HAYE MARKET

After bludgeoning hapless de Mori, who’s next in line?

• ‘Joshua fight will 100 per cent happen,’ his trainer exclusively reveals
• Our view on the comeback that everyone is talking about

'PACQUIAO BELIEVES HE BEAT MAYWEATHER’

We talk to Freddie Roach about the Filipino’s return

‘FIGHTERS COULD SMELL THE ALCOHOL ON HIM’

The tragic story of Sinan Samil Sam
THE ESSENTIAL FLOYD ‘MONEY’ MAYWEATHER SPECIAL AVAILABLE NOW

Accounts of all his fights up to the Saul Alvarez victory
Tales from his victims who explain how he defeated them
In the gym with the superstar, including his regime
Tommy Hearns on how a fight between the pair would go
And much, much more

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GOT THE POWER
David Haye shows he can still punch, against Mark de Mori
THE STAGE IS SET
The heavyweight division is big business again... now we need the fights to complement the intrigue

HE unwritten rule of high-profile boxing comebacks is you’re allowed one Mark de Mori. And it must be the first contest that follows the layoff. So forgive David Haye for not allowing himself to become a creature from them. And entering the early stages of middle age, the British star was permitted to scour the world rankings and pluck the least threatening creature from them. And despite fears that his return might struggle for attention, we’re told his bombastic display peaked at 3m viewers on free-to-air lads channel, Dave. If those figures are to be believed, more people watched Haye demolish de Mori than paid to see Tyson Fury bewitch Wladimir Klitschko, or Anthony Joshua and Dillian Whyte go to war at the end of last year. And higher numbers tuned into the 2016 version of Haye – on TV at least – than witnessed his return. Out of action since 2012, and entering the early stages of middle age, the British star was permitted to scour the world rankings and pluck the least threatening creature from them. And despite fears that his return might struggle for attention, we’re told his bombastic display peaked at 3m viewers on free-to-air lads channel, Dave.

Matt Christie
@MattCBoxingNews
Editor

THE STAGE IS SET
The heavyweight division is big business again... now we need the fights to complement the intrigue

LET IT BEGIN:
Haye's next steps are crucial

Haye has got our attention which was surely the point

The stage is set. Now what must be delivered are fights to take the division beyond the realms of curiosity. Fury-Wilder is one of the most important showdowns in the whole sport, and Haye-Joshua could do even bigger domestic business than the two Carl Froch and George Groves fights combined. And then the winner fights the winner. Maybe the losers can collide too. And let’s not forget Klitschko just yet.

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THERE have been a few grumbles about our rankings, and they’re completely understandable. One source of confusion seems to be our middleweight list, where Saul Alvarez and Miguel Cotto are placed above Gennady Golovkin. This does not mean we believe Golovkin would lose to either. It simply reflects our belief that the Kazakh is yet to beat anyone of that level. Cotto beat long-time divisional leader Sergio Martinez to claim the No.1 position, and then in turn lost it to Alvarez. In the meantime, Golovkin’s best wins are arguably over David Lemieux and Martin Murray. We will always reward achievement over potential, while respecting other independent rankings that may do the opposite. Ratings are so subjective, and cause plenty of debate. And from our point of view, the last thing they are supposed to do is cause any offence.

This does not mean we believe Golovkin would lose to either. It simply reflects our belief that the Kazakh is yet to beat anyone of that level. Cotto beat long-time divisional leader Sergio Martinez to claim the No.1 position, and then in turn lost it to Alvarez. In the meantime, Golovkin’s best wins are arguably over David Lemieux and Martin Murray. We will always reward achievement over potential, while respecting other independent rankings that may do the opposite. Ratings are so subjective, and cause plenty of debate. And from our point of view, the last thing they are supposed to do is cause any offence.

And for what it’s worth, if Golovkin was matched with Alvarez tomorrow, I’d pick the Kazakh to win, and get ready to alter the rankings accordingly after the fight.

WE’VE been granted exclusive access into the camp of light-heavyweight terror, Sergey Kovalev. We bring you our findings, and preview his rematch with Jean Pascal.

AND we’re ringside in California for Danny Garcia-Robert Guerrero, and in Bestnal Green for Ryan Walsh-Darren Traynor.

AVAILABLE to download via iTunes and Google Play from January 26, and the print edition is in stores on January 26.
Avid Haye obviously looked a lot bigger and some may think he looked slower but I think he was just loading up so much from the first bell. The anticipation of being out of the ring for three-and-a-half years and then finally getting in there in front of a packed-out crowd at the O2 Arena, he just went out there winging away. He knew he could knock out Mark de Mori and he wanted to put on a spectacular show for his fans, and also make a big statement. I think he did both.

We’ve been talking about this comeback for a very, very long time. He had me round his house on Christmas Eve in 2014. Even before Carl Frampton fought Chris Avalos, Haye told me he wanted to train with me and said he thought I was the guy for him. He had a few things to sort out with his shoulder and to get himself bulletproof. He went and saw the best specialist in the world and got it sorted and, honestly, it has not hindered him one bit in training. We’ve been talking about this comeback for a very, very long time. He had me round his house on Christmas Eve in 2014. Even before Carl Frampton fought Chris Avalos, Haye told me he wanted to train with me and said he thought I was the guy for him. He had a few things to sort out with his shoulder and to get himself bulletproof. He went and saw the best specialist in the world and got it sorted and, honestly, it has not hindered him one bit in training. The fact he took so long out and let himself completely heal and not get impatient is a big deal.

The day after the fight I spoke to him and he said, ‘I’ve never felt this good after a fight and a training camp, I can’t thank you enough.’ It was nice to hear that because I know he put his body through hell in every training camp. He knew he could always win the fights but he was just breaking down in them. So he talks to me about what he needs. With his weight we’ll just play it by ear. There are no barriers there, so why limit ourselves?

I want him to fight three times a year. Someone as big as him, he can’t be on an undercard. He needs to be the main event and needs time to promote the show. It’ll be interesting to see what offers we get this week; everyone wants to be involved in a David Haye fight because it brings prestige and it brings money. So we’ll decide on an opponent soon, I think he’ll have one more fight then he’ll be back in the mix and can fight for a world title.

I think it’s 100 per cent from our point of view that the Anthony Joshua fight will happen. I don’t think Eddie [Hearn] will let it happen because Joshua’s his big hope. He’s definitely a great fighter, I just don’t think they’ll rush him, because they don’t need to. I think he needs one or two more fights before he fights a David Haye fight because it brings prestige and it brings money. So we’ll decide on an opponent soon, I think he’ll have one more fight then he’ll be back in the mix and can fight for a world title. I think it’s 100 per cent from our point of view that the Anthony Joshua fight will happen. I don’t think Eddie [Hearn] will let it happen because Joshua’s his big hope. He’s definitely a great fighter, I just don’t think they’ll rush him, because they don’t need to. I think he needs one or two more fights before he fights a David Haye fight because it brings prestige and it brings money.

When Joshua gets to that position though, will he be ready? Will he be able to deal with the lateral movement? Can he hit a moving target? He’s never hit a moving target. He’s never fought somebody who’s slipping and sliding. When David does that he comes back with big shots and he’s quick. It’s an interesting fight and I’m definitely backing my man to knock him out.

Can Joshua hit a moving target? Will he be able to deal with the lateral movement?
HEAVYWEIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

WELL done to America’s Deontay Wilder for defeating the tough Pole Artur Szpilka with a devastating KO on Saturday (January 16). Szpilka gave Wilder plenty to think about and caught him a few times, but Deontay finally caught up with him in the ninth round. After the fight, the entertainment hadn’t finished, as unified heavyweight champion Tyson Fury entered the ring and taunted Wilder, with both men exchanging barbs. This was very exciting, and reminded me a little of some Muhammad Ali’s past antics. I hope Fury and Wilder end up facing each other sooner rather than later.

Patch Hammond, Norwich

POOR DE MORI

DAVID HAYE should apply to be a contestant on The Apprentice, as he would surely win the competition. He persuaded the entire audience inside the O2 Arena on Saturday (January 16), plus all the TV viewers, that he was back to face a live, possibly dangerous opponent. However, that foe, Mark de Mori, didn’t even put up a challenge. Haye is a top-class heavyweight, but despite his absence from competitive boxing for over three years, there must have been an opponent out there who could have shown more desire than de Mori.

Peter Mason, via e-mail

WE ASKED...

MARTIN HANCOX
He beats Deontay Wilder but loses to Tyson Fury and Anthony Joshua shouldn’t fight him just yet. Haye was a class act but needs to earn his shot again.

CHRIS REAL
He’ll be too good for Tyson Fury but Anthony Joshua, with youth on his side, may be a bit too much for Haye.

LEA DARREN PRIOR
Haye could beat any of them right now. This is the weakest heavyweight division ever, especially the belt-holders.

WASHLEY NYAKURONBA
If he fails to do the job in the first five rounds then Alexander Povetkin, Fury, Dereck Chisora and even Joshua would have the upper hand.

My only concern is why a two-weight world champion is seeking to challenge a relatively inexperienced boxer in Anthony Joshua. Surely Haye should be strategically moving towards an assault on a world title. Challenging a fighter that is still serving his apprenticeship is worrying. I wish Haye every success in his career, but not in this aspect.

Mike Hills, Glenwood Springs, Colorado

MIXED BAG

OVER the weekend (January 16-17), I watched three heavyweight fights. The first was the farce between David Haye and Mark de Mori. The ‘action’ consisted of de Mori standing against Haye and Mark de Mori. The ‘action’ was entertaining, and until the knockout, Szpilka gave a good account of himself.

In the post-fight interview, Wilder stated that he is not yet the finished article, but he would be prepared to come to the UK to face Tyson Fury in the future.

Mervyn Gee, Paignton
**HEAD-2-HEAD**

**DAVID HAYE VS ANTHONY JOSHUA**

**Who wins this fascinating clash of former champ and rising contender?**

**STEVIE WILKINSON**

Haye. Joshua’s power-punches will be hard to land on Haye and he hasn’t shown much more than power up to now.

**JAMES JONES**

Joshua would win. Haye is very experienced, but Joshua would be too quick and would outwit Haye.

**MATT COX**

Whoever lands first wins, Joshua wins with his handspeed if Haye stays heavy, as Haye can’t move like he needs to at his Mark de Mori weight.

**CARL PRESCOTT**

Haye might have been out for a while but you don’t lose experience. Would have to say Haye wins, more durable and faster.

**JAMES BUNYARD**

Joshua is pound-for-pound the better fighter. Haye hasn’t impressed me ever since fighting Klitschko.

**BRETT VIVIAN**

Haye is too fast and skilled, his head movement is too good for Joshua to catch him. Haye by eighth-10th round stoppage.

**FATA OSY SANGYUM**

Joshua will knock out David. Haye is fast but Joshua is too powerful.

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**THE PANEL**

**HOW FAR CAN DAVID HAYE GO IN HIS COMEBACK?**

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<tr>
<th>Kevin Campion</th>
<th>David Price</th>
<th>Carl Thompson</th>
<th>Kieran Mulvaney</th>
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<tr>
<td>Goodwin Head of Boxing</td>
<td>Heavyweight contender</td>
<td>Former Haye conqueror</td>
<td>BN US reporter</td>
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<td>I think he will be heavyweight champion again. He has the ability, the athleticism and the power to be right in the mix. The heavyweight division just got even more exciting now Haye is back.</td>
<td>He can go very far, not based on his ability and explosiveness. The way the land lies at the minute there is a good opening for him providing his body holds up.</td>
<td>Eying up all the heavyweights I think he could go far and regain a heavyweight title. I think Charles Martin would be ideal, a little tricky perhaps as he’s a southpaw but he might be the one to go for.</td>
<td>When I watched Anthony Joshua-Dillian Whyte, I thought to myself, ‘Haye’s the kind of guy that would give Joshua trouble, with his fast hands.’ Haye’s got talent so at the very least he can get a shot at Joshua.</td>
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**WHAT SHOULD DEONTAY WILDER DO NEXT?**

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<tr>
<td>There are some big fights out there for him. Povetkin is the fight most people have spoken about. But I think that’s a fight he would lose. The Tyson Fury fight is the fight people want to see but I also see Fury winning.</td>
<td>I wouldn't fight Povetkin next if I was him. He should fight Charles Martin, unify the titles and make as much money as he can while he’s got the title because I think they will all change hands over the next couple of years.</td>
<td>It’s a risky fight versus Alexander Povetkin, but if I was him I would defend against the No. 1 contender because I don’t believe in running and it would seem like running if he fought anyone else. Stand up and fight, you’re the champion.</td>
<td>Offensively he’s good but he seems to struggle when guys are throwing punches at him. I don’t know what he should do but I think he’ll avoid his mandatory somehow, take another fight or two then try for a fight with Fury.</td>
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**10 COUNT**

**BRITISH HEAVIES**

Daniel Herbert lists the UK’s greatest ever big men

1. **LENNOX LEWIS**

The big Londoner won 15 world title fights across two reigns as global king, licking Evander Holyfield, Mike Tyson and Vitali Klitschko among others.

2. **TYSON FURY**

Love him orloat him, Morecambe’s fighting gypsy dethroned a long-reigning unified champion in his own backyard in Wladimir Klitschko.

3. **HENRY COOPER**

British champion for a record 10 years and five months (1959-69), Henry lost his only world title bid to Muhammad Ali on one of his frequent cuts.

4. **DAVID HAYE**

The “Hayemaker” peaked at cruiserweight, but in the supreme division he wrested the WBA belt from man mountain Nikolai Valuev.

5. **FRANK BRUNO**

Big hitter improved his stamina to become world champ (WBC version) at the third attempt, holding it for six months (1995-96).

6. **BOB FITZSIMMONS**

Held the world title from 1897-99 even though he weighed only what would now be super-middleweight. Tough and a hurtful hitter despite his wiry build.

7. **TOMMY FARR**

Renowned chiefly for taking a peak Joe Louis the distance in 1937, this Welshman was a brainy fighter who lacked a hard dig.

8. **JOE BUGNER**

Built superbly but without a devastating punch, Joe nevertheless went the distance with Muhammad Ali (twice) and Joe Frazier at his peak.

9. **BRUCE WOODCOCK**

Like so many British heavies, this Yorkshireman fell short at world level, but he was good enough to round up national, Empire and European crowns in the late 1940s.

10. **DON COCKEL**

This Battersea man is best known for his villain ninth-round 1955 world title loss to Rocky Marciano, but before that he had notched some good wins in the USA.
**THE WEEK**

What’s been going on in the boxing world over the last seven days

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**SUBSTITUTE: Butler (pictured) will face Corcoran next month**

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**BLACKWELL GETS JNR**

**THURSDAY January 14, 2016**

THE highlight of the latest British Boxing Board of Control Circulars, is confirmation that Hennessy Sports have won the purse bids to host Nick Blackwell’s mandated defence of his British middleweight title, against Chris Eubank Jr, on March 5, at Glow in Kent’s Bluewater.

Mick Hennessy, who represents the champion and has worked with Eubank in the past, works closely with terrestrial platform, Channel 5.

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**FURY WANTS TO FIGHT JOSHUA**

**FRIDAY January 15, 2016**

HUGHIE FURY, cousin of world heavyweight champion Tyson Fury, tells Boxing News he would welcome a domestic showdown with British champion, Anthony Joshua.

"I got the offer when he had around five fights, and I'd had about 10,” claims the 21-year-old. “My dad [trainer Peter] said, 'We'll take it', and we heard nothing from him. I’d take it tomorrow if he asked for it but I can’t see them going this route. He’s human and he can get hurt at the end of the day. If they put him in now with good opposition he’s going to come undone.”

Joshua – ranked a generous No. 2 by the WBC (Hughie is No. 30) – is scheduled to return to action on April 9, whereas Hughie looks like competing in March.

"I want to get my rankings up over the next few fights,” Fury, 18-0 (10), continues. “I just want a good opponent, I’d face whoever will take it. I know I put the hard work and dedication in and I’m not really bothered about the British title; if it comes, it comes. My focus is on world titles. By the end of this year, hopefully everything goes to plan and I get up in the rankings for all the major governing bodies. I want to have good fights this year. Tyson was stripped of the IBF title just days after taking it from Wladimir Klitschko last year, and Hughie believes that could be a blessing in disguise.

"It’s better for me so I can clear his name. I don’t fight family, me and Tyson will never fight each other, but hopefully we get all the titles between us.”

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**FAMILY AFFAIR: Hughie (pictured) hopes that he and cousin Tyson can claim all the major belts between them**

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**BUTLER STEPS IN**

**WEDNESDAY January 13, 2016**

THE injury woes of Joe Selkirk continue, as he’s forced out of his February 6 10-round super-welterweight bout with Gary Corcoran at Dublin’s National Stadium. The Liverpudlian, 28, will be replaced by perennial domestic contender Danny Butler.

A former English middleweight champion, Butler, also 28, fancies his chances of upsetting the unbeaten Corcoran.

“I’ve watched a bit of Gary and I know he’s a strong, come-forward type of fighter but that doesn’t faze me at all, I’m happy to stand and trade with him,” says Bristol’s Butler, who lost a 2009 bid for the then-vacant 160lb British title against Darren Barker.

“It doesn’t bother me fighting away from home. I’ve got a job to do and it doesn’t matter where it is.”

Corcoran, meanwhile, is not concerned about the change of opponent. "I’m still 100 per cent focused on fight night. We’ve been sparring all around the country, lately I’ve been sparring Bradley Skeete and Tommy Langford.”

Skeete, meanwhile, will challenge British and Commonwealth welterweight champion Sam Eggington on March 5 at Birmingham’s Genting Arena. Kai and Gamal Yafai will also appear.

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**KNOWN QUANTITY: Blackwell meets a man he has sparred before**

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**THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK**

- Fury wants to fight Joshua.
- Butler steps in for Selkirk.
- Blackwell gets Jnr.

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**TRENDING**

#HAYEDAY / #WILDERSZPILKA / #FURYWILDER / #FRAMPTONQUIGG
‘I CAN CONFIRM, THERE WAS NO ALTERCATION BETWEEN [TYSON] FURY AND MYSELF. I ADMIRE THE BIG MAN’

Carl Froch chuckles at the suggestion he was close to brawling with the world heavyweight champion.

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

**DALLAS ACTION**

SATURDAY January 16, 2016

AT The Bomb Factory in Dallas, Texas, lightweight prospect Erick De Leon takes just 2-18 to flatten Fidel Navarrette. The 23-year-old, born in Mexico but a US citizen since 2011, was a three-time National Golden Gloves Champion, and once worked with Emanuel Steward out of the Kronk Gym.

The southpaw cracked Navarrette to the canvas with a savage right hook. The American regained his footing but was deemed in no condition to continue by referee Laurence Cole. De Leon is now 12-0 (6).

Topping the bill, in another lightweight battle, is the young Mexican lightweight prospect, Matt Korobov, who wins a lopsided verdict (three scores of 80-71) over Mexican Josue Ovando. The victory is Korobov's first since his only loss – a December 2014 defeat to Andy Lee.

The 33-year-old Russian, who represented his nation at the 2008 Olympics, sees his record improve to 25-1 (14).

**AL’S CAMP FOR SALE**

SUNDAY January 17, 2016

MUHAMMAD ALI turns 74, and his famous Deer Lake training camp, where he prepared for the likes of Joe Frazer and George Foreman in the 1970s, is up for sale and can be yours for $495,000.

The five-acre site, in Owings, Pennsylvania, is now a boxing fan's dream bed-and-breakfast destination. Sylvester Stallone, Howard Cosell, Sammy Davis Jnr and Frank Sinatra have all stayed there.

Bought from Ali himself in 1997 – 16 years after the fighter last used it as a training camp for his final bout against Trevor Berbick – George Dillman refurbished the worn-out site, but key reminders of Ali’s time there remain: the house Ali lived in; his gym; kitchen hall; chalet and horse stable; and 10 cabins – which housed Ali's team and sparring partners – are all there atop a secluded mountain.

Dotted among the 18 buildings are 18 giant boulders, on which names of great boxers, like Joe Louis and Rocky Marciano, are painted. Further investigation will uncover hooks that supported his punching bags, and hand-written notes he compiled while training like: “Up at 4.45am (GOOD!), weight before running 228, ran four miles, weight after 226…”

All memorabilia, including pictures of Ali, are incorporated in the price and serious interested parties should contact Kim Raifsnider on 001-610-223-7548.

**WINNING AGAIN:** Korobov [right] outpoints Ovando

**TYSON’S FAN CLUB**

MONDAY January 18, 2016

TALES of an altercation between Carl Froch and Tyson Fury, alleged to have taken place in New York over the weekend, start to gather pace on the weird and wonderful world of social media.

Froch, now working as an analyst for Sky Sports, was ringside in Brooklyn covering the Deontay Wilder-Artur Szpilka fight when Fury invaded the ring after the bout. The story goes that the pair squared up, security intervened, and Froch fled from the scene in fear.

“I heard that myself,” Froch laughs when Boxing News ask him about the incident two days later. “Maybe he [Fury] had an argument with a tall, dark, handsome guy and people thought it was me. So, I can confirm, there was no altercation between Fury and myself; I admire the big man.”

Another of Tyson’s admirers is the lightweight champion’s two-time victim, Dereck Chisora.

Also on the Wilder-Szpilka bill was the farcical encounter between Charles Martin and Vyacheslav Glazkov that saw Martin crown the new IBF champion, and then declare he could beat Fury.

“I don’t think you could beat Tyson Fury,” Chisora tells Martin. “The guy is just too big.” The Londoner then calls out the new champion, and reflects: “We’re like a bunch of hyenas, we’re here to get the scraps.”

**LESSONS BANKED**

TUESDAY January 19, 2016

JOHN RYDER is well aware that his January 30 opponent, Sergey Khomitsky, is a dangerman.

It will be his second bout since losing a memorable battle with Blackwell last May. “I’m doing things majorly differently to how I’ve approached fights before and that element of fear is in me as I know what Khomitsky is capable of.”

“Take no notice of his age, the last thing to go in a fighter is their power, he’ll have that until the end, so I know that this is a dangerous fight.”

Ryder was once considered one of the brightest prospects in Britain, but the loss to Blackwell – that came two years after a tight defeat to Billy Joe Saunders – rocked his reputation.

“My diet and training has changed a lot since losing to Blackwell,” Ryder reveals. “The most important thing in a loss is to learn from it. I don’t want to lose any more fights.”

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK**
ALL-NEW LEWIS

LEWIS PETTITT returns this Friday (January 22) four months after his shock 11th-round defeat to Bobby Jenkinson in a vacant Commonwealth super-bantamweight title fight.

“I did a lot of things wrong that night,” the Erith (Kent) boxer tells Boxing News. “I was winning comfortably, even though it was my worst performance. But it just didn’t pan out the way I wanted.”

Lewis admits his weight preparation was all wrong. “In the summer I went on holiday and came back at 11st [154lbs], which was far too big. Getting down to super-bantam [122lbs] was a struggle.

“But I’ve employed a nutritionist and feel a different fighter now. I’m eating five times a day instead of one meal a day. The nutritionist, she’s got me eating fish and veg, as much as I want. And I’m taking on five times as much fluid now, so I’m well-hydrated.”

Tomorrow’s fight at Bethnal Green’s York Hall is an eight-rounder at 126lbs against Poland’s Krzysztof Rogowski, about whom Lewis knows a bit: “I saw him on Sky against Liam Hanrahan [in September 2014 in Manchester]. He went down but got up to knock out Hanrahan, so he’s dangerous.”

Daniel Herbert talks to a philosophical fighter

HERTFORDSHIRE middleweight Elliott Matthews is looking forward to getting back into the ring after a cut eye in sparring forced him out of a British title shot late last year.

Matthews boxes a six-rounder on a February 27 show promoted by his manager Mickey Helliet at York Hall, where he hasn’t boxed for 10 years, since his days as a star amateur with Repton.

Elliott was all set to challenge British 160lbs king Nick Blackwell on a Channel Five-televised show in November, only to get cut in his last sparring session just eight days before. The wound, on his right eye, needed four stitches.

“It was a nuisance,” recalls Rickmansworth’s Matthews in a conversation with Boxing News. “The British title shot was a great opportunity for me and to get cut in sparring was just one of those things. They happen for a reason.”

Jack Arnfield from Blackpool took Matthews’ place and put up a solid performance before going down on points. Some boxers might have been too frustrated to tune in, but not Elliott.

“I watched the fight on television,” he says. “Blackwell’s good but not unbeatable, and I think I could have won the fight. I’m hoping to get the chance again this year and a direct British title shot would be ideal. I’ve made a lot of efforts to get into this position.”

In March Blackwell is scheduled to defend against Chris Eubank Jnr in an ordered defence, for which purse bids were won by Mick Hennessy. Elliott fancies the title to change hands – “on points or maybe a late stoppage” – but is happy to fight either man.

“I’ve got a lot of faith in myself,” adds Matthews, who is 34 but turned pro aged 30. “I train full-time and have just moved into a place 10 minutes from the Elite gym in Limehouse, where Barry Smith is my trainer.

“I’m just getting back into sparring now. I work with a couple of Turkish guys, they’re strong. And I spar a mix of weights, including light-heavies and super-lightweights, to work on different things. It’s going well.”

‘I’VE GOT A LOT OF FAITH’

Daniel Herbert

SHAYNE’S FUMING

SHAYNE SINGLETON was left fuming after the Colne man didn’t get to appear on the weekend’s big O2 bill. Opponent John O’Donnell withdrew injured three days beforehand from their British welterweight title eliminator and Singleton was dropped from the card.

Singleton’s manager Steve Wood tweeted that he hoped his boxer’s fans “who paid for travel, hotels and tickets from O2 direct (boxers not allowed tickets) get their hard-earned monies back.”

David Haye’s company Hayemaker Promotions staged the show, but providing the undercard was Goodwin Boxing, who said they “had no comment to make on the matter.”

‘EUBANK CAN BEAT BLACKWELL ON POINTS OR MAYBE A LATE STOPPAGE’

AMBITIOUS:
Matthews is still aiming for a shot at the British title
Boxing News’ illustrious annual review of the boxing world is back and this year we relive the sport’s greatest nights through the eyes of the fighters. The likes of Ricky Hatton, Joe Calzaghe, Marvin Hagler and many more take the reader through every element of their finest fights, as if they were there with them. Plus much more.

ON SALE NOW AT WWW.BOXINGNEWSSHOP.COM OR DOWNLOAD ON THE BOXING NEWS APP
PREPARING: Roach [centre] is going to get Pacquiao [left] ready for his fight with Bradley.
I was recently confirmed that Manny Pacquiao will fight WBO welterweight champion Tim Bradley for a third time on April 9, at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Bradley took a highly controversial decision over Pacquiao in 2012 before Manny gained revenge in 2014. Amir Khan and Terence Crawford were also considered as potential opponents this time around, and the announcement of Pacquiao-Bradley III has so far been met with mostly derision from fans. The Filipino insists it will be his final fight while his trainer, Freddie Roach, believes his charge will stick around for a lucrative rematch against Floyd Mayweather, who defeated him last May.

How is Manny doing, is the right shoulder he injured in training for Mayweather - then had surgery on - fully healed now?

He’s doing very well, he’ll do a few weeks training in the Philippines then he’ll come down to my gym. He seems motivated for the fight. I talked to him on the phone and I’m happy he’s getting back in the ring. Bradley’s always been a tough guy, he’s got a new trainer [Teddy Atlas] who’s quite the story-teller. We’ll see what happens. His shoulder is fine now, he’s playing basketball and the surgery went well and he says he feels fine.

Why did Manny choose to go with a third fight against Bradley?

Well the offer was made from Top Rank, there were a couple of other names out there – we kind of wanted to fight [Terence] Crawford but they don’t think he’s ready for Manny yet. It is 1-1 on paper [laughs]. He’s a good opponent. I don’t think it’ll be Manny’s last fight.

So can you see Manny fighting again in 2016?

Well it depends on what happens with the elections in the Philippines, if he becomes a Senator. But I can see it happening. I just know he still has a lot of fight left in him and once he gets in the gym he trains his a** off and he still has a great work ethic. Manny’s spoken about his desire to get a rematch with Mayweather; do you think that’s realistic in the near future?

I don’t know if Floyd will definitely come back but Manny will always want to fight him; if we didn’t have that injury in the first fight we would’ve done a lot better. Manny’s watched it over and over and still feels he won the fight and a lot of other people feel the same way. It wasn’t the most exciting fight last time around but if he’s healthy and has two hands, it would be much more exciting.

What do you make of the teaming of Bradley and Teddy Atlas?

I didn’t see much improvement in the last fight [Bradley’s stoppage win over Brandon Rios]. He had a fat, overweight guy in front of him. I don’t think we can give him [Atlas] credit yet. If Bradley does better against Manny, we can give him credit but I don’t think that’ll happen. I don’t think being a cheerleader is the best way to train a fighter.

What about Adrien Broner?

His name also came up as an option. Broner’s come to my gym, he’s kind of a friend of mine somehow. I was nice to him when he first started boxing, he was a good kid back then. When he came here he was very respectful and very nice. He’s not a bad kid, he was mentioned but with the struggle between [Broner’s advisor, Al] Haymon and his side of boxing it’s very difficult. That’s really the same thing with Amir Khan [advised by Haymon and promoted by Golden Boy], he’s not with the same company [as Top Rank’s Pacquiao] and it’s difficult to make those fights happen. I don’t know why they let people have monopolies on the fight game because the best should fight the best, that’s the only way boxing can become the top sport in the world. It’s foolish.

You’re also currently training Jean Pascal. How is preparation going for his fight with Sergey Kovalev on January 30?

A lot of my focus is on Jean right now as he’s fighting for the [unified light-heavyweight] title. That camp is going very well, I’m concentrating on him as much as I can. I have another fight in China on the same day so I’m sending [assistant trainers] Justin Fortune and Marvin [Somodio] to China with [Zou] Shiming [who meets unbeaten Brazilian Nathan Santana Coutinho] and I’ll go to Montreal to fight Kovalev. It’s hard when fights turn up on the same day, Pascal wants Marvin to wrap his hands and I said, ‘Well, he can’t! He’s in China.’ Everyone wants to wait for Marvin and not me! I’m looking forward to an upset in Montreal though.
HERE was something grossly unfair about it, but the bloodthirsty fans, present in their thousands, didn’t care. Like dropping a mouse into a box of cats, the woeful Australian (Perth) Mark de Mori was fed to David Haye at a packed O2 Arena in London. It was all over in 131 seconds.

A grotesque mismatch, indeed, but one that catapults the winner – back after an absence of three-and-a-half years – into a land of opportunity.

“I’m punching harder than ever,” said Haye in the thrashing’s aftermath. “I don’t believe any heavyweight on the planet could stand up to those shots.”

Not many heavyweights would retreat to the ropes and invite Haye to knock them out like de Mori did, either. These first steps back had to be small, though, and the selection of the Aussie, somehow rated No. 10 by the WBA, was perfectly understandable. After all, Mike Tyson battered an equally overmatched Peter McNeeley in 1995 following a layoff, but this tells us little about Haye’s chances of ruling the heavyweight division. It did show, in gruesome detail, that the British star’s punching power remains after reconstructive surgery on his perennially pesky right shoulder, but how his swollen muscles, inflated like never before, cope in more rigorous tests remains unknown. Here, though, it did not matter. This was always about reminding the fans what the division had been missing in his absence, and the fans – an attendance figure of 16,000 was

**THE VANITY PROJECT**

Haye delights fans and, after his layoff, looks good against the made-to-order de Mori
reported – were given a stark reminder of that.
In his pomp, “Hayemaker” was fast and explosive. Now 35, Haye evidenced both qualities yet seemed a shade slower, and a little stiff in the opening minute. That could be down to a number of things – rustiness, age, increased muscle mass – but analysing this contest too deeply is pointless.
What we got was blazing violence from an immensely talented fighter, one of the best of his generation, yet one in against someone sorely outclassed. Important for David’s future, his supporters will pay to watch what happens next, and so they should, because this comeback – whatever the motives for it – allows Haye to re-enter a division that has improved since he exited. And the Londoner’s presence, for however long it lasts, adds vitally for Haye – bucketloads of cash.
At the O2, there was a smattering of ticket sales were eased long before Haye entered the ring. For an hour before the main event, there was no boxing for fans to watch, yet they clung to their plastic cups of beer and danced to the beats booming from the DJ set which provided

The atmosphere in the O2 was suffocating, and the floor stickier than a seaside nightclub.

By the time Haye entered the ring, with new trainer Shane McGuigan, the crowd were at fever pitch. The ageing star surveyed his castle, inhaled the adoration, and smiled a heartfelt smile. Just for a moment, as he walked towards the ring singing along to his signature tune – Ain’t No Stoppin’ Us Now – it was like he had never been away.

“I genuinely wasn’t expecting the response I got, it was so positive,” said Bernordsen’s Haye. “It makes me want to keep on giving them these nights. I went out there and thought, ‘This is amazing.’ It felt like the old days. It really was something else. Hopefully next time the guy can stand up.”

De Mori never looked like standing up for long. Though his pre-fight ambition should not be doubted, a dipping jab to the gut quickly got his attention and, just as Haye had predicted beforehand, any plans for victory disappeared. Haye chased him to the ropes, and each punch he threw looked, and sounded, like it might end the fight. But the favourite was wild, attempting a hook that missed before de Mori threw an overhand right that nestled into his rival’s guard. Haye was not concerned, stalked with menace, and fully loaded three more swings. One landed, one hit the Aussie’s shield, and the other missed. De Mori was soon crippled by panic. He found himself in a neutral corner. Haye was on him again. A jab, delivered far too politely, was countered with a sickening right hand. The fight, such as it was, was all but over. De Mori lurched forward, his face met a replica blast before a left hand completed the bombing.

The visitor slumped down the ropes, frozen in shock – plonked in an undignified heap on the canvas. One arm was locked straight, the other jutted out beneath his body, and referee Bob Williams waved his own above him. Haye was delighted, and undoubtedly relieved, but briefly de Mori’s stricken condition was a cause for concern.
Several minutes passed before he regained his footing – complete with oxygen mask, and a little embarrassment, on his face.

And that was that. David Haye, the master of disaster, is back.

THE VERDICT Haye does as expected, and marmalises de Mori.
WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

Matt Christie examines some options for Haye

TYSON FURY

WBA Super and WBO champion Fury [below] is unlikely to entertain the thought of fighting Haye in the near future. Haye twice pulled out of contests with Fury in the past and Tyson, left seriously out of pocket, has never really forgiven him.

"I think Tyson Fury is a good fighter, very good," said Haye. "It's a shame he doesn't want to fight me. I think we all know why, when he sees punch power like that."

However, if the champion defeats Wladimir Klitschko in their projected return, and Haye is still around, Fury will undoubtedly reconsider. For now, though, this contest is off the table.

ANTHONY JOSHUA

AS Eddie Hearn mentioned on Twitter, a Haye-Joshua showdown is big enough to sell out Wembley Stadium twice over. And money-motivated Haye would make this contest tomorrow. The bookies already make the younger man favourite, but this battle of the ages is no forgone conclusion.

Haye could take Joshua to places he's never been before. For that reason, it will not happen next. But if both are still winning at the end of the summer, its appeal grows even more. Huge.

"I believe that fight can be made later on in the year," said Haye. "I'm in shape, I'm punching hard. I'm a little bit older. It'll make for a great fight."

DILLIAN WHYTE

"WE want fun fights for the fans," said Haye, whose plan is to unify the division. "There are plenty of guys out there. I'm just happy to be back. I've been sitting on the outside for so long. It's a really lovely feeling to be back and giving the fans something back."

A contest against Wilder would fit the bill. The WBC champion has sparred with Haye in the past, and the Englishman would fancy his chances against the heavy-handed giant. However, Wilder is obliged to take on formidable Russian Alexander Povetkin later in the year and a bout with Haye, at this stage, will not happen.

DEONTAY WILDER

THIS would be a logical step towards Anthony Joshua, the fight Haye seems to crave the most. Whyte's performance against Joshua in December, albeit a losing one, showed that he would put up a spirited effort, and one capable of testing Haye's ageing body far more than the Mark de Mori of the world. What's more, it should be easy to make, easy to sell, and Haye could build his case towards a ludicrously lucrative contest with Joshua before, during and after the contest. Out of Haye's domestic rivals, Whyte, at least at this juncture, looks the most likely.
Wladimir Klitschko

Despite a 10-year reign, few people are mentioning 39-year-old Klitschko’s [below] name anymore. But what if his subdued performance against Fury was an aberration, and not evidence of the ageing process? A win over Tyson in the return – surely not beyond the realms of possibility – and the Ukrainian regains his place as the man to be shot at. Also consider Haye’s competitive streak, and ego. It bothered him for years that he never got the chance to gain revenge over Carl Thompson, and he would likely welcome a sequel with Klitschko whatever the result of the Fury rematch.

Ruslan Chagaev/Lucas Browne

Ruslan Chagaev, 37, defends his WBA ‘regular’ title against Lucas Browne in March and the winner could be targeted by Haye later in the year. The Brit wants to return in April, but might be persuaded to wait a little while longer for a contest that would be unquestionably winnable, and for a spurious title that could be marketed as a genuine one. Chagaev or Browne would also represent a decent test for Haye at this stage of his career, and the Brit must have secured a lofty spot in the WBA rankings thanks to the bludgeoning he handed to the their 10th best heavyweight in the world.

Carlos Takam

A wildcard, perhaps, but the beatable Frenchman holds a Top 15 ranking with the IBF, WBC and the WBO. Ageing and stodgy, Takam is another fighter who could make Haye look good and his reputation in the boxing world far exceeds that of de Mori. What’s more, the Cameroon-born fighter’s schedule is clear and he may feel the time is right to fight Haye after three confidence-building wins which followed a 2014 loss to Alexander Povetkin. Perhaps he lacks the name value of some other contenders on the list but Takam seems a perfect fit for Haye’s masterplan.

Charles Martin

“The shoulder feels better than it was before. I feel this new and improved version of me will go on and win heavyweight championships,” Haye commented about his apparent desire to unify the division. The little-known Charles Martin is now the IBF champion [see pages 22-23], and would likely be a welcome target for any relevant name in the weight class. However, the sanctioning body he rules is a stickler for mandatory challenges and, as yet, Haye is nowhere to be seen in their rankings, and beating up de Mori is unlikely to see him enter too highly. Boxing politics appear to make this one a non-starter.

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THE hard-fought scrap between Liverpool veteran Tony Dodson and Harlow’s Richard Horton added some much-needed drama to the undercard – hit by the late cancellation of John O’Donnell-Shayne Singleton. As per, Dodson was forced to fight through his own blood, but appeared a more comfortable winner after six rounds than referee Kieran McCann’s 59-56 card suggested.

Dodson, a former British super-middleweight champion, was perhaps outworked in the opening session but landed a delightful left hook, thrown with an expert hand, which was the highlight of the early exchanges. The Scouser upped the pressure in the second, and regularly showed his class on the inside and with his work on the counter. However, from what looked like a clash of heads, Dodson’s left eye was suddenly framed by blood. He didn’t seem to care, though. Ignoring the injury, he prowled after Horton and hurled a three-punch volley – finished with a short right – that dumped the underdog on the canvas.

Horton rose gamely, but looked unsteady when the bell came to his rescue. After that, it looked like Dodson dominated. He pummelled Horton up close, and while swallowing the occasional retort, his classier work appeared to guarantee victory. Although on two occasions the ringside doctor was asked to examine his grisly wound, which flapped and bled throughout, and would later require 16 stitches to close. After six rounds, Dodson’s arm was raised, and considering the knockdown, the final tally suggests Horton was given at least a share of three of the other sessions.

Opening the evening – which in fairness ran like clockwork – was a cumbersome cruiserweight encounter between Canning Town’s Wadi Camacho, and Czech Jindrich Velecky. Southpaw Camacho was deliberate with his attacks yet had some problems landing more than one shot at a time against a largely stationary target. Velecky, just happy to be there, offered no threat.

The favourite improved in the last two sessions but never looked like getting the stoppage. The 60-54 score returned by McCann surprised no one.

Tidy Luton prospect, Kay Prospere, took just 2-32 to blaze through Killamarsh’s usually sturdy Lee Connelly in a super-lightweight contest scheduled for six. Prospere started fast, raining punishment on Connelly from the start. A right hand dumped Connelly on the deck midway through, and he delivered the finish one minute later via a short left hook. Referee Jeff Hinds’ decision to call it off was the right one.

At super-bantamweight, the two-minute duration of rounds – as opposed to the more common three – allowed brave but outgunned Elemir Rafael to survive the full six-session course with Folkestone’s Josh Kennedy. The Slovakian was under fire from the start and Kennedy, who had stopped all four of his previous opponents, moved in for the finish as early as the opening round. But Rafael was tough and game, and refused to fall, opting instead to hold on tight to Kennedy. The broad, thin shoulders of Kennedy are designed for power but he had to settle for the lopsided 60-54 points win this time.

Cries of “Fix” greeted Stratford-based Angolan Jose Lopes’ effortless win over Dinnington’s Darren Snow, who toppled from a left hook that only seemed to graze. After 35 seconds it was all over, including Mr Hinds’ 10-count.

**FULL RESULTS**

- David Haye (227 1/4lbs), 27-2 (25), w rsf 1 Mark de Mori (243 1/2lbs), 30-3-2 (26); Tony Dodson (175 3/4lbs), 32-8-1 (15), w pts 6 Richard Horton (177 3/4lbs), 9-6-1; Kay Prospere (142lbs 2oz), 7-0 (5), w rsf 1 Lee Connelly (140 1/4lbs), 4-17-1; Wadi Camacho (200lbs 1oz), 14-5 (8), w pts 6 Jindrich Velecky (197lbs 14oz), 19-60 (18); Josh Kennedy (128 1/2lbs), 5-0 (4), w pts 6 Elemir Rafael (125lbs 2oz), 33-105 (8); Jose Lopes (197 3/4lbs), 6-6 (3), w ko 1 Darren Snow (196lbs 7oz), 1-2-1.
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Wilder unhinges competitive Szpilka before rival champ Tyson throws down the gauntlet

NE punch from Deontay Wilder may have changed the course of the heavyweight division. The short right which obliterated Artur Szpilka at 2-24 of the ninth round (set for 12) not only resulted in Wilder retaining his WBC heavyweight title, but also started the drums beating for what could turn out to be the biggest heavyweight fight in a couple of decades.

After Szpilka was removed from the ring by stretcher as a precautionary measure, into the ring bounced an animated Tyson Fury, the WBO and WBA Super champion, demanding a unification showdown. Fury took off his vest and threw it to the ground in a gesture of wanting to settle matters then and there. It was pure WWE stuff. Fury seemed delighted in casting himself as the villain and the crowd of 12,668 at Barclays Center ate it up. But the longer Fury stayed in the ring the more the potential of a dangerous melee loomed. Wilder, shielded in his corner, at first did not respond. However, a confrontation became inevitable when Fury, after pacing around the ring, insisted on walking right up to Wilder where they went face to face. The sheer size of the massive Fury made it evident that promoter Lou DiBella and the New York State commission personnel would have been at risk had a physical altercation occurred. Security was sparse. "Any time, any place, anywhere. I’ll fight you in your backyard after I beat [Wladimir] Klitschko again" said Fury.

“We all know Fury is just a phony” responded Wilder. “This is just an act – you’re not a real fighter.”

Certainly, the knockout of Szpilka was one of the most devastating one-punch endings in heavyweight history. It conjured up memories of the 1972 light-heavyweight championship fight in which Bob Foster wrecked Mike Quarry with a single blow.

Maybe because Szpilka had been so competitive to that point, referee Mike Griffin did not realise the severity of the blow at first. As Szpilka lay...
motionless on his back Griffin started to count, but stopped at ‘five’ when it then became evident to him that the man from Wieliczka, Poland was out. By that point the medics were rushing into the ring and Dr Barry Jordan was frantically waving for the stretcher to be brought in. Even Wilder who had engaged in a shoving match with Szpilka earlier in the week during a promotional event, stopped and looked down on his adversary and seemed concerned. Szpilka was on the canvas for several minutes but appeared responsive in following the doctor’s instructions. And when Artur was being removed on the stretcher he pumped his right fist to the crowd. At that point everyone was relieved.

Wilder’s big right rendered the scorecards irrelevant and also masked just how much he had struggled until the end. In the punch statistics Wilder’s edge was marginal, but judges Pasquale Procopio and Waleska Roldan had him comfortably ahead at 78-74, while Guido Cavalleri had the man from Tusculoosa up 77-75. The consensus at ringside was that it was a close fight in which Wilder was slightly up.

The heavy contingent of fans from Brooklyn’s Polish community roared loudly whenever Szpilka attacked. They motivated their man who moved in and out, side to side, frustrating Wilder with quickness. It was not until the third round that Wilder was able to establish a rhythm. Wilder moved forward behind a jab and followed up with some long rights. Szpilka had been cautiously attacking, never standing still long enough to engage.

A right had Szpilka reeling backward in the fourth. Deontay was cutting the ring off better, but Szpilka remained elusive and scored with two jabs and a left hook that sent the sweat sailing off Wilder’s head in the fifth. The champion quickly restored order, landing a savage...
right uppercut – and that was how it was playing out until the decisive moment. Szpilka would dart in with a flurry, not having much power behind the blows. Wilder would land a good punch now and then, but was largely frustrated by his inability to trap the challenger. The frustration was mounting for Wilder, but he remained patient.

Ironically the match ended in such explosive fashion not because of the champion’s aggression, but because of the challenger’s. Late in the ninth round Szpilka had Wilder backed up. He then dipped down and threw a left hook with full force. The blow was way too wide and never reached the mark. Wilder stepped in with a perfect short right to the chin and it was all she wrote.

Trainer Ronnie Shields, while stressing how proud he was of Szpilka’s effort, also expressed frustration over how he threw the hook which resulted in him getting caught. “I stressed in training camp over and over that it was something he shouldn’t do,” said Shields.

“He was a crafty guy,” admitted Wilder. “I haven’t competed against a southpaw in three years. I’m surprised it took that long, but we had nine rounds and they all can’t be pretty.”

A day of reckoning is coming for Wilder. He cherishes being WBC champion to the point of having his green belt dressed in fur. WBC president Mauricio Sulaiman made it abundantly clear at the press conference two days before the fight that the winner had to box mandatory challenger Alexander Povetkin, who was in attendance at Barclays Center. Some feel that Al Haymon and the others guiding Wilder’s career will avoid Povetkin, who would be by far the best and most dangerous opponent he has faced. They could then match him with the new IBF champion (see below) who would be less of a threat. Will Wilder override his advisors and insist on fighting Povetkin? Stay tuned.

Charles Martin and Vyacheslav Glazkov met over a scheduled 12 rounds for the vacant IBF heavyweight title that was ridiculously stripped from Fury. It can be argued that the fight that never should have been made, never got started. After two timid rounds that resembled a meek sparring session, Glazkov stumbled backward in the third round and went down without getting hit. Glazkov limped slightly when he got up. Glazkov then threw a long body blow, but as he did the man from Ukraine’s right knee became distorted and he fell backward. He got up limping and there was temporary confusion as to what was occurring. At most southpaw Martin threw a punch that grazed Glazkov’s glove. Glazkov looked like he wanted out. Soon it became apparent why: he had
torn his right ACL, the most severe of all knee injuries. It was then stopped at 1:50 of the session.

Martin, from Carson, California, now finds himself as the most unlikely of champions. Although unbeaten, Martin had never remotely moved in world-class company before. There is usually a line to face a world champion, but for Martin that queue will extend around the block, so vulnerable is he perceived. For now at least, all contenders will take note that the easiest path to the world heavyweight title goes through the man that the IBF calls its king.

"He felt my power" said Martin before watching the replay and being forced to acknowledge the injury played a decisive role in the outcome.

"This should have been my belt," said Findley in the fight was Gadzhiev's ability to get off first. The small promotional group New Legends Inc proudly had announced earlier in the week the signing of Brooklyn light-heavyweight Julian Sosa. The partnership got off to a nice start when Sosa halted St Joseph, Julian Sosa, the new IBF unified ruler Fury

Findley is your prototypical fighter who is much better than his record indicates. In his last contest he lost a split decision to Australian prospect Zac Dunn, but against Sulecki never won a round. Sulecki impressed with his smooth boxing skills and is ready to take a serious leap up in class. A right nearly dropped Findley in the seventh round at which point it was stopped by referee Shada Murdaugh.

Adam Kownacki and Washington, D.C’s Danny Kelly engaged in the best fight of the night despite the lopsided scoring in the Brooklyn-based Pole’s favour (Carlos Ortiz and Robert Perez 80-72 and Glenn Feldman 79-73 over eight sessions). It was non-stop punching throughout. Kownacki’s workrate never wavered, but Kelly hung tough and refused to pack it in when he easily could. Kelly fought back valiantly but Kownacki was too strong and relentless. The novelty of marketing Chicago’s Mike Lee as a former football player for the “Fighting Irish” college team of Notre Dame has worn off. Lee who has also done a high-profile commercial for the food chain Subway seems more of a part-time fighter than one who is making boxing his main focus. In any event, Lee was predictably impressive on this evening against overmatched Rhode Island fighter Joseph Gardner. Lee dropped Gardner three times, twice in the second and once in the third. Referee Tony Chiaramante halted the contest at 43 seconds of the third with the beaten boxer on the canvas. It was scheduled for eight rounds.

Brooklyn-based Russian Ivan Golub ran New Jersey fighter Jean Rodriguez Jnr out of the ring, dropping him twice in the opening round of their eight. After 2-41 had elapsed it was waved off by referee Benji Estevéz.

Carlos Gongora stopped Oklahomans Derrick Adkins at 1-56 of the fourth round in a six. Brooklyn’s Gongora floored Adkins once in the second and twice in the fourth. All three judges deservedly had Kissimme’s Botirsher Obidov up 39-37 at the end of his four-roundener with Boca Raton’s Ramil Gadzhiev. The difference in the fight was Gadzhiev’s ability to get off first.

The small promotional group New Legends Inc proudly announced earlier in the week the signing of Brooklyn light-heavyweight Julian Sosa. The partnership got off to a nice start when Sosa halted St Joseph, Missouri southpaw Bryan Timmons at 1-48 of the second round. It was scheduled for four.

THE VERDICT Wilder keeps winning against decent opposition but a real challenge now threatens.

Deontay Wilder (228 3/4lbs), 36-0 (35), w rsf 9 Artur Szpilka (231 1/4lbs), 20-2 (15); Charles Martin (249 1/2lbs), 23-0-1 (21), w rsf 3 Vyacheslav Glazkov (218lbs), 21-1-1 (13); Adam Kownacki (252 3/4lbs), 13-0 (10), w pts 6 Danny Kelly (231 1/4lbs), 9-2-1 (8); Mike Lee (177 1/2lbs), 18-0 (10), w rsf 3 Joseph Gardner (178lbs), 11-9-1 (1); Julian Sosa (141 1/4lbs), 4-0-1 (2), w rsf 2 Bryan Timmons (139 1/2lbs), 3-7-3 (1); Carlos Gongora (170 1/2lbs), 4-0 (3), w rsf 4 Derrick Adkins (171 1/4lbs), 1-1-1 (1); Botirsher Obidov (160 3/4lbs), 4-0-1 (1), w pts 4 Ramil Gadzhiev (161 1/4lbs), 1-1-1 (1); Ivan Golub (147lbs), 10-0 (8), w rsf 1 Jean Rodriguez Jnr (146 3/4lbs), 12-4 (5); Maciej Sulecki (161 lbs), 22-9 (7), w rsf 7 Derrick Findley (161 1/4lbs), 22-10-1 (14).

NON-STOP: Kownacki [right] outscores Kelly in a cracking contest

UNLIKELY KING: Martin, the new IBF champ [inset], greets unified ruler Fury

Findley is your prototypical fighter who is much better than his record indicates. In his last contest he lost a split decision to Australian prospect Zac Dunn, but against Sulecki never won a round. Sulecki impressed with his smooth boxing skills and is ready to take a serious leap up in class. A right nearly dropped Findley in the seventh round at which point it was stopped by referee Shada Murdaugh.

Adam Kownacki and Washington, D.C’s Danny Kelly engaged in the best fight of the night despite the lopsided scoring in the Brooklyn-based Pole’s favour (Carlos Ortiz and Robert Perez 80-72 and Glenn Feldman 79-73 over eight sessions). It was non-stop punching throughout. Kownacki’s workrate never wavered, but Kelly hung tough and refused to pack it in when he easily could. Kelly fought back valiantly but Kownacki was too strong and relentless. The novelty of marketing Chicago’s Mike Lee as a former football player.
WHEN all else fails, Deontay Wilder’s power does not. Here the American slugger cracks brave Artur Szpilka [right] with a huge left hand en route to retaining his WBC heavyweight title in Brooklyn, New York.
that his two most recent fights – both in 2015 – saw “The Ghost” thrashed by Keith Thurman and then lucky to get past unheralded Aaron Martinez.

So this weekend’s match-up is even odder given that it marks the debut of Al Haymon’s Premier Boxing Champions project on the free-to-air Fox network in the USA (BoxNation show it in the UK). The exciting Thurman v Shawn Porter fight, originally mooted for this show, would have made more sense but has now been put back.

So Garcia v Guerrero it is, and it’s the sort of fight where Danny needs not just to win – but win impressively. Garcia admitted that his two 2015 outings didn’t see him at his best: “My last two fights, I fought Lamont Peterson who was the IBF champion, and Paulie Malignaggi, who got stopped by Shawn Porter but has faced a lot of great fighters. Those were some experienced fighters that have fought world champions. Guerrero’s a good fighter but we’ll be ready for him and come out with the win.”

Guerrero, for his part, warned people not to write him off because of his most recent fight last June, when the southpaw had to get off the floor to edge a split 10-round decision over Martinez. “It was a lack of focus,” explained the Gilroy, California man of that close call. “I went in there and got off my game plan and started slugging with Aaron.

‘GUERRERO’S A GOOD FIGHTER BUT WE’LL BE READY FOR HIM’

Photo: BILL McCAY/PREMIER BOXING CHAMPIONS

TREADING WATER: Garcia is yet to take the boxing world by storm after a bright introduction

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

TALE OF THE TAPE

DANNY GARCIA

Robert Guerrero

★@DannySwift

@GHOSTBOXING

★

Mar 20, 1988/27

Mar 27, 1983/32

Philadelphia, PA

Gilroy, CA

American

American

5ft 8 1/2ins

5ft 8ins

68 1/2ins

70ins

31-0 (16)

33-3-1 (18) 2N C

Orthodox

Southpaw

Nov 17, 2007/19

May 22, 2001/18

KO PERCENTAGE

46

Angel Garcia

Ruben Guerrero

TRAINER

Main Event

Undercard

★★★★★

★★★★

★★★

★★

★

Photo: BILL McCAY/PREMIER BOXING CHAMPIONS

TIME TO DAZZLE

Garcia needs to beat Guerrero and look good doing it, writes Daniel Herbert

26 • BOXING NEWS • JANUARY 21, 2016

www.boxingnewsonline.net
When your mind is not right, you’re unable to concentrate.”

A barrage of blows to head and body put Guerrero down in round four and he was saved by the bell. Yet he showed guts to battle back and out hustle Martinez over the last three rounds for the win.

“It’s time to put that behind me and move on,” said Guerrero. “This fight is to take that next step and get back on top with that title. Danny Garcia is undefeated. He says he wants to break through the division and I am here to be that wall.”

Indeed, this will be only Garcia’s second fight at 147lbs, following his ninth-round stoppage of Paulie Malignaggi in August. Danny was a clear winner, cutting Malignaggi and wearing him down methodically, but Paulie’s peak was at 140lbs and he was past his best; the contest’s only meaning was to provide a gentle introduction to the welterweights.

“I feel a lot stronger at 147 pounds,” said Garcia before moving into the third person (always a worrying sign in a fighter). “We’ll see the best of Danny Garcia at 147 – fresher, faster, stronger and a lot smarter.”

To be fair, he had faded alarmingly in his previous outing, a 143lbs catchweight affair against Lamont Peterson, who like Garcia came into their April 2015 fight with a super-lightweight belt. Danny was cut on the right eye in round 11 and under heavy pressure in the last, but hung on to take a majority decision courtesy of his work in the first seven rounds (when Peterson was curiously lethargic).

And two years earlier, Garcia had likewise struggled in the later stages of a points win over Zab Judah in a super-lightweight title defence, so he should feel much more comfortable up at welter. He should be naturally the bigger man against Guerrero, who held world belts at feather, super-feather and lightweight (interim only) before jumping two weights to 147 back in 2012 (some 11 years after his pro debut).

A big win against Andre Berto earned Robert a payday against Floyd Mayweather, but his fitness and workrate couldn’t trouble Floyd, who won unanimously. Guerrero outslugged Yoshihiro Yamagai in one of 2014’s best fights but in March last year was badly beaten by Thurman in the first ever PBC promotion, being dropped heavily in round nine and badly cut on the left eye on route to a wide points defeat.

A similar outcome looks likely this weekend. Guerrero’s heart cannot be questioned and one can see him soaking up punishment while hanging in there doggedly as the faster, sharper Garcia piles up the points. Yet Danny will have to go the distance, as he tends to in big fights, withstanding his 2012 fourth-round stoppage of Amir Khan – the man he may meet next, given the WBC have named Khan mandatory challenger for this fight’s winner.

Another welter bout on this card pits former US Army veteran Sammy Vasquez, 20-0 (14), against the aforementioned Aaron Martinez, from East Los Angeles and 20-4-1 (4), in a 10-round WBC title eliminator. Southpaw Vasquez, from Monessen in Pennsylvania, is the man on the rise and should take the win on points.

THE VERDICT Garcia needs to remind the world of his talents against an opponent made for him.
HOT STUFF

Walsh and Traynor can combine for a cracker, writes Daniel Herbert

Walsh winning by three rounds and said even the Clark camp seemed surprised at getting a share of the verdict. Don’t forget, too, that it was up at super-feather (for a British Masters belt) and Ryan’s powerfully-built 5ft 6 1/2ins frame is better suited to featherweight.

Walsh won the British title at the second attempt, although it was a split decision that some felt could have gone either way. In a fight that saw both have good spells, Mouniemne showed the better skills but Ryan applied pressure constantly and scored a fifth-round knockdown with a short right. A one-point scorecard for Mouniemne was overruled by scores of six points and four points for Walsh, and the Norfolk man was the new British champion.

pleasingly. It could well go the full 12 rounds and come down to who catches the judges’ eyes.

“It took plenty of hard work, blood, sweat and tears to win the British title, so I’m definitely not losing it in my first defence to the likes of Traynor,” said Cromer’s Walsh, whose first crack at the British 126lbs belt saw him outpointed by Lee Selby in October 2013.

Ryan lost that night by margins of eight points and six points twice, but cut Selby on both eyes – and it’s a result that looks a whole lot better given how the “Welsh Mayweather” went on to win the IBF title.

It remains the only loss for Ryan, whose other pro blemish was a 10-round draw with Dundee’s Ronnie Clark in November 2012.

BN’s man ringside had Walsh winning by three rounds and said the judges’ eyes.

“I’m not losing it in my first defence to the likes of Traynor’

RANK WARREN’S first promotion of the year could well set a high standard when Ryan Walsh takes on Darren Traynor in the main event at York Hall, Bethnal Green on Friday (January 22).

At stake on this BoxNation-televised show is the British featherweight title Walsh won by beating Samir Mouniemne in September, which saw him join super-feather twin Liam as a national ruler. (They are the first twins to hold Lonsdale Belts at the same time).

As Ryan is a pressure-fighter who is never in a bad contest, and Traynor an unbeaten challenger whose limits are not yet established, styles should blend

Photo: ACTION IMAGES/ALEX MORTON

ONLY THE BEGINNING: Walsh [atop brother Michael’s shoulders] wants the Lonsdale Belt for keeps.

[Table of the Tape]

MAIN EVENT

UNDERCARD

Daniel Herbert

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RYAN WALSH</th>
<th>DARREN TRAYNOR</th>
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<td>Dob/age: 5/5 1/2ins</td>
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“Winning the title has put me onto another level in my career,” said Ryan. “By the end of 2016 I want to have defended it three times and made the Lonsdale Belt my own, so I’ll be making sure Traynor doesn’t affect my plans.”

Traynor was a drug addict at 13 but has battled back and doesn’t intend to waste all that hard work now he’s got to this level. “I’m on my own course to achieve my destiny and that’s to win the British title. It was a fairy tale for Ryan when he won the title, and for him and Liam to be the first twins to hold British titles at the same time. But that page is getting ripped out when I fight him.”

Ryan’s good. He’s awkward and puts on plenty of pressure, but I’ve seen plenty of weaknesses and I know I’ve got the tools to beat him. Let’s see if his strength and speed can match mine, plus I have endless stamina.”

Yet while Traynor has a 100 per cent record, only one opponent has had a winning record – David Savage, the Glaswegian he met in an April 2015 British title eliminator. To give him credit, Daren rose to the occasion, dropping Savage twice for a sixth-round stoppage.

On the negative side, in November 2013 Traynor only just scraped past Bulgaria’s Yordan Vasilev in an International Masters bout (up at 130lbs, admittedly). Vasilev, who has an up-and-down record, floored Traynor twice in round one with rights to the head – the punch with which Walsh decked Mouneimne, remember.

Darren did recover to win on points (96-94) but Walsh is surely capable of putting him under more pressure, and hitting him harder, than Vasilev did. Ryan has been training in Tenerife where he’s been sparring left-hooker Andy Townend, so he figures to be in top shape for what could well prove a gruelling fight.

Traynor will give it his best, but he has much less experience than Walsh of hard fights, and ones over the championship distance, so the pick is for Ryan to outwork him in the bout’s second half to earn a clear points victory.

Chief support sees East Dulwich’s stylish Ahmet Patterson, 16-0 (6), take on Birmingham southpaw Ryan Aston over 10 rounds for the vacant IBF Intercontinental super-welterweight belt.

Aston’s 18-2-2 (6) ledger includes losses for Midlands Area belts at middleweight by Curtis Valentine (ref 2 in 2012) and super-welter by Jason Welborn (pts 10 in 2015). He can push Patterson, but the Londoner has the skills to win on points.

Four months after losing to Bobby Jenkinson for the Commonwealth super-bantam crown, Erith’s Lewis Pettitt can make a winning return in an eight-rounder against Krzysztof Rogowski from Poland.

THE VERDICT Walsh can make a statement at the start of what should be a big year for him.

Expert View

DAI DAVIES
DOMESTIC FEATHER CONTENDER

It’s a 50-50 fight. Ryan Walsh looked great against Samir Mouneimne, whom I’m going to fight in a final eliminator for the Commonwealth title. It was a close fight and only the knockdown separated them in the end. Traynor’s not bad, but he’s not got a lot of experience. This is a step up for him. Walsh was supposed to defend against Ryan Doyle, but that fell out and now it’s Traynor. So it depends how much notice Darren has had. We know Walsh has been in training camp for 10-12 weeks, at the MGM gym in Marbella. How much training they’ve done will tell in the final rounds. Walsh is strong, a good inside fighter who is tough to beat.
BACK TO HIS BEST: Williams celebrates a glorious return, adding the British title to his Commonwealth strap.
‘THE BIG FIGHTS WILL COME ON MY TERMS’

Paul Wheeler speaks to a man who is anticipating a bright future for himself... and rightly so

It is fair to say that big things are expected of Welsh starlet Liam Williams. Aside from an unfortunate technical draw against a cut Tyan Booth just over two years ago, the gifted Clydach Vale man boasts an unblemished record as a pro, with 13 dominant victories (eight inside the distance). The reigning British and Commonwealth super-welterweight champion is looking forward to making even greater waves this year, starting with a defence of his titles against Navid Mansouri on February 13 in Liverpool.

After 13 months out of the ring due to an injured right hand, you returned last month with a second-round stoppage of Kris Carslaw in a fight that saw you claim the vacant British title, as well as successfully defend your Commonwealth crown. How did your hand feel during the bout?

It felt perfect. The only issue was that I had to get my confidence back after such a long time out. That was to be expected really, especially considering how much pain the injury had caused me. When I first went back to the gym after having surgery on my hand, I was a bit wary of the types of punches that I was throwing, but mentally, I’m fully confident now.

You first injured your hand during a victory over Yuri Pompilio (rsf 8) in Germany in April 2014. How exactly did the injury occur, and had it been troubling you ever since?

What happened was, I slipped a jab and went for the right uppercut. The punch landed right on the point of [Pompilio’s] elbow, which broke my hand. The damage just escalated from there really. During sparring and fights, I kept catching my knuckle (on the right index finger). Whenever I caught it on the top of someone’s head or on their elbow, the pain was just unbearable.

Thankfully, I don’t have any worries about this anymore.

How many operations have you had on the hand since the Pompilio fight?

I had to have two different operations. The first doctor I went to see said that I wouldn’t be able to box again. Obviously, I didn’t want to be hearing that, so I went and got a second and third opinion, and I found a doctor in Cardiff who was willing to take on the job. He was confident that he could fix my hand, so I took him up on it straightaway. I’m just so glad and thankful that it’s all fixed now.

During your 13-month injury-enforced absence from the ring prior to the Carslaw clash, how long were you out of the gym for?

I didn’t actually have that long out of the gym, to be fair. Obviously I couldn’t do any punching or sparring, but I kept going along to the gym to keep in contact with my trainer, Gary Lockett, and all the boys. I couldn’t do any proper training, but I enjoyed just doing my own thing and keeping myself fit and in shape.

I was just trying not to get too fat!

Not being able to box or train properly for over a year must have been very difficult for you. Did you ever fear that you’d become a forgotten man in the super-welterweight division during your hiatus?

Yeah, I did in a way. I think anybody else in my position would’ve felt the same. When you’re not active and not in the picture, ➤
We’re both British champions at the moment, and we bounce off each other really well. As well as Nick, I also spar Alex Hughes quite a lot. He’s an undefeated, talented young fighter who’s also trained by Gary. With me being a super-welterweight, Nick being a middleweight, and Alex being a super-middleweight, it works out really well for us when it comes to sparring. All three of us spar really well, and we learn a lot from each other.

Your three most recent contests combined have lasted less than 10 minutes, and you even finished Carslaw with a jab. Do you think this demonstrates the power you possess?

To be totally honest, I don’t class myself as a massive puncher. However, strangely enough, I think the time out may have done me a bit of good in that respect. The rest I had from boxing has been a blessing in disguise in a way, because since I’ve come back, I’m more mature, and I’m punching harder. The injury and the time out was obviously difficult for me, but I think it’s worked in my favour, as I’m a more rounded fighter now.

What do you make of your upcoming opponent, Mansouri?

I’ve got respect for him, and I think he’s a good fighter. I never underestimate any opponent. If I was fighting someone who’d been pulled off the street, I’d still train just as hard as if I was fighting a
world champion. I’m always very dedicated in the gym, and I make sure I train really hard. As long as I’m on form against Mansouri, I think it’ll be a routine win for me. Nevertheless, I’m not taking him lightly. I think he’s going to come and give me a good fight.

If all goes well for you against Mansouri, what are your plans for the rest of 2016? Is the European super-welterweight champion, Frenchman Cedric Vitu, on your radar?

One of my aims is to win the Lonsdale Belt outright [by making three successful defences of the British title]. Then again, if a bigger opportunity came up, I’d have to rethink. It’d be more than likely that I’d move on from British level if a bigger opportunity presented itself. Boxing’s quite a mad sport, so you never know what’s round the corner. I’m just going to take everything as it comes, and see what happens. Of course, fighting for the European title would interest me a million per cent. If I was offered the fight against Vitu right now, I’d ditch the Mansouri fight and go straight for it. That’s just the type of person I am. I’m always up for a challenge, and I’m willing to take anyone on.

Your Queensberry Promotions stablemate, Liam Smith, is the WBO super-welter title-holder. You’re still just 23 years old, and you’ve only boxed just over 50 rounds as a professional, but do you feel that you’re ready for an opponent of Smith’s level yet?

I definitely feel that I’m a good enough fighter to beat any of the top guys in my division, but I’m just lacking experience. I’m aware that, ideally, I could do with getting some more rounds under my belt before I step in the ring with the top guys. I’m happy moving along at the speed that I’ve been going at so far in my career. Things are moving nicely at the moment, and I’m sure that these big fights will come when they’re ready, and they’ll come on my terms. In an ideal world, when would you like the Smith fight to happen?

The perfect time for me would probably be 12-18 months down the line. Then again, if I was offered the fight before then, I’m not saying that I wouldn’t take it. In fact, I definitely would take it. But in an ideal world, I’d have that fight in 12-18 months’ time.

‘THE PERFECT TIME FOR ME [TO FIGHT SMITH] WOULD BE 12-18 MONTHS DOWN THE LINE’
HE passing of former European heavyeweight champion Sinan Samil Sam on October 30 was not unexpected – rumours had been circulating for a number of days, particularly in the German and the Turkish media, that his health had deteriorated to such an extent that his death was imminent – but it was shocking nonetheless.

At the age of 41, his body ravaged by years of alcohol abuse and in desperate need of a replacement liver, Sam lost his final fight in an Istanbul hospital bed, surrounded by his family. Pictures posted on the internet revealed a grossly overweight figure, hardly recognisable from the fighter of a decade before. It was a tragic end for a man who, while never reaching the pinnacle of the sport, enjoyed a respectable career.

Born in Frankfurt, Germany, to Turkish immigrants, Sam relocated to Ankara at an early age. It was there that he embarked on a trophy-laden amateur career which included nine Turkish championships, a gold medal at the junior World championships in 1992 and silver at the European championships in 1993. After beginning as a middleweight, Sam moved up through the weight classes and signed off as a super-heavyweight with a gold medal at the 1999 World championships in Houston.

Ahmet Oener, later to become known as a promoter but at that point still an active boxer, engineered Sam’s switch to the professional code with Hamburg’s Universum Box-Promotion in 1999.

“The way he was brought to Universum was pretty much how Ahmet Oener got into management,” Malte Mueller-Michaelis, the former managing director of Oener’s promotional company, Arena Box-Promotion, told Boxing News. “He’d seen that a Turkish fighter had become the amateur world champion, and as there’s a large Turkish community in Germany, wouldn’t that be an opportunity? So Ahmet endeavoured to get Sinan under contact.”

Sam arrived in Hamburg as a competent practitioner, but his ability alone wasn’t sufficient to propel him to the forefront of the German boxing scene.

“The conditions at Universum at that time were good, but Sinan wasn’t an easy case in terms of integration,” explained Mueller-Michaelis.
FIGHTERS MENTIONED YOU COULD SMELL THE ALCOHOL ON HIM... IT WAS CLEAR HE WASN'T IN OPTIMAL CONDITION
"It's important to speak German, and to give interviews. He wasn't the showman, and unlike the Klitschkos, he really didn't grasp how important his appearance was outside of the ring. He wanted to impress with his performances inside the ring, but that by itself isn't enough for the German market. It's enough to become an absolute sports star in Turkey, but not in Germany."

Despite his lack of media friendliness, Universum were still able to steer Sam to the European heavyweight title. In October 2002, in his 16th bout, Sam relieved Poland's Przemyslaw Saleta of the belt to set up an encounter with Britain's Danny Williams.

"I thought it was going to be a walk in the park," recalled Williams to Boxing News. "After watching him on tape I thought, 'This guy is absolutely useless. I'm going to become European champion easy.' I trained well for the fight. You have to train well, and I trained well but, basically, I didn't think it was going to be a fight. That all changed after the first round."

Williams entered the ring in Berlin fully expecting to overwhelm Sam, but he was in for a rude awakening. His man down twice in the fourth round, and again in the fifth, Williams' trainer Jim McDonnell was compelled to throw the towel in during the sixth as his thoroughly beaten charge was mercilessly knocked around the ring.

"I found him to be immensely strong," reflected Williams. "Having seen him fight I didn't think much of him. I thought I was going to jab this guy's head off, I thought, 'I'm going to beat this fat, overweight Turkish guy', but then in the ring with me I felt his immense strength. He was a very, very strong fighter."

"It devastated me. Totally, it destroyed me."

I remember, a few days after the fight I booked a ticket to go to America, on my own. I went there to spar in Gleason's Gym. It really shook me up, that loss. It hurt me badly."

Two months later Sam followed up with a seventh-round stoppage of another Brit, Julius Francis, but then things started to unravel. Consecutive losses, firstly over 10 to Juan Carlos Gomez the following September in the US and then, in February 2004, a disputed majority decision against Luan Krasniqi in a European title defence, signalled the end of his first stint at Universum.

A move to Sauerland Event offered Sam new perspectives, but by this time disillusionment with the politics of the sport had begun to set in.

"You hear from your manager, who's also your confidant, that you've been cheated and obviously you start to feel that they don't want you at the top in Germany, and that is a source of frustration," said Mueller-Michaelis of the Krasniqi fight. "On top of that came the loss against Gomez in the USA, and then a new start at Sauerland. He was never really happy."

His tenure at Sauerland lasted less than two years. After beating an assortment of hand-picked opponents, Sam met Oleg Maskaev in a WBC final eliminator. Maskaev won widely on the scorecards and went on to become a world champion in his next fight by beating Hasim Rahman.

Sam returned briefly to Universum before joining Ahmet Oener's fledgling outfit, Arena Box-Promotion in 2006. It was a small stable, and Sam was the biggest star.

"In many respects, when Ahmet founded Arena, he did it around Sinan," explained Mueller-Michaelis. "Sinan was the first main event fighter. At that time he was a former European champion, and the basic idea was to bring him in and try to get him to the point where he could fight for a world championship. Sinan wasn't in the best shape at that time, to be honest. But he was a very experienced heavyweight, and well placed in the rankings. Ahmet's aim was to lead Sinan to a world championship."

His recruitment also provided Oener with an avenue into the relatively unexplored Turkish market. In only his second fight for Arena,
Sam was matched against Oliver McCall in Ankara in a WBC title eliminator.

"There weren't any professional boxers in Turkey before Sinan, and we went there with the first professional boxing promotion in June, 2007," said Mueller-Michaelis. "It was unique. At that time there was only Sinan, and after becoming the amateur World champion he had a very high profile in Turkey. We picked up on that when we were in Ankara. It was unbelievable how people reacted to him in the street."

Despite the euphoria in his homeland, all was not well. Sam felt that he was being exploited, and his antagonism towards his promoter was palpable. In the end, he lost a unanimous decision against McCall.

"It was a fight which he should have won, but Sinan didn't deliver what he needed to," continued Mueller-Michaelis. "I don't know if he was psychologically strong enough at that point to reach the very top. Ahmet gave him a chance with the world championship eliminator. You could sense the tension between them, particularly around the fight in Turkey where there were arguments about the purse."

"Ahmet knew that he wasn't an easy character, but he always ensured that Sinan earned good money [when he was his manager]. When he became a promoter, he needed to earn the purses, and that's when they fell out."

He fought on, and even recaptured the European title against Paolo Vidoz, but his best days were behind him. Disillusionment and frustration played an ever-more significant role, and his reliance on alcohol became obvious to many of those around him.

"Fighters did mention that you could smell the alcohol on him during training," said Mueller-Michaelis. "It was clear that Sinan wasn't in optimal condition – he didn't look like a well-trained heavyweight boxer."

"The physical deterioration was noticeable, and I think that setbacks and the hand of fate would have contributed to the situation not getting any better. When you watch the last fight against Paolo Vidoz, even before the weigh-in Vidoz couldn't really run, and neither could Sinan. The fact that the fight was for the European championship is shameful as neither boxer was in the kind of condition where you could describe him as a professional athlete."

He was, you might argue, too reclusive to be a star.

"Sinan had lived in Germany for a long time," said Mueller-Michaelis. "He didn't want to speak much. I think he could understand everything, but he avoided speaking. Since getting to know him, I never had a particularly close relationship to him because he wasn't the kind of person who had a warm approach. He had a subtle sense of humour, but he remained distant. Maybe he was just a bit disillusioned by the world of professional boxing, and for that reason didn't let anybody get very close to him."

"We mustn't forget that Sinan was an amateur World champion. He had the disposition and the schooling to go a long way, and he won the European championship and had a very close fight with Luan Krasniqi. He belonged to the pinnacle of the European scene, and I think that while he was still with Universum, when Arena was founded, he was a bit frustrated and a bit disillusioned. The way professional boxing works, and the changing of promoters, leads to an athlete losing faith."

"Sinan was the entry to the business. Arena came from nothing, and Sinan was a former European heavyweight champion and somebody who came close to getting a world title shot. Ahmet played his cards well. After Sinan lost to McCall, Ahmet matched McCall against [Juan Carlos] Gomez, who had also joined Arena by then. Gomez went on to fight Vitali Klitschko for the heavyweight title."

Others were granted the opportunities that Sam had craved. As well as Gomez and Maskaev, Krasniqi and Williams also went on to challenge for world titles.

For Sam, a career that had promised so much came to an unsatisfactory end, and he drifted away into anonymity back in Turkey. His name reappeared, briefly, in 2010 when it was reported in the German media that he was likely to die if he didn't receive a replacement liver. Sadly, his recovery was only temporary.
**DIARY**

**FEBRUARY 21**
Baltimore, Maryland
Nathan Thorley v Joe Asare (vacant WBO super-lightweight title).
(Promoter: Merchant Promotions).

**FEBRUARY 22**
Newport, Gwent
Newport Centre.
(John Wayne Hibbert (holder) v David Key (vacant WBO International middleweight title); Liam Cameron v Jason Dean (WBO European super-flyweight title); Thomas Stalker v Alex Rios (vacant WBO European lightweight title); Ryan Farrag v Vijender Singh v/s/o; Leon Woodstock v Joe Beeeden; Kevin Satchell v s/o. (Promoter: Queensberry Promotions).

**FEBRUARY 23**
The Hague, Netherlands
(Grand Arena).
(Promoter: KOTV Boxing Weekly).

**FEBRUARY 24**
Steven Lewis v Marek Laskowski; Paul White v Arrow Kelly (IBF Continental middleweight title); Matty Askin (holder) v Lawrence Oates (WBO Inter-Continental middleweight title); Peter McGurk v Sam Eggleston (vacant Commonwealth bantamweight title); Nathan Thorley v Joe Asare (vacant WBO Super Featherweight title); Liam Cameron v Jason Dean (WBO European super-flyweight title); Thomas Stalker v Alex Rios (vacant WBO European lightweight title); Ryan Farrag v Vijender Singh v/s/o; Leon Woodstock v Joe Beeeden; Kevin Satchell v s/o. (Promoter: Queensberry Promotions).

**SATURDAY 6**
Magnus Centre, Rotherham
Muheed Fazelid v Klaas Mboyang (vacant Commonwealth bantamweight title); Liam Cameron v s/o; Sam Steed v/s/o; Walesed Din v/s/o; Ramaz Nassa v/s/o; Leon Field v/s/o; Razaf Najib v/s/o; Loua Nassa v Jordan Turner; Luke Yousaf v/s/o; Kevin Skill v/s/o; Ole Aslam v/s/o. (Promoter: Dennis Hobson Promotions).

**EUROPA HOTEL, BELFAST**
James Fryers v Maxi Hughes; James Tennyson v Anthony Horvatic; Paul Hyland Jr v Ian Holey; Joe Fitzpatrick v Ruslan Berdymukhamedov; Feargal McCrory v Peter Mellor; Tyrone McCullagh v/s/o. (Promoter: Mark H Dunlop).

**NEWPORT CENTRE**
Craig Kennedy v Tony Conquest; Barrie Jones (holder) v Bradley Pyse (Welsh Super Featherweight title); Andrew Selby v/s/o; Unassigned v/s/o; Lee Appleyard v/s/o. (Promoter: Stefy Bull Promotions).

**GL1 LEISURE, GLOUCESTER**
Akeem Emir Brown v Chris Adaway; Andy Harris v Dean Evans; Danny Carter v/s/o; Kane Stewart v/s/o; Scott Gibbons v/s/o. (Promoter: Keith Mayo).

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**SATURDAY 20**
Belasco Theater, Los Angeles, California (Estrella TV)
Julian Ramirez v Christopher Martin (vacant WBC Youth Silver featherweight title); Abraham Lopez v Carlos Valcarcel. (Promoter: Golden Boy Promotions).

**SATURDAY 21**
California (Estrella TV)
Belasco Theater, Los Angeles, California (Promoter: MGM Scotland).

**SATURDAY 22**
Semi-noke Casino, Immokalee, Florida (Box TV)
Ericubin v Jose de Jesus Macias. (Promoter: Boxtv Promotions).

**SATURDAY 23**
Staples Center, Los Angeles, California (BoxNation & FOX)
Danny Garcia v Robert Guerrero (vacant WBC welterweight title); Sammy Vasquez v Aaron Martinez; Dominic Breazeale v Amir Mansour. (Promoter: TGB Promotions).

**THURSDAY 23**
Pasqua, Las Vegas
Roberto Bontoli v Walter Cabrals. (Promoter: Boxeo de la Costa).

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**DIARY**

**BOXING ON THE BOX**

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**FRIDAY 22**
York Hall, Bethnal Green (BoxNation)
Ryan Walsh (holder) v Darren Traynor (British featherweight title); Ahmet Patterson v Ryan Astun (vacant IBF Inter-Continental super-welterweight title); Lewis Pettitt v Krzyztof Rogowsk; Sammy McDness v Duane Green; Billy Long v Kieron Grey; Archie Sharpe v Youssaf Al Hamidi; Ben Smith v Dan Carr; DF Carr v Joe Beeeden. (Promoter: Queensberry Promotions).

**SATURDAY 30**
Copper Box Arena, Hackney Wick (Sky Sports)
George Groves v Andrea Di Luisa (vacant WBC International super-middleweight title); John Ryder v Sergey Khomitsky (vacant WBA International middleweight title); John Wayne Hibbett (holder) v Tommy Martin (Commonwealth super-lightweight title); Martin Joseph Ward (holder) v Marco Pianisi (WBC International super-featherweight title); Kris Agyei-Dua (holder) v Ben Hall (Southern Area super-welterweight title); Leon McKenzie v Kelvin Young; Ghina Davies v/s/o; Ted Cheeseman v Ryan Hardy; Reece Bellotti v Dai Davies; Charlie Duffield v Richard Harrison; Lucien Reid v/s/o; Craig Richards v Kieron Gray; Louis Adolphe v/s/o. (Promoter: Matchroom Boxing & Sauerland Event).

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**SATURDAY 13**
Echo Arena, Liverpool (BoxNation)
Terry Flanagan (holder) v Derry Mathews (WBO lightweight title); Liam Williams (holder) v Navid Mansouri (British and Commonwealth super-welterweight titles); Tommy Langford (holder) v Lewis Taylor (WBO Inter-Continental middleweight title); Matty Askin (holder) v Lawrence Bennett (English cruiserweight title); Steven Lewis v Marek Laskows; Paul Butler (holder) v/s/o (WBO European super-flyweight title); Thomas Stalker v/s/o (vacant WBO European lightweight title); Ryan Farrag v/s/o; Vijender Singh v/s/o; Leon Woodstock v Joe Beeeden; Kevin Satchell v/s/o. (Promoter: Queensberry Promotions).

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**ROYAL ARMOURIES MUSEUM, LEEDS**
Reece Cartwright v/s/o; Zahid Hussain v/s/o. (Promoter: Rebecca Margel).

**DEARNE VALLEY LEISURE CENTRE, DENBY**
Steve Hale v/s/o; Josh Wale v/s/o; Robbie Barrett v/s/o; David Almen v/s/o; Lee Appleyard v/s/o. (Promoter: Stefy Bull Promotions).

**GL1 LEISURE, GLOUCESTER**
Akeem Emir Brown v Chris Adaway; Andy Harris v Dean Evans; Danny Carter v/s/o; Kane Stewart v/s/o; Scott Gibbons v/s/o. (Promoter: Keith Mayo).
HEAVYWEIGHT
208lbs/94kg (9-4)
1 TYSON FURY 29-0 (ENG)
2 VLADIMIR KLITSCHKO 44-4 (UKR)
3 ALEXANDER PVIOTKOV 31-0 (RUS)
4 DEONTAY WILDER 36-0 (USA)
5 KUBRAT POYLEV 22-1 (BUL) (above)
6 LUIS ORTIZ 24-0 (CUB)
7 BERKANE STIVERNE 25-2-1 (CAN)
8 CARLOS TAKAM 33-2-1 (CMR)
9 CHARLES MARTIN 23-0-1 (USA)
10 YAVERCHUK GLAZKOV 23-1-1 (UKR)

MIDDLEWEIGHT
160lbs/73kg (10-3)
1 SAUL ALVAREZ 46-5-0 (MEX)
2 MIGUEL COTTO 40-6-1 (PRI)
3 GERNANDY GOLOVKIN 34-0 (KAZ)
4 DANIEL JACOBs 31-1-1 (USA)
5 BILLY JOE SAUNDERS 23-0-0 (ENG)
6 PETER QUILL 32-1-1 (USA)
7 ANDY LEE 34-3-1 (USA)
8 DAVID LEMIEUX 34-3-1 (CAN)
9 DANIEL GEALE 31-1-0 (AUS)
10 HASSAN WASH DRAHMAN 32-0 (FRA)

SUPER-WIGHTWEIGHT
200lbs/91kg (7-5)
1 KREZSZOF GLOWACKI 25-0-0 (POL)
2 MARCO HUCK 38-3-1 (GER)
3 GRIGORY DROZD 40-1-1 (RUS)
4 DENIS LEDEBER 28-2-0 (RUS)
5 VICTOR EMILIO RAMEZ 22-2-1 (ARG)
6 OLA AFOPLA 22-4-4 (ENG)
7 FRAT ASLAN 36-8-2 (GER)
8 ELUNGA MAKAMBO 31-1-1 (ZIM)
9 TONY BELLEW 26-1-1 (ENG)
10 OVILL MCKENZIE 35-12-1 (ENG)

LIGHT-HEAVEYWEIGHT
175lbs/79kg (12-0)
1 SERGEY KOVALIEV 28-0-1 (Ukraine)
2 ADOMIS STEVENSON 27-2-1 (CAN)
3 JEAN PASCAL 30-3-1 (CAN)
4 ZUERGEN BRADNER 41-2-0 (GER)
5 ANDREZS FONARA 28-3-3 (PHL)
6 ARTUR BETERBEV 40-0-0 (RUS)
7 ELIDER ALVAREZ 19-0-1 (COL)
8 ANDRE WARD 28-0-0 (USA)
9 ISAAC CHILESMA 26-4-2 (Nigeria)
10 VAYCHEAS CHABANKSSKY 34-0-0 (UKR)

SUPER-MIDDLEWEIGHT
186lbs/84kg (20-5)
1 JAMES DEGEALE 22-1-1 (ENG)
2 ARTHUR ABRAHAM 44-4-6 (GER)
3 BADOU JACK 11-1-1 (SWED)
4 LUCIAN BUTE 32-2-1 (CAN)
5 GEORGE GROVES 21-3-0 (ENG)
6 ANTHONY DERRICK 28-1-1 (USA)
7 FEDOR CHUDINOV 14-0-0 (RUS)
8 ANDRE DERRICK 24-2-2 (USA)
9 FELIX STURM 39-5-3 (GER)
10 GILBERTO RAMIREZ 33-0-0 (MEX)

WIGHTWEIGHT
146lbs/66kg (10-2)
1 VIKTOR POSTOL 28-0-0 (UKR)
2 LUCAS MATTHYSSE 37-4-3 (ARG)
3 TERENCE CRANFORD 27-0-0 (USA)
4 ADRIEN BRONER 31-2-0 (USA)
5 JOSE BENAVIDEZ 24-0-0 (USA)
6 KARL KALHUKERER 19-12-2 (USA)
7 MAURICIO HERNAA 25-5-0 (USA)
8 EDUARDO TROVANOY 23-0-2 (MEX)
9 Cesar RENE CIAUCA 48-1-1 (ARG)
10 ANTONIO OROZCO 23-0-1 (MEX)

SUPER-LIGHTWEIGHT
130lbs/59kg (20-3)
1 GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX 16-0-0 (CUB)
2 CARL FRAMPTON 23-0-0 (NIR)
3 SCOTT QUIGG 21-0-2 (ENG)
4 NONITO DONAIRE 36-3-1 (PHL)
5 KIKO MARTINEZ 35-6-0 (SPA)
6 GENESIS SERVANIA 27-6-0 (PHL)
7 ALBERT PAGARA 25-0-0 (PHL)
8 ENT VARGAS 25-5-0 (USA)
9 JULIO CEZA 30-1-0 (MEX)
10 MANUEL AVILA 19-1-0 (USA)

BANTAMWEIGHT
118lbs/53kg (10-7)
1 SHINSUKE YAMANAKA 24-0-2 (JPN)
2 JUAN CARLOS PAYANO 27-0-0 (DOM)
3 ANGELO MORENO 35-4-1-1 (PHL)
4 JAME MCDONNELL 27-2-1 (ENG)
5 TOMOKI KANEDA 31-2-0 (JPN)
6 LEE HASKINS 32-3-0 (ENG)
7 FUMIHIRO NOZAWA 51-13-0 (THA)
8 RAUSHEE WARREN 13-1-0 (USA)
9 ZHANAT ZHAKYAYEV 26-1-1 (KAZ)
10 SURJIAN SOR RUNGVISAI 46-6-1-1 (THA)

SUPER-BANTAMWEIGHT
122lbs/55kg (9-1)
1 ROMAN GONZALEZ 44-0-0 (NCA)
2 JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA 32-2-0 (MEX)
3 AMAN BUHANGANG 17-0-0 (THA)
4 BRIAN VOLODA 36-5-3 (USA)
5 KAZUO IBUKI 32-2-1 (JPN)
6 JUAN CARLOS REVECO 36-3-2 ( ARG)
7 MORITI KHALAMALI 32-2-0 (RSA)
8 EDGAR ROSA 41-9-1 (MEX)
9 CHTWEN ARROYO 36-2-0 (PAN)
10 MAXIMIDOR PUNCHA 31-0-0 (THA)

WIGHTWEIGHT
105lbs/49kg (9-1)
1 DONNIE NEELES 37-1-4 (PHL)
2 TU KIMURA 18-2-1 (JAP)
3 PEDRO GUEVARA 26-2-1 (MEX)
4 RYUICHI TAGUCHI 32-2-2 (JPN)
5 ALBERTO ROSELL 34-6-9 (PER)
6 AKIRA YAGASHI 23-5-3 (JPN)
7 JAVIER MENDOZA 24-3-1 (MEX)
8 KEI LORO 29-13-0 (PHL)
9 MOSES PUENTES 22-3-2-1 (MEX)
10 RANDY PETALCORIN 23-1-2-1 (PHL)

STRAWWEIGHT
58lbs/27kg (5-1)
1 HEKKIE BUDLER 29-1-3 (RSA) (above)
2 WANXIANG HENGYATON 40-0-0 (THA)
3 JOS ARGUERIO 36-1-0 (MEX)
4 KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA 30-8-0 (JPN)
5 KNOCKOUT FRESH 33-1-1 (THA)
6 CARLOS BUITRAGO 28-1-1 (MEX)
7 XIONG ZHAO ZHONG 26-6-1-1 (CHN)
8 KOSAE TAHAKA 6-0-0 (JPN)
9 DENVER CUELL 36-5-4 (PHL)
10 BYRON ROGAS 24-1-1 (MEX)

BOUNDFORBOUND
The best of the best
1 MANNY PACQUIAO 57-6-2 (PHL)
2 ROLAND GOZLAN 44-4-6 (RUS)
3 ANDRE WARD 28-0-0 (USA)
4 TIMOTHY BRADLEY 33-1-1 (USA)
5 GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX 16-0-0 (CUB)
6 SERGEY KOVALIEV 28-0-1 (UKR)
7 RAUL ALVAREZ 46-1-1 (MEX)
8 MIGUEL COTTO 40-6-1 (PRI)
9 GERNANDY GOLOVKIN 34-0-0 (KAZ)
10 TERENCE CRAWFORD 27-0-0 (USA)
SHOWDOWN

Why McGrail versus Stevenson is a bout you don’t want to miss

McGrail and Stevenson, two former Youth level prospects, will face each other in Miami in their first team match of the 2016 season in the World Series of Boxing. Stevenson is a bantamweight who has won nearly everything before setting up to Senior level, including the Youth Olympics and his victory in the US Olympic Trials. Liverpool’s McGrail won the gold medal at the Youth Worlds and is now more experienced at Senior level.

McGrail is confident that he’ll be well prepared for the longer distance. “We spar six rounds anyway,” he notes. “I upped the strength work... it’s only an extra two rounds. At the end of a three-round fight obviously you’re tired but probably you’ve still got two rounds in you because you’ve trained for longer than three rounds. “I don’t know what the pace will be like, whether it’ll be slowed down but I’ll be looking to keep the pace up.”

McGrail continued, “He hasn’t boxed internationally at 56kgs yet, so he’s got a bit to prove as well. He’s never done five rounds, I’ve never done five rounds but I’m confident I can get the win. I know I can go out there, and as long as I perform, I know I’ll be sound.”

The Liverpudlian is young, and the 2020 Olympics might be a more realistic option for him, but he dreams of Rio 2016. “In my eyes I feel I can make Rio,” he said. “Qais [Ashfaq] most probably will go to the first qualifier, unless he gets injured or anything like that, or if his form’s not the best. But I know I’m only getting better and better. I’ll definitely get a chance at a qualifier if he doesn’t qualify.

“I’ve just got to prove myself.”

The US team will field their number ones on January 21 and it sets up some fascinating matches: Cam Awesome versus Lawrence Okolie at 91kgs, Charles Conwell versus Troy Williamson at 75kgs, Gary Russell versus Pat McCormack at 64kgs and Nico Hernandez versus Harvey Horn at 49kgs.
GB performance director Rob McCracken reflects on the year past and looks forward to 2016

**WHAT are you thougths on 2015, a tough year?**

We had our best European senior championships ever, in the history of European championships. We had five boxers boxing in the final. Because the Olympic qualifications [began], it kind of got overlooked... We got gold and four silvers and a bronze.

The boxers performed well in the Worlds and arguably we could have come home with three or four medals, to be honest with you, and I thought Joe [Joyce] was unlucky.

They’ve all gained experience. WSB’s coming at a good time so they can get more experience to prepare them for the qualifiers. It’s a young squad, none of the males from London are here. It’s still a young squad but it’s got lots of potential in it.

**Do you think with 2015 being such a busy year, that was catching up with some of the boxers by the end?**

Possibly, possibly some of them showed a bit of fatigue. It’s new enough for most of them, so it’s a hard, hard schedule. They needed the break after the Worlds and after Christmas.

I think it benefited the more experienced ones in Olympic boxing throughout the world. Having said that, we still believe that we had some good performances in the World championships. Joe, Mo Ali looked like he was in control [lost on a cut]. I thought Qais [Ashaq] and Pat [McCormack] performed really well at the World championships and Joe [Cordina against Robson Conceicao] was very close, could have gone either way.

They’ve got a lot of learning to do but I think they showed at the Worlds they have the potential.

**Do you have a feeling about which of the Olympic qualifiers you might get through?**

It depends who you draw, what day it is, what form you’re in, how you feel. It’s a lot of work to do, we’ll know where we’re at after the last qualifier in June. Hopefully we’ll have qualified enough boxers to go to Brazil and get what we need and the boxers get what they deserve. Everybody’s really looking forward to it. There’s a lot of fresh faces here over the last year or two but they’re very confident and they’re gaining experience by the second and they’re really looking forward to it.

**ONWARDS**

**MISSION 2016**

**YAKUP SENER**

The new season of the World Series of Boxing began on January 16, pitting a new franchise, the Türkiye Conquerors, against the China Dragons in Istanbul.

Yakup Sener, a light-welterweight who became a 2012 Olympian qualifying through a tournament in his hometown, used his experience to secure victory over China’s bustling Calcheng Meng, a pivotal win for the Conquerors on Saturday. In a five-round match, the Turkish team had conceded their first two contests. China’s Junjan He beat light-flyweight Hamza Kartal by a clear unanimous decision. Turkish bantamweight Hakan Cigdem pulled out with injury after four rounds with Boxiang Xu, who was well ahead on the cards.

The team’s fortunes turned with Sener’s unanimous points win over Meng, which Erem Tibukoglu, 75kgs followed up with a points win over Minggang Zhao and Seyda Kesen halted Chinese 91kgs Fengkai Yu in two rounds to secure a 3-2 team win.
AMATEURS

AMATEURSCENE

THE RETAINER: 
Kenny keeps hold of his belt

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

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SEND us your club’s news, results or upcoming events to john.dennen@boxingnewsonline.net or 020 7618 3478

Tom Hutton sees another round of English title bouts

HODDESDON bantamweight Charlie Kenny kept his English title with a hugely-impressive second-round stoppage of David Seymour at the Irish Centre in Birmingham on January 16.

Kenny, making his first title defence, was too strong. He gave Seymour (Bell Green) a standing count in the dying seconds of the opening round and shook him up early in the second with a whipping left hook.

Kenny followed up to blast Seymour to his knees with a right and the referee waved it off.

The light-heavyweight title changed hands after Reece Ellis (Spennymoor) upset touted Umar Sadig (Repton) on a split decision, possibly nicking it on the last round when he left the Londoner with a swelling around his right eye.

In an eliminator at 75kgs, Jewellery Quarter southpaw Jordan Thompson unanimously outpointed Spennymoor’s Gaz Dodds, who was number seven in our latest English rankings.

After a thoughtful opening round, Dodds took the fight to Thompson at the start of the second.

The 20-year-old stood his ground, kept his defences tight, then counter-attacked with thumping two-fisted salvos to body and head before settling to box off the backfoot.

Dodds did get through with a pair of rights in the dying seconds of the round that brought a standing count, but Thompson wasn’t badly dazed and went on to win the last clearly enough.

Early in the round, he backed up Dodds with a left to the body and kept him on the backfoot until the end.

Thompson is now hoping for a shot at English titlist Jordan Reynolds (Hoddesdon), who beat him in the final of last year’s Haringey Box Cup.

At heavyweight, there were wins for Tarnworth teenager Ryan Hatton and Natty Ngwenga, now down at 91kgs having reached the Elite final at super-heavyweight last season.

Hatton put a lot into the first two rounds of his bout with PJ Stubbs (Henry’s) and had to dig in during the last three minutes after feeling a body shot to secure a split points decision, his 44th win in 50 bouts.

In another eliminator, Ngwenga unanimously outpointed Poole’s Chris Billam-Smith, who’s been troubled by a shoulder injury that has needed surgery since he reached the ABA cruiserweight final in 2013.

Billam-Smith boxed well under pressure, but couldn’t stop Ngwenga (Army) coming forward.

Lightweight titlist Corey O’Reagan (Bradford College) pulled out of his defence against Jack Wood (Wesleyburg) and in an eliminator, Cleary’s pressure-fighter Dan Quartermaine repeated a points win over Henri Potter (Kingfisher).

RESULTS:
Eliminators: 60: D. QUARTERMAINE (Cleary’s) outpd H. Potter (Kingfisher). 69: L. CUTLER (Poole) outpd L. Lynn (Royal Navy).
75: J. THOMPSON (Jewellery Quarter) outpd G. Dodds (Spennymoor). 91: R. HATTON (Tarnworth) outpd PJ Stubbs (Henry’s), N NGWENGA (Army) outpd C. Billam-Smith (Poole).
English titles: 56: C. KENNY (Hoddesdon) stpd D. Seymour (Bell Green). 69: R. ELLIS (Spennymoor) outpd L. Sadig (Repton).
Female titles: 57: N. HUGHES (CSM) outpd A. TRUBIT (Army), N. HUGHES (CSM) outpd B. HUNTER (Army).

KENNY POWERS ON

The Pole eliminates both Crystal Barker and Valerian Spicer from the Nations Cup

THE Nations Women’s Cup took place in Ruma, Serbia from January 8-12.

England’s Crystal Barker entered at 60kgs but lost her preliminary bout to Poland’s Kinga Siwa by unanimous decision.

Valerian Spicer, from London but an Olympic hopeful for Dominica, also competed at 60kgs. She outscored Belarus’ Alla Yarshевич unanimously in her first contest in Serbia and in the quarter-final took a split decision victory over Morocco’s Hasna Lachgar.

But in the lightweight semi-final Siwa – who won silver – struck again, edging out Spicer on a split decision.

RESULTS:
Elite finals: 48: LISE SANDEJER (Sweden) outpd Bina Devi Haojiam (India) unan. 51: CHANG YUAN (China) outpd Sara Orahmoune (France) split. 54: DELPHINE MACINZI (France) outpd Marielle Hansen (Norway) split. 57: PWILAO BASUMAVARY (India) outpd Manel Meharzu (Algeria) unan. 60: AGNES-ALGISSON (Sweden) outpd Kinga Siwa (Polska) split. 64: NADIA MAOMET (Serbia) outpd Madina Nurshayeva (Kazakhstan) unan. 69: DARIKA SANTADEVIA (Russia) outpd Hana Soeleka (Poland) unan. 75: NOUCHKA FONTJIN (Netherlands) outpd Yuan Meiqing (China) unan. 81: YULDUS MAHAMUTOV (Kazakhstan) outpd Meena Rani (India) split. 81: SEEMA PUNIA (India) outpd Elizaveta Sayushkina (Ukraine) unan.

SIWA STRIKES
KINGS OF THE RING

Hard work over Christmas pays off in Sweden for the Hoddesdon club

HODDESDON BOXING ACADEMY claimed an emphatic medal haul at the prestigious King of the Ring tournament, held in Boras, Sweden from January 8-10. A team of 19 boxers returned home with an outstanding 12 gold medals, five silver and two bronze.

The Burford Street club trained all over the Christmas period and the extra effort paid dividends as performances peaked before an impressive audience in a competition that was live-streamed across Europe.

Hoddesdon walked away with awards for Best Team, Best Contest, Best Senior Elite boxer and the coveted prize “The King of The Ring”. That accolade went to current English belt-holder Amir Smensen (Grimstad BK).

Another significant performance was that of Ralphy Ibrahim who on the first evening defeated Worlds rep and current European bronze medalist Clarence Goyeram (IFK Gothenburg) in a barnstormer of a contest. This was also declared best contest of the tournament. Ralphy outpointed Adolphe Sylva (Halmstad BS) and then in the final Helge Engesland (Grimstad BK) Ralphy was declared Best Elite Boxer of the tournament.

Other eye-catching performances came from Elite boxers Jordan Flynn (60kgs) and Kyran O’Neill (56kgs) who were narrowly outpointed in their respective finals by quality opposition in Yohanne Berhane (IF Linnea) and former Olympian Ronald Serugo (IF Goteborgs).

Aadam Hussein produced a sublime performance to outpoint Finnish opponent Gokmen Gorgin in the 50kgs Junior final. “There were so many significant performances from our boxers that to mention them would take up several pages. We trained throughout Christmas, twice daily and the fitness levels were evident in each and every performance,” said Hoddesdon coach Sab Leo. “The Swedish Federation and its supporters made us feel extremely welcome.”

FINALS RESULTS:


Youth: 52: MAI JURVANEN (Finland) outpd MOHAMMAD HASEEHE (Sweden) unan. 56: MOHAMMAD HOSSEIN WERSANEH (Finland) outpd Farris Khan (England) split. 60: HASAN OMAR (Sweden) outpd Aidan Hampson (Wales) unan. 64: PAULI ULILA (Ukraine) outpd Amad Doki (Sweden) split. 75: HARRIS AKBAR (England) outpd Abin Rehau (Norway) unan.


TWENTY-FIVE years ago when Robert Ellis formed Spennymoor Boxing Academy his ambition was to take the young people in the area off the streets, channel their youthful enthusiasm into a positive attitude and take it into the sport of amateur boxing.

Robert made two promises to himself. Firstly to build a team of boxers that the town could be proud of and secondly to take them around the world to places that most of them could only dream of. With his dedicated team of volunteer coaches, these promises have been kept.

The Academy has travelled all over the world and visited 19 countries including New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the USA and the Far East in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur along with many European countries.

Their latest tour was to Canada last year in which their boxers competed in two tournaments in Vancouver and Toronto and along with all the fundraising efforts for such a monumental task, Robert went about looking for a full kit for the tour squad, which Avec Sports provided.

The next step then, with a grant from Living and the generosity of the club’s main sponsors Workwear Express, Team 42 and George Bolam, now every boxer and coach at the club is fully equipped with the new tracksuits.
ROBERTO READY

Duran calls out champ Sugar Ray, writes
Daniel Herbert

ROBERTO DURAN pronounced himself ready to take on WBC welterweight king Sugar Ray Leonard after stopping Norway-based Ugandan Josef Nsubuga in six rounds at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas.

"I want Leonard now and I’ll knock him out," said the typically bullish Panamanian, who also said: “I’m the real world champ.”

Duran had relinquished his world lightweight crown a year before, and had been accumulating experience at welter, before bidding for one of the two titles then available (WBC, WBA).

Nsubuga, a former star amateur having only his 13th pro fight, was billed as the “Ugandan Powerhouse” but proved more of a stylist than a puncher. We said he “put up an excellent fight” as he “jabbed, countered and rallied with bursts of quick punches.”

Yet late in round four Duran, looking “sharp and relentless”, dropped Nsubuga with a smashing right to the jaw and although the African beat the count, he was retired by his corner during the interval. Six months later Duran would outpoint Leonard to become WBC champion.

BARRY BATTERS FOSTER

THE National Stadium in Dublin hosted a Dublin v Ulster amateur show, the highlight of which saw Barry McGuigan beat Richie Foster in a featherweight battle.

Foster, the reigning Irish bantam champion, landed hard lefts but McGuigan was “always in command and gave the Dubliner little rest, constantly putting him under intense pressure.”

Richie took two standing counts, from a “blazing” right to the chin in round one and then from “another smashing right” in round two. But he reached the final bell, where McGuigan was a unanimous points winner – despite suffering a bruised left hand in this bout (as revealed by an X-ray).

Barry went on to a fabulous pro career, and handles Carl Frampton.

The show was the first between Dublin and Ulster since 1955, with our report stating that “relations between the two sides are now happier after a long period when it seemed there would never be agreement.”

McGOWAN PASSES

OUR back page was in those days used for a news round-up and 36 years ago it contained an obituary of Liverpool heavyweight Les McGowan, who had died from leukaemia at the shockingly young age of just 30.

As an amateur McGowan reached the 1972 ABA heavyweight final, only for Tim Wood to stop him in a big upset. The following year Les began a pro career that lasted only 15 months but saw him pack in 11 fights.

We called McGowan’s time in the paid ranks “short but exciting” and said that his March 1974 fight with future British champ John L. Gardner at the Royal Albert Hall was “one of the most exciting heavyweight clashes seen at the venue.” Fortunes swayed constantly before Gardner prevailed in round five.

The Merseysider went on to beat Eddie Patterson, Sid Paddock and Hendon’s Tony Moore, before retiring after back-to-back losses to Neville Meade and in a rematch with Moore. All in 1974.
YESTERDAY'S HEROES

EX-BOXER ASSOCIATION NEWS
Kent EBA revival
KENT EBA, founded in 1968, was once a thriving organisation that awarded four trophies annually to encourage young boxers. Sadly, Harold Alderman MBE tells me there are now just four regular members, despite there being plenty of ex-boxers living in Kent.

Harold, a Kent EBA founder-member, writes: “I really would like to see many of the ex-boxers (amateur and pro) who reside in Kent – especially the Medway, north Kent and Thanet areas – rally round (like they did for St Mary’s ABC in Chatham) to help revive the Kent Ex-Boxers’ Association.

“I don’t mean people outside the county donating money, but people actually living in Kent and willing to attend meetings. But of course it needs an easy-to-get-to venue, near a railway station and with easy bus access.”

To get involved please contact Harold on 07729 528115.
Email exboxers@gmail.com with your ex-boxer association news.

A NATURAL: McCluskey takes two ABA titles and reaches an Olympic quarter-final before his pro success

THE LATER YEARS A CHAMPION

AMILTON’S John McCluskey was part of a group of talented ‘60s and ‘70s Scottish boxers whom fight fans of that era remember fondly. Also in that group were Ken Buchanan, Dick McGargill, Evan Armstrong, John O’Brien, Sammy McSpadden, Bobby Mallon and McCluskey’s boyhood pal Walter McGowan.

While as a pro McCluskey did not hit the heights of world champions Buchanan and McGowan, he set his own unique record, which has never been equaled by another flyweight.

He reigned as British champion for 10 consecutive years. Born in Hamilton in January 1944, unlike his friend McGowan – who was the son of an ex-fighter – John had no boxing heritage to boast of. In fact, it was only through McGowan’s encouragement that he visited Larkhall Amateur Boxing Club at age 16, to give the sport a go.

After watching him spar, club coach Dave Barry told McCluskey he was a natural, and the lad soon proved him right. John won the Scottish amateur flyweight title in 1963 and both that title and the ABA (now Elite national) crown in ’64. An Olympic trial bout victory that summer earned him a place on the GB team at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.

At the time John worked for a barber in Hamilton, who to his surprise refused to give him time off to compete at the Games. McCluskey resigned and went anyway, but returned home disappointed after being eliminated in the flyweight quarter-final. In 1965 he won the ABA flyweight title again, and then turned his ambitions to a paid career.

He sought the advice of fellow Scots fighter Dick Currie, who suggested he sign with London-based entrepreneur and boxing manager Jarvis Astaire, who had a track-record of producing champions. McCluskey took that advice and in January 1967, in just his eighth pro fight, he won the vacant British flyweight title with an eighth-round KO of Manchester southpaw Tony Barlow at Belle Vue. This made him the third Scot in succession to hold the title, after Jackie Brown and Walter McGowan.

In June 1970, McCluskey captured the vacant Commonwealth flyweight crown by beating Australia’s Harry Hayes in Melbourne. He lost that title the following year, again in Melbourne, when stopped on a cut eye by Henry Nissen.

McCluskey retired in August 1977. He became a coach and was made honorary president of his local Hamilton Boxing Club.

As a modest man McCluskey shunned the limelight, but he was proud to be inducted into the Scottish Boxing Hall of Fame in 2006. A much-liked and respected president of the Scottish EBA, he died in July 2015, aged 71.

The late British and Commonwealth flyweight ruler John McCluskey was born this week in 1944.
When and why you started boxing:
My brother had put on a lot of weight and my mum made him go to a boxing gym to lose some of it. I was about 14, and I went along to support him, and just fell in love with the sport. Before that, I’d been playing football for Fulham and then Peterborough United.

Favourite all-time fighter:
Mike Tyson. He’s not in my weight class, but I loved his ferocity and hunger.

Best fight you’ve seen:
Arturo Gatti-Micky Ward II [a unanimous 10-round points victory for Gatti in November 2002].

Personal career highlight:
Winning the [vacant] English super-lightweight title [with a unanimous 10-session points success over Ricky Boylan in January 2015].

Toughest opponent:
Andy Harris [w pts 4 – March 2013]. It was only my third pro fight. I underestimated him and didn’t box too well.

Best and worst attributes as a boxer:
My main strength is my left hand – I have a good left hook and brilliant jab. However, I sometimes let my heart rule my head.

Training tip:
Stay dedicated, because you can’t ‘play’ boxing. You have to live the sport.

Best friends in boxing:
John Wayne Hibbert. We formed a friendship from sparring, and now we’re fighting each other this month!

Other sportsman you would like to be:
As I used to play football, I’ll say Thierry Henry – pure class.

‘I DON’T HIDE ANYTHING. I JUST LIVE FOR BOXING’

Last film/TV show you saw:
[Comedy movie] Step Brothers.

Have you ever been starstruck:
When I bumped into Amir Khan at a Prizefighter show when I was younger. Also, when I was really young, I met Matt Skelton and was blown away. I ended up boxing on the same bill as him years later [in Liverpool in July 2014].

Last time you cried:
When I won the English title. I’m not much of a crier, but I knew all the hard work had finally paid off.

Best advice received:
‘Your right hand gets you around the country, your jab gets you around the world.’ That came from [ex-WBO super-featherweight champion] Nicky Cook, when I was 16 and living in Tenerife.

Worst rumour about yourself:
It’s not really a rumour, but I hate it when my opponents say at pre-fight press conferences, ‘Ah he’s just a baby, he’s just a kid.’

Something not many people know about you:
There’s nothing really. I don’t hide anything at all. I just live for boxing.
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