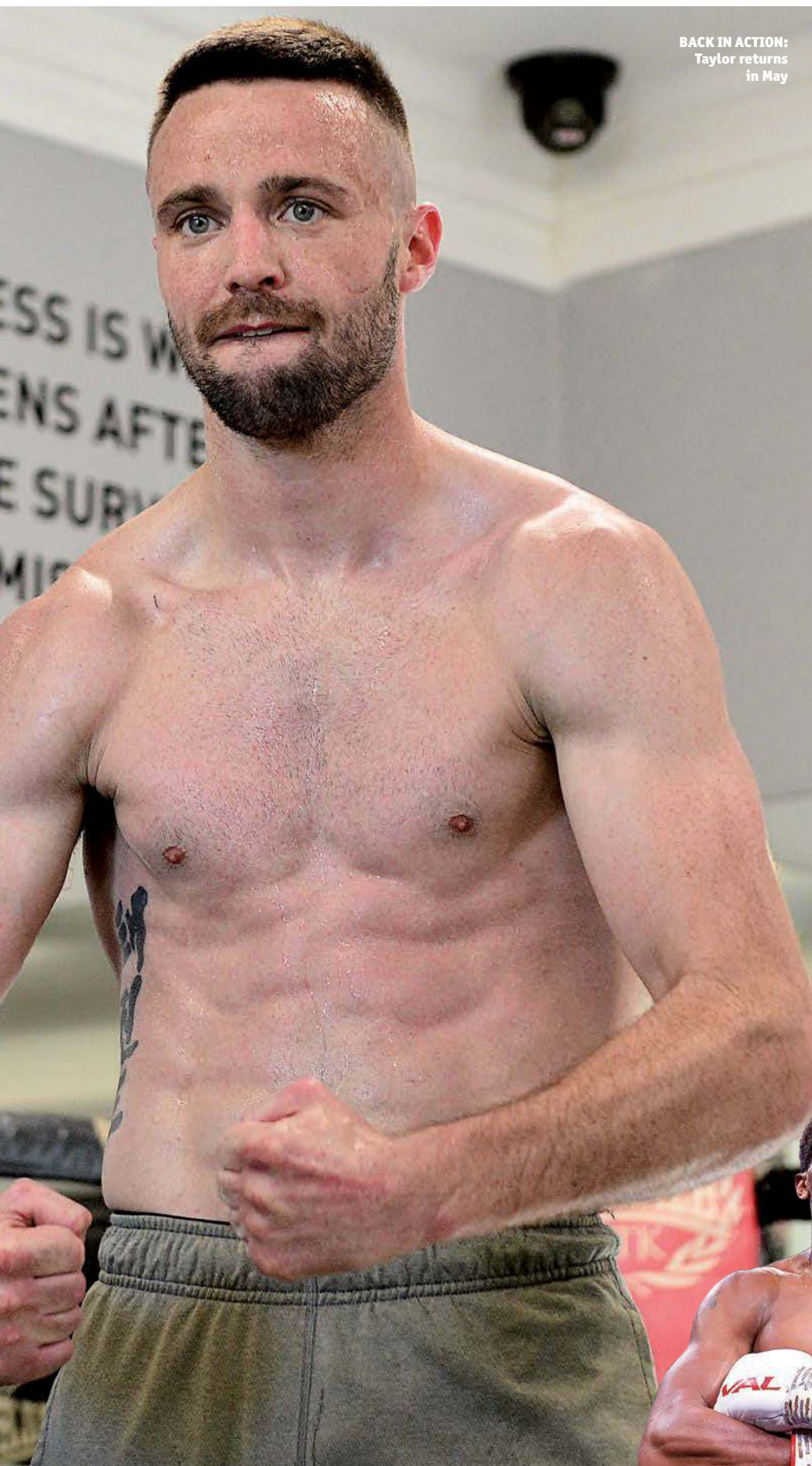
"The potential for fights from here on in now, it's mental, it's crazy, fights that potentially I could be involved in in the next couple of years. It could be amazing. So I've just got to keep my feet on the ground, keep working hard, keep focused... That's the most important thing, keeping focused and focusing on one fight at a time."

'YOU'VE GOT TO CONNECT WITH THE TRAINER, YOU NEED A BIT OF TIME'

Photo: MARK RUNNACLES/GETTY IMAGES



TAYLOR SETS NEXT FIGHT AND NEW TRAINER



BACK IN ACTION:
Taylor returns
in May

JOSHUA-PULEV SET

Wilder-Fury III in the works and
Box Office platforms exploited

AS expected, WBA, IBF and WBO heavyweight champion **Anthony Joshua** will take on **Kubrat Pulev** on June 20 at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Pulev has been the IBF mandatory since defeating Hughie Fury over 12 rounds in 2018. The Bulgarian comes with pedigree but at the age of 38 he is several years past his peak. He was stopped in five rounds by Wladimir Klitschko in 2014.

This marks 30-year-old Joshua's first outing in the UK since he halted Alexander Povetkin in September 2018. He split two bouts with Andy Ruiz Jr last year, regaining his belts in Saudi Arabia in December after being stopped by the American in a huge upset in June.

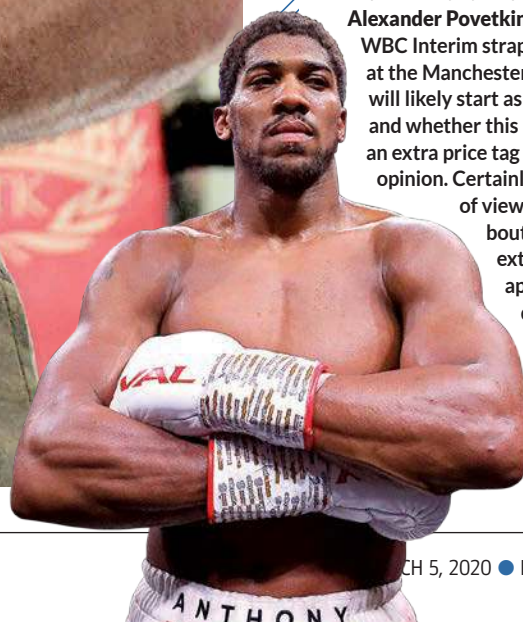
Any slim hopes that Joshua would next take on **Tyson Fury** were dashed when **Deontay Wilder** last week indicated he would trigger the rematch clause and demand a third fight. Wilder, who was defeated in seven one-sided rounds by Fury last month, is expected to get his shot at his old WBC title on June 20, again inside Las Vegas' MGM Grand.

There are three other heavyweight bouts that are scheduled for the pay-per-view treatment.

Joe Joyce and **Daniel Dubois** collide in a fascinating 12-rounder on BT Sport Box Office on April 11 at the O2 Arena.

It has been reported, though not officially confirmed, that **Oleksandr Usyk** and **Dereck Chisora** will clash at the same venue on May 23. It is rumoured to be appearing on Sky Sports Box Office. It's believed the contest will be a WBO eliminator. Another one for Sky Sports' pay-per-view platform is **Dillian Whyte's** 12-rounder with the fading 40-year-old,

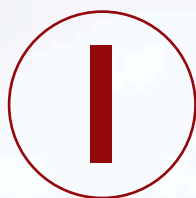
Alexander Povetkin. The needless WBC Interim strap will be on the line at the Manchester Arena. Whyte will likely start as a big favourite and whether this bout is worthy of an extra price tag is likely to split opinion. Certainly, from BN's point of view, five heavyweight bouts coming at an extra cost – however appealing the division might be at the moment – is a lot to ask boxing fans in a short period of time.



THE RISE AND FALL AND RISE OF THE GYPSY KING

TYSON
★ FURY ★
HIS LIFE AND TIMES
BOXING
NEWS

The life and times of Tyson Fury are destined to form one of boxing history's most engrossing stories. Elliot Worsell picks up the tale at the beginning and journeys through a phenomenal existence that has always been prone to stray off path



F rising from the 12th-round knockdown in their first fight was a microcosm of the Tyson Fury story so far, the "Gypsy King's" performance in his rematch with Deontay Wilder was a sample of what could follow. Not as profound as

his December 2018 resurrection, but no less awe-inspiring, the beating he put on Wilder in Las Vegas this month was both terrifying for the division and uncharacteristically clean and drama-free for Fury.

Make no mistake, what transpired on February 22 was no overnight success story. Nor should

Fury's rise – be it from a knockdown or to prominence – come as a surprise to anyone aware of his journey.

The truth is that the 31-year-old's undefeated record is relevant only to what happens in the boxing ring. Away from it he has taken his licks and losses and more than once needed to display an ability to rebound from setback. Most say it's a wonder he has become heavyweight champion of the world again after so many problems away from the ring. Some say it's a wonder he is still alive.

On the day he was born, Luke Tyson Fury was the size of a fist. His survival was touch and go but he fought to pull through and pull through he did. Two decades later, on the day he turned professional, he was all grown up, now bigger than your average. His fighting name was Tyson Fury and with a name like Tyson Fury, and a mouth like no other, it was easy to question his authenticity and presume him a gimmick. Many did.

Early on there were obstacles, things he had to

fight. As well as the pressure brought on by his name, he had to fight his age, which, being 20, was precariously young for a heavyweight, and he had to fight his size, which most believed would limit his ability to operate the way a heavyweight needs to operate. He also had to fight the chequered history of Traveller boxers and the longstanding perception that they are all talented amateurs who eventually lose discipline and hunger upon turning pro.

Essentially, though known now as the "Gypsy King", nothing was handed to Fury on the way up. Nobody anointed him. There were as many people praying for his downfall as his success and when the talk was of Fury fighting David Price, few were picking Fury to win. They preferred Price's supposedly better technique and punch power. They preferred the guy who wasn't running his mouth before learning to walk. Though both were unbeaten, only one of them was being talked about as a future heavyweight champion of the world.

And back then it was plain to see why. Price had yet to come undone, his vulnerabilities still hidden, while Fury's proclamations of greatness were undermined by facile fights against British cruiserweights and journeymen like Daniil Peretyatko and Aleksandrs Selezens.

Not just that, in his eighth pro fight Fury met John McDermott for the English heavyweight title and of the 10 rounds completed appeared to win no more than his opponent. Outboxed at times by a soft-bellied man of six foot three, the performance served only to add credence to the views of those forecasting Fury's downfall. [That said, referee Terry O'Connor, the sole scorer of the fight, saw it differently. Siding with the favourite, he awarded Fury the victory by a nonsensical score of 98-92.]

Three fights later Fury sorted any uncertainty in fine style, stopping McDermott inside nine rounds in the pair's 2010 rematch. As well as figuring out McDermott, he had figured out the key to improving from fight one to fight two, a quality he would call upon again a decade later.

Before that, more adversity. In 2011, a right ➤

AWAY FROM THE RING FURY HAS TAKEN HIS LICKS AND LOSSES AND MORE THAN ONCE NEEDED TO DISPLAY AN ABILITY TO REBOUND FROM SETBACK. IT'S A WONDER HE HAS BECOME HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD AGAIN

► hand thrown by Neven Pajkic in the second round sent Fury to the canvas and caused a swarm of Travellers to rush to ringside in the hope of exacting revenge on their friend's behalf. Thankfully, though, Fury sorted Pajkic himself, securing a stoppage in the next round and saving both his unbeaten record and a riot from breaking out.

In 2013, meanwhile, he hit the deck again, this time when fighting Steve Cunningham on his American debut. Fury saw Madison Square Garden from every angle that night, though would rather have not seen its ceiling and lighting rig in the second round. Still, as before, he rallied back with interest, overcoming additional shaky moments to stop Cunningham in the seventh. The finish was proof, some believed, of a champion's heart. A positive thing. Others, however, argued the dramatic, up-and-down nature of the fight was symptomatic of a phony destined to be found wanting the moment he stepped up his competition. Only time would tell.

Phony or not, because he kept winning Fury eventually got his shot at the WBA, IBF and WBO world heavyweight titles in 2015. His best opponent to that point was Dereck Chisora, a man he had

defeated twice, which would explain why nobody gave Fury a chance of beating Wladimir Klitschko, undefeated for nine years, in Düsseldorf, Germany. But Fury believed and that was all that mattered. In befuddling Klitschko for 12 rounds he ended a near-decade reign and somehow prised new levels of quiet from a notoriously subdued German crowd. The silence was attributed to confusion rather than disappointment.

After the fight, Fury rested on a bench in his changing room and picked at the blisters his movement had produced on the soles of his feet. Jubilation, it seemed, was counteracted by pain in much the same way hearing the congratulations of loved ones was being counteracted by a feeling of being crowded, overwhelmed. There on the bench you could see the adrenalin leave his body and the weight return to his shoulders.

The next morning, Fury spoke to the media and revealed a fear that he had peaked, that it would never get better than Düsseldorf and Klitschko. It was a slice of brutal honesty, something expected of Fury. Yet it was also a retirement hint, one ignored by all but those familiar with Fury and the traits of Traveller boxers.

Photo: ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

THE DESCENT:
Fury starts to put on weight and at times looks uncomfortable in public



Photos: PATRIK STOLLARZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES & AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES



SAVAGE BEATING:
Wilder covers up but he can't repel Fury in their rematch



GAME CHANGER:
Fury befuddles
Klitschko to
take world title
in 2015



With media duties done, Fury then disappeared, hopping in a car with his wife, Paris, to travel 140 miles to Rotterdam. More an escape than a journey home, it saved them sharing a plane with everybody else and bought them time before the demands of a world heavyweight champion started to impact a family whose comfort came from being outsiders.

Inevitably, countless interview opportunities were chucked his way in the ensuing days and weeks. All the big television chat shows. All the major US magazines. But Fury played hard to get, stressing, "I'm heavyweight champion of the world now, so my time is precious and has a price." He negotiated every interview and turned down more media engagements than he accepted, seemingly liberated by the freedom his power could secure him and sparing no thought to capitalising on the short window of opportunity plenty had assured him was quick to close. Rather than greed, I suspected the goal was simply to be left alone for a while. And it worked. Driving a hard bargain was the surest way to secure isolation.

I remember in the aftermath of that Klitschko win encountering Fury at low-key shows in Carshalton and Wembley and being struck by how uncomfortable he looked when surrounded. He was in attendance at these shows to support friends, doing a favour for then-promoter Mick Hennessy, but at no point was there any sense Fury was using these public outings to peacock, flaunt his wares or seek validation from the admiring glances and attention of others. Instead, body language suggested his inclination was to hide, to go unseen, to be a featherweight, someone of so-called normal size with a greater capacity to blend in.

It reminded me of the time I saw Nikolay Valuev part a Nuremberg shopping centre en route to a set scales ahead of his WBA heavyweight title defence against David Haye in 2009. (Back then we weren't to know Valuev, upon losing his belt, would retire for good, but it was obvious in hindsight. Enough clues were there.) That afternoon Valuev cowered as much as a man of seven foot is able to cower. Walking, he was all of six foot eleven and to get where he needed to get Valuev shuffled two feet quicker than he would in the ring the following evening. If all eyes were on him, his were on the floor.

Fury wasn't that bad, of course. In public, his smile remained as big as his upset win and he had no problem crouching for pictures. But, equally, it's true to say the giant who goaded and dethroned Klitschko before serenading his wife in a boxing ring seemed at odds with the timid Fury who, overwhelmed by people and attention, sought salvation in a ringside seat. It brought to mind this old Samuel Johnson quote: "He who makes a beast of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man." It made you wonder if Fury's gregarious personality was in fact more a coping mechanism, a mask one day destined to slip.

Sure enough, the beginning of the end arrived in the form of a bizarre press conference in Manchester, during which Fury went topless and mocked his own weight issues and limitations in front of Klitschko. It was thought to be mind games, Fury being Fury. However, those closest to him would have interpreted the performance as an insight into Fury's mind – a mind both complicated and falling apart.

Shortly after this performance came news of a Fury injury and the postponement of the fight, which confirmed these fears and provided numerous conspiracy theories. One was that ticket sales were down. Another was that Fury's training was subpar. Yet all we knew for certain was that the rematch was no longer happening, and that Tyson Fury didn't appear to be behaving the way we expect a heavyweight champion should behave.

Then things got even worse.

First, we learned Fury had failed a UK-Anti Doping [UKAD] urine test, conducted in February 2015, for elevated levels of nandrolone metabolites. Blamed on eating uncastrated wild boar, this finding cast a cloud over Fury's February 2015 victory against Christian Hammer and led to Fury accepting a backdated ban following a two-year fight with UKAD for clarity.

Sadly, during this period Fury failed another UKAD test – this one in September 2016 – for cocaine, which was attributed to the depression brought on by his injuries and the ongoing dispute with UKAD. Whatever went on in the shadows, it all amounted to a vicious cycle of bad choices and mixed messages and the only thing more elusive than Fury was the truth.

Nine months prior, Fury had shocked the boxing world and fulfilled a lifelong dream. Now he was on the brink of retirement, something he constantly threatened, gaining weight, partying with football fans at Euro 2016, and doing all he could to self-destruct in plain sight. Now he had gone from champion to 'cheat'; from troubled soul to damaged goods. If there was a road back, it was one rarely travelled.

Yet, in the end, as shocking as the demise was the eventual rise, which started with a morbidly obese Fury issuing tongue-in-cheek callouts of Deontay Wilder and Anthony Joshua, the heavyweight leaders at the time, and grew wings the night he returned to the ring in June 2018 to stop Seferi.

Seferi.

There were no titles on the line that night. They were now elsewhere. But of far greater importance was the confirmation that Fury was alive, healthy and fighting again. Better yet, by the end of that same year he had agreed to challenge Wilder, the WBC heavyweight champion, and by Christmas was heralded as something between The Undertaker and Jesus Christ. For in coming back, both from that famous knockdown and two and a half years of turmoil, Fury, 30-0-1 (21), had reinvented himself. He had graduated from misunderstood maverick to role model.

Other champions will do it differently. Some will do it properly. But few champions in heavyweight history have been both born and built to do it quite like Tyson Fury. From the name to the size to the ease with which he trades punches with heavyweights in boxing rings, he is a natural, a big man who feels never bigger than when doing the thing he not only loves to do but needs to do.

This was made abundantly clear against Wilder, a fight in which Fury, reinventing himself all over again, upgraded from role model to champion; a champion many now believe is the best heavyweight on the planet. The win landed him both a title [WBC] and a second chance – to prove it, to put things right. And this time Tyson Fury needs protecting, not from punches but himself. **BN**

“
**I'M HEAVYWEIGHT
CHAMPION OF
THE WORLD NOW
SO MY TIME IS
PRECIOUS AND IT
HAS A PRICE**”

★★★★★ 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

MASTERPIECE

Gonzalez turns back the clock to topple Yafai, writes Jack Hirsch

FRISCO, TX

FEBRUARY 29

★★★★★ MAIN EVENT

★★★★★ WHOLE SHOW



It was supposed to end with **Kal Yafai** making a successful sixth defence of his WBA super-flyweight title - then Yafai and the rest of us would

reminisce what a great fighter **Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez** had once been.

There was no reason to think it would be any different. The unbeaten Yafai was the boxer whose career was on an upswing, who needed that one name opponent on his ledger for us to start shortlisting him among the premier title-holders. And who better than Gonzalez to provide that?

Yet there was still a feeling of uncertainty when both entered the ring at The Ford Center at The Star (Matchroom promoted).

Few were picking against Birmingham's only ever world champion, despite that he was no more than a slight betting favourite. It would be a good night to put a few bob on the champion. After all, Gonzalez was past his best, trying to revive a career that had been in tatters after a brutal knockout defeat to Sisraket Rungvisai in 2017, since when he had boxed only twice since against modest opposition.

Hold back the tears and save the nostalgia for another time. In the most stirring and spectacular fight of the legendary Nicaraguan's career, he picked Yafai apart before stopping him at 29 seconds of the ninth round.

At the time of the stoppage, Gonzalez led on the scorecards of judges Rafael

Ramos by 80-71, Wilfredo Esperon 78-73, Dave Moretti 77-74.

If there was anything more surprising than the result, it was the tactics Yafai employed. Rather than box from the outside, where he is usually most comfortable, Yafai continuously waded in and tried to overpower Gonzalez in close. Even when that strategy failed to work the champion stubbornly refused to adjust.

Yafai's trainer Spencer McCracken was perplexed, pleading with him at the end of the second round to box, saying he was fighting Gonzalez's fight.

Yafai professed to having idolised Gonzalez, once even paying to see him box. Whether it was hero worship or something else, Yafai was not functioning on this night. His mouthpiece came out twice early in the fight and he stayed stationary for long periods, allowing Gonzalez to double up on left hooks to the body and uppercuts to the chin. Yafai's jab was non-existent.

Chocolatito was in a rhythm and breaking Yafai down. It was shades of Roberto Duran and Davey Moore all over again. Gonzalez was cut over the right eye from a butt, but the punches he was delivering were making Yafai's facial damage worse.

By the eighth round it looked like Yafai's confidence was totally gone. Textbook combinations from Gonzalez had Britain's longest-reigning current world champion unsettled. With about 10 seconds left in the round, a combination topped off by a right hook dropped Yafai. The bell soon rang, but the minute's rest between rounds did not matter: Yafai was a tired fighter, mentally beaten.

Gonzalez put the finishing touches on his masterpiece soon after the ninth began, landing a jab followed by a booming right to the chin. Yafai crashed hard on his back and started to pull himself up, but referee Luis Pabon had seen enough.

Chocolatito was a world champion again. Maybe he has other big fights left in him - if not, the memory of this evening is sure to endure.

Unfortunately for Yafai his run at the top might be destined to become no more than a footnote to the Chocolatito legend. But if he needs any encouragement that he can come again, he need look no further than his idol, who is living proof of that.

Jay Harris was distraught over not only losing a 12-round unanimous decision against **Julio**

Cesar Martinez in an unsuccessful bid to win the WBC flyweight title, but also how the match was scored; he felt he deserved no worse than a draw.

The man from Wales was being hard on both himself and judges Fernando Barbosa at 116-111 (same as me), Jesse Reyes 115-112 and Herb Santos' 118-109.

Laurence Cole refereed.

Harris can take some positives from his first fight outside the UK. He acquitted himself very well, proving he was of championship calibre despite failing to achieve his goal this night. Harris' problem came down to what he was up against - a superior fighter in Martinez, who is fast gaining a reputation as a champion who might turn out to be special.

"One of boxing's must-see attractions," ring announcer Dave Diamante bellowed to the crowd in introducing Mexico City's Martinez. Although Harris had some support from those who made the long trip overseas, the huge Mexican contingent drowned them out. ➤

TALKING POINT

THOUGH Yafai had held a world belt since 2016, his level of opposition was far below that of Roman Gonzalez. It highlights one of the many issues with the sanctioning bodies: There are so many of them, champions can reign without being truly tested.

IT WAS SHADES OF ROBERTO DURAN AND DAVEY MOORE ALL OVER AGAIN

LEVELS:
Yafai is punished
again by Gonzalez



LIFE IN THE OLD DOG:
Gonzalez is masterful, both
at long range and in close,
as he adds another alphabet
title to his collection

Photos: ED MULHOLLAND/MATCHROOM





RELENTLESS:
Harris is forced to
cover up while
Martinez unloads

➤ Martinez attacked from the start and never let up. His flexibility, speed and ability to unload hard blows from long range troubled Harris in the opening round, but then he settled in.

Harris moved around, boxed, all the while looking for ways to get inside and land blows that would make a difference. But Martinez's timing was superb and his power greater. From time to time an accumulation of blows from Harris would be cancelled out when Martinez landed, heavily forcing him to regroup. The challenger's blows were straight, down the slot and technically perfect at times, but Martinez's were more damaging.

Martinez landed thudding body punches throughout and cut Harris' left eye in the fourth. Harris also bled from the nose. Martinez did not escape unscathed, his cheeks being badly bruised. The pace was quick with neither willingly conceding anything to the other, but Martinez grabbed a firm foothold on the contest early in the 10th round when a left hook to the body dropped Harris. A lesser challenger might have folded, but Harris showed resolve, getting to his feet at eight and battling on even terms the rest of the way.

With his eyes swollen, the left virtually

closed, said: "I thought I nicked it. I wanted to win the title so badly, I'm gutted I didn't win it."

Harris had given everything yet came up short. Another fight on another night against a champion a little less formidable than Martinez, might very well see him achieve his dream somewhere down the line.

After defeating **Jessie Vargas** in the nominal main event by a unanimous 12-round decision, **Mikey Garcia**

emerged as the front runner in the Manny Pacquiao sweepstakes.

The reason is that the Filipino legend, the WBA's welterweight king, will probably find Garcia more beatable than fellow champions Terence Crawford and Errol Spence, who are reportedly being considered as well.

Not that Garcia is chopped liver. He might even start as a slight betting favourite against Pacquiao, but regardless of how he might do in that fight, the drubbing the Oxnard, California, man suffered against Spence last March should convince him not to take up residence in the welterweight division. He is simply not big enough to be a force there, even after having won world titles in multiple weight divisions leading up

to that.

Garcia did well to emerge with the victory in his first fight since the Spence debacle, but his vulnerabilities were exposed in the early going against Las Vegas' Vargas, a former champion whose current form suggests he is more gatekeeper than title contender. Whether Garcia himself is still an elite fighter we shall see, but what is indisputable is that he's still an elite attraction. The victory over Vargas keeps him in the mix for big things, be it Pacquiao or whatever.

Vargas fought confidently the first four rounds, jabbing and controlling the pace, but then it all turned quickly in the fifth when Garcia landed a right to the side of the head two minutes in. Vargas' equilibrium was gone and it took several rounds before it came back. During that time Garcia forged ahead, putting everything behind his blows and hurting Vargas at various intervals. Mike McCallum, Vargas' trainer, looked on the verge of stopping it in the corner after a couple of the rounds.

Garcia tired in the later stages, which enabled Vargas to come back a bit over the last two rounds, but by then the fight had gone away from him. I had it 115-112 Garcia. Judges Kathy Leonard and Steve Morrow both had it 116-111, while David Sutherland scored 114-113. Jon Schorle refereed.

Joseph Parker scored a nice victory in stopping Illinois' Shawndell **Terrell**

MIKEY GARCIA IS NOT BIG ENOUGH TO BE A FORCE AT WELTER

Winters at 2-40 of the fifth round in a scheduled 10, but it was a more competitive fight than expected.

Parker dropped Winters in the third round, but then was cut on the right eye from a left hook in the fourth.

Feeling a sense of urgency, the former WBO heavyweight champion from New Zealand came out firing in the fifth. Right hands were landing flush. Winters could not withstand the attack and was sent sprawling under the lower ring rope. He got up at the count of seven and gamely tried to convince referee Rosario Solis to allow him to continue, but it was wisely stopped.

Joel Diaz says **Israil Madrimov**, 25, is the most talented boxer he has ever worked with. Considering the men Diaz has trained, that says quite a lot.

Madrimov, with only five fights as a professional, finds himself as the WBA's mandatory challenger in the super-welterweight division. The Uzbekistan native earned that distinction by stopping 40-year-old Venezuelan **Charlie Navarro** at 2-24 of the sixth round in a scheduled 10.

Bouncing in and out, and switching often from lefty to righty, Madrimov created a web of confusion for Navarro, who never mounted an attack. He was content to survive and was on the retreat throughout.

"C'mon Israil, finish this guy," said Diaz in the corner at the end of the fifth. Madrimov duly cooperated by sending Navarro to the canvas twice, first from a left to the body, then later from a right to the chin, at which point referee Rafael Ramos called a halt.

Las Vegas prospect **Alexis Espino** was given firm resistance but did enough to win a unanimous six-round decision over Tuscaloosa's **Delvecchio Savage**. Judges' Rudy Chapa and David Iacobucci had it 59-55, Don Griffin 60-54. Neal Young refereed.

Los Angeles prospect **Diego Pacheco**, 18, continued his progress with a unanimous six-round decision over Mexico's **Oscar Riojas**. Riojas was being battered in the closing moments and on the verge of being stopped when the final bell rescued him. Judges Chapa, Iacobucci and Javier Martinez all had it 60-54. Young refereed.

Californian **Leo Ruiz Acevedo** had little problem with Oklahoma's Dennis Knifefchief, stopping him at 1-44 of the third round in a six refereed by Solis.

Jesse Rodriguez of San Antonio dominated his scheduled eight against Californian **Marco Sustaita** before referee Cole stepped in to call a halt at 1-10 of the final round. **BN**

THE VERDICT Gonzalez outclasses Yafai while Harris impresses in defeat.

Photos: ED MULHOLLAND/MATCHROOM



IN CONTROL:
Garcia's right hand
lands on Vargas



THE OLD ROUTINE:
Parker is far too
good for Winters



WATCH HIM GO:
Madrimov turns the
screw on Navarro

FULL RESULTS

Roman Gonzalez (114 1/2lbs), 49-2 (41), w rsf 9 **Khalid Yafai** (115lbs), 26-1 (15); **Julio Cesar Martinez** (111 1/2lbs), 16-1 (12), w pts 12 **Jay Harris** (111 1/2lbs), 17-1 (9); **Mikey Garcia** (146lbs), 40-1 (30), w pts 12 **Jesse Vargas** (147lbs), 29-3-2 (11); **Joseph Parker** (245 1/2lbs), 27-2 (21), w rsf 5 **Shawndell Terrell Winters** (208lbs), 13-3 (12); **Israil Madrimov** (153lbs), 5-0 (5), w rsf 6 **Charlie Navarro** (153lbs), 29-10 (22); **Jesse Rodriguez** (111lbs), 11-0 (7), w rsf 8 **Marco Sustaita** (111lbs), 12-3-1 (10); **Diego Pacheco** (167 1/2lbs), 9-0 (7), w pts 6 **Oscar Riojas** (167 1/2lbs), 21-13-1 (10); **Alexis Espino** (165lbs), 6-0 (4), w pts 6 **Delvecchio Savage** (163 1/2lbs), 3-6-1 (3); **Leo Ruiz Acevedo** (153lbs), 7-0 (5), w rsf 3 **Dennis Knifefchief** (155lbs), 12-12-1 (7).

RUTHLESS

From ringside, Roy Kelly sees Darlington's champ Corrie retain title in too-brief Ellis battle

NEWCASTLE

FEBRUARY 29

★★★☆☆ MAIN EVENT

★★★☆☆ UNDERCARD

★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

A NEW star has been born after **Ellis Corrie** took less than three minutes to retain his Northern Area welter title.

The Darlington boxer stopped challenger **Chad Ellis** in ruthless fashion at the Newcastle Eagles Community Arena, referee Ron Kearney calling a halt at 2-54 of the first round after coach Gary Barr threw in the towel.

Just 87 days after winning the vacant welterweight belt with a fourth-round hammering of Redcar's **Tom Hill**, the 22-year-old proved he is no one-hit wonder. The Steve Wraith-managed talent, a convert from the Muay Thai arena, is a man in a hurry, in every sense. Hill was beaten in only his sixth paid assignment and his seventh was even more spectacular as Corrie removed another '0'.

After a confident start behind his jab, a powerful right to Ellis's head wobbled the Spennymoor boxer with a minute to go, followed by a right-left-left salvo.

Corrie had his rival firmly in his sights and another booming right sent Ellis backwards into the ropes, which stopped him from going down.

Mr Kearney issued a standing count and had a long hard look at the 25-year-old before giving him the chance to continue. Seconds later he was rocked by another right, prompting Barr to save his man - wisely.

It completed a good night for Darlington after **Troy Williamson** extended his unbeaten run to 14 with a second-round stoppage of **Daniel Urbanski**, his sixth consecutive early.

The 28-year-old, aiming to make his mark on the super-welterweight division in 2020, certainly made his mark on the Pole, who looked horribly out of his depth as "Trojan" worked nicely to his body in the first of a scheduled six.

A right put Urbanski down in the second and while the 35-year-old made it to his feet, two left-right combinations later referee Kevin McIntyre decided he had seen enough at 0-58.

There was an almost-identical result as **Joe Laws** ended MTK's 13-fight event in

some style, referee Kearney accepting the towel from the corner of **Jan Prokes** at 0-57 of the second of six rounds.

The Czech was wilting in the first after the popular Geordie rattled in left hook after left hook to the body while shipping claret from his head. Laws may have something of a gung-ho reputation but here he was measured and accurate, landing time and again in the second, though the end was something of an anti-climax. Mr Kearney only took Prokes to his corner to have a lace tied but his trainer wanted out and the official agreed.

Thornaby's **Joe Maphosa** was equally impressive in the body-shot department against **Moises Mojica**, completing his 10th paid success with a 60-54 verdict (Kearney).

The Frank Warren super-flyweight prospect, hoping for elevation into the title scene, was too quick with his hands and feet for the Spain-based Nicaraguan.

Another Queensberry Promotions boxer, **Jeff Saunders**, continued his comeback with a 60-54 shut-out of **Edvinas Puplauskas**.

The Sedgefield welterweight controlled matters throughout against a competitive Lithuanian but the fact it was only his second contest in 28 months showed he needs to get back in the ring on a regular basis. Kevin Weaver refereed with Mr Kearney scoring.

In the night's other six-rounder, Hill made an assured return from his Northern Area defeat with a 60-54 success over

Sheffield's **Serge Ambomo** (McIntyre).

One of the fights of the night came in a four-rounder as early-finish exponent **Lee Reeves** saw his 100 per cent record ended on his UK debut by **Artur Davydenko** in a southpaw scrap.

The Ukrainian put the Dominic Ingle-trained Irishman down in the third on the way to a 38-37 result from Mr McIntyre.

The Scottish official was also in charge as Greek-Geordie **Alex Farrell** impressed in a 40-35 win over Manchester southpaw **Jan Ardon**.

Elsewhere in the other four-rounders, Middlesbrough cruiserweight **Michael Webster** inflicted considerable damage to **Andrius Ruzas**, the Hull boxer failing to come out for the second.

Also at cruiser, Hetton's **Adam Gair** was a 39-37 winner over the Czech Republic's **Jiri Svacina**, while Swallow's **Steve Robinson** took an all-English heavyweight tussle 40-37 against Swindon's **Phil Williams** (both Kearney).

Sheffield's **Qasim Hussain** looked nonplussed at his 101st defeat, Mr Kearney marking Newcastle's **Anth Ornsby** a 40-36 winner, while Geordie debutant, **Matt McCallum**, thrilled his fans with a 40-37 triumph over game Lithuanian **Vaidas Balciauskas**.

THE VERDICT After two destructive Northern Area triumphs, Corrie and trainer Peter Shepperson are ambitious to move on to reach national star status.

Ellis Corrie (146

1/2lbs), 5-1-1 (2), w rsf

1 **Chad Ellis** (147lbs),

9-1; **Jeff Saunders** (152

1/4lbs), 14-0 (8), w pts

6 **Edvinas Puplauskas**

(151lbs 6oz), 6-28 (4);

Joe Maphosa (117lbs),

10-0 (1), w pts 6 **Moises**

Mojica (117lbs), 9-10-2

(6); **Tom Hill** (153lbs

6oz), 9-1 (2), w pts 6

Serge Ambomo (151lbs

2oz), 7-19-2 (3); **Joe**

Laws (143lbs 6oz), 9-0

(5), w rsf 2 **Jan Prokes**

(145lbs 2oz), 1-13-2;

Troy Williamson (158lbs

6oz), 14-0-1 (11), w

rsf 2 **Daniel Urbanski**

(169 1/4lbs), 21-34-3

(5); **Artur Davydenko**

(144 1/2lbs), 2-5, w pts

4 **Lee Reeves** (142lbs),

5-1 (4); **Adam Gair**

(204lbs 2oz), 5-0, w pts

4 **Jiri Svacina** (206lbs

2oz), 13-41 (2); **Steve**

Robinson (244 1/2lbs),

3-0 (2), w pts 4 **Phil**

Williams (253lbs 2oz),

3-22-1 (1); **Alex Farrell**

(153 1/2lbs), 4-0 (1), w

pts 4 **Jan Ardon** (163lbs

6oz), 1-3; **Michael**

Webster (199lbs 6oz),

4-0 (2), w rtd 1 **Andrius**

Ruzas (197lbs), 1-2;

Anthony Ornsby (148lbs

6oz), 4-0, w pts 4 **Qasim**

Hussain (149lbs 6oz),

4-101-2; **Matt McCallum**

(170lbs) 1-0, w pts 4

Vaidas Balciauskas

(170lbs), 3-19 (2).



EARLY NIGHT: Corrie starts fast and overwhelms Ellis in the opening round

STILL UNBEATEN:
August celebrates
with his team



PAWEL POWER

August stops
Joseph for
Area title,
writes Gareth
Jones from
ringside

BRISTOL
FEBRUARY 29

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW
★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

PAWEL AUGUST claimed the vacant Southern Area light-heavyweight title with a dominant performance in front of his raucous supporters at the Action Indoor Sports arena.

The Polish-born 24-year-old from Taunton displayed commendable patience against **Jordan Joseph**, from Hemel Hempstead, who had come second in a previous crack at the belt against Chris Hobbs. August took his time to check out his opponent, who assisted with a rather passive demeanour in the early exchanges.

Pawel's compact, tight guard denied Joseph any openings to the head, so he opted to target the body in the third of the scheduled 10-threes, but it was the fourth before the visitor enjoyed any real success, a solid right to the jaw proving that August's defence could be breached.

Even then, Pawel, who moved to Britain in 2006 and won a GB junior gold medal five years later, ended the session with clumping hooks to Jordan's ears. By the fifth, the bearded Joseph's punches lacked

conviction, while August showed greater intent as he stepped up the pace.

The end was still somewhat unexpected. Pawel began to land to the head and Jordan, apparently incapable of either throwing back or moving off the ropes, shipped a succession of unanswered shots until referee Mark Bates leapt to the rescue after 61 seconds of the sixth.

Local celebrations were muted, however, as two of Bristol's favourite sons tasted defeat. For stylish lightweight **Tyler Davies**, stepping in to replace the injured Ryan Wheeler against dangerous **Stuart Greener**, it was a first setback in eight fights. Greener's nickname, "Little Canelo", is clearly born of his looks, but he battles with some of the two-fisted aggression of the Mexican idol. And a decent following from Devizes were in good voice as his early assaults took the smooth Davies out of his stride.

The third of this six-threes saw Tyler land a rat-a-tat combination to the face and it looked as though Stuart was tiring. But he found his second wind in the fourth and, with the home man hampered by a swollen left eye, finished the bout strongly.

When Mr Bates's 58-56 card in Greener's favour was announced, Tyler's

mentor Chris Sanigar went ballistic - but it was a reaction driven by frustration rather than logic. A rematch would be entertaining and informative.

The other home loser was **Dan Sarkozi**, who faded down the stretch to drop a 58-57 verdict to Sheffield trier **Nathan Hardy**, a man Sarkozi had outpointed across the city three years ago. Referee Jeff Hinds' decision raised a few eyebrows, with the talented local in command for the first three sessions, but Dan faded - as often before - and the hard-working Yorkshireman certainly merited a draw.

Sarkozi was making his third appearance following a stroke and heart surgery, but a lack of stamina had been a problem prior to that. For all his skill, this failing will always limit his prospects.

There were no problems in the card's third six-threes, unbeaten Bristolian Aaron Sutton whitewashing Bolton journeyman Chris Jenkinson 60-54 for Mr Hinds. The Lancastrian was never in serious discomfort - apart from the pain from a low blow in the last - but Sutton was in command throughout.

The rest of the bill comprised four-threes, with most interest focused on pink-haired teenager **Anton Haskins**, son of recently-retired former world champion Lee. The 19-year-old southpaw dropped dreadlocked **Daniel Alder** with a body blow in the opener and when the man from Thamesmead allowed himself to be driven into a neutral corner Anton took full advantage with a barrage which brought Mr Bates's intervention at 1-21 of the second.

Two Welsh members of the Sanigar stable crossed the Severn Bridge to extend 100 per cent records. Loose-limbed Risca welter **Jake Tinklin** strolled to a 40-36 win from Mr Bates over clowning **Naheem Chaudhry**, from Blackburn, but the same official gave Cardiffian **Lloyd Germain** only a 39-37 margin over Warminster's sporadically ambitious **Paul Cummings**.

Bristol's **Demmery twins** both prevailed. Ben outpointed Weston's **Dan Sabastonelli** 40-36 for Mr Hinds, whose 39-37 vote for Jake recognised the effort put in by Sheffield switch-hitter **Karim Khan**. Mr Hinds also handed a 40-36 victory to Frome's **George Pawley** over shaven-headed **Dylan Draper**, from Baintree.

THE VERDICT Mixed feelings for promoter Sanigar - a new champion in the camp, but two ticket-sellers beaten.

FULL RESULTS

Pawel August (174 1/2lbs), 11-0 (5), w rsf 6 **Jordan Joseph** (175lbs), 8-4-1 (2); **Nathan Hardy** (155lbs), 10-30-5 (3), w pts 6 **Dan Sarkozi** (154lbs), 12-3; **Stuart Greener** (144lbs), 3-4 (1), w pts 6 **Tyler Davies** (138lbs), 7-1; **Aaron Sutton** (160lbs), 10-0, w pts 6 **Chris Jenkinson** (164lbs), 11-74-3 (4); **Jake Tinklin** (148lbs), 6-0, w pts 4 **Naheem Chaudhry** (155lbs), 2-64-1 (1); **Anton Haskins** (139lbs), 2-0 (1), w rsf 2 **Daniel Alder** (141lbs), 1-8; **Lloyd Germain** (157lbs), 4-0, w pts 4 **Paul Cummings** (159lbs), 2-47; **Ben Demmery** (152lbs), 2-0, w pts 4 **Dan Sabastonelli** (157lbs), 1-3; **Jake Demmery** (157lbs), 2-0, w pts 4 **Karim Khan** (161lbs), 1-12 (1); **George Pawley** (148lbs), 2-0, w pts 4 **Dylan Draper** (151lbs), 1-43.

TO HULL AND BACK

Late loss of bill-topper proves a choker for promoters, writes **Andy Whittle** from ringside



FEBRUARY 29

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

WITH the proposed Area title clash between Bradford's Zeeshan Khan and Liverpool's **Brian Phillips** having fallen by the wayside, all that remained for Phillips at the Bonus Arena was a keep-busy six-rounder against fellow Liverpudlian **Ricky Starkey**.

It was one of half a dozen sixes that made up the VIP card - and just when it seemed Phillips was headed for a wide points win referee Andy Brook, much to the annoyance of Starkey's corner, decided he had seen enough, halting it with 38 seconds of the contest remaining.

Leeds featherweight **Jack Daniel** hadn't dropped a single point previously, but this latest outing against former English champion **Sean Davis** proved a closer affair. Jack got the nod 58-57 from Mr Latham at the finish, though I had it a point wider.

Local cruiser **Sonny Taylor** enjoyed good support once more as he put paid to the hopes of Poland's Pawel Strykowski, hurting him to the body before sending him to his knees in centre ring just moments later. The Pole didn't even try



WINNER:
Phillips celebrates his ninth victory from 10 contests

to beat the count of referee Brook and it was all over with five seconds of the penultimate round remaining.

Unbeaten Hull southpaw **Connor Coghill**, stayed busy with a 60-54 win, from third man Latham, over Reading's **Ibrar Riyaz** who is now just 12 bouts away from completing a double century.

Meanwhile, experienced local puncher **Luke Fash** did enough to earn a share of the closing session before losing out 60-55 to **Zahid Hussain** of Leeds on the card of third man Brook.

Popular Hull lightweight **Lewis Sylvester** was another to secure a count-out victory when Spanish-based Nicaraguan **Johnson Tellez** failed to beat the count of referee Latham, having been floored at the culmination of an impressive spell from the home man after 2-22 of the second round.

THE VERDICT A good day for Leeds on Humberside, with two winners at the boxing hot on the heels of a 4-0 win at the football.

FULL RESULTS

Brian Phillips (135lbs 9oz), 9-1 (3), w rsf 6 **Ricky Starkey** (132 1/2lbs), 2-18-2; **Jack Daniel** (134 1/4lbs), 7-0 (2), w pts 6 **Sean Davis** (134 1/2lbs), 14-13; **Lewis Sylvester** (137 1/2lbs), 6-0 (2), w ko 2 **Johnson Tellez** (130 1/2lbs), 10-53-5 (7); **Sonny Taylor** (202 1/2lbs), 5-0 (3), w ko 5 **Pawel Strykowski** (205 1/4lbs), 3-12; **Connor Coghill** (135lbs 7oz), 8-0, w pts 6 **Ibrar Riyaz** (145 1/2lbs), 6-178-4 (3); **Zahid Hussain** (127 1/2lbs), 16-1 (2), w pts 6 **Luke Fash** (127lbs), 2-59-2.

HOME WIN FOR FULLER

Visitor is tough but outscored, writes **Simon Euan-Smith**



FEBRUARY 29

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

LENNY FULLER topped the bill in his hometown and took a clear eight-round verdict over Spain-based Nicaraguan **Berman Sanchez** at Maidstone Leisure Centre.

Referee Lee Every (officiating throughout) scored it 80-73, which summed up Fuller's dominance.

Fuller found the range quickly, and a left-right to the head sent Sanchez

back in the first. Sanchez rallied, hit back when he could, and was warned twice for headwork.

Fuller also was warned, in the sixth, for grabbing his opponent round the back of the head - and by the end of this session there was a swelling under Sanchez' left eye and a smaller one below Fuller's right. A left hook shook Sanchez in the seventh but he fought back spiritedly in the last.

Chris Davies (Richmond) took a 59-56 verdict over in six against another Spaniard, **Nathan Junor** (based in Derby). Davies ploughed forward constantly. Junor tried to use his height and reach advantages, and probably won the third - but generally he couldn't keep Davies off.

Six four-rounders completed this

Joe Elfidh promotion for Boxing Connected. Chatham's **Grant Dennis** beat **Jordan Grannum** (Islington) by 40-36. Dennis repeatedly beat his man to the punch with both hands.

Brooklyn Tilley (Rainham) beat Langold's **Luke Middleton** by 39-37. Though there was only a 1lb difference in the weights, Middleton looked a lot bigger - but he couldn't keep Tilley off, and Tilley repeatedly got close to have Middleton guarding a swelling under the left eye.

Martin Hillman (Orpington) picked his punches effectively and scored a 39-37 win over Bradford's **Jake Pollard**.

THE VERDICT Visitors win only three rounds out of 38.

FULL RESULTS

Lenny Fuller (144lbs 2oz), 10-1 (1), w pts 8 **Berman Sanchez** (147 1/4lbs), 29-13-3 (21); **Chris Davies** (173lbs), 14-0 (1), w pts 6 **Nathan Junor** (172lbs), 1-8-1; **Kieran Spice** (172lbs), 1-0, w pts 4 (40-36) **JJ Smith** (175lbs), 0-3; **Paul Brown** (173lbs), 5-0, w pts 4 (40-36) **Andy Bishop** (175lbs), 0-13; **Martin Hillman** (128lbs), 14-6 (2), w pts 4 **Jake Pollard** (126lbs), 0-18; **Grant Dennis** (158lbs), 15-2 (3), w pts 4 **Jordan Grannum** (159lbs), 5-70-2; **Charlie Shane** (165lbs), 9-0, w pts 4 (40-37) **Gianni Antoh** (162lbs), 1-14; **Brooklyn Tilley** (144lbs), 2-0, w pts 4 **Luke Middleton** (145lbs), 2-10.

ON THE BALL

Nick hammers Godor in one round to stay unbeaten in 12th outing

⊕ LIVERPOOL

FEBRUARY 28

NICK BALL enhanced his unblemished record with an inside-the-distance win at the Grand Central Hall. The Liverpool youngster took on Bratislava's **Ivan Godor** over six rounds atop a Black Flash Promotions bill, which was promoted in association with Queensberry Promotions. Referee Jamie Kirkpatrick accepted the retirement from the blue corner at the end of the first round.

James Metcalf got back in the ring after hand surgery and earned a first-round stoppage. The current custodian of the Commonwealth super-welterweight title took less than a minute to get rid of **Jan Balog**. The Czech import went over from a left hand and was deemed in no position to continue by referee Mark Lyson after just 32 seconds.

Carly Skelly is still unbeaten after outpointing **Claudia Ferenczi**, from Bratislava, by 40-36 on Steve Gray's card.

Gray was also in the middle for the imperious **James Heneghan's** shut-out win (40-36) over Manchester's **Scott Williams** and **Connor Butler's** 39-37 decision over Evesham's **Brett Fidoe**.

Brad Strand got the better of Oldham's **Taka Bembere** (40-36) on Kirkpatrick's card and the same official gave **Jack McKinlay** a 39-38 verdict against Tottenham-based **Michael Likalu**.

Andrew Cain got a first-round stoppage over Spanish-based Nicaraguan **Rafael Castillo** after 2-33 on Gray's card, while **Karl Tierney Jr** was awarded his second pro win by Lyson, outpointing Ukraine's **Ivan Bezverkhyy** 40-34 after a knockdown and a point deduction for holding.

FULL RESULTS

Nick Ball (135 1/2lbs), 12-0 (6), w rtd 1 **Ivan Godor** (133lbs), 20-73-4 (6); **James Metcalf** (154 3/4lbs), 21-0 (13), w rsf 1 **Jan Balog** (158 1/2lbs), 15-50-1 (8); **Carly Skelly** (115lbs 6oz), 3-0, w pts 4 **Claudia Ferenczi** (112lbs 10oz), 20-75-8 (10); **James Heneghan** (165 1/2lbs), 4-0, w pts 4 **Scott Williams** (167lbs 6oz), 0-5; **Connor Butler** (120 1/2lbs), 4-0-1 (1), w pts 4 **Brett Fidoe** (123lbs), 13-60-5 (6); **Brad Strand** (125lbs), 3-0 (1), w pts 4 **Taka Bembere** (132lbs 6oz), 1-16 (1); **Jack McKinlay** (147lbs), 2-0, w pts 4 **Michael Likalu** (145 3/4lbs), 0-2; **Andrew Cain** (129lbs 2oz), 5-0 (5), w rsf 1 **Rafael Castillo** (130 1/2lbs), 14-58-3 (6); **Karl Tierney Jr** (309 1/2lbs), 2-0 (1), w pts 4 **Ivan Bezverkhyy** (217lbs 2oz), 0-4; **Jonathan Walsh** (139lbs), 4-0 (1), w pts 4 **Chris Adaway** (141 1/2lbs), 10-65-4 (1); **Junior Thompson** (157 1/2lbs), 2-0 (1), w pts 4 **Kristaps Zulgis** (157lbs 6oz), 5-15-3 (2); **Harry Woods** (167lbs), 4-0, w pts 4 **Kevin McCauley** (150lbs 9oz), 15-205-12; **Michael Hedges** (139lbs), 2-0-1, drew 4 **Lee Connelly** (138lbs 6oz), 7-54-5.

HOT HARRY!

Limburn moves to six unbeaten in crowd-pleaser, writes Will Hale

⊕ BOURNEMOUTH

FEBRUARY 29

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

EASTLEIGH'S **Harry Limburn** took a 60-55 verdict over Telford's **Dean Jones** on Lee Cook's card after a high-paced six-threes headliner on the Bendall's Boxing promotions card at the O2 Academy. Limburn came forward and was aggressive throughout. He forced Jones on the back foot and banged him with hard right hands downstairs and hooks to the head from close range. Jones exploited Harry's slight over-eagerness to drag him into 50/50 exchanges over the last two sessions.

Totton's **Jimmy Cooper** put on a lovely display of slick boxing as he took a clear 40-37 four-threes win over Birmingham's **Daryl Pearce** on Cook's tally.

Cooper has excellent footwork and uses both distance and defensive head movement to slip shots. Pearce was game and aggressive but often found himself hitting fresh air and walking onto counters. Only when Cooper became overconfident in the last did Pearce register any success.

Basingstoke's **Bryce Goodridge** shut out Irlam's durable **Ryan Hibbert** over four-threes on Chas Coakley's scoresheet. Bryce punished Hibbert for not moving his head as he connected cleanly and frequently with jabs, hooks and right hands. Goodridge exploited his height to get leverage on well-timed uppercuts in close.

In another four-threes shutout officiated by Coakley, Portsmouth's hard-punching southpaw **Joseph Butler** dominated Worcester's tough **Michael Mooney**. Butler's combinations were powerful, educated and dangerous, and Mooney needed all his experience to last the course.

Basingstoke's **Jacob Gabriel** also took every session of a four-threes against Brierley Hill's **MJ Hall** on Cook's card. Jacob used a cross-arm defence and tucked in behind the shoulder to then catch Hall with straight counters and bodywork around the side of the guard.

FULL RESULTS

Harry Limburn (140lbs), 6-0, w pts 6 **Dean Jones** (137lbs), 1-26; **Jimmy Cooper** (143lbs), 9-1-1 (1), w pts 4 **Daryl Pearce** (143lbs), 1-10; **Bryce Goodridge** (176lbs), 4-0 w pts 4 **Ryan Hibbert** (178lbs), 0-7; **Joseph Butler** (139lbs), 3-0 w pts 4 **Michael Mooney** (140lbs), 9-74-2 (3); **Jacob Gabriel** (145lbs), 2-0, w pts 4 **MJ Hall** (145lbs), 2-53-2; **Fynntie Judd** (151lbs), 1-0, w pts 4 **Dale Arrowsmith** (154lbs), 2-36-1 (1); **Mace Ruegg** (135lbs), 1-0, w pts 4 **Michael Horabin** (136bs), 2-17.

BARIKI BEATEN

Walsh in sparkling form once more

⊕ NORWICH

FEBRUARY 28

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

HAVING returned to the squared circle at as recently as December, when he needed just 125 seconds to bank his 12th straight inside the distance victory, Cromer's always-popular **Michael Walsh** returned at The Halls.

Could Tanzanian puncher **Amani Bariki**, on his first boxing excursion away from his home country, succeed where 12 others had come unstuck? Might he spring a huge upset and make it an unlucky 13th for Michael, who has titles in his sights once more?

The answer to both questions, somewhat unsurprisingly, was no, the African making it through just as far as the early stages of the second of a scheduled eight before being sent sprawling by a hammer of a right. Just 41 seconds of the round had elapsed.

Norwich welter **Liam Goddard** and Wisbech super-welter **Joe Steed** both successfully banked the seventh wins of their respective careers, Liam beating Gerona-based Nicaraguan **Josue Bendana** 60-54 and Joe, whose victories had all come via the long route, outscoring Thornton Heath's **Richard Samuels** 40-36.

Lincoln southpaw **Sergio Gugliotta** is still looking for his first paid victory after going down 40-36 to Briston's **Connor Vian**, who has a Southern Area title shot beckoning, while in Romanian-born late sub **Gabriella Mezei** Spalding novice Stevi-Ann Levy faced a much tougher task than was initially the case. It was close throughout before Stevi-Ann finally edged home 39-38, a great result for her. There was a win too for 21 year-old local lightweight **Owen Blunden** in the opening bout of the evening against another Nicaraguan **Jose Aguilar**. The smart money was on Blunden taking it 40-36 and referee-for-the-night Lee Cook's card at the finish of a sometimes messy encounter didn't disappoint.

March-based African **Bernardo Marime**, victorious here three months earlier, secured victory number two, turning up the heat late en route to a shut-out four-round success over Canning Town southpaw **Lee Hallett**.

FULL RESULTS

Michael Walsh (127lbs), 13-0 (13), w ko 2 **Amani Bariki** (127lbs), 10-2-2 (5); **Joe Steed** (155lbs), 7-0, w pts 4 **Richard Samuels** (153lbs), 1-12; **Liam Goddard** (145lbs), 7-0 (1), w pts 6 **Josue Bendana** (141lbs), 10-21-4 (6); **Owen Blunden** (135lbs), 5-0 (1), w pts 4 **Jose Aguilar** (134lbs), 16-75-5 (6); **Connor Vian** (144bs), 12-2-1 (1), w pts 4 **Sergio Gugliotta** (147lbs), 0-6; **Bernardo Marime** (146lbs), 2-0, w pts 4 **Lee Hallett** (146lbs), 1-30; **Stevi-Ann Levy** (130lbs), 2-0, w pts 4 **Gabriella Mezei** (131lbs), 10-24-5 (3).

YOUNG VETERAN:
Quigg is aware that
time is ticking on
his career

Photos: MARK ROBINSON/
MATCHROOM

THE FIGHTING MAN

When Scott Quigg heard his
nose go crunch all he wanted
to do was stay in the pocket
and have a shootout with the
man who had broken it,
writes Terry Dooley



CHANGES to our lifestyles plus gentrification in many major cities means that the old-fashioned greasy spoon is starting to go the way of the local pub. I'm talking about those proper places where they serve fried liver and the menu has been the same for decades rather than the deli-style facsimiles that serve a deconstructed full English that has been garnished with fennel, and is then presented on a spade.

It is a totally different kettle of fish when you visit the market towns that surround Manchester, though. You can barely move around Bury Market without stumbling across a proper café. When I arranged to meet Scott Quigg, 35-2-2 (26), at The Bury Cafe the place was heaving.

As I drank my first and so far only coffee of 2020 — one of those milky ones with a skin on top that they used to serve you in school — and waited for him to arrive, I realised that the smell of frying food was floating over to where I was sat. Then I realised it probably wasn't the best place to meet a fighter who has to make weight.

"It doesn't bother me," said the former WBA super-bantamweight title-holder as he sat down for a catch-up with *Boxing News*. Bury born and bred, the 31-year-old knows the place well, as well as knowing what places like this mean to the community. "Cafes like this are what the people like and it keeps the centre going," he said. "This place is hammered on a Saturday and even during the week."

If you head out the of the café you can get to the town hall within

minutes, the Castle Leisure Centre is also nearby, and on the way in I passed the school that Quigg left at the tender age of 15 with the consent of his parents in order to pursue his boxing career. That decision raised a few eyebrows yet for Quigg it was a life-changing moment.

It meant that he missed out on the rites of passage that take place when you leave school: that first summer of total freedom, drinks in either the park or the pub — if you looked old enough — and the transition to nights on the town. For Quigg, though, it was a case of making long-term gains as it removed temptation from his path and meant he could become an early full-time student of the university of the gym.

Despite a lack of formal schooling, Quigg had the nous to manage his own career from an early stage. He showed his negotiating skills when working to overturn a ban on boxing in Bury that was put in place as a bemusing reaction to Mike Tyson biting Evander Holyfield's ear back in 1997. The sanction was a barrier to Quigg and that is the argument he made when taking his fight for the right to box at home to Bury's councillors.

He won the right to fight at home then beat Andrey Kostin (rsf 1), Santiago Allione (ko 3) and Franklin Varela (rsf 7) at the Castle Leisure Centre between 2010 and 2011.

"Me against Kostin was the first fight here for many years," he recalled. "That is probably up there with the top three nights of my career. It was a big thing, a big occasion, and it makes me proud."

Sadly, it is unlikely to happen again, he had hankered after a fight at Bury FC's Gigg Lane only to see those hopes go up in flames when the club was expelled from the league last year due to haphazard management that led to the inability to field a team.

"Gigg Lane would have been ideal," he said. "Unfortunately, the football club is ➤



IF YOU DECIDE TO CARRY ON FIGHTING ONCE YOU HAVE BROKEN YOUR JAW OR BROKEN YOUR NOSE YOU HAVE TO STICK BY THAT DECISION"



I DON'T CARE ABOUT THESE PEOPLE WHO GIVE OUT ALL THIS STICK ONLINE. THEY HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE WHAT I TRIED TO DO TO MAKE WEIGHT"

➤ gone now. The loss of the team was a massive loss to Bury. It gave the town a boost when matches were on. You'd see how busy and how much life there was about town on match days. There are people who lost jobs. People have lost their enjoyment of following the team at the weekend. They work all week and looked forward to that. We had core fans who have now had to miss out. The bad decisions were made from owners who aren't from Bury and don't really care about the club — it was a business to them."

Getting back to the business of boxing, the last time we sat down Quigg was preparing for a WBO featherweight title shot against Oscar Valdez. He had talked about preparation, professionalism, and planning, then he missed out on making the weight by three pounds, forfeiting his right to fight for the title. It was an opening in his defence that some critics had been looking to exploit for years, with claims of ill-discipline or gamesmanship bandied about.

In mitigation, Quigg had been carrying an injury to his foot going into the fight, he told me that every effort had been made to make the weight and that he couldn't give a damn what people had to say.

"Those last three pounds just wouldn't shift," he revealed. "I don't care about these people who give out all this stick online. They haven't got a clue what I tried to do to make the weight. It got to the point where I'd trained for four weeks with a fractured foot and I wasn't going to kill myself to make the weight."

"I wasn't going to put my health at risk by draining myself, especially as I was already hampered by my foot. I didn't put on a load of weight overnight, either, so it wasn't an advantage. You can't do it if your body has already gone into shutdown. The intensity of the roadwork and the training wasn't the same because of the foot. If you have never stepped into that ring or done what a boxer has to do then you can't really understand it. People are entitled to an opinion, but too many of them take it too far. It would infuriate me when I was younger, I'd want to find them so they could say it all to my face, now I just find it irrelevant. I box because I love it, the opinions of others who don't really don't matter."

The fight was brutal during the early going. Quigg's nose was broken and he picked up a cut to his left eyebrow, Valdez had suffered a broken jaw in the

ON THE NOSE:
Quigg shows off his injuries as he embraces Valdez
Photo: MIKEY WILLIAMS/
TOP RANK

fourth and lost a few teeth. Ironically, Quigg believes that the damage he inflicted on the titlist in that initial to and fro battle went against him.

"I enjoyed the fight," admitted Quigg. "I just thought 'B****d' when I heard the nose crunch. I didn't have any breathing problems with it because it was already bent so if anything it went back the other way a bit. The worst thing about it all was that his jaw went so he went on his bike. I'd have fancied my chances if it had stayed a shootout."

Some boxers make the decision to duck out of a fight like that once the physical damage starts to become too much. Victor Ortiz infamously pulled himself out when fighting Joselito Lopez because his jaw had been broken during an exchange in round nine. Quigg said that he can understand why a fighter might make that decision, he also told me that he understands why people often never forgive a 'quitter'.

"It is probably the smart decision to make when people do that," he said. "Boxing has got no friends, if you carry on too long it will get to you. The critics we get and the stick that we get when someone pulls themselves out is from people who probably wouldn't even get in the ring in the first place. It is my instinct and mentality to carry on in a fight like that — everyone has to make their own choice. Some fighters make a choice that is right for them."

"Instinct makes you either carry on or think: 'S**t, my jaw is broken or my nose has gone, do I carry on?' If you decide to carry on you have to stick by that decision and the plan, if you don't you could get hurt even more. If you are going to carry on you need to have control of your mind, because your mind is going to give signals that say 'I can't carry on', so you have to keep control of your mind, keep your head, and cope under a crisis like that."

Quigg posted a second-round comeback win against Mario Briones up at super-featherweight in October 2018 yet a bad bicep tear while preparing for a fight against Jayson Velez in April derailed his plans for 2019. A planned outing against his next

CHANGING FACE

Quigg not impressed by Carroll's fighting talk

"HE is a d**k," spat Quigg when Jono Carroll's name came up. "After the Kiko Martinez fight he was asking for photos with me. I had nothing against him until there was talk of me fighting Tevin Farmer and he said: 'Who the f**k is Quigg — I'll smash him'. I thought: 'Where did that come from?' He comes up with that much garbage you just expect it from him. My shutters were already down at the face-to-face. People get wound up, I've been there before. Talk as much s***e as you want, just make sure you get into that ring. He isn't going to produce on the night — I won't allow it."

The fight's relatively short turnover meant that getting a Visa to train in LA with Freddie Roach was not practical, so Quigg teamed up with Joe Gallagher again as the pair remained on good terms when parting company in 2017.

"I didn't want to be rushing about," he revealed. "I wanted to do it properly so put the call through to Joe. We parted ways amicably so there was no issue there. Joe knows me, I know him, and together we will get this job done with no problems."



**I THREW A LEFT HOOK
AND I JUST FELT A RIP
DOWN MY ARM. MY
BICEP WAS HANGING
ON BY A THREAD**

opponent Jono Carroll [see sidebar above] on the undercard of Anthony Joshua's rematch

with Andy Ruiz Jr in December was spiked due to concerns that it could flare up again.

"I was sparring, I threw a left hook and I just felt a rip down my arm," he said. "It just didn't feel right. The x-ray revealed that I had ripped my bicep, it was literally hanging on by a thread,

so it was a 95 per cent tear and I had ripped the tendon on my elbow — it was a double whammy.

"I went out to camp for the Saudi show and it didn't go well. I held off sparring for as long as I could and sparred with one hand. The first five spars went well, the movement was coming, and then when the time came to let the left go I felt a little niggles in it. I got it checked and there was a tear again, but not off the bone, so it was a risk. I decided that I needed to prepare properly so took the surgeon's advice to pull out."

Quigg once told me that no one beats Father Time. Rather than seeing the injuries as a sign that he is coming towards the end he believes that he has learned and adapted. He argued that the injuries have prevented us from bearing witness to Quigg Mk. 2.0 and we will see the best of him against Carroll.

"It is just one those things," he answered when the question of age being more than just a number was put to him. "Maybe there are more miles on the clock yet I'm punching with these things [he lifted his fists] pretty much all the time. Boxing has an impact on your body so there is nothing that you can do about that. I am at physio three days a week because prevention is better than a cure."

"The enjoyment would have to go," he added when asked what would prompt the word 'retirement' to pop into his head. "If my body was shutting down you wouldn't be able to do what you do in training and enjoy it, so if that stops you know it is time to pack it in. My body is fine, the injuries are part of the sport. I still enjoy what I do and can perform. I'm still doing things better than ever and improving as a fighter." **BN**



PREVIEWS

Previewing the best
upcoming fights
around the world

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

The star ratings indicate how well the writer believes the fighters match up, the fight(s)' contextual significance, and how good the fight(s) will be

Photos: MARK ROBINSON/MATCHROOM



ALL SMILES:
But the build-up to
Quigg [left] versus Carroll
has been far from cordial

Quigg
returns
to the UK,
where Carroll
awaits him,
writes
Paul
Wheeler

BACK HOME

★★★★★ MAIN EVENT

★★★★★ UNDERCARD

IT has been just over four years since **Scott Quigg** last had a world title wrapped around his waist. Since dropping his WBA

super-bantamweight crown to Carl Frampton on a split verdict in their unification clash, the Bury boxer has only had five fights. He won the first three, all at featherweight, but then missed weight prior to his scheduled WBO 126lb title tilt against Oscar Valdez two years ago. Despite the belt no longer being up for grabs for Quigg, the bout still went ahead.

Quigg did not end up winning the contest against Valdez, but he did regain the respect of those who had chastised him for coming in overweight. Valdez triumphed unanimously on the scorecards, yet Quigg performed valiantly during a brutal, bloody affair. Valdez finished up with a broken jaw (as Quigg did against Frampton) and missing tooth, while Scott suffered a broken nose and a cut to his left eyebrow.

After weighing in closer to super-featherweight than featherweight for his war with Valdez, Quigg decided that an official move up to 130lbs was his best option. Last time out in October 2018, he stopped the outgunned Mario Briones in two rounds. He was due to appear on the undercard of the Andy Ruiz Jr-Anthony Joshua rematch three months

ago, but an injured arm ruled him out.

Quigg's opponent in Saudi Arabia that night was set to be Irish southpaw **Jono Carroll**. Now that the injury has healed, the two are able to get it on at the second time of asking. The Manchester Arena will host their 12-rounder this Saturday (March 7), live on Sky Sports Action/Main Event (UK) and DAZN (US).

For Quigg, it really is a case of returning home. Not only will this be his first appearance at Manchester Arena – a familiar local stamping ground – since December 2016, but it will also mark a reunion with his ex-coach, Joe Gallagher, whom he left to link up with Hall of Fame trainer Freddie Roach in Los Angeles in early 2017.

"It's great to be back fighting at Manchester Arena and for my supporters

to be able to see me on UK soil," said Quigg. "It's a perfect platform for me to launch my career forward again and get back in the mix for a world title shot."

"This year is going to be a very successful one for me. I know that I've still got it. All the doubters will see that there's still plenty left in the tank. I'm looking forward to getting in there and taking Carroll apart. He's going to come and try to have a go but he'll get demolished. I'll take him out, get my arm raised and move on. It's as simple as that."

Frequent barbs have been exchanged between the fighters in the lead-up to their match, much in the same way that Carroll engaged in fighting talk with Tevin Farmer before challenging him for the IBF super-featherweight strap 12 months ago. Although the rugged Dubliner was unanimously outscored by the slick-boxing Farmer, his reputation was enhanced in defeat.

"My loss to Farmer woke me up," Carroll reflected. "I want to gain as much experience as possible and I welcome failure. I like it when I fail because it means I'm pushing myself hard enough. Anything that will push me mentally and physically I'm up for. It keeps me focused, disciplined and gives me guidance."

I want to be the best I can possibly be. I know that I'm at world level now. I've been working hard to go and smash Quigg up."

Carroll's setback against Farmer was sandwiched by a split draw with decent veteran Guillaume Frenois in December 2018 and a unanimous victory over the unheralded Eleazar Valenzuela in August last year. An exciting and bullish aggressor, Carroll maintains a high-energy approach and attacks the body with gusto, though he is not known as a heavy hitter.

Unlike Carroll, the experienced Quigg is regarded as a powerful puncher, as

the likes of Rendall Munroe and Kiko Martinez can attest. Jolting uppercuts and overhand rights up top are particular favourites of his, as are hurtful hooks downstairs. A strong all-rounder who can box behind his jab or swarm forward, Quigg boasts a good work rate and is very fit. However, he has been down on a couple of occasions in the past. Nevertheless, with his superior pedigree and versatility, Quigg is the pick to prevail on points in a competitive tussle.

Also on this Matchroom Boxing show, Derbyshire's **Zach Parker**, 18-0 (12), Manchester's **Hughie Fury**, 23-3 (13), and Liverpool's **Anthony Fowler**, 11-1 (8), are in action over 10. Former British super-middleweight boss Parker is favoured to get past Australia's **Rohan Murdock**, 24-1 (17), via decision in their WBO title eliminator. Czech **Pavel Sour**, 11-2 (6), is likely to be beaten inside the distance by ex-WBO heavyweight title challenger Fury, while 2016 Olympian Fowler can outpoint Bolton's **Jack Flatley**, 16-1-1 (4), at super-welter.

THE VERDICT Quigg needs a win to recapture some momentum.

REINFORCED: Carroll believes that his setbacks have made him a stronger person

TALKING POINT

THE last time Quigg boxed in the UK was back in April 2017 on the Anthony Joshua-Wladimir Klitschko undercard at Wembley Stadium. His opponent on this occasion was Viorel Simion, whom he unanimously outpointed at featherweight.

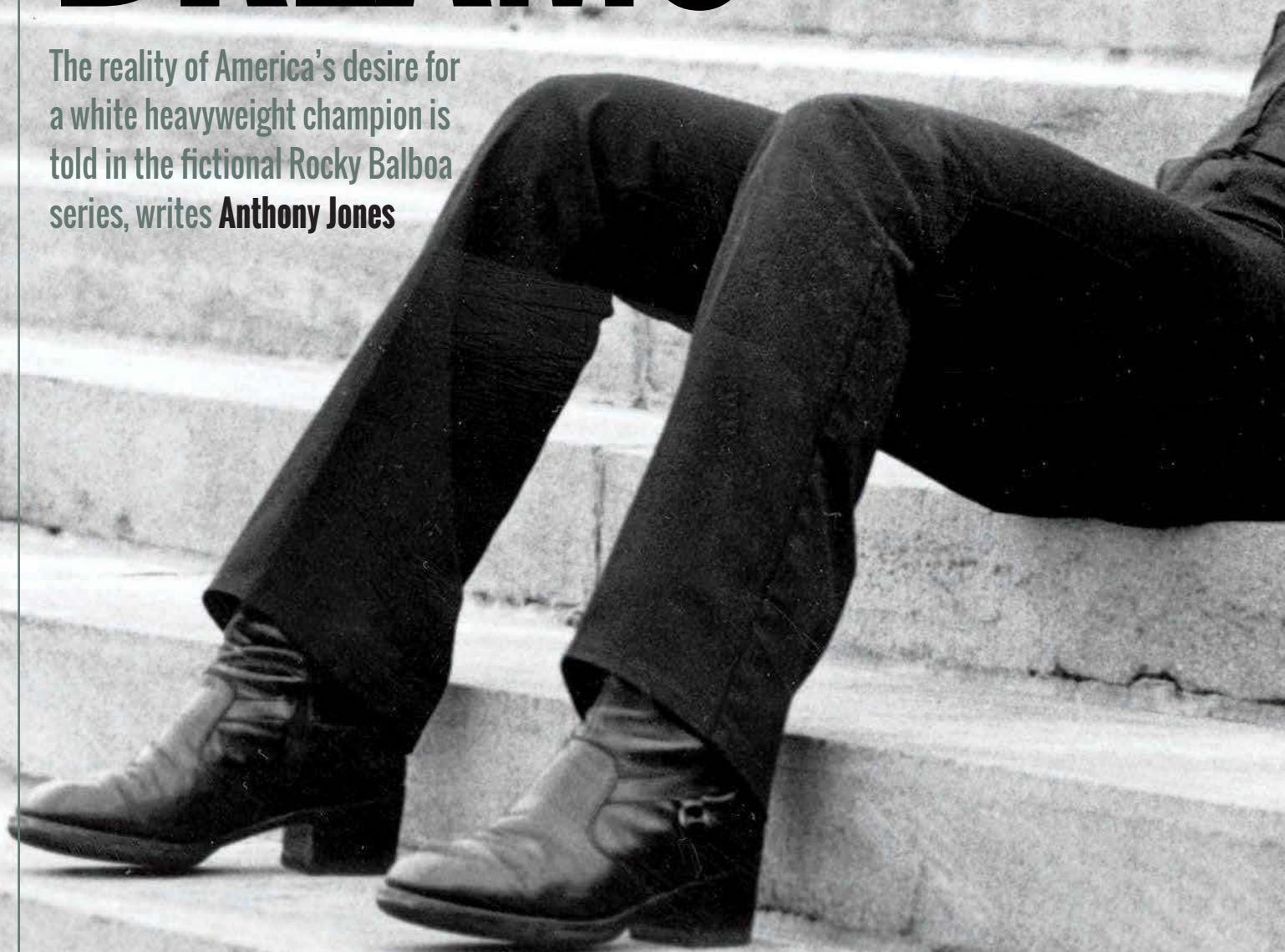
'I'VE BEEN WORKING HARD TO GO AND SMASH QUIGG UP'

TALE OF THE TAPE

SCOTT QUIGG		JONO CARROLL
@scottquigg		@jono_carroll
Oct 9, 1988/31	DOB/AGE	Apr 12, 1992/27
Bury	HOMETOWN	Dublin
English	NATIONALITY	Irish
5ft 8ins	HEIGHT	5ft 7ins
35-2-2 (26)	RECORD	17-1-1 (3)
Orthodox	STANCE	Southpaw
Apr 21, 2007/18	DEBUT/AGE	Dec 16, 2012/20
67	KO PERCENTAGE	16
WLWWW	LAST FIVE FIGHTS	WLDWW

GREAT WHITE HOPES AND DREAMS

The reality of America's desire for a white heavyweight champion is told in the fictional Rocky Balboa series, writes **Anthony Jones**





BEST FRIENDS:
Stallone and his dog, Butkus,
on the set of *Rocky*

Photo: GETTY IMAGES



TRUE LEGEND:
Frazier is right up
there with
Philadelphia's finest

JOE FRAZIER, newly arrived in Philadelphia and eking out a meagre wage at a Kosher slaughterhouse while dreaming of becoming a fighter, used to practice his combinations on the sides of beef he was employed to wheel into the refrigerator. His early morning run would end with a sprint up the steps of the Art Museum where a bronze statue now stands to commemorate... not Frazier, arguably the finest fighter ever produced by the City of Brotherly Love, but a fictional heavyweight champion called Rocky Balboa, who is well known, amongst other things, as being white.

The statue, like the 1976 Oscar-winning movie and the franchise that followed, represents the yearning of a white America for a return to the day when the holder of the greatest prize in sport, the toughest man on the planet, would be of Caucasian extraction. For 40 years, with only the three-year reign of Rocky Marciano and the brief intervention of Ingemar Johanson, the ethnicity of the world heavyweight boxing champion had been African American and accepted as such.

Indeed, the mid-seventies saw probably the greatest burgeoning of black American talent gathered together at any one time. Three Olympic gold medallists, Muhammad Ali, Frazier and George Foreman succeeding each other as world champion plus Ken Norton, Ron Lyle, Earnie Shavers and slippery Jimmy Young, with a young Larry Holmes positioning himself to take over his old boss' crown. And not a white American in sight. Well, not really.

How did it come to this? The nature of boxing in the first half of the 20th century was dictated by the profile of the ticket paying audience, which was white, making progress for black fighters doubly tough. They were the 'opponent' and had to mind their manners and take hometown decisions in their stride. Jack Johnson was often accused of playing 'cat and mouse' with his opponents, of prolonging the agony of inferior opposition. In fact, it was a philosophy drilled into any ambitious black

fighter; if they blew away the white hometown boy they wouldn't be invited back, so better to settle for points and the prospect of another payday. L'il Arthur was just acting out of habit.

There were great black champions in the lighter divisions in the early 1900s; Joe Gans, Kid Chocolate and George Dixon to name a few, but they were exceptional. It was only with the growth of cinema that black fighters began to get a toe hold in the awareness of a wider public and it took the advent of television in the late forties to finally blow the market wide open. With free access to a fight bill on any given week, the armchair fans could afford to rest their prejudices and simply enjoy the action. One by one, the colour of the talent in the eight divisions then recognised began to take on a darker hue, champions and contenders alike.

By the sixties a white contender was only employed to lift the market value of a heavyweight championship bout when the holder was looking for a relaxing evening. Floyd Patterson made a habit of it, while his legitimate contenders – nearly all of them

black – had to content themselves with fighting each other. In the 10 years between 1965 and the 'second coming' of Muhammad Ali, the paucity of white American heavyweight talent was such that only four could be found to fill the challenger's role in all that time, Jerry Quarry being the only one of them to be regarded as any kind of threat.

And so to January 1975; Muhammad Ali, fresh from his victory over Foreman, was looking for an easy voluntary defence of his title to top up his bank balance without too much exertion on the night. Ali and his management had always been keen on having a white (mostly European) patsy in the other corner on these occasions and this time the finger of fate fell on a New Jersey trader called Chuck Wepner, "The Bayonne Bleeder", a 10-year veteran of nuts-and-guts brawls across continental America, and lately on a surprising run of wins, though not enough to avoid cries of 'mismatch!' from the boxing media.

Wepner's main assets were a comprehensive knowledge of the skills that the Marques of Queensberry forbade, a brave heart and an even braver manager. No one expected him to win, but Wepner rose to the occasion and lasted into the 15th round, putting "The Greatest" on the floor in the process (closer inspection of the knockdown showed Chuck's boot firmly on the toe of an off-balance Ali, but the referee's decision stands). Wepner was applauded for his efforts and the hoopla that accompanied the story of the no-hoper who put the champ on the deck was not lost on a struggling young actor named Sylvester Stallone who had dug into the last of his meagre savings to watch the fight on closed circuit.

Inspired by the spectacle of the underdog who bit back, Stallone went to work on a script that transformed the battered, libidinous New Jersey beer salesman of reality into the Rocky we know – the honest bruiser who is in a professional cul-de-sac and suffering romantic problems. A bruiser who it must also be said, was uncommonly good looking in an almost effeminate way, and whose nose had not been broken in over sixty professional fights – a tribute to any defensive artist, but quite extraordinary for a go-forward brawler like Rocky Balboa.

At this point the personalities of Stallone

and his fictional creation are pretty much inseparable, which adds to the charm of the original movie, both characters being down on their luck but prepared to fight for their share of the American dream. Stallone managed

THE COLOUR OF THE TALENT IN THE EIGHT DIVISIONS BEGAN TO TAKE ON A DARKER HUE, CHAMPS AND CONTENDERS ALIKE-

to interest United Artists in his script but had to settle on a shoestring budget of \$1 million because he – a total unknown – insisted on taking the lead role. Released in the fall of 1976, *Rocky* made \$225 million worldwide and won three Oscars including Best Picture.

It is a great, schmaltzy, feel good story; the hero doesn't win the fight, but he regains his self-respect and wins his girl. It is, however,

the name of the hero that contains the key to the character and where his appeal to the white American community lies.

Rocky. Rocky as in Marciano, the last white American to hold the heavyweight title. Rocky – forty-nine wins and no losses, who retired undefeated. Rocky who beat Joe Louis and Muhammad Ali – that the aged Louis was washed up and the Ali 'fight' was a computer fit-up cuts no ice with Marciano fans – and Rocky, as in Balboa who commands a strange parallel universe lasting from 1975 to 1985 (in script terms) while Ali, Norton, Holmes et al dominated in the real world.

One cannot blame Sly for milking a winning formula, but none of the succeeding *Rocky* movies in the hugely successful franchise that followed could ever be called great, or even particularly good. What they are, though, is a pretty accurate social mirror of the times in which they were created, much as bad popular fiction is; the novels of Dennis Wheatley in the 1930s - 50s, Ian Fleming and Mickey Spillane in the 60s in which the racism, snobbery and misogyny that were part of the contemporary culture are all happily on display. It is also worth adding W.D. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* to this list. Although it was the first movie that could be called 'great' on account of its length plus its aesthetic and production values, is also a nauseating peon of praise to the Klu Klux Klan. Back in 1918 president Woodrow Wilson saw and loved it.

This is not to accuse the *Rocky* franchise of any of these negative qualities – Stallone's original script had Balboa discovering his trainer was a racist, throwing the fight and walking away from boxing – indeed, Rocky's relationship with Apollo Creed emphasises to a touching degree the respect and friendship that can develop between two athletes of different races once they've finished beating the stuffing out of each other. What the *Rocky* movies did was not racist per se, but simply pandering to the largest racial demographic, giving back something that was lost.

Photo: GETTY IMAGES



REAL ROCKY:
Marciano prowls the
ring after dropping
Joe Louis

Of course, it gave back to the Italian American community most of all, as Eddie Murphy was foremost in pointing out in his profanity laden sketch of the 5ft 2ins Italian emerging from a *Rocky* movie and picking a fight with a black 6ft 5ins sweet vendor...

"You heard what I said muli, pay for my f**kin' candy!"

"Oh, you just seen Rocky." The candy is delivered anally.

Stallone's creation acted as a salve to an American white male audience yearning for the day when one of their own would once again hold the status of toughest man on the planet. The figure of Rocky became so entrenched in the American psyche that his fictitious persona even made it onto the front cover of at least one 'real' boxing magazine.

The hysteria surrounding any white heavyweight of above average ability came to a head with the career of "Irish" Gerry Cooney who challenged Larry Holmes for the WBC title in 1983. Cooney stood 6ft 6ins in an age when most heavyweights were 6ft 2ins, could box and had one-punch kayo power in his right hand. He was also white (the 'Irish' tag before a boxer's name used to be a coded indication that he was white).

His development as a serious contender was suffocated by the prospect of the huge pot of gold involved in a potential title challenge, his management team opting for a premature shot against Holmes rather than risking it all by maturing their charge with the sort of 'live' opponents who offered serious learning rounds. Cooney made an awful lot of money on the night, but never had the satisfaction of calling himself 'Champ'.

Holmes claims that Cooney's trailer in Las

ROCKY ACTED AS A SALVE TO AN AMERICAN WHITE MALE AUDIENCE YEARNING FOR ONE OF THEIR OWN TO AGAIN WIN THE TITLE

Vegas was wired up with a presidential line to the White House in expectation of victory for the challenger. No such arrangement was on hand for the black champion.

Meanwhile, in the alternative boxing universe of the *Rocky* ranchise, Balboa, having beaten Ali/Creed in a return, overcame self-doubt and Clubber Lang in the third movie before moving on to conquer the Soviet threat in *Rocky IV* when he dismantled the robotic Ivan Drago. This last was slightly out of step at the time with the age of Glasnost dawning, but ironically prophetic of the hordes of ex-Iron Curtain heavyweights that would descend on the land of the free once the Wall came down.

In *Rocky V* the "Italian Stallion", broke and in the first stages of dementia pugilistica, kayo'd

both his ungrateful mentee, Tommy Morrison and Don King – err, George Washington Duke – to restore integrity to the fight game. And there the franchise rested for 16 years before the widowed Rocky emerged from retirement, blinking in the light of a

new century, to take on both middle age and Antonio Tarver, losing a split decision to the latter, but once again regaining his credibility.

And here the *Rocky* story shifts gear. In the 21st century not only was there not a white American heavyweight champion to be found, there were no black champions either. It was the all-American nightmare - the symbol of American manhood in the hands of the Brits and the Commies! And with his finger still unerringly on the pulse of his audience, Stallone produced a contemporary American hero to save the day – a black American hero, the son of Apollo Creed.

Adonis Creed, mentored by Rocky, journeys to Liverpool to challenge "Pretty" Ricky Conlan (Tony Bellew) for the light-heavyweight title and, in a reprise of the first movie, fails by a whisker, but comes away with the glory, personal and professional. Stallone, never ashamed to milk a franchise, reworks *Rocky IV* with Ivan Drago's son in the opposite corner for Creed II. (Does Clubber Lang have any kids?) The new Rocky is a black American, but 40 years on from the first movie, ethnicity is no longer an issue. May it ever be so.

And concluding in the real world; in a curious case of life imitating art, 2018's WBC heavyweight title fight between Tyson Fury and Deontay Wilder could well have been scripted by Stallone – starting with their names. Two protagonists, one looking for redemption, the other for recognition, put on one of the most thrilling heavyweight fights seen in recent years and both got what they wanted although the fight was a draw.

Cue sequel. America's black Rocky is battered to a humiliating defeat by a challenger who combines the size and power of Ivan Drago with Clubber Lang's bad intentions.

Cue Fury-Wilder III; Sly should sue for copyright! **BN**

**HEAVYWEIGHT**

over 200lbs/14st 4lbs

1. **TYSON FURY** 30-0-1 (ENG)
2. **ANTHONY JOSHUA** 23-1 (ENG)
3. **DEONTAY WILDER** 42-1-1 (USA)
4. **ANDY RUIZ JNR** 33-2 (USA)
5. **DILLIAN WHYTE** 27-1 (ENG)
6. **KUBRAT PULEV** 28-1 (BGR)
7. **JOSEPH PARKER** 27-2 (NZL) *[above]*
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)
4. **DAVID BENAVIDEZ** 22-0 (USA)
5. **JOHN RYDER** 28-5 (ENG)
6. **LIONELL THOMPSON** 22-5 (USA)
7. **ANTHONY DIRRELL** 33-2-1 (USA)
8. **JUERGEN BRAEHMER** 52-3 (GER)
9. **FEDOR CHUDINOV** 22-2 (RUS)
10. **DANIEL JACOBS** 36-3 (USA)

**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)
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. **MIKEY GARCIA** 40-1 (USA) *[above]*
7. **KEITH THURMAN** 29-1 (USA)
8. **YORDENIS UGAS** 25-4 (CUB)
9. **EGIDIJUS KAVALIUSKAS** 21-1-1 (LTU)
10. **RAY ROBINSON** 24-3-2 (USA)

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) *[above]*
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)
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** 31-1 (MEX)
2. **REY VARGAS** 34-0 (MEX)
3. **MURODJON 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. **ROMAN GONZALEZ** 49-2 (NIC) *[above]*
4. **KAZUTO IOKA** 25-2 (JPN)
5. **JERWIN ANCAJAS** 32-1-2 (PHL)
6. **KAL YAFAI** 26-1 (ENG)
7. **FERNANDO MARTINEZ** 11-0 (ARG)
8. **ANDREW MOLONEY** 21-0 (AUS)
9. **GIDEON BUTHELEZI** 22-5 (RSA)
10. **FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ JNR** 33-4-1 (MEX)

FLYWEIGHT

112lbs/8st

1. **CHARLIE EDWARDS** 15-1 (ENG)
2. **JULIO CESAR MARTINEZ** 16-1 (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. **JAY HARRIS** 17-1 (WAL)
10. **MAXIMINO FLORES** 25-4-2 (MEX)

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)
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** 21-0 (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 CANDOY** 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. **TYSON FURY** 30-0-1 (ENG)
8. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN** 40-1-1 (KAZ)
9. **ARTUR BETERBIEV** 15-0 (RUS)
10. **LEO SANTA CRUZ** 37-1-1 (MEX)

● 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: SARAH STIER/GETTY IMAGES

MARCH**FRIDAY 6****Leeds United FC Banqueting Suite, Elland Road**

Justin Newell v Jordan Ellison; Darren Tetley v s/o; Mick Learmonth v s/o; Cory O'Regan v Lee Hallett; Kyle Scully v s/o; Luke Kelly v s/o; Michael Fafera v Ben Thomas; Ismail Khan v Edward Harrison; Harry Fryer v s/o. (Promoter: Bateson Promotions).

The Rotunda, Caesars Palace**Bluewaters Dubai, UAE (iFL TV TBA & ESPN+)**

Aliu Bamidele Lasisi v Norbelto Jimenez; TJ Doheny v Ionut Baluta; Nurtas Azhbenov v JR Magboo; Zhan Kossobutskiy v s/o; Cesar Mateo Tapia v Steve Collins Jnr; Rohan Date v Rivo Kundimang. (Promoter: D4G Promotions & MTK Global).

Auditorio Blackberry, Mexico City, Mexico (Telemundo)

Armando Torres v Juan Alejo. (Promoter: Producciones Deportivas & All Star Boxing).

SATURDAY 7**Manchester Arena (Sky Sports Action/ Main Event 7pm & DAZN)**

Scott Quigg v Jono Carroll; Zach Parker v Rohan Murdock; Hughie Fury v Pavel Sour; Anthony Fowler v Jack Flatley; Jack Cullen v s/o; Aqib Fiaz v s/o; Reshat Mati v s/o; Dalton Smith v s/o; Blane Hyland v s/o; Ibrahim Nadim v s/o. (Promoter: Matchroom Boxing).

Brentwood Centre (iFL TV TBA & ESPN+)

Danny Dignum v Alfredo Meli; Sam Gilley v Curtis Felix Jnr (vacant Southern Area welterweight title); Shaquille Day v Kaisee Benjamin; Mitchell Frearson v s/o; James Hawley v Josh Adewale; Liam Wells v Zygimantas Butkevicius; Martin McDonagh v Chris Adaway; George Fox v Chris Healey; Jack Martin v MJ Hall; Randal Barlow v Kevin McCauley; Charlie Kenny v s/o; Kevin Reavell v Scott Williams. (Promoter: MTK Global).

Dunstable Conference Centre

Kay Prospere (holder) v Bilal Rehman (English super-lightweight title); Mohammad Ali Malik v s/o; Dan Lorenzo v s/o. (Promoter: Boxing Connected).

Magna Centre, Rotherham

Christian Kinsiona v Mickey Ellison; Razaq Najib v Louis Norman; Liam Dring v s/o; Cory Hardy v s/o. (Promoter: Stefy Bull Promotions).

York Hall, Bethnal Green

Denis Denikajev v Kris Pilkington; Terry Conroy v Jordan Grannum; Daniel Mendes v Dmitriy Kalinovskiy; James Verbeeten v Lee Devine; Jamie Smith v Tayar Mehmed; Sangeeta Birdi v Bojana Libiszewska;



Amar Kayani v Teodor Boyadzhiev; Jack Owen v Andy Bishop; Kola Koyejo v Darryl Sharp; Harry Armstrong v Miloslav Pavek; Constantin Ursu v Teodor Nikolov; Rob Garvey v Dan Blackwell. (Promoter: Budgen Boxing).

Harvey Hadden Sports Village, Nottingham

Nathan Kirk v Josue Bendana; Joe Underwood-Hughes v Joe Beeden; Ryan Amos v Nathan Hardy; Delmar Thomas v Youssef Al Hamidi; Jack Hutsby v Lewis van Poetsch; Jordan Ringham v Guycha Muele; Kyle Hughes v Chris Jenkinson; Sajid Abid v Qasim Hussain; Conner Short v Michael Horabin; Dominic Sheppard v Genadij Krajevskij; Josh Chapman v Tim Ventrella; Ezra Taylor v s/o. (Promoter: Boxing Connected).

Britannia Hotel, Nottingham

Ellis Machin v Kamil Sokolowski; Stanley Stannard v Martin Jones; Tom Cowling v Josh Hodgkins; Josh Quailay v Matt Gordon; Billy Scott v Callum Ide. (Promoter: Carl Greaves Promotions).

Glen Pavilion, Dunfermline

Tommy Philbin v s/o; Billy Stuart v s/o. (Promoter: Northern Sporting Club).

Barclays Center, Brooklyn, New York (BoxNation 1am & FOX)

Adam Kownacki [pictured] v Robert Helenius; Efe Ajagba v Razvan Cojanu; Frank Sanchez v Joey Dawejko; Robert Alfonso v Carlos Negron; Zachary Ochoa v Angel Sarinana. (Promoter: TGB Promotions).

Gimnasio Municipal, Parral, Mexico

Oscar Duarte v Andres Garcia; Luis Alberto Hernandez Ramos v Placido Ramirez; William Zepeda v Brayam Rico; Luis Fernando Robles v Jesus Iribe. (Promoter: Golden Boy Promotions).

RCC Boxing Academy, Ekaterinburg, Russia

Muhammadkhuja Yaqubov v Tomas Rojas; Mark Urvanov v Akzhol Sulaimanbek Uulu; Magomed Kurbanov v Ismail Iliev; Evgeny Tishchenko v Marcos Aumada. (Promoter: Titov/RCC Boxing Promotions).

Dzierzoniow, Poland

Ewa Brodnicka (holder) v Djemilla Gontaruk (WBO female super-featherweight title). (Promoter: Tymex Boxing Promotion).

Hotel Ramada, Geneva, Switzerland

Ornella Domini v Szilvia Szabados (vacant European female welterweight title). (Promoter: Boxniaque Promotion).

FRIDAY 13**Kings Hall, Stoke-on-Trent**

Nathan Heaney v Christian Schembri; Cole Johnson v s/o; Luke Caci v s/o; Connor Parker v Eligio Palacios; Kieron McLaren v s/o; Atal Khan v s/o; Leon Gower v s/o. (Promoter: Black Country Boxing Promotion).

Grand Casino, Hinckley, Minnesota (Showtime)

Brandon Lee v Camilo Prieto; Brian Norman Jnr v Flavio Rodriguez; Alejandro Guerrero v Jose Angulo; Aram Avagyan v Dagoberto Aguero. (Promoter: Salita Promotions).

Manual Artime Community Center Theater, Miami, Florida

Cristofer Rosales v Szilveszter Kanalas. (Promoter: M&R Boxing Promotions).

Auditorio Blackberry, Mexico City, Mexico (Telemundo)

Adrian Curiel v Rosendo Hugo Guarneros. (Promoter: Producciones Deportivas & All Star Boxing).

VESTED INTEREST

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

Photo: GB BOXING



SURPRISE SUMMONS

All of a sudden Lewis Richardson steps in for Sammy Lee at the Olympic Qualification Event



John Dennen

@BoxingNewsJD

Amateur Editor

In a remarkable turn around in his fortunes, Lewis Richardson is stepping forward to box for Great Britain in the European Olympic Qualification Event.

Welshman Sammy Lee was originally selected for the middleweight GB berth. But he has suffered an injury to ligaments in his shoulder that has ruled him out of

boxing at the qualifier in London next March.

Richardson, as the reserve, has been selected in his stead and will get the first chance to win a place the Olympic Games later this year.

"Just over the moon, it's just what you're working towards," Richardson told *Boxing News*.

"It's been a massive upward journey in the last six months. It's a great

opportunity now and I'm really looking forward to it."

"Middleweight's a very competitive weight and there's no real number one. Sammy got the nod, obviously I was bitterly disappointed but at the same time realistic in thinking I've come a long way in the last six months and I've done well to get the reserve spot," he continued. "I stayed ready and the opportunity's come.

"I'm just really developing at a fast pace and I feel like I'm ready to mix it with the world's best."

He can expect to do just that at the qualification event at the Copper Box in Stratford (March 14-24). European nations, like Russia and Ukraine are particularly strong in his division and have some of the world's leading middleweight boxers.

"This is world level boxing and that's where I want to be. I believe on my day I can cause anyone big, big trouble," Richardson said.

"There's no reason why I can't go and have some of these names on my slate and make a name for myself at these qualifiers and book my place to Tokyo."

He has already had a taste of boxing in Japan, Richardson competed in the Olympic Test Event where he won his first gold medal for GB. "It was an amazing experience and Tokyo was a real special, special country. I'd never really been out of Europe so I got to travel the world doing what I love. I beat Australia in the semi-final and then beat Japan in the final, to do that, it was an amazing experience. It was just a special, special place and the venue was unbelievable, the venue's going to be at their national sumo wrestling arena... It felt cultured and there was real history. Just soaked it all up and took it all in my stride and come out winning," he said.

"An unbelievable experience and I'll tell you what I'd love to be out there [for the Olympic Games in July]. I'll do everything I can in these European qualifiers to try and book my place."

Tickets for the event are on sale now at <https://see.tickets/boxingroadtotokyo> with prices starting at £5 (£2.50 concessions) for many of the sessions at the biggest Olympic boxing event to take place in England since the 2012 Olympic Games.



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MISSION
2020

SHAUN HUDDART

FROM **England**
STANCE **Orthodox**
TITLES **England**
Boxing Youth
championships

THE England Boxing Youth championship semi-finals and finals, after initially being called off, were staged at the Birtley boxing club from February 29 to March 1.

The hosting club did secure two champions. Birtley's Shaun Huddart and clubmate Jack Dryden won Youth Cadet titles, beating Alby Hil of Chadwell St. Mary's and Pinewood's Mark Cooper at 49kgs and 52kgs respectively. "I have been training two years non-stop for that," said Huddart. "I've lost on a split in the Junior final before, so I didn't want there to be any mistakes this time."

"Every round was close and I thought it was a really good bout. We are both similar in style, but I felt I just had the edge. It's nice to beat someone as good as him in the final. "I couldn't wait for this, living 10 minutes away from the venue, and it's great to be able to deliver for the club." For the full results visit https://www.englandboxing.org/news_articles/youth-championships-finals-day-round-up/ on the England Boxing website.

THE UNLIKELY DREAM

Charley Davison goes straight from an assessment into the Olympic qualification team

HOW did you get on to the GB team?

I had an assessment for the 51kgs weight so I done that and then they asked me to go along with them to Colorado [for a training camp only in January of this year]. I think out there was a bit of test to see how I got on. I had a couple of gym bouts, then I really impressed them with how I done.

What went through your mind when the coaches told you you were going to the Olympic qualifier?

I just couldn't believe it, because I was only up there for assessment I just thought I'd give it everything I've got, that's all I could do. I was really shocked.

It's still not sunk in properly now... It's going to be an amazing event, especially with it being in London. Obviously I'll be very nervous because it's such a big event. I'm going to try and take it in my

stride, treat it like any other spar, any other bout, same sort of thing in the same sort of ring.

It's not far from my home town [Lowestoft], I've got quite a lot of support, I'm going to use that as a positive thing. Hopefully it'll all go well.

How did your kids react to you getting the chance to become an Olympian (Davison is the mother of three children)?

My eldest one, he's eight now, he understands a bit more. My little girl just keeps asking why I keep going to Sheffield, she's only six. She doesn't realise what I'm training for, the youngest one obviously doesn't. They're really excited, the eldest one more so, he comes to the gym sometimes if I'm training when I'm at home. He'll explain to his class at his school what's happening. It's nice that at least one of them understands what's

going on and in future maybe they can do something they want to do sport-wise.

You'd had a long break from the sport?

Seven years out, [being a] full time mum. I just spoke to John Cremin [her club coach] one time and said I'd like to come back, train.

The hardest part was getting the fitness back... I just got fit, boxed in the [national] championships at 57kgs, but I just wasn't big enough. The nerves got to me as well, my first bout back. Got down to 54kgs the next year, I won them at 54 [in 2019] and now I'm down at 51kgs.

I just thought national title was my first aim, obviously I didn't want to step too far. But when I lost at 57kgs, I never wanted to feel that again. Never wanted to feel losing again. So trained really hard. Got down to 54, won that and the buzz was back.

'MY LITTLE GIRL JUST KEEPS ASKING WHY I KEEP GOING TO SHEFFIELD'

Photo: ANDY CHUBB/ENGLAND BOXING



CHAMPION:
After seven years out of the sport, Davison wins the Elite championships

AMATEUR SCENE

The very best action, previews and news from Olympic-style boxing

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THE FIRST 2020 OLYMPIANS

The African Olympic qualification event concludes in Dakar, Senegal

ON Wednesday (February 26) Botswana's featherweight **Sadie Kenosi** became the first boxer to win a place at the 2020 Olympic Games. She beat Morocco's **Widad Bertal** on a unanimous decision to reach the final of the African Olympic Qualification Event at the Dakar Arena in Senegal and in the process made sure of her Olympic quota place for Tokyo. "When I got into the ring today I was confident that I would book my ticket to Tokyo from this fight. That's all that was going on in my head - Olympics. This win means a lot for women boxing, we are not many in Gaborone. And for me to come here and become the first qualifier in boxing from Botswana is huge," she told the *Olympic Channel*.

Her opponent in the final, Tunisia's **Khoulood Moulahi** also guaranteed her Olympic spot with a unanimous points win over Congo's **Marcelat Sakobi**.

Welterweights **Oumayma Bel Ahbib** of Morocco and Mozambique's **Helena Acinda** secured Olympic qualification with their semi-final victories.

Moroccan 75kgs **Khadija**

El-Mardi dominated Algeria's **Ichrak Chaib** to book her place at a second Olympic Games. Mozambique's **Adosinda Rady** claimed the second available place at Tokyo 2020 in that division.

Seasoned Algerian flyweight **Mohamed Flissi**, a two-time World medallist and two-time Olympian made it to his third Games by reaching the final in Dakar. Zambian 52kgs **Patrick Chinyemba** will also be on the plane to Tokyo.

Namibia's **Jonas Jonas** qualified

Photo: GETTY IMAGES



VETERAN: Mohamed Flissi celebrates in Dakar as he reaches his third Olympics

in the new 63kgs division, as did Mauritius' **Richarno Louis**.

David Tshama denied **Dieudonne Seyi Ntsengue** immediate qualification, while he pursues his hope of becoming Congo's first Olympic medallist.

Younes Nemouchi's semi-final win over Uganda's **David**

Ssemujju on Wednesday bagged the Algerian his spot at Tokyo 2020.

Algeria's **Abdelhafi Benchabla** has moved up to heavyweight and won one of two quota places for Tokyo 2020 by reaching the 91kgs final. Morocco's

Youness Baalla claimed the other Olympic spot available in this weight class. Benchabla told the *Olympic Channel*: "Four Olympics; Beijing, London, Rio and Tokyo... No more fifth place now I want a medal."

51kgs is the only women's division with three Olympic places

up for grabs in this competition in Dakar. Algeria's **Roumaysa Boualam** stopped Uganda's **Catherine Nanziri** in two rounds to claim one of them. Morocco's **Rabab Cheddar** secured a second by winning the other flyweight semi-final.

Lightweight **Mariam Zayani** also secured Olympic qualification with a stoppage win, halting Congo's **Naomie Yumba** in a round. Algeria's **Imane Khelif** took the other Olympic lightweight spot available.

Further male boxers to qualify on the Wednesday were featherweights **Everisto Mulenga** and Kenya's **Nicholas Okoth**, welterweights **Albert Mengue** and **Stephen Zimba**, light-heavies **Abdelrahman Abdelgawwad** and **Mohammed Houmri** and super-heavies **Chouaib Bouloudinats** and **Maxime Yegnong Njeyo**.

There were three box-offs on Friday (February 28) to win the final Olympic quota places on offer at flyweight, lightweight and middleweight. Ghana's **Sulemanu**

Tetteh secured his entry to Tokyo 2020 at 52kgs. At 63kgs **Abdelhaq Nadir** became a fifth Moroccan to qualify at this tournament when he outpointed Congo's **Fiston Mbaya**. Cameroonian middleweight Ntsengue won a bronze medal and his ticket to Tokyo by defeating Uganda's top seed Ssemujju also on a split.

The only Olympic box-off in the women's event took place at 51kgs on Saturday (February 29), where Kenya's **Christine Ongare** powered through to a unanimous win over Uganda's **Catherine Nanziri**. Ghana secured a second Olympic place when **Samuel Takyi** beat Uganda's **Isaac Masembe** on a unanimous decision in the featherweight box-off, although his countryman **Jessie Lartey** lost the men's welterweight box-off to Uganda's **Shadiri Bwogi**. The final Olympic box-off took place in the men's light-heavyweight category, where **Mohamed Assaghir**, another representative of Morocco, won his bout by unanimous decision against Ghana's **Shakul Samed**.

'THAT'S ALL THAT WAS GOING ON IN MY HEAD - THE OLYMPICS'

OLYMPIC BOXING RATINGS

Women's rankings as at February 27. Compiled by Daniel Herbert and John Dennen

MIDDLEWEIGHT 75 kgs

1. **LAUREN PRICE** (Wales)
2. **NOUCHKA FONTIJN** (Netherlands)
3. **TAMMARA THIBEAULT** (Canada)
4. **KHADIJA EL-MARDI** (Morocco)
5. **NAOMI GRAHAM** (USA)
6. **IVETA LEŠINSKYT** (Lithuania)
7. **ZHENG LU** (China)
8. **DARIMA SANDAKOVA** (Russia)
9. **AOIFE O'ROURKE** (Ireland)
10. **ANASTASIIA SHAMONOVA** (Russia)

WELTERWEIGHT 69 kgs

1. **BUSENAZ SURMENELI** (Turkey)
2. **YANG LIU** (China)
3. **SAADAT DALGATOVA** (Russia)
4. **LOVLINA BORGHAIN** (India)
5. **OSHAJONES** (USA)
6. **CHEN NIEN-CHIN** (Chinese Taipei)
7. **KAROLINA KOSZEWSKA** (Poland)

8. **ASSUNTA CANFORA** (Italy)

9. **NADINE APETZ** (Germany)

10. **GU HONG** (China)

LIGHTWEIGHT 60 kgs

1. **BEATRIZ FERREIRA** (Brazil)

2. **WANG CONG** (China)

3. **MIRA POTKONEN** (Finland)

4. **RASHIDA ELLIS** (USA)

5. **KELLIE HARRINGTON** (Ireland)

6. **NATALIA SHADRINA** (Russia)

7. **MONKHOR NAMUUN** (Mongolia)

8. **AMY BROADHURST** (Ireland)

9. **ANASTASIA BELYAKOVA** (Russia)

10. **AGNES ALEXIUSSON** (Sweden)

FEATHERWEIGHT 57 kgs

1. **NESTHY PESTECIO** (Philippines)

2. **LIUDMILA VORONTSOVA** (Russia)

3. **KARRIS ARTINGSTALL** (England)

4. **LIN YU-TING** (Taipei)

5. **SENA IRIE** (Japan)

6. **STANIMIRA PETROVA** (Bulgaria)

7. **NILAWAN TECHASUEP** (Thailand)

8. **MICHAELA WALSH** (Ireland)

9. **YODGOROY MIRZAEVA** (Uzbekistan)

10. **QIAO JIERU** (China)

FLYWEIGHT 51 kgs

1. **LILIYA AETBAEVA** (Russia)

2. **BUSENAZ CAKIROGLU** (Turkey)

3. **PANG CHOI MI** (North Korea)

4. **MERY KOM** (India)

5. **NGUYEN THI TAM** (Vietnam)

6. **CAI ZONGJU** (China)

7. **VIRGINIA FUCHS** (USA)

8. **TSUKIMI NAMIKI** (Japan)

9. **INGRIT VALENCIA** (Colombia)

10. **GRAZIELE DE SOUSA** (Brazil)

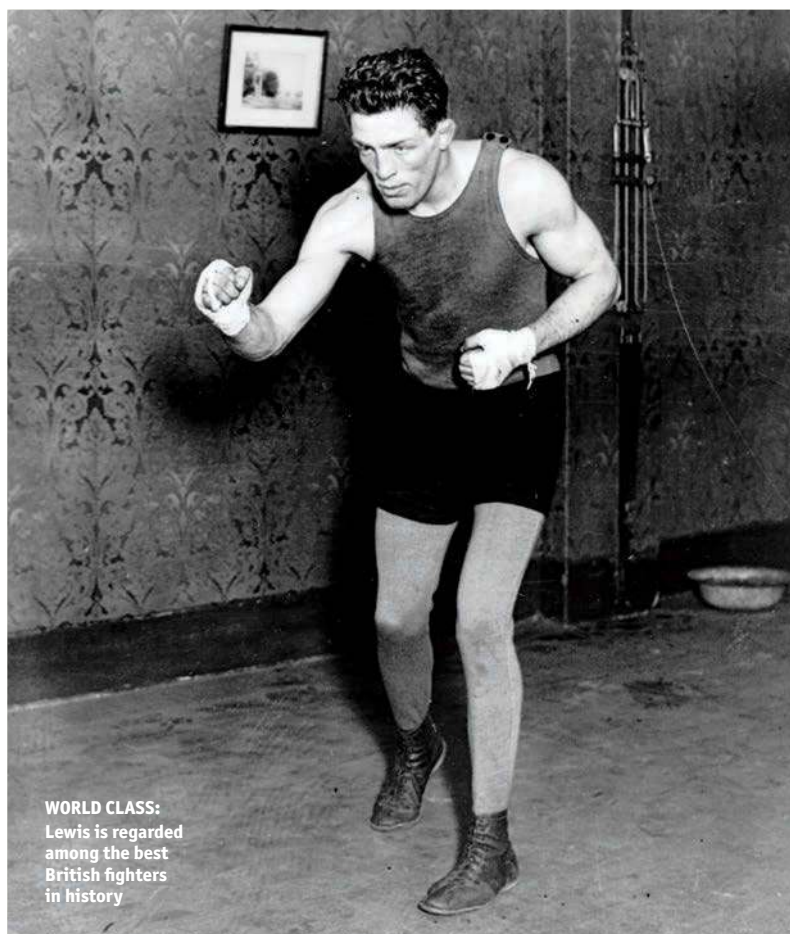
Photo: AIBA



RAPID RISE: Karriss Artingstall has gatecrashed the world top three at 57kgs

BRADFORD BOXING BAN

Photos: LARRY BRAYSHER



WORLD CLASS:
Lewis is regarded
among the best
British fighters
in history

We examine the bizarre decisions to ban pro boxing in Bradford for two long spells



Alex Daley

@thealexdaley

**Historian
& author**

FOR much of the 19th century professional boxing was viewed in Britain as a disreputable back-alley activity, and pugilists ran the risk of being fined or jailed. This pushed the sport underground, but by the end of the century – thanks largely to the establishment of the National Sporting Club – professional boxing was lawful and socially acceptable.

In the years preceding the Great War, British boxing was booming and fight halls across the country staged regular shows. West Yorkshire had its share of fight cities and towns, with contests held in areas such as Leeds, Halifax, Bingley and Keighley. Bradford was another place bitten by the boxing bug and the city possessed three talented pros: the Delaney brothers, Jerry and Fred, and Fred Blakeborough. Jerry and Fred were two of six brothers who punched for pay, and Jerry – who would sadly die aged 22 at the Battle of the Somme – would reach world class.

Bizarrely, though, in early 1912, Bradford City Police Chief Constable, Joseph Farndale, announced that forthwith no licences would be issued for pro boxing shows in the city. He stated that any future contests would need to be exhibitions and could not be decided

A VISIT FROM 'THE VIKING'

Steve Foster attends Manchester EBA's February meeting



Simon Euan-Smith
simonoldtimers
@googlemail.com

**EBA
correspondent**

THERE were several welcomes at Manchester EBA's February meeting. Members were delighted to see former Commonwealth super-welterweight champion Steve "The Viking" Foster, who won the title by outscoring the formidable Chris Pyatt in July 1996. Pyatt had held the title for over four years, but Steve took a unanimous decision, and in his next bout challenged the tricky Ronald "Winky" Wright for the WBO crown. Sadly, Wright knew too much and won a unanimous verdict.

Foster met some good people in his 39-bout career (he had three contests in 1981, took a break until 1985 and finally retired in 1999) – including Rob McCracken for the British super-middleweight title and Howard Eastman for the middleweight. Newsletter editor Ian Harrison notes that he promised to

come to future meetings and take part in Manchester's Q&A series – "which is very popular with our members," Ian says. That's something other EBAs could copy – most ex-boxers have plenty of stories to tell, and members would love to hear them.

Also welcomed were two well-known local ex-pros, Ian and Ray Murray, who enjoyed themselves and promised to come again. Ray, a welterweight, had seven bouts in the 1970s. Ian campaigned between 1975 and 1987, starting at featherweight and eventually going up to super-light. He too tackled some quality opponents, including future world featherweight champion Barry McGuigan in the latter's eighth fight, and future Commonwealth lightweight champion Pat Doherty, now an active Croydon EBA member.

Another new member was Terry Rimmer, described as a "big boxing enthusiast," and brother of respected coach and trainer Bobby. The meeting was glad to see Peter Fillingham, who had been out of action for three months with a broken pelvis. On the sick list, Eddie Sinclair is now back home after a spell in hospital with pneumonia, and the meeting was sorry to hear that long-time member Dennis Cross and ex-pro Colin Mannock (who turned 83 on February 16) were both unwell.

My recent mention of Bristol ex-boxer Gary Chippendale drew this response from reader Arthur McCann: "Gary was a former opponent of my late brother Pat, the former Southern Area light-heavyweight champion. From memory, Pat beat Gary in five rounds. On behalf of our family, would you please pass on

by knockout. To add insult to injury, he replaced boxing with wrestling in the Bradford City Police Club and warned Fred Delaney to stop training in public at the pub where he did his workouts. The ban lasted over two years and forced local fighters and fans to travel to other cities and towns. It's probably no coincidence that the chief constable's easing of the embargo, in May 1914, followed an announcement that the King was a boxing fan.

Fast-forward a decade to January 1924 and Bradford was playing host to an all-time great of the fight game. Ted Kid Lewis was booked to meet Sergeant Sid Pape, from York, in a 15-rounder at the city's Windsor Hall for £100 side stakes and "a substantial purse".

Naturally, the match attracted huge local interest, but surprisingly the promotion ran at a loss, with the elevated admission fees proving too steep for regular fighters. Even more surprising were the after-effects of the match.

There was a huge gulf in class and experience between Lewis, a former world welterweight titlist, and Pape, who was merely a decent domestic-level fighter, albeit one who had scored some fine wins over British heavies and light-

heavies and would go the full 15 rounds for British light-heavy honours less than a year later. In theory, the talent disparity should have been offset to some degree by Pape's weight and size advantage, but the fight didn't pan out that way.

Lewis tore into the Yorkshireman from the first bell and in the second round knocked Pape out of the ring. Sid scrambled back through the ropes and regained his feet after a short count.

But he was quickly dropped again and then decked for a third time, after which he lay awkwardly face down.

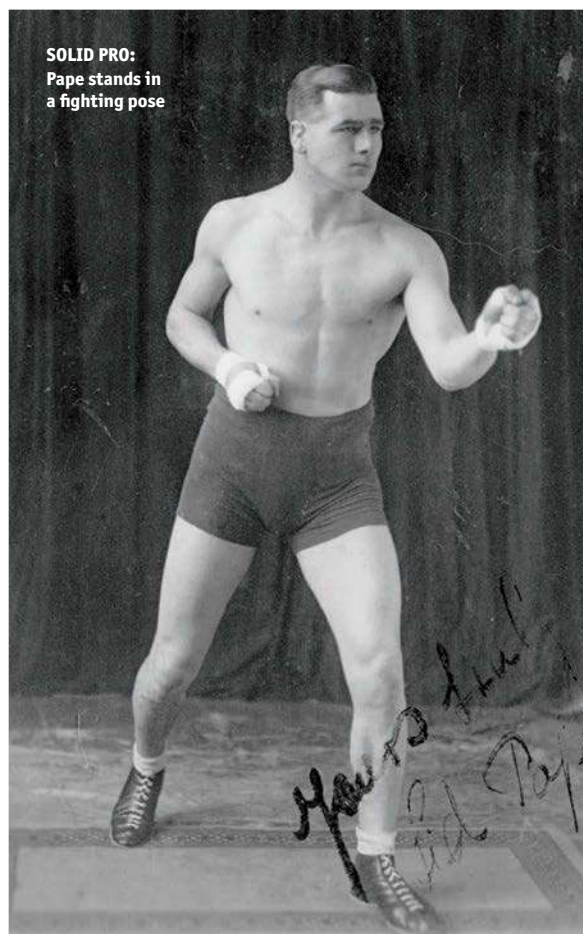
Finally, the towel came in.

The referee, Harry Jennings, was castigated in the press for not halting the bout. A certain Alderman T. Sowden was quoted in the Bradford Daily Telegraph as calling

the ref's failure to step in "not sport but sheer cruelty." Jennings later successfully sued the publisher for libel.

The furore over the mismatch prompted Bradford's authorities to reinstate the pro boxing ban. There were no more licences granted for professional fights there for the rest of the 1920s. Pro boxing finally returned to Bradford in March 1930, at the Olympia on Thornton Road. It was the first show in the city held under the auspices of the BBBofC.

THE REF WAS CASTIGATED FOR NOT HALTING THE BOUT



SOLID PRO:
Pape stands in
a fighting pose



THE VIKING: Foster is flanked at Manchester EBA's February meeting

our best wishes to Gary, for a speedy recovery." Only too pleased to, Arthur, and you're right - Pat beat Gary in five rounds at York Hall in January 1982.

Pat would go on to score two wins over Johnny Frankham, in 1973 and 1974, in Southern Area title bouts - but it was Frankham who went on to become a British titlist, outscoring former Olympic champion Chis Finnegan for the vacant belt in June 1975. That's boxing. Another McCann brother, Peter, was a long-serving Board of Control timekeeper (and is now a London EBA member), while nephew Kieran is now an 'A' class referee and secretary of Home Counties EBA.

Croydon EBA have lost a stalwart in Eric Pudney, who died last month aged 95. Eric was introduced to boxing by his late brother, Ron, who was Southern Area middleweight champion and later a Board

of Control inspector. Eric was a long-time member of Croydon, and served on the committee for several years before lack of mobility prevented his attending meetings. He was always forthright in saying what he thought, and frequently at loggerheads with Chairman Barry Penny in committee meetings - "but I loved it!" Barry said. "It was all good-natured banter, nothing more. I've really missed that."

When able to, Eric would visit other Associations, and he was a staunch supporter of Croydon - whenever we held a dinner, or other function, Eric would bring along about 10 family members.

I'm sure everyone will join me in sending condolences to Eric's daughter, Christine, and all the family.

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

DANNY WHITAKER

George Storr talks to a pizza-loving centre-half

Photo: NATHAN STIRK/GETTY IMAGES

When and why you started boxing:

My friend had just started at Keighley ABC and he wanted someone to go along with him. He lasted about a week and I ended up staying. I was just naturally quite good at it.

Favourite all-time fighter:

Ricky Hatton! He was an exciting, aggressive fighter.

Best fight you've seen:

The Ricky Hatton-Kostya Tszyu fight got me hooked on the sport.

Personal career highlight:

It's got to be *Ultimate Boxer* – beating the favourite [Jonathan Palata] in the first round [in December last year]. It's probably quite rare to have a highlight like that in your first year as a pro.

Toughest opponent:

I boxed ex-professional Gary Thompson in a white-collar fight. He was a very, very tough man. I beat him on points over four rounds but it was hard.

Best and worst attributes as a boxer:

I think I've got fast hands for a heavyweight – that's my best attribute. My worst is that I overthink things.

Training tip:

Keep your hands up!

Favourite meal/restaurant:

My favourite meal's pizza, but I can't say that, can I?!

Best friends in boxing:

My manager, Glenn Banks, has been a great guide. He's not only a top manager and team member, but a good friend.

Other sportsman you would like to be:

I'd be a footballer, not just because I enjoy it but because they get paid a load of money. I'm quite good at



'AN OVERWEIGHT JIM CARREY COULD PLAY ME. I LIKE THE CRAIC'

football, despite my size. I was a centre-half when I played.

Last film/TV show you saw:

Robin Hood.

Who would play you in a film of your life:

Probably an overweight Jim Carrey. I like the craic and I'm very, very immature.

Have you ever been starstruck:

Yes, when I met Ricky Hatton at a dinner. Also, when I first met Dave Allen. He turned up at the gym on his bike to spar... with no gumshield. I don't want to give him a big head because now we speak all the time, but I was a bit starstruck the first time we met. He's mental!

Last time you cried:

When I found out I was having my baby girl, Aspen.

Best advice received:

'Have no regrets.' People told me to try boxing professionally so that I'd never have to think, what if?

Something not many people know about you:

I've got five kids and I'm only 29!

FAST FACTS

Age: 29 **Twitter:** n/a **Nickname:** 'Big Dawg' **Height:** 6ft 2ins
Nationality: English **From:** Silsden **Stance:** Orthodox **Records:** 3-1
Division: Heavyweight **Titles:** n/a **Next fight:** Whitaker is set for a four-rounder in Colne next Saturday (March 14).

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