

THE BIBLE OF BOXING

The RING

APRIL 2023



GD
GERVONDA
DAVIS




RYAN
GARCIA

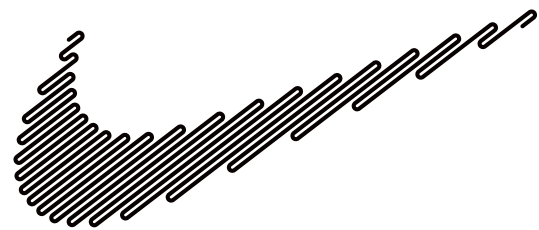


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Gervonta Davis and Ryan Garcia gathered on stage with their trainers, promoters and network reps at the L.A. presser for their showdown.



BRING IN THE FEDS?

I just read your article entitled “Boxing is Broken” (by Steve Kim, February 2023 issue). I am between a casual fan and a hardcore fan, though I do follow the history of boxing – simply because life intercedes and me following several other sports like ice hockey and collegiate women’s rugby keeps me from being a deeper fan of any one sport.

I vaguely remember Teddy Atlas around 2015 – if I am not mistaken, before the superfight

between Mayweather and Pacquiao (May 2015) – mentioning how the sport of boxing in the U.S. needs a governing body, like federal oversight. I’m not sure this would solve any of the problems you are referring to regarding boxing matchups that fight fans are left wanting to see (sometimes for years, with or without it happening; one example being the Errol Spence Jr. vs. Terrence Crawford matchup, which, honestly, I think should have happened 2-5 years ago now!). In the article you mentioned Lou DiBella’s former role as “boxing czar” at HBO and wondered if boxing in general could use

somebody like that. Taking the suggestions much further, I wonder if the U.S. government getting its hands into boxing would be good for the sport in North America and/or the U.S.A. or if it would be far worse given the track record of the true functionality of our federal government. I know that sounds funny, and it may be. This is a brainstorming comment.

Anyway, I enjoyed your article, and I do agree with your assessment of the situation. I appreciate the article.

*William Hinton
Aiken, South Carolina*

STEVE KIM’S RESPONSE: *William, thank you for your correspondence and interest in our piece. But while government intervention may seem like a good idea, in my view, the last thing I want is the government meddling in boxing. The government can’t even govern the country properly, and we want them running a sport that most of them know very little about?*

The thoughts of having a national commission and things of that nature sound good, but here’s the issue: Just who should that be? And just how much power should this committee or elected individual have? Would this person or group have unilateral powers of authority over this industry?

What if the wrong people with a dishonest agenda are put in charge? Or someone who simply is ignorant to the realities of the business and sport?

The reality is this: Boxing has to fix itself from within.

Those who wield influence need to be the ones who reform the business of boxing. But the issue is that unlike other major sports leagues and the UFC, there is real competition. As was stated in our original column, we essentially have different galaxies of boxing that exist. Oftentimes, they can subsist without even acknowledging each other.

But what is happening is an erosion within the sport, not just in terms of the available talent, but fan interest.

If those in charge who have a vested interest in it don’t want to consistently do the right thing – then maybe it’s not worth saving.

BEFORE IT’S TOO LATE...

I just wanted to vent my frustration over the fact that top boxers never ever want to fight each other – in the heavyweight division at least. I’m no expert, but even a casual fan can tell you that if this carries on, boxing will lose viewership. Deontay Wilder only fought Tyson Fury the first time around because he thought Fury was finished. Something has to change fast.

Eoin Greene

SOMETIMES BOXING STILL GETS IT RIGHT

When I heard Benavidez-Plant announced, I decided it was a good time to come back to Vegas for a fight. Tickets were priced fan-friendly and it seemed like a good enough fight to have a good time. Well, I’m glad I came. The whole event from start to finish was a lot of fun. The place was packed with real boxing fans (not ignorant high rollers). As soon as the first fight started, you could see the place already had about seven or eight thousand people inside rooting and chanting for the fighters. Every fight was compelling up to the main event; fans around me were talking about boxing, commenting on future and past fights and having a good time. I got to meet Riddick Bowe (highlight of my evening) and a lot more PBC fighters. Most of them were very nice, with a few exceptions I won’t mention here, but I do have to say that the nicest guy was Deontay Wilder. Really glad I



approached him. Very accessible guy and even did the “Bomb Squad!” scream with me for a personal video.

The main event was also very heated and fans were really into it. I like both guys, so I wasn’t rooting for anybody in particular. I was impressed by what both guys managed to accomplish and liked how Benavidez closed the show. I wish the ref would’ve stopped the fight after the 10th. There was really no reason for Plant to receive the kind of punishment he got in the last two rounds.

Overall, I’m glad I came, and I hope there’s more events like this that people can actually afford and

Benavidez-Plant was an enjoyable event, according to a reader who attended the fight in Las Vegas.

are sold to the general public and not the typical resellers that are ruining sports for the real sports fans and only making these events accessible to people with big bucks.

Juan Valverde

WRITE TO THE RING! comeoutwriting@gmail.com
— Emailed letters will include a writer’s email address unless a city and state of origin are provided. Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

ICON SPORTSWIRE / CONTRIBUTOR

SCORECARDS

Boxing Aficionado™

MAIN EVENT

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
RED CORNER													
BLUE CORNER													

CO-MAIN EVENT

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
RED CORNER													
BLUE CORNER													

PRELIMS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
RED CORNER													
BLUE CORNER													

PRELIMS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
RED CORNER													
BLUE CORNER													



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RINGSIDE BY DOUG FISCHER

SLIGHTLY LESS BROKEN



The cover to our February 2023

issue ruffled some feathers (which is exactly what it was supposed to do), especially when the anticipated showdown between Gervonta “Tank” Davis and Ryan Garcia was made official via Tank’s Twitter account.

The image of a dream fight card poster featuring Dmitry Bivol vs. Artur Beterbiev, Regis Prograis vs. Jose Ramirez and Davis vs. Garcia ripped in half – symbolizing the sport’s inability to make those intriguing matchups – was bound to trigger some folks.

Adding the coverline “Boxing Is Broken” across the bottom of the cover only added salt to the wounds of fans frustrated with the lack of big fights to look forward to in 2023.

But Davis-Garcia was a ray of hope that ignited much of fight fandom, some of whom among the Boxing Twitterverse accused The Ring (and Yours Truly) of being “negative” and “cynical.”

Normally I wouldn’t waste time addressing social media criticism because, let’s face it, the panties of hardcore fans and boxing insiders

seem to get bunched and twisted over pretty much everything these days.

But since the dissenters’ main beef with the image was the inclusion of the Davis-Garcia fight, which is the cover subject of this issue, I figured I’d use this column to elaborate on my replies to the smart asses who said we should remove the April 22 showdown from the February cover (something we could actually do now that The Ring is digital only).

Don’t call the sport “broken,” they said, when a great fight like Davis-Garcia was just made.

Over the next several days – a period in which no official press release on the venue, press conference dates or pay-per-view price was issued to the public – I calmly (and respectfully) told them two things:

We ain’t changing a damn thing on that cover.

The sport IS broken when heaven and earth has to be moved to make a fight between lightweight contenders.

The “Boxing Is Broken” coverline was the title to that issue’s cover story, the inaugural column of an ongoing series penned by my old cohort Steve Kim. The subject of



part one was the “network divide” which has, over the past decade, either blocked, dismissed or delayed countless matchups that fans demanded, all because of promoter-platform allegiances that lead to fighter exclusivity. All three bouts on that cover were examples of this.

Yes, Davis-Garcia was made (announced via social media on February 24), and I’m as happy about that as any blue-blooded fight fan, but if the sport wasn’t such a complicated mess, the negotiations wouldn’t have taken months. If boxing was working properly, a fight like Davis-Garcia would be business

as usual.

The official press releases announcing media events in New York City and Los Angeles said it all. The showdown between The Ring’s No. 2- and No. 3-rated lightweights was described as a “long-awaited clash” and “a rare matchup of unbeaten superstars in the primes of their careers.”

Why are matchups between “unbeaten superstars” so damn “rare” in this era? (If you read part one to Kim’s “Boxing Is Broken” series, you’d have a good idea.)

Between 1999-2000, the sport delivered Oscar De La Hoya vs.

Ike Quartey, De La Hoya vs. Felix Trinidad, Trinidad vs. David Reid, and Trinidad vs. Fernando Vargas.

Why is a fight like Davis-Garcia “long-awaited”? These guys are in their 20s! They both publicly stated that they wanted to fight two years ago. They have dedicated fan bases who want to see them fight. Once upon a time that meant the matchup HAD to be made, regardless of boxing politics and pettiness.

All four of those pay-per-view showdowns that took place in 1999 and 2000 that I mentioned were co-promotions. Top Rank, Main Events, Don King Productions and

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America Presents worked together to make those fights because it was good business, and the networks (HBO and Showtime) didn’t get in the way. There was enough money to go around and they knew it.

Now the networks and streaming platforms get in the way. That’s why Davis-Garcia was on the February cover. It was announced – again via social media accounts – that the fight was a “done deal” last November. It was said that the fighters had “reached an agreement.” They would weigh in at a 136-pound catchweight and meet on April 15 in Las Vegas.

But it wasn’t a done deal. The networks – Showtime and DAZN – still had to iron out all of their contractual details, which I admit I know little about. But I know that it took months for them to do so, trying the already frayed

Showdowns between unbeaten stars were once commonplace.

patience of fans embittered by the sport’s failure to deliver the most significant matchups, such as Terence Crawford-Errol Spence and Tyson Fury-Oleksandr Usyk, and ultimately pushing the date back one week to April 22.

I understand there were A LOT of moving parts to work through to make this fight, but come on! It shouldn’t be like making Lennox Lewis-Mike Tyson or Floyd Mayweather-Manny Pacquiao.

Davis and Garcia are bona fide attractions, but they’re still forging their legacies. They aren’t future hall of famers – yet. They aren’t living legends.

Forty years ago, young guns like Davis and Garcia would have been fighting on network TV. Twenty-five years ago, they’d be duking it out HBO’s Boxing After Dark. If the fight delivered action, drama, a sold-out arena and great ratings, the rematch would have been a pay-per-view event.

Now it’s straight to pay-per-view with an \$85 price tag. And I’m not even going to complain about that – as long as the fight lives up to its hype.

Days before this issue went live (no more “going to press”), the rumor was that Spence-Crawford would be announced at Davis-Garcia. If that happens, The Ring will celebrate along with the rest of the boxing world.

Until then, the top two welterweights continue to serve as a prime example of what’s wrong with the sport. The “Boxing Is Broken” series will continue, and that’s not The Ring being cynical. We’re not saying the sport is dead. We’re just calling it like we see it because we’ve seen MUCH better days and we’re not BLIND.

We want a healthier sport. (Hell, we need something to write about!)

We hope one of the major platforms – ESPN, Showtime, DAZN – allows Prograis, who is not aligned with a major promoter, to defend his WBC 140-pound title vs. a worthy junior welterweight challenger. (Ramirez would be nice, but we’ll gladly accept Subriel Matias, Jack Catterall or the winner of the proposed Josh Taylor-Teofimo Lopez showdown.)

We hope Beterbiev can fight for the undisputed light heavyweight championship vs. Bivol before he’s in his 40s.

Imagine if Bivol-Beterbiev and Prograis-Ramirez are eventually made. I’m no expert on boxing collectibles, but maybe that would add value to the February 2023 cover image.

I do know this: Making those fights – sooner rather than later – would definitely add value to boxing.

NEW FACES

By Anson Wainwright

BRUCE CARRINGTON



BEST NIGHT OF PRO CAREER AND WHY: Carrington is most pleased with thrilling his hometown fans at the Theater inside Madison Square Garden in March 2022.

“I would say my best performance was my third fight, against Yeuri Andujar,” Carrington told *The Ring*. “I feel like I showed an array of combinations, my power, and showed I was able to break my opponent down mentally and then knock him out at the end of the fight. I showed my full toolbox out there.”

Worst night of pro career and why: “Shu Shu” (Egyptian, meaning “The one who rises above all”) says he was sloppy in his professional debut in October 2021. Also, though his fans didn’t complain, he wasn’t satisfied with how he performed in his most recent fight, against the experienced Jose Antonio Lopez (17-13-1, 7 KOs).

“I felt I could have done more,” said Carrington. “In terms of my punch output, my jab was there, keeping the guy humble, but there were certain opportunities I had to let go. That’s something we’re capitalizing in this camp and we’re definitely going to bring more momentum coming into this next fight.”

AGE: 25

HOMETOWN: Brooklyn, New York

WEIGHT CLASS: Featherweight

HEIGHT: 5-foot-8 (173 cm)

AMATEUR RECORD: 255-31

TURNED PRO: 2021

PRO RECORD: 6-0 (3 knockouts)

TRAINER: Kay Koroma

MANAGER: Self-managed

PROMOTER: Top Rank

INSTAGRAM: @bruce_carrington

WHAT’S NEXT: The 25-year-old will face Brandon Chambers in a scheduled six-rounder on the undercard of Shakur Stevenson-Shuichiro Yoshino at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey, on April 8.

“I’m really excited because this is another situation where I can prove myself,” he said. “This is my first undefeated fighter; he’s 9-0-1, five knockouts. I’m super-ready to come up these ranks and prove to everybody that I’m the one everyone needs, I’m the one everyone wants to see. I’m ready to take over, little by little, fight by fight. I’m taking my time. I’m not in a rush. But every single fight, you guys are definitely going to get a crowd-pleasing performance.”

WHY HE’S A PROSPECT: Carrington had a successful amateur career, notably winning the New York City Golden Gloves in 2017 and the Olympic Trials in 2020. However, his aspirations of representing his country in Tokyo were dashed.

“I was supposed to be at the Olympics, but the Covid quarantine happened and I wasn’t able to fight, because the IOC picked guys who were the No. 1 the year prior,” he explained. “So, that dream of mine was taken away.”

Carrington has had a ton of high-level sparring, working with the likes of Shakur Stevenson, Keyshawn Davis, Gervonta Davis, Robeisy Ramirez, Floyd Diaz, Angel Barrientes, Richardson Hitchins and Chris Colbert.

“It was always competitive, neck and neck. It’s something for you to prove yourself,” he said of those sparring sessions. “Every day we’re sparring is not always the good day; some days they might get the best of me. That’s when I would have to make sure I get the best of them. We go back and forth like that. That’s kind of what happens with us elite fighters; we like to test ourselves and always want to beat somebody that gives us a hard time. Being comfortable would be uncomfortable.”

Carrington believes his demeanor under fire helps set him apart from his rivals.

“Anything that is thrown at me, give me a round or two and then I’m going to take over the fight,” he said. “When I stay calm, I’m able to see everything that comes – all the counters are open to me – and fight off it and really take over the fight each and every time.”

Two-division titleholder Tim Bradley, who now serves as a commentator for ESPN, believes Carrington is built for the long haul.

“Bruce brings an old-school feel to the game and a certain level of maturity that supersedes his age and the current degree of difficulty in his opposition,” said Bradley. “Many young pugilists are in a rush for success nowadays, and Bruce has the goods to be fast-tracked. But being around Carrington and picking his brain occasionally, I perceive him as a marathon runner, unlike the sprinters we see in boxing today. His mindset is to build his brand first while gradually stepping up competition.”

Bradley feels Carrington shares certain characteristics with a former three-division world champion.

“A young James Toney comes to mind when I sit and watch Bruce work from mid-range to inside the pocket,” said the recent International Boxing Hall of Fame inductee. “He is most comfortable at the most dangerous range in boxing. His instinct to avoid punches in-close while swiftly moving in advantageous positions to collect offense makes him fun to watch and dangerous to most. In today’s boxing, infighting is a lost art, and the quick tie-up has become the new norm.”

“Carrington, in my mind, projects a ceiling of undoubtedly the elite level. He is a future titleholder for sure – and possibly multiple divisions.”

WHY HE’S A SUSPECT: Carrington seems to be ahead of the curve. He’s a very well-rounded fighter, doubtlessly aided by his extensive amateur career. However, while he’s mature in terms of boxing, he’s still relatively green as a professional.

While not a noted puncher, he hits

hard enough to gain his opponents’ respect.

“I’m more like Tim Bradley and Andre Ward. I have respectable power for sure,” he said. “I don’t see myself as this knockout guy; I’ve always been a boxer first. That’s my bread and butter. That’s my natural fighting style. When things are flowing, I pick up the pace. Sometimes the knockout comes, sometimes it doesn’t, but my main goal is to stay disciplined and sharp.”

Bradley feels if Carrington can master one particular area, it could help him separate himself from the pack.

“Ring intelligence, aka ‘ring IQ.’ Boxing has a wave of ebbs and flows. A boxer not only has to be a ring general but a part-time psychologist/psychic,” explained Bradley. “Depending on the evolution of the match, a boxer must recognize the behavior of the fighter through observation and intuition. A fighter has to learn when to step on the gas and when to box to create opportunities.”

STORYLINES: Carrington was brought up in Brownsville, New York, which for better or worse has helped shape him as a person and fighter.

“That’s a very rough, tough neighborhood. We had the highest murder rate at some point,” he said. “There was a lot of building awareness. I remember my brother, he used to tell me, ‘Don’t walk the street looking down and not knowing where you are. Look behind you, look over your shoulder; you never know what is going to happen.’ And it’s kind of exhausting when you’re living in an environment where you have to look over your shoulder all the time, to where you have to be alert. You don’t have that sense of comfortability. That’s something we had to work with. It built tougher skin in me.”

“I used to see guys get stabbed, get killed at the age 5, 6. The first time I saw it, it was very traumatic, but then it kept happening, again and again to where it was like after a while it was forgettable. It’s crazy for somebody who doesn’t live in that type of environment.”

Despite seeing things no child should see, Carrington was never in trouble himself. But if it came his way, he has his own way of dealing with it.

“I was never a kid that got into fights, got into any conflict. I was a good kid, but kids at school picked and bullied me. But I was good at defending myself,” he said. “I was beating up the bullies who tried to bully me, so that was pretty funny to my dad. In the house, he’d never seen me fight. He was like, ‘My little Shu Shu, he’s fighting and beating up these kids two times the size of him? Bring him to the gym real quick.’”

Once he went to the gym, he found himself surrounded by stars and quickly found his calling.

“Curtis Stevens, Paulie Malignaggi, Luis Collazo, Sadam Ali, Daniel Jacobs – I was starstruck when I walked inside the gym,” he said. “Being around them definitely helped me keep going every day.”

“In my very first sparring session, I beat this kid up so bad he never came back to the gym. From that day, I was like, ‘I want to be a boxer for the rest of my life!’ I made that decision to be a boxer at the age of 7 and a career of it. That’s a really mature decision to make at such a young age when you think about it, and I’m happy I stuck with it.”

He attributes his “old head on young shoulders” mindset to spending time with his elders.

“Whenever I would hang out with my dad, he’s talking to his friends and I’m hanging out with them, so my maturity level was totally different from everybody else when I was in school,” he explained. “Most of the time, I was friends with guys who were older than me. I feel like I bring that maturity with everything I do in terms of life, ring, decision-making, everything.”

Although boxing is Carrington’s primary focus, he says there are a few things he enjoys away from his chosen profession.

“I’m very interested in acting,” he said. “Especially watching *Creed 3*. Hopefully they make *Creed 4*; I’m trying to get in that.” (laughs)

ROUND 1

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH ★ NEW FACES +

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH



against Charlo on January 28, because the 32-year-old Texan injured his left hand in sparring and had to withdraw from the scheduled defense. In stepped Tony Harrison, the only man to hold a professional victory over Charlo, as a high-level “stay busy” opponent.

Harrison, The Ring’s No. 4-rated junior middleweight at the time, was viewed as a live underdog due to his experience and slick boxing style. More than a few fans and pundits picked Harrison to outclass the Australian when they shared the ring for their WBO interim title bout on March 12 in Tszyu’s hometown of Sydney. Oh, how wrong they were.

Tszyu took firm command of the fight from the opening bell, even though he was out-jabbed by the ring-savvy Detroit native during the early rounds. Harrison moved well, fought hard in the pocket and off the ropes, but he could not dissuade Tszyu, who calmly broke down the veteran with steady pressure and economical power punching.

Harrison, who had been rocked into the ropes in Round 3, was game throughout the systematic beating but also a spent force by the ninth round, when Tszyu struck with a chilling series of right crosses and uppercuts

TIM TSZYU

Few believed Tim Tszyu had any chance of unseating Jermell Charlo when it was announced that he would get a WBO-mandated shot at the undisputed junior middleweight champion at the beginning of 2023.

The doubters were going off what they witnessed during Tszyu’s U.S. debut against Terrell Gausha last July. The 28-year-old son of hall of famer Kostya Tszyu was dropped in the opening round en route to a close unanimous decision over the fringe contender.

If he’s getting knocked down by Gausha, fans theorized on Boxing Twitter, Charlo will destroy him. The critics weren’t slighting Tszyu, who showed both talent and determination in getting up and working his way back into the fight; they simply recognized that he wasn’t ready to challenge an elite champion of Charlo’s experience.

We’ll never know how Tszyu would have fared


that dropped the American to the seat of his trucks and forced the referee to stop the fight.

The victory, followed by Tszyu’s fiery (and foul-mouthed) post-fight interview, changed the tune of Boxing Twitter. The majority still think Charlo will win their rescheduled showdown, but some fans think Tszyu’s got a shot. Everyone agrees that it’s a fight worth watching.

And by the time they finally share the ring, Tszyu will have gained even more experience.

It was thought that Charlo would be ready to fight by the summer, but Tszyu has learned that the champ’s hand needs more time to heal, so The Ring’s new No. 1-rated junior middleweight is now eyeing a June ring return with the hope of finally getting Charlo in the ring in September.

“I think [Charlo] understands this isn’t an easy fight for him,” Tszyu told Fox Sports Australia. “And so he wants to be 120 percent ready. I think before he was taking me lightly.”

Nobody’s taking him lightly now. 



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MARK KOLBE/GETTY IMAGES

RATINGS

SUMMARY ★ ANALYSIS

The Ring Ratings
covering fight results
from January 7-
March 25, 2023



FRANCOIS NEL

RECENT FIGHT RESULTS AND CHANGES IN THE RING'S DIVISIONAL RANKINGS

BY BRIAN HARTY

It's been a few months since our last ratings analysis and there's not enough space on these pages to mention all the Ring-rated fighters who were in action, but here's a quick-and-dirty rundown of the position changes that have occurred in each weight division so far this year.

CRUISERWEIGHT: Up-and-comer Richard Riakporhe stopped veteran Krzysztof Glowacki in four rounds and rose from No. 9 to No. 6 as a result. Badou Jack, now 39 years old, became a two-time titleholder and reentered the rankings at No. 4 after a two-knockdown, final-round stoppage of Illunga Makabu, who dropped one spot to No. 5. The Swede's return also pushed No. 10-rated Chris Billam-Smith off the list. Billam-Smith returned, however, when Thabiso Mchunu (No. 6) was removed for having 14 months of inactivity.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: Anthony Yarde showed uncommon grit in what was ultimately a losing effort against No. 2-rated Artur Beterbiev (you can read more about that in our February 2023 issue), and after some thoughtful debate among the ratings panelists, Yarde was elevated from No. 7 to No. 6 for the quality of his effort. Londoner Dan Azeez annexed the European championship with a 12th-round stoppage of Thomas Faure, essentially knocking the Frenchman out on his feet with an overhand right, and earned a promotion from No. 10 to No. 9. Azeez got another promotion after No. 8-rated Jean Pascal lost a unanimous decision to Germany's Michael Eifert, who entered at No. 10.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT: Christian Mbilli, still undefeated at 24-0 (20 KOs), was elevated from No. 5 to No. 3 after winning a wide unanimous decision over Ecuador's Carlos Gongora.

MIDDLEWEIGHT: Demetrius Andrade went up to 168, thus vacating his No. 3 position at middleweight and clearing the way for Felix Cash to inherit the No. 10 slot. In mid-January, Jermall Charlo was removed for inactivity, having not fought since June 2021. Liam Smith,

**Former 168- and 175-pound
standout Badou Jack (right) re-
entered the rankings by dethroning
WBC cruiserweight titleholder
Illunga Makabu.**

unrated at the time, shockingly finished off a delirious Chris Eubank Jr. in the fourth round of a Manchester rafter-shaker and entered the ratings at No. 5; Eubank fell from that same rank to No. 10. As a bonus, with the fight taking place at 160 pounds, "Beefy" also held onto his No. 7 spot at 154. No. 6-ranked Ryota Murata announced his retirement after a nine-year, up-and-down career that concluded with his loss to Gennadiy Golovkin in April 2022; his departure made room for Meirim Nursultanov at No. 10.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT: In mid-March, Tim Tszyu again did his family name proud with a ninth-round stoppage of Tony Harrison, who absorbed an ungodly number of clubbing rights before finally dropping. Tszyu rose from No. 3 to No. 1 as a result and is now sitting just below division champion Jermell Charlo, who was Tszyu's original opponent before the Texan broke his hand while sparring in January. Harrison dropped from No. 4 to No. 8. Jesus Ramos entered the list at No. 8 (crowding out No. 10-rated Michel Soro) with a seventh-round stoppage of Joseph Spencer on the David Benavidez-Caleb Plant undercard.

WELTERWEIGHT: A grudge match-by-proxy between boxing sons Conor Benn, rated No. 8 by The Ring, and Eubank was supposed to happen at a catchweight of 157 pounds last year, but the fight was canceled back in October after it came to light that Benn had tested positive for a banned substance called clomifene a couple months earlier. The issue had been shelved by the ratings panel until the situation became clearer, which it never really did, but the debate resurfaced in March. Eventually it was decided to remove Benn for the time being. Cody Crowley, coming off an impressive majority decision victory over Abel Ramos, was installed at No. 9.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT: Arnold Barboza remained undefeated (28-0) and rose from No. 6 to No. 5 by unanimously outpointing former lightweight titleholder Jose Pedraza. Subriel Matias earned a one-spot elevation to No. 3 with a fifth-round stoppage of Jeremias Ponce for the vacant IBF title, the fight ending after Ponce was crumpled by a body shot at the end of the round and his corner decided it was time to call it a night.

LIGHTWEIGHT: Joseph Diaz Jr. lost for the third time in a row, this time by split decision against Mercito Gesta, so the No. 9-rated Californian finally lost his grip on the ratings and Japan's undefeated Shuichiro Yoshino entered at No. 10.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT: O'Shaquie Foster very skillfully dismantled Rey Vargas (who is rated at featherweight – No. 2 at the time of the fight) to secure a unanimous decision victory and a promotion from No. 6 to No. 3.

FEATHERWEIGHT: No. 1-rated Emanuel Navarrete moved up in weight, which elevated Vargas to the top spot and allowed Isaac Dogboe to return at No. 10. Leigh Wood's corner threw in the towel after he was floored by a left hook from Mauricio Lara in Round 7 of what was a fantastic battle; Lara snatched the WBA belt and rose from No. 3 to No. 1 as a result, while Wood (who was winning on all three cards) remained at No. 5. A battered Luis Nery was elevated from No. 6 to No. 3 after winning a grueling demonstration of attrition warfare against Azat Hovhannisyanyan, who was stopped on his feet in the 11th round but only dropped from No. 4 to No. 5 due to being a total badass. Dogboe was then pushed off the list by the arrival of Brandon Figueroa, who unanimously decided a hard-charging Mark Magsayo to enter the rankings at No. 4; Magsayo dropped from No. 3 to No. 5.

BANTAMWEIGHT: Naoya Inoue vacated the Ring championship and all of his sanction-org titles in anticipation of his fight against Stephen Fulton at 122 pounds. It was originally supposed to happen in May but was postponed until July after Inoue suffered some kind of injury, possibly to his hand, while training.

Lee McGregor (No. 5) moved up to junior featherweight and Kai Chiba (No. 10) lost by second-round stoppage to countryman Keita Kurihara during the same week, so two vacancies were created; Kurihara took the No. 2 post and Liborio Solis moved in at No. 10.

STRAWWEIGHT: Melvin Jerusalem made a rare trip out of the Philippines and took the WBO title from Masataka Taniguchi by second-round stoppage in Japan; Taniguchi dropped from No. 3 to No. 10 and Jerusalem entered at No. 3, pushing out Pedro Taturan. And finally, New Jersey native Oscar Collazo bumped his record to 6-0 (4 KOs) with a fifth-round TKO of Yudel Reyes and supplanted Yudai Shigeoka at No. 10.



- 1** **OLEKSANDR USYK**
Ukraine • 20-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 2** **NAOYA INOUE**
Japan • 24-0-0 (21 KOs)
- 3** **TERENCE CRAWFORD**
U.S. • 39-0-0 (30 KOs)
- 4** **ERROL SPENCE JR.**
U.S. • 28-0-0 (22 KOs)
- 5** **CANELO ALVAREZ**
Mexico • 58-2-2 (39 KOs)
- 6** **DMITRY BIVOL**
Russia • 21-0-0 (11 KOs)
- 7** **VASILY LOMACHENKO**
Ukraine • 17-2-0 (11 KOs)
- 8** **JOSH TAYLOR**
U.K. • 19-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 9** **JERMELL CHARLO**
U.S. • 35-1-1 (19 KOs)
- 10** **ARTUR BETERBIEV**
Russia • 18-0-0 (18 KOs)



Canelo Alvarez will defend his undisputed super middleweight championship against No. 4 contender John Ryder on May 6.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 POUNDS

- C (VACANT)**
- 1 GENNADIY GOLOVKIN** *IBF, WBA*
Kazakhstan • 42-2-1 (37 KOs)
- 2 JAIME MUNGUIA**
Mexico • 41-0-0 (33 KOs)
- 3 ZHANIBEK ALIMKHANULY** *WBO*
Kazakhstan • 13-0-0 (8 KOs)
- 4 CARLOS ADAMES**
Dom. Rep. • 22-1-0 (17 KOs)
- 5 LIAM SMITH**
U.K. • 33-3-1 (20 KOs)
- 6 SERGIY DEREVYANCHENKO**
Ukraine • 14-4-0 (10 KOs)
- 7 ERISLANDY LARA**
Cuba • 29-3-3 (17 KOs)
- 8 FELIX CASH**
U.K. • 16-0-0 (10 KOs)
- 9 CHRIS EUBANK JR.**
U.K. • 32-3-0 (23 KOs)
- 10 MEIRIM NURSULTANOV**
Kazakhstan • 18-0-0 (10 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 POUNDS

- C JERMELL CHARLO** *RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO*
U.S. • 35-1-1 (19 KOs)
- 1 TIM TSZYU**
Australia • 22-0-0 (16 KOs)
- 2 BRIAN CASTANO**
Argentina • 17-1-2 (12 KOs)
- 3 SEBASTIAN FUNDORA**
U.S. • 20-0-1 (13 KOs)
- 4 ERICKSON LUBIN**
U.S. • 24-2-0 (17 KOs)
- 5 MAGOMED KURBANOV**
Russia • 24-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 6 LIAM SMITH**
U.K. • 33-3-1 (20 KOs)
- 7 ISRAIL MADRIMOV**
Uzbekistan • 8-0-1 (6 KOs)
- 8 JESUS RAMOS**
U.S. • 20-0-0 (16 KOs)
- 9 TONY HARRISON**
U.S. • 29-4-1 (21 KOs)
- 10 CHARLES CONWELL**
U.S. • 18-0-0 (13 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 POUNDS

- C (VACANT)**
- 1 ERROL SPENCE JR.** *IBF, WBA, WBC*
U.S. • 28-0-0 (22 KOs)
- 2 TERENCE CRAWFORD** *WBO*
U.S. • 39-0-0 (30 KOs)
- 3 JARON ENNIS**
U.S. • 30-0-0 (27 KOs)
- 4 YORDENIS UGAS**
Cuba • 27-5-0 (12 KOs)
- 5 VERGIL ORTIZ JR.**
U.S. • 19-0-0 (19 KOs)
- 6 EIMANTAS STANIONIS**
Lithuania • 14-0-0 (9 KOs)
- 7 KEITH THURMAN**
U.S. • 30-1-0 (22 KOs)
- 8 RADZHAB BUTAEV**
Russia • 14-1-0 (11 KOs)
- 9 GODY CROWLEY**
Canada • 22-0-0 (9 KOs)
- 10 DAVID AVANESYAN**
Russia • 29-4-1 (17 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 POUNDS

- C JOSH TAYLOR** *RING, WBO*
U.K. • 19-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 1 REGIS PROGRAIS**
U.S. • 28-1-0 (24 KOs)
- 2 JOSE RAMIREZ**
U.S. • 28-1-0 (18 KOs)
- 3 SUBRIEL MATIAS**
Puerto Rico • 19-1-0 (19 KOs)
- 4 JACK CATTERALL**
U.K. • 26-1-0 (13 KOs)
- 5 ARNOLD BARBOZA**
U.S. • 28-0-0 (10 KOs)
- 6 JOSE ZEPEDA**
U.S. • 36-3-0 (27 KOs)
- 7 GARY ANTUANNE RUSSELL**
U.S. • 16-0-0 (16 KOs)
- 8 SHOHJAHON ERGASHEV**
Uzbekistan • 23-0-0 (20 KOs)
- 9 ALBERTO PUELLO** *WBA*
Dom. Rep. • 21-0-0 (10 KOs)
- 10 TEOFIMO LOPEZ**
U.S. • 18-1-0 (13 KOs)



Anthony Yarde advanced a notch in the light heavyweight rankings after his bold stand against No. 2-rated Artur Beterbiev.



Tim Tszyu advanced to No. 1 in the junior middleweight rankings following his ninth-round TKO of Tony Harrison.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

- C OLEKSANDR USYK** *RING, IBF, WBA, WBO*
Ukraine • 20-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 1 TYSON FURY** *WBC*
U.K. • 33-0-1 (24 KOs)
- 2 DEONTAY WILDER**
U.S. • 43-2-1 (42 KOs)
- 3 ANTHONY JOSHUA**
U.K. • 24-3-0 (22 KOs)
- 4 JOE JOYCE**
U.K. • 15-0-0 (14 KOs)
- 5 ANDY RUIZ JR.**
U.S. • 35-2-0 (22 KOs)
- 6 DILLIAN WHYTE**
U.K. • 29-3-0 (19 KOs)
- 7 LUIS ORTIZ**
Cuba • 33-3-0 (28 KOs)
- 8 JOSEPH PARKER**
New Zealand • 31-3-0 (21 KOs)
- 9 FILIP HRGOVIC**
Croatia • 15-0-0 (12 KOs)
- 10 FRANK SANCHEZ**
Cuba • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 POUNDS

- C JAI OPETAIA** *RING, IBF*
Australia • 22-0-0 (17 KOs)
- 1 LAWRENCE OKOLIE** *WBO*
U.K. • 19-0-0 (14 KOs)
- 2 MAIRIS BRIEDIS**
Latvia • 28-2-0 (20 KOs)
- 3 YUNIEL DORTICOS**
Cuba • 26-2-0 (24 KOs)
- 4 BADOU JACK** *WBC*
Sweden • 28-3-3 (17 KOs)
- 5 ILUNGA MAKABU**
Congo • 29-3-0 (25 KOs)
- 6 RICHARD RIAKPORHE**
U.K. • 16-0-0 (12 KOs)
- 7 ALEKSEI PAPIN**
Russia • 15-1-0 (14 KOs)
- 8 ARSEN GOULAMIRIAN**
France • 27-0-0 (18 KOs)
- 9 MATEUSZ MASTERNAK**
Poland • 47-5-0 (31 KOs)
- 10 CHRIS BILLAM-SMITH**
U.K. • 17-1-0 (12 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 POUNDS

- C (VACANT)**
- 1 DMITRY BIVOL** *WBA*
Russia • 21-0-0 (11 KOs)
- 2 ARTUR BETERBIEV** *IBF, WBC, WBO*
Russia • 19-0-0 (19 KOs)
- 3 CALLUM SMITH**
U.K. • 29-1-0 (21 KOs)
- 4 GILBERTO RAMIREZ**
Mexico • 44-1-0 (30 KOs)
- 5 JOE SMITH JR.**
U.S. • 28-4-0 (22 KOs)
- 6 ANTHONY YARDE**
U.K. • 23-3-0 (22 KOs)
- 7 JOSHUA BUATSI**
U.K. • 16-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 8 DAN AZEEZ**
U.K. • 19-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 9 CRAIG RICHARDS**
U.K. • 17-3-1 (10 KOs)
- 10 MICHAEL EIFERT**
Germany • 12-1-0 (4 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 POUNDS

- C CANELO ALVAREZ** *RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO*
Mexico • 58-2-2 (39 KOs)
- 1 DAVID BENAVIDEZ**
U.S. • 27-0-0 (23 KOs)
- 2 CALEB PLANT**
U.S. • 22-2-0 (13 KOs)
- 3 CHRISTIAN MBILLI**
France • 24-0-0 (20 KOs)
- 4 JOHN RYDER**
U.K. • 32-5-0 (18 KOs)
- 5 DAVID MORRELL**
Cuba • 8-0-0 (7 KOs)
- 6 ANTHONY DIRRELL**
U.S. • 34-3-2 (25 KOs)
- 7 ERIK BAZINYAN**
Canada • 29-0-0 (21 KOs)
- 8 VLADIMIR SHISHKIN**
Russia • 14-0-0 (8 KOs)
- 9 ZACH PARKER**
U.K. • 22-1-0 (16 KOs)
- 10 ALI AKHMEDOV**
Kazakhstan • 19-1-0 (14 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 POUNDS

- C DEVIN HANEY** *RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO*
U.S. • 29-0-0 (15 KOs)
- 1 VASILY LOMACHENKO**
Ukraine • 17-2-0 (11 KOs)
- 2 GERVONTA DAVIS**
U.S. • 28-0-0 (26 KOs)
- 3 RYAN GARCIA**
U.S. • 23-0-0 (19 KOs)
- 4 ISAAC CRUZ**
Mexico • 24-2-1 (17 KOs)
- 5 FRANK MARTIN**
U.S. • 17-0-0 (12 KOs)
- 6 GEORGE KAMBOSOS JR.**
Australia • 20-2-0 (10 KOs)
- 7 WILLIAM ZEPEDA**
Mexico • 27-0-0 (23 KOs)
- 8 GUSTAVO LEMOS**
Argentina • 28-0-0 (18 KOs)
- 9 MAXI HUGHES**
U.K. • 26-5-2 (5 KOs)
- 10 SHUICHIRO YOSHINO**
Japan • 16-0-0 (12 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 POUNDS

- C (VACANT)**
- 1 OSCAR VALDEZ**
Mexico • 30-1-0 (23 KOs)
- 2 HECTOR GARCIA** *WBA*
Dom. Rep. • 16-1-0 (10 KOs)
- 3 O'SHAQUIE FOSTER**
U.S. • 20-2-0 (11 KOs)
- 4 SHAVKATDZHON RAKHIMOV**
Russia • 17-0-1 (14 KOs)
- 5 JOE CORDINA** *IBF*
U.K. • 15-0-0 (9 KOs)
- 6 ROBSON CONCEICAO**
Brazil • 17-2-0 (8 KOs)
- 7 ROGER GUTIERREZ**
Venezuela • 27-4-1 (21 KOs)
- 8 KENICHI OGAWA**
Japan • 26-2-1 (18 KOs)
- 9 LAMONT ROACH**
U.S. • 23-1-1 (9 KOs)
- 10 ALBERT BELL**
U.S. • 22-0-0 (6 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 POUNDS

- C (VACANT)**
- 1 MAURICIO LARA** *WBA*
Mexico • 26-2-1 (19 KOs)
- 2 REY VARGAS** *WBC*
Mexico • 36-1-0 (22 KOs)
- 3 LUIS ALBERTO LOPEZ** *IBF*
Mexico • 27-2-0 (15 KOs)
- 4 BRANDON FIGUEROA**
U.S. • 24-1-1 (18 KOs)
- 5 MARK MAGSAYO**
Phil. • 24-2-0 (16 KOs)
- 6 LEIGH WOOD**
U.K. • 26-3-0 (16 KOs)
- 7 JOSH WARRINGTON**
U.K. • 31-2-1 (8 KOs)
- 8 KIKO MARTINEZ**
Spain • 44-11-2 (31 KOs)
- 9 ROBEISY RAMIREZ**
Cuba • 11-1-0 (7 KOs)
- 10 MICHAEL CONLAN**
Ireland • 18-1-0 (9 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 POUNDS

- C (VACANT)**
- 1 STEPHEN FULTON** *WBC, WBO*
U.S. • 21-0-0 (8 KOs)
- 2 MURDJOHON AKHMADALIEV** *IBF, WBA*
Uzbekistan • 11-0-0 (8 KOs)
- 3 LUIS NERY**
Mexico • 34-1-0 (26 KOs)
- 4 RA'EESHE ALEEM**
U.S. • 20-0-0 (12 KOs)
- 5 AZAT HOVHANNISYAN**
Armenia • 21-4-0 (17 KOs)
- 6 MARLON TAPALES**
Phil. • 36-3-0 (19 KOs)
- 7 RONNY RIOS**
U.S. • 33-4-0 (16 KOs)
- 8 ZOLANI TETE**
S. Africa • 30-4-0 (23 KOs)
- 9 MIKE PLANIA**
Phil. • 27-2-0 (14 KOs)
- 10 TAKUMA INOUE**
Japan • 17-1-0 (4 KOs)

BANTAMWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 POUNDS

- C (VACANT)**
- EMMANUEL RODRIGUEZ**
Puerto Rico • 21-2-0 (13 KOs)
 - JASON MOLONEY**
Australia • 25-2-0 (19 KOs)
 - NONITO DONAIRE**
Phil. • 42-7-0 (28 KOs)
 - VINCENT ASTROLABIO**
Phil. • 18-3-0 (13 KOs)
 - GARY ANTONIO RUSSELL**
U.S. • 19-1-0 (12 KOs)
 - ALEJANDRO SANTIAGO**
Mexico • 27-3-5 (14 KOs)
 - PAUL BUTLER**
U.K. • 34-3-0 (15 KOs)
 - RYOSUKE NISHIDA**
Japan • 6-0-0 (1 KO)
 - KEITA KURIHARA**
Japan • 17-7-1 (15 KOs)
 - LIBORIO SOLIS**
Venezuela • 35-6-1 (16 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 POUNDS

- JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA** RING, WBC
Mexico • 44-3-0 (28 KOs)
- ROMAN GONZALEZ**
Nicaragua • 51-4-0 (41 KOs)
- KAZUTO IOKA**
Japan • 29-2-1 (15 KOs)
- JOSHUA FRANCO**
U.S. • 18-1-3 (8 KOs)
- JESSE RODRIGUEZ**
Mexico • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)
- FERNANDO MARTINEZ** IBF
Argentina • 15-0-0 (8 KOs)
- SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
Thailand • 51-6-1 (44 KOs)
- JUNTO NAKATANI**
Japan • 24-0-0 (18 KOs)
- KOSEI TANAKA**
Japan • 18-1-0 (10 KOs)
- ANDREW MOLONEY**
Australia • 25-2-0 (16 KOs)
- FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ JR.**
Mexico • 37-5-1 (25 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 POUNDS

- C (VACANT)**
- SUNNY EDWARDS** IBF
U.K. • 19-0-0 (4 KOs)
 - JULIO CESAR MARTINEZ** WBC
Mexico • 19-2-0 (14 KOs)
 - ARTEM DALAKIAN** WBA
Ukraine • 22-0-0 (15 KOs)
 - ANGEL AYALA LARDIZABAL**
Mexico • 16-0-0 (7 KOs)
 - MCWILLIAMS ARROYO**
Puerto Rico • 21-4-0 (16 KOs)
 - DAVID JIMENEZ**
Costa Rica • 12-1-0 (9 KOs)
 - RICARDO SANDOVAL**
U.S. • 21-2-0 (16 KOs)
 - FELIX ALVARADO**
Nicaragua • 38-3-0 (33 KOs)
 - CRISTOFER ROSALES**
Nicaragua • 35-6-0 (21 KOs)
 - SEIGO YURI AKUI**
Japan • 18-2-1 (11 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 POUNDS

- KENSHIRO TERAJI** RING, WBA, WBC
Japan • 20-1-0 (12 KOs)
- JONATHAN GONZALEZ** WBO
Puerto Rico • 27-3-1 (14 KOs)
- HIROTO KYOGUCHI**
Japan • 16-1-0 (11 KOs)
- HEKKIE BUDLER**
S. Africa • 34-4-0 (10 KOs)
- ELWIN SOTO**
Mexico • 19-3-0 (13 KOs)
- SIVENATHI NONTSHINGA** IBF
S. Africa • 11-0-0 (9 KOs)
- MASAMICHI YABUKI**
Japan • 15-4-0 (14 KOs)
- DANIEL MATELLON**
Cuba • 13-0-2 (7 KOs)
- ESTEBAN BERMUDEZ**
Mexico • 14-4-2 (10 KOs)
- CARLOS CANIZALES**
Venezuela • 25-1-1 (19 KOs)
- SHOKICHI IWATA**
Japan • 9-1-0 (6 KOs)



Frank Martin moved to No. 5 in the lightweight rankings after outpointing fellow up-and-comer Michel Rivera.



Mauricio Lara grabbed the No. 1 spot in the featherweight rankings with a stoppage of WBA titleholder Leigh Wood.

STRAWWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 POUNDS

- C (VACANT)**
- KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART** WBA
Thailand • 24-0-0 (9 KOs)
 - PETCHMANEE CP FRESHMART** WBC
Thailand • 39-1-0 (23 KOs)
 - MELVIN JERUSALEM** WBO
Phil. • 20-2-0 (12 KOs)
 - WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
Thailand • 55-3-0 (19 KOs)
 - WILFREDO MENDEZ**
Puerto Rico • 18-2-0 (6 KOs)
 - DANIEL VALLADARES** IBF
Mexico • 26-3-1 (15 KOs)
 - RENE MARK CUARTO**
Phil. • 21-3-2 (12 KOs)
 - GINJIRO SHIGEOKA**
Japan • 8-0-0 (6 KOs)
 - MASATAKA TANIGUCHI**
Japan • 16-4-0 (11 KOs)
 - OSCAR COLLAZO**
U.S. • 6-0-0 (4 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

RECORDS PROVIDED BY BOXREC.COM

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. The Ring's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another. 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders choose not to fight one another and No. 1 fights No. 3, that matchup could be for the Ring title if the Editorial Board deems No. 3 worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months, although injuries

and certain other unforeseen circumstances could be taken into consideration; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

The Ring Editorial Board considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world and then decides collectively what changes will be made. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

POUND FOR POUND



- CLARESSA SHIELDS**
U.S. • 13-0-0 (2 KOs)

- KATIE TAYLOR**
Ireland • 22-0-0 (6 KOs)
- AMANDA SERRANO**
Puerto Rico • 44-2-1 (30 KOs)
- CHANTELLE CAMERON**
U.K. • 17-0-0 (8 KOs)

- SENIESA ESTRADA**
U.S. • 24-0-0 (9 KOs)
- JESSICA MCCASKILL**
U.S. • 12-3-0 (5 KOs)
- DELFIN PERSOON**
Belgium • 47-3-0 (19 KOs)

- ALYCIA BAUMGARDNER**
U.S. • 14-1-0 (7 KOs)
- MIKAELA MAYER**
U.S. • 17-1-0 (5 KOs)
- NATASHA JONAS**
U.K. • 13-2-1 (8 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 POUNDS

- FRANCON CREWS-DEZURN** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
U.S. • 8-1-0 (2 KOs)
- SHADASIA GREEN**
U.S. • 12-0-0 (11 KOs)
- ELIN CEDERROOS**
Sweden • 8-2-0 (4 KOs)
- CHRISTINA HAMMER**
Slovenia • 22-1-1 (12 KOs)
- JANINA NEUMANN**
Germany • 5-0-0 (5 KOs)
- RAQUEL MILLER**
U.S. • 13-0-0 (6 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 POUNDS

- CLARESSA SHIELDS** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
U.S. • 13-0-0 (2 KOs)
- SAVANNAH MARSHALL**
U.K. • 12-1-0 (10 KOs)
- CHRISTINA HAMMER**
Germany • 28-1-0 (13 KOs)
- EMA KOZIN**
Slovenia • 22-1-1 (12 KOs)
- FEMKE HERMANS**
Belgium • 15-4-0 (6 KOs)
- RAQUEL MILLER**
U.S. • 13-0-0 (6 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 POUNDS

- NATASHA JONAS** RING, IBF, WBC, WBO
U.K. • 13-2-1 (8 KOs)
- TERRI HARPER** WBA
U.K. • 13-1-1 (6 KOs)
- MARIE EVE DICAIRE**
Canada • 18-2-0 (1 KO)
- PATRICIA BERGHULT**
Sweden • 16-1-0 (4 KOs)
- HANNAH RANKIN**
U.K. • 13-6-0 (3 KOs)
- FEMKE HERMANS**
Belgium • 15-4-0 (6 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 POUNDS

- JESSICA MCCASKILL** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
U.S. • 12-3-0 (5 KOs)
- CECILIA BRAEKHUS**
Norway • 37-2-0 (9 KOs)
- LAYLA MCCARTER**
U.S. • 45-13-5 (11 KOs)
- VICTORIA BUSTOS**
Argentina • 24-7-0 (0 KOs)
- LOLITA MUZEYA**
Zambia • 17-1-0 (9 KOs)
- EWA PIATKOWSKA**
Poland • 16-1-0 (4 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 POUNDS

- CHANTELLE CAMERON** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
U.K. • 17-0-0 (8 KOs)
- SANDY RYAN**
U.K. • 5-1-0 (2 KOs)
- KALI REIS** U.S. • 19-7-1 (5 KOs)
- ERICA FARIAS**
Argentina • 27-7-0 (10 KOs)
- OSHIN DERIEUW**
Belgium • 19-0-0 (7 KOs)
- MARY MCGEE**
U.S. • 28-4-0 (16 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 POUNDS

- KATIE TAYLOR** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
Ireland • 22-0-0 (6 KOs)
- AMANDA SERRANO**
Puerto Rico • 44-2-1 (30 KOs)
- DELFIN PERSOON**
Belgium • 47-3-0 (19 KOs)
- ESTELLE MOSSELY**
Belgium • 11-0-0 (1 KO)
- MAIRA MONEO**
Uruguay • 12-1-0 (2 KOs)
- MIRIAM GUTIERREZ**
Spain • 14-2-0 (5 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 POUNDS

- ALYCIA BAUMGARDNER** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
U.S. • 14-1-0 (7 KOs)
- MIKAELA MAYER**
U.S. • 17-1-0 (5 KOs)
- DELFIN PERSOON**
Belgium • 47-3-0 (19 KOs)
- MAIVA HAMADOUCHÉ**
France • 22-2-0 (18 KOs)
- HYUN MI CHOI**
South Korea • 20-0-1 (5 KOs)
- BO MI RE SHIN**
South Korea • 15-1-3 (8 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 POUNDS

- AMANDA SERRANO** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
Puerto Rico • 44-2-1 (30 KOs)
- ERIKA CRUZ HERNANDEZ**
Mexico • 15-2-0 (3 KOs)
- SARAH MAHFOUD**
Denmark • 12-1-0 (3 KOs)
- JELENA MRDJENOVICH**
Canada • 41-12-2 (19 KOs)
- NINA MEINKE**
Germany • 16-3-0 (4 KOs)
- BRENDA CARBAJAL**
Argentina • 18-5-1 (9 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 POUNDS

- (VACANT)**
- SEGOLENE LEFEBVRE** WBO
France • 16-0-0 (1 KO)
- YAMILETH MERCADO** WBC
Mexico • 21-3-0 (5 KOs)
- MAUREEN SHEA**
U.S. • 30-2-1 (13 KOs)
- CHERNEKA JOHNSON** IBF
Australia • 15-1-0 (6 KOs)
- ELLIE SCOTNEY**
U.K. • 6-0-0 (0 KOs)

BANTAMWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 POUNDS

- (VACANT)**
- DINA THORSLUND** WBO
Denmark • 19-0-0 (8 KOs)
- YULIHAN LUNA AVILA** WBC
Mexico • 25-3-1 (4 KOs)
- EBANIE BRIDGES** IBF
Australia • 9-1-0 (4 KOs)
- NINA HUGHES** WBA
U.K. • 5-0-0 (2 KOs)
- MARIANA JUAREZ**
Mexico • 55-12-4 (19 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 POUNDS

- (VACANT)**
- DIANA FERNANDEZ**
Mexico • 27-4-1 (4 KOs)
- ASLEY GONZALEZ** WBC
Mexico • 16-2-0 (7 KOs)
- LOURDES JUAREZ**
Mexico • 34-4-0 (4 KOs)
- MICAELA LUJAN** IBF
Argentina • 11-1-1 (3 KOs)
- ADELAIDA RUIZ**
U.S. • 12-0-1 (6 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 POUNDS

- MARLEN ESPARZA** RING, WBA, WBC
U.S. • 13-1-0 (1 KO)
- NAOKO FUJIOKA**
Japan • 19-3-1 (7 KOs)
- GABRIELA ALANIZ**
Argentina • 14-0-0 (6 KOs)
- ARELY MUCINO** IBF
Mexico • 32-3-2 (11 KOs)
- KENIA ENRIQUEZ**
Mexico • 25-1-0 (11 KOs)
- GABRIELA FUNDORA**
U.S. • 10-0-0 (4 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 POUNDS

- (VACANT)**
- SENIESA ESTRADA**
U.S. • 24-0-0 (9 KOs)
- JESSICA NERY PLATA** WBA, WBC
Mexico • 29-2-0 (3 KOs)
- EVELYN BERMUDEZ** IBF, WBO
Argentina • 18-1-1 (6 KOs)
- KIM CLAVEL**
Canada • 16-1-0 (3 KOs)
- TSUNAMI TENKAI**
Japan • 29-13-1 (17 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 POUNDS

- SENIESA ESTRADA** RING, WBA, WBC
U.S. • 24-0-0 (9 KOs)
- YOKASTA VALLE** IBF, WBO
Nicaragua • 28-2-0 (9 KOs)
- CHRISTINA RUPPRECHT** WBC
Germany • 12-1-1 (3 KOs)
- SARAH BORMANN**
Germany • 15-0-0 (7 KOs)
- ANABEL ORTIZ**
Mexico • 33-5-0 (4 KOs)
- JESSICA BASULTO**
Mexico • 11-1-0 (3 KOs)

ATOMWEIGHTS

WEIGHT LIMIT: 102 POUNDS

- (VACANT)**
- MONSERRAT ALARCON** WBA
Mexico • 18-4-2 (0 KOs)
- FABIANA BYTYQI** WBC
Czech Rep. • 19-0-2 (5 KOs)
- YUKO KUROKI** WBO
Japan • 21-7-2 (9 KOs)
- MIKA IWAKAWA** IBF
Japan • 12-6-1 (4 KOs)
- ERI MATSUDA**
Japan • 5-1-1 (1 KO)



THE CHAMPIONS CORNER: DAVIS VS. GARCIA

SEVENTEEN FORMER LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPIONS BREAK DOWN THE ANTICIPATED APRIL 22 CLASH OF POPULAR KO ARTISTS

By Anson Wainwright

The two best boxers in the 135-pound division will vie for the undisputed championship on May 20, and while the excellent matchup between Devin Haney and Vasiliy Lomachenko will certainly entertain hardcore fans and boxing purists, the lightweight showdown that the general public – especially the younger generation – is clamoring for takes place a month earlier, when Gervonta “Tank” Davis and Ryan Garcia finally share the ring.

Davis (28-0, 26 KOs) and Garcia (23-0, 19 KOs) aren’t nearly as accomplished as Haney, the Ring champ and holder of all four sanctioning body belts, or Lomachenko, the pound-for-pound-rated 2017 Fighter of the Year. However, the unbeaten contenders more than make up for their lack of awards and championship hardware with personality, charisma and dynamic boxer-puncher styles that have earned them dedicated fan bases and social media followings in the millions.

Davis and Garcia, The Ring’s Nos. 2- and 3-rated lightweights, are the division’s most popular fighters and the most exciting. The explosive nature of their matchup intrigues casual fans and diehards alike.

The non-title Showtime/DAZN pay-per-view event is special enough for The Ring to return to The Champions Corner, where only former titleholders are polled for their analysis, insight and predictions. Although some of the 17 former lightweight champs – which includes three Hall of Farmers – are still skeptical of Garcia’s ability, all are expecting fireworks.

Davis and Garcia face off at their NYC press conference.



RAY MANCINI
WBA TITLEHOLDER
(1982-1984)

“I look forward to the fight because of Tank Davis. Ryan Garcia doesn’t get me excited. He’s a good fighter, but it’s Tank Davis who is selling this fight. People say Ryan Garcia is selling this fight; he’s a good-looking kid, sells with his mouth.

“I’ve got to be honest, I don’t see all the clamor for Ryan Garcia. To me, he’s basic. He’s a good fighter but nothing special to me. He fights in straight lines; he goes back and comes straight in. He’s quick-handed, punches pretty good. I don’t think he’s fought near the caliber of opponent Tank Davis has. Who has he beat? [Luke Campbell] dropped him with a straight left hand. He got back up. And that was just a straight left hand. [Campbell] wasn’t a big puncher. [Garcia] left himself exposed.

“Tank Davis is a wrecking machine. I’ve seen him up close and personal; I’ve seen when I did commentary for PBC. I got to know him a little bit, his background. This kid’s as tough as nails – mentally, too. He’s been in there with anybody and everybody. Here’s the thing people don’t realize: This kid spars with junior middleweights because he’s so strong. They have a hard time getting guys to stay in there with him at his weight or a little above.

“I don’t see anything Ryan Garcia is going to bring to the table that [Davis] ain’t seen or dealt with – certainly not the power – but I admire Ryan Garcia. He says he’s going to knock [Davis] out within five rounds; you’ve got to admire that. He sells the sizzle, but can he

deliver the steak? It sounds good, and his talking got him the fight. I hope he can back up what he says, but Tank Davis is going to be a headache for anybody. I thought Mario Barrios was one helluva fighter, and [Davis] walked through Mario Barrios.

“Everyone knows Tank Davis is a slow starter, but don’t you think Tank is going to train to come out quicker? If I’m Tank Davis, I want Ryan Garcia to believe that and make it a firefight from the jump, which benefits me – I’m the bigger puncher. I think Tank is special. It’s just the personal problems.

“I think Ryan is going to leave himself exposed at some point, and when Tank Davis breaks off a hook or straight left hand it’s going to be a little different from what he’s used to. I think Tank Davis takes him out. I think Tank Davis breaks him down and will stop or knock him out in the later rounds.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS



JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ
WBA TITLEHOLDER (1987-1989), RING MAGAZINE/
WBC CHAMP (1988-1989)

“It will be a tough and difficult fight, especially for Ryan Garcia. I believe that Davis is a much better fighter, but in height and reach Garcia has an advantage, and he can punch as well. When a fighter punches as hard as he does, anything can happen.

“I believe that the first few rounds will be tough, since one of them is taller and there is also the issue of contrasting stances, because one of them is a lefty and the other one is right-handed. In a fight like that, the

first few rounds are difficult; they step on each other’s toes a lot due to the contrasting stance. But I think that little by little, Davis will find his rhythm, and anything can happen. I would love to see Ryan Garcia winning, but I see it as a difficult fight for him. Definitely Gervonta Davis has the advantage, since he can box and punch.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS



DINGAAN THOBELA
WBO TITLEHOLDER
(1990-1991, 1993)

“I think it’s a good matchup – two great champions fighting against each other. Gervonta is accurate and he counterpunches at the right time, especially with his left hand. That makes him awkward. Garcia has speed and height advantage that gives him a long reach to keep his opponents at bay. Garcia is under pressure to prove to the boxing world he’s got what it takes. He will start fast by taking the fight to Gervonta. While Gervonta, on the other hand, will study him, counterpunch and execute.

“May the best man win, but my money is on Gervonta winning on points. But I’m also not writing off a stoppage win for him.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS

RAFAEL RUELAS
IBF TITLEHOLDER
(1994-1995)

“It should be a good fight. From what I’ve seen, in my opinion, Gervonta would have the upper hand. Ryan has



some good power and speed. When Gervonta fought Leo Santa Cruz, he got hit with a lot of shots, but Ryan isn't as aggressive as Santa Cruz. The one thing with Ryan: When he's punching with one hand, the other hand is not defending like it should. We'll see if they can test each other's chins. We already know Ryan Garcia got dropped by Luke Campbell by a shot that wasn't really a solid shot, and he went down. When he got up, Campbell didn't jump on him – and I think Gervonta would.

“I'm hoping Ryan Garcia wins the fight, but I think it'll be the other way around. I would think Ryan will stay away from Gervonta using the jab a little bit, but I think Gervonta will win around the seventh round.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS



SHANE MOSLEY
IBF TITLEHOLDER
 (1997-1999)

“I love this fight. It's 50-50 and the style matchup favors Ryan. It's not easy work for Tank, as many think. He might get knocked out if he's not careful. I get why people favor Tank.



Garcia addresses the media at the L.A. press conference.

He's more experienced and has more ring generalship, but the problem is that he's short and he's in with a tall guy with a longer reach who is just as fast as he is – maybe faster.

“Tank is used to fighting taller guys and he does a good job of baiting them in and catching them with his speed and power; it's usually his overhand left or his left uppercut. He doesn't attack his opponents. He's not a pitbull. He's really more of a finesse fighter with power and speed. Tank wants the other guy to attack, so he can clip them in exchanges. But that's going to be difficult against Ryan, because Ryan is so tall and Joe Goossen is going to have him boxing tall.

“I trained with Joe for my rematch with Winky Wright. Goossen trains you to punch with authority, from the right distance, and not waste shots. He wants you to get into position and punch. And I think Ryan is punching better now than he was when he was with Eddy Reynoso. Goossen has him punching better and Ryan has grown into his man strength. Ryan is big! I can see him fighting as heavy as 160 one day. It's not just the height and size that will give Tank problems, it's that Tank will have to go to Ryan, which will work in Ryan's favor.

GARCIA: RYAN HAFREY

“Tank could still crack him with one good shot and Ryan would go bye-bye, but I see Ryan being able to use his length and get his left hand off before Tank gets his left off. Tank's left hand is further away from Ryan because he's a southpaw and Ryan is right-handed. Ryan's left will be closer to Tank. With the reach advantage, plus [the left hook] comes in so fast, it's just going to be difficult for Tank to get his counter left off. Ryan's straight right is also going to be dangerous. Rolly [Romero] gave Tank problems with his size and power early in their fight, and [Romero is] not as tall or as sharp of a puncher as Ryan.

“I'm not saying Ryan is a better fighter than Tank. Tank is better right now, but Ryan's length and speed are going to be a problem for him. The fight will definitely end by knockout. Ryan wins early. Tank wins late.

“But Ryan's got the edge in my mind. He's really good with the potential to be great.”

PREDICTION: GARCIA



CESAR BAZAN
WBC TITLEHOLDER
 (1998-1999)

“It is a fight that knowledgeable fans have been waiting for and that we hope does not disappoint the public. Let's hope for a show inside the ring. Davis is a fighter who waits for the opportunity to throw his left uppercut. Garcia is a very unstable fighter; he is busier on social media than in training. Garcia is a boy who has the qualities to be a great fighter,

but he has not fought a fighter like Gervonta Davis. I imagine that this fight for Ryan is very important for his career, and I don't think he will waste it because he is involved in social media.

“It's going to be an exciting fight from start to finish, both very technical and punchers. If he does things right up top, I think Ryan Garcia will win by KO in the eighth round.”

PREDICTION: GARCIA



PAUL SPADAFORA
IBF TITLEHOLDER
 (1999-2003)

“Ryan is going to be effective in the early stages, but Gervonta Davis is putting 15,000 people in an arena. Some fighters like myself, I became a champion, I got worse, OK. Tank became a champion and he did what champions do: They get better because they get smarter as a man and they don't make bad decisions. Ryan Garcia has already shown some doubt in his brain, because I can relate with Ryan Garcia. He has another issue besides boxing. Boxing is obviously not his first priority; I'm talking about social media and everything. Now he's got a problem on his hands with a fighter in Tank who's got power in both fists and who punches harder than anyone in that division and actually makes the weight very well.

“I think Ryan Garcia is relentless when he gets you hurt. I think he has fantastic speed and he's got a great left hook. But he has an issue with punching with his head in the air,

and this issue is going to come up, because you can't hide from that in a fight this long and with that kind of competition in Tank. I just don't see Ryan being able to put up with that strong little bastard for 12 rounds, and I've got Ryan getting stopped in the ninth or 10th round. Tank is the more rounded fighter, period. But one thing about Tank is Tank is fundamentally sound and he knows how to fight the way he fights. He knows who he is. He knows what he's got. He knows that he has the ability to stop you in any given moment, and going into a fight like that he understands he's one of the pound-for-pound best, but he's got 12 rounds to do what he knows how to do, and that's catch Ryan Garcia.

“I think Ryan is going to come out and instead of being what he should be, he's going to be what he shouldn't be. He's going to be the aggressor. I see Ryan Garcia pushing the issue until he can't.

“I give Ryan credit for taking the fight, of course, I do, but he's a fighter. It's what we do. Why would we not take fights? Tank has seen a lot in his life. He has something extra about him. What he's seen is what he's overcome. I just can't wait to go to the fight.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS



JOSE LUIS CASTILLO
WBC TITLEHOLDER
 (2000-2002), **RING**
MAGAZINE/WBC
CHAMPION (2004-2005)

THE CHAMPIONS CORNER

“A great fight that the fans were waiting for. Gervonta has a lot of patience and will be waiting for the opportunity to counter attack and take advantage. Garcia’s speed and intelligence can get him ahead in the fight. It’s a very even fight, though I give Gervonta the advantage.”

“It will be a very good fight. I have Gervonta winning by KO in the later rounds.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS



JULIO DIAZ
IBF TITLEHOLDER
(2004-2005, 2007)

“It’s a very exciting fight. It’s about time they gave the public two top fighters that make it exciting, because we don’t know who to pick because it’s not a one-sided matchup. It’s up in the air. I’m glad they’re starting to match up two great champions; that’s what boxing needs right now: exciting fights that keep you on the edge.”

“I think it’s a great matchup. I think it’s going to be a great fight for both of these champions. It’s very hard to choose a side. I think whoever comes in with the best game plan will win the fight, but it’s a hard fight to pick. They’re both talented. They’ve both got great skills. It’s going to be a very exciting fight at a fast pace.”

“I think Gervonta can bring a very compact, shorter fight to Ryan, and Ryan needs to fight on the outside and use his speed and skills. I think it’s going to benefit Gervonta Davis to get inside and start chopping down Ryan.”

“I think Ryan will outbox Gervonta

for about five or six rounds, and if Gervonta can get past that, the later rounds Gervonta will be more successful. I see Gervonta pulling off a victory by decision, probably a split decision. It’s very hard to pick.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS



JUAN DIAZ
WBA TITLEHOLDER (2004-2007), WBO/IBF (2007-2008)

“Two exciting fighters with undefeated records is what boxing needs to bring a little spice back to boxing. Davis is a very powerful, explosive fighter, baits his opponents to come in and catches them with that explosive power. Garcia uses his jab very well to set up knockout shots very well. Garcia is the pressure fighter who likes to come forward and attack. Davis likes to sit back and wait for his opponents to come forward so he can set up those power shots since he is the shorter fighter most of the time. I believe this fight will be the opposite of what these two are used to fighting.”

“I believe Davis will pressure and Garcia will box, which would make it an entertaining fight. I believe if Garcia is able to use his jab, box and stay composed from the outside, Garcia will win on points with his jab and speed.”

PREDICTION: GARCIA

DAVID DIAZ
WBC TITLEHOLDER
(2007-2008)

“I think it’s a fight that has been a



long time coming for both young fighters. I think it’s going to be a great matchup.

“Gervonta puts his punches together, which I like. He’s fast, he’s got good angles, and from what it looks like, he’s got good power in both hands. Ryan uses his height well; he’s aggressive, but he uses his distance and reach pretty well. Shorter fighters have to get in closer to hit the taller, more lengthy fighters, that would be the game plan Gervonta will have to use; obviously his speed and quickness will be a factor, trying to use angles on Garcia. I think it’s going to come down to seeing if Ryan can break down Gervonta Davis’ defense.”

“I think this is going to be a very interesting fight. I think the [different] styles is what is going to make [the fight]. It might make it a little bit cautious on both sides, a little bit of figuring out, but [by the] middle to the end, I think it’s going to be an explosive fight. I think Garcia will probably try to be the aggressor; he might go into the fight with something to prove. I think he might try to make things happen for himself.”

I’m going to go with Gervonta. He’s been really good at closing out fights of late, so he might be able to pull this off. I think it’s a distance fight, a split decision.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS

NATE CAMPBELL
IBF/WBA/WBO
TITLEHOLDER (2008-2009)

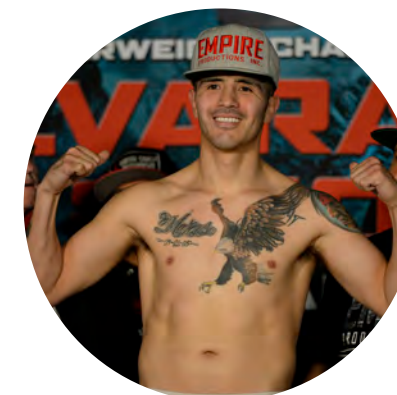
“I think the fight needed to be made. Ryan’s been calling everybody out;



Davis, wearing a vintage Oscar De La Hoya T-shirt under his leather jacket, is interviewed by Showtime.

flashy punching with his chin poked up in the air. If I was Tank, I’d make him fight me. I think Ryan does well early, but Tank stops him, middle to late rounds.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS



BRANDON RIOS
WBA TITLEHOLDER (2011)

“I think it’ll be an all right fight. I don’t agree with all the hype. It’s a big fight, but if that’s what it takes to bring boxing back, I guess you’ve got to hype it up, and hopefully these two young guys in their prime make it a good show instead of a one-sided fight.”

“I think they’re both skillful. I think Gervonta brings the aggressiveness and power. I think Gervonta is the stronger puncher; he comes like a bulldozer. I think he’s faced better opponents than Ryan Garcia. I think this is Ryan Garcia’s biggest test to date, because he hasn’t really fought anybody. I think Ryan brings the height and speed.”

“I think the first half, they’re going to feel out each other, and then in the second half, that’s when they come out stronger and they’re going to go for it. I think someone is getting knocked out, but at the end of the day, I’m going for Gervonta Davis [to win].”

PREDICTION: DAVIS



I think it’s a great time for him to show and prove. I think he’s an elite fighter. Gervonta has already proven he can fight on that level. They’re at a place now where they’ve got to fight

each other.

“Gervonta punches well; he’s a way better puncher. Ryan is flashy and looks good on Instagram. We’ve seen him get clipped by Luke Campbell, and that boy ain’t no big puncher, and that boy put him on his seat. [Garcia] stopped [Campbell], but I think if Tank hits him, he’s going to implode.”

“Tank can take a better shot than Ryan. If I was Tank, I would walk in to make him fight. If I was Ryan, I would try to stay away from Tank. Tank is short, no long reach; Ryan is tall, about 5-foot-10, so I would stay away from Tank. But at some point, you have to stand and fight. Ryan has a tendency to do all that



ANTHONY CROLLA
WBA TITLEHOLDER
(2015-2016)

“I can’t wait for it. I just think it can’t fail to deliver fireworks. They are two explosive punchers. I felt for a long time I was one of a few who was giving Ryan Garcia a real chance. I think ever since the Luke Campbell fight – Luke Campbell was a very good lightweight and would give any lightweight in the world something to think about at the top, top level and beat most of them – and with that fight with Garcia, he put Garcia down heavily, but within 40 seconds or so, Garcia got up and basically walked Luke down and beat him up. I just thought that was massively impressive, although I don’t think he [Garcia]’s (progressed) from then the way you expected him to.

“But I think here you’ve got two dynamite punchers. That said, I think I’m going with Davis by KO. I just believe he’s the better defensive fighter. But I believe it’s much more of a pick ’em than people think. One thing that’s been frustrating is I see there’s a rehydration clause, which I think is a bit strange, especially as they’re both lightweights ... I feel like changing my mind now ... but I just believe Davis being a little more compact, a slightly bigger puncher will be the difference.

“I think in the first round, there’s going to be loads and loads of feinting, not much landing, but I believe once that first shot lands from either of them, that’s when it opens up. I believe there will be a battle for the center of the ring. With Davis being



that bit smaller, he will come over the top and land something big, and that’s when I believe Garcia will try and force it. And [Garcia] will have success, but I also believe he will walk onto something big. After Davis lands, I wouldn’t be surprised to see Garcia try and push Tank back, but we shall see. We saw [Leo] Santa Cruz had plenty of success against Davis, and I believe Garcia will have success, but Santa Cruz didn’t have the power to win Tank’s respect. Santa Cruz probably got a little bit greedy, but I just believe Davis will walk Garcia onto something when he’s forcing it.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if Davis got buzzed along the way, and I think it’s a real shootout, but [I’m picking] Davis inside six in a fight where you see both guys hurt.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS

The fighters’ rivalry was on display during the L.A. press event.



RAY BELTRAN
WBO TITLEHOLDER (2018)

“Styles make fights. In the last

RYAN HANEY

few fights, Ryan Garcia has been looking great, but I think Garcia is a one-dimensional fighter and Tank works the angles very well; he can counterpunch very well and he can punch. Tank doesn’t throw that many punches, and that could be a window for Ryan Garcia with his reach. If he can keep Davis busy and doesn’t let him get momentum, he can win.

“I think Ryan Garcia is the right style for Tank. I think Ryan’s going to win the first few rounds, but eventually I think Tank will knock him out. He’s going to set Garcia up. Maybe eight or nine rounds.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS



GEORGE KAMBOSOS JR.
RING MAGAZINE/IBF/
WBA/WBO CHAMPION
(2021-2022)

“It’s a terrific matchup, an exciting fight for the boxing fans, and it’s good to see two young fighters coming together and creating a mega event and getting it on. It is a 50-50 fight, very exciting fight for boxing. Awesome fight. It’s going to have a lot of different people and fans taking different sides, but as a true boxing fan that’s what you want to see: the best fighting the best. These guys have great fan bases, and that’s going to attract more eyes to the sport, which is ultimately great for every fighter.

“Gervonta Davis is a power-puncher. He has dynamite in both hands. He can end the fight at any moment between Round 1 and Round 12. He’s also very sharp on his feet – people underestimate his feet. He moves in and out real quick; he can close the distance real quick. Ultimately that’s going to be very important in this kind of fight, because Ryan does have the



“I believe it will be cagey to start, with each fighter taking his time to work the other guy out, but after a few rounds I expect Tank to start breaking Garcia down with power shots and coming on strong as the fight goes on. I think Tank wins by stoppage, late on.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS

height advantage. If [Davis] can close that gap, close his feet quick without Ryan getting too far in distance, he’ll be able to land his big shots. He’s got the power, he’s got the footwork, and he does have a good boxing IQ. He throws his combinations when he needs to. He’s not a high-volume guy; he’s more of an explosive puncher when he does let his hands go.

“Ryan has the height, the speed; he’s very sharp with his hands. His footwork’s not the greatest; he does get stuck. He does leave that chin up high. There are things he’s got to work on, but he does have a very good left hook, very fast hands, and he has the reach and height advantage. So he has to use these attributes to give himself an even better chance in the Gervonta Davis fight.

“I think the fight is going to be very exciting, especially (the early) rounds. I think Ryan is going to get a bit of lead at the start. I think Ryan will be able to steal some early rounds, use his height, use his reach, use his speed to kind of keep Gervonta off. But once he finds that gap, finds the distance, come Round 4, 5, 6, I think Tank’s going to start landing the power shots, putting Ryan into a more defensive mode. We saw Luke Campbell, who’s not the biggest puncher at lightweight, put Ryan Garcia down. Credit to [Garcia], he did bounce back and get the stoppage win. It’s a whole different story when Gervonta Davis hits you. I think he’ll be able to land those shots as the fight progresses.

“Ultimately, Gervonta Davis will win this fight. He has the power, and I think he’ll get on the inside in the mid-to-later rounds and do the damage. I’m looking forward to it. And who knows? I’d like to fight either one of them in the future.”

PREDICTION: DAVIS

Doug Fischer, Tris Dixon and Diego Morilla contributed to this feature.

SOME SAY A FIGHT ONLY MATTERS IF A TITLE IS AT STAKE, BUT A LACK OF BAUBLES HAS NEVER STOOD IN THE WAY OF BIG-TIME BOXING EVENTS

By Don Stradley

NO BELTS REQUIRED

The excitement generated by the Gervonta Davis-Ryan Garcia bout proves the obvious: Fans crave a good matchup, and there doesn't have to be a title on the line.

Of course, this might be startling news if your boxing interest is limited to the recent era, a time where even fighters of marginal talent seem draped in multiple belts. You're probably quite surprised that Davis and Garcia are fighting for nothing more than a "W" and some bragging rights. And money, of course.

It wasn't always so unusual. The boxing business has a rich history of non-

Gervonta Davis and Ryan Garcia are not fighting for a world title, but their matchup is the most anticipated event on the boxing schedule.

Joe Louis stopped Primo Carnera in the sixth round of a non-title bout two years before seizing the heavyweight throne.



NO BELTS REQUIRED

title bouts being promoted as major events. The secret is simply having the right names on the marquee.

There was no title at stake on June 25, 1935, but 57,000 or so fans paid their way into Yankee Stadium to see Joe Louis, a rising young star out of Detroit, take on the Italian giant, Primo Carnera. Curiosity was high, as Carnera was a former heavyweight champion who could still draw crowds. Publicists saddled the fight with an “Ethiopia versus Italy” angle, but New York fans were less interested in politics than in getting their first look at Louis. Most writers correctly predicted he would win easily, but that didn’t diminish the buzz for this contest. In Louis, promoter Mike Jacobs had a great new attraction.

By the sixth, Carnera was a battered and bleeding hulk. At 2:32 of the round, referee Art Donovan stopped the action and spared the former champ from more agony. It was a history-making Big Apple premiere for Louis. Damon Runyon dubbed him “the new thunderbolt of the pugilistic world.”

Louis met another ex-champion later that year, and it was another big-ticket item at Yankee Stadium, bigger even than Louis-Carnera. This time the opponent was Max Baer, and Louis needed only four rounds to put him away. With Louis-Baer, Jacobs had done the unthinkable – he’d promoted a non-title bout to the tune of a million-dollar gate, something no one dreamed possible in the 1930s. Jacobs claimed that 84,831 fans paid to get in.

Even at the other end of his career, Louis could make non-title fights into newsworthy events. His final bout, a sad KO loss to Rocky Marciano in 1951, drew 17,241 to Madison Square Garden and earned the sort of headlines usually reserved for declarations of war. Louis never needed a title belt to create a sensation. He shared this trait with another legendary heavyweight, Muhammad Ali.

By January of 1974, a bit of the luster had worn off of Ali and



Joe Frazier. Their 1971 bout had been one of the biggest events in sports history. Now both were ex-champions, and many boxing writers of the day felt the two had already done their best work. Yet their rivalry was resurrected for “Super Fight II.”

The event drew 20,748 to the new Garden and filled closed-circuit theaters around the world. An impromptu shoving match between the two fighters on ABC’s *Wide World of Sports* was amusing but not necessary; the public simply wanted to be part of the magic generated by the most famous athlete of the day and his fiercest adversary.

Though overshadowed by the first and third Ali-Frazier bouts, Super

Fight II was a major happening and a memorable contest. Ali won by a unanimous but close 12-round decision. It remains one of Top Rank’s crowning achievements. “We were just two guys,” Ali said after the bout, “neither of us champions, standing up there beating each other to death.”

Now and then a non-title bout is so competitive that The Ring chooses it as Fight of the Year. That was the case when Floyd Patterson, a two-time ex-champion, fought George Chuvalo, a bruiser from Canada, in 1965. Critics thought Patterson was washed up after his embarrassing losses to Sonny Liston, but he won a 12-round decision over

Chuvalo and put himself back in the heavyweight mix.

Another non-title bout picked as our Fight of the Year occurred in 1976 when George Foreman battled Ron Lyle in Las Vegas. The dynamic of Foreman-Lyle was similar to Patterson-Chuvalo, in that Foreman was a former champion trying to reestablish himself, and Lyle was a rugged top contender. They pounded on each other until Foreman finally stopped Lyle at 2:28 of the fifth.

There have been high-profile non-title bouts in weight classes other than heavyweight. Sugar Ray Robinson and Jake LaMotta fought six times, and only their final meeting in 1951 was a title bout.

During the 1940s, welterweight Robinson and middleweight LaMotta were victims of boxing politics and unable to land title shots in their respective divisions. One way for them to pay the bills was to fight each other. Like Ali and Frazier, their names were magical together and their styles made for compelling action. Robinson and LaMotta became boxing’s most reliable road show, fighting in New York, Detroit and Chicago. Though Robinson won four of the first five meetings, the bouts were competitive and fans never tired of them. No titles were needed to sell the “Sugar Man” and the “Bronx Bull.”

One of the more controversial non-

Ali and Frazier fought as contenders in their 1974 rematch.

title events pitted Billy Conn, the former light heavyweight champ who had recently challenged Joe Louis, against Tony Zale, the middleweight champion of the time. In January of 1942, with military service looming for both, they clashed at Madison Square Garden. How was such an oddball match created? The main reason was that Conn was hotter than ever after his 1941 loss to Louis, and Mike Jacobs wanted to showcase him. Not wanting to risk Conn losing before he could have a rematch with Louis, the wily promoter sought a smaller but marketable opponent. Zale put his title on the shelf and agreed to face Conn, who outweighed him by 11 pounds on fight night.

The event bewildered the press. Some wondered what Conn could gain by beating a middleweight, and others wondered why Zale would bother fighting a heavyweight contender when he confessed to having no interest in challenging Louis for the title. Yet the bout drew a strong crowd to the Garden, thanks partly to Zale and Conn being such capable trash talkers. Newspapers of the day filled column inches with each man’s insults.

Ultimately, Conn was too big and skilled for Zale and won a unanimous 12-round decision. Fans jeered Conn at the end for his failure to stop the smaller man, while Zale left the ring to some resounding applause. “CONN LOSES PRESTIGE,” roared a Rochester, New York, newspaper headline. Still, Jacobs had to consider the bout a success. As World War II was about to stall the boxing business for a few years, he gave fans an event to relish. And there were moments of intense action, particularly in the seventh and eighth rounds when it appeared Zale had Conn in trouble. The United Press’ Jack Cuddy reported

NO BELTS REQUIRED

that the middleweight “banged Conn about the ring with [so] much gusto that the 15,033 fans shook the girders with their cheers.”

From Harry Greb to Willie Pep to Julio Cesar Chavez, non-title fights were a way for popular champions to stay active. Greb preferred partying to training; when he had a title defense coming up, he'd schedule a few non-title bouts as tune-ups. That was better than spending six weeks skipping rope. Pep followed a similar strategy, though he may have needed the extra paydays because he was a notorious gambler and always needed some extra “playing money.” During

Robinson-LaMotta I, II, III, IV and V were non-title bouts.

Chavez's various title reigns, he often scheduled non-title bouts somewhere in Mexico, partly to stay sharp and partly to bring his star power to the countrymen who adored him.

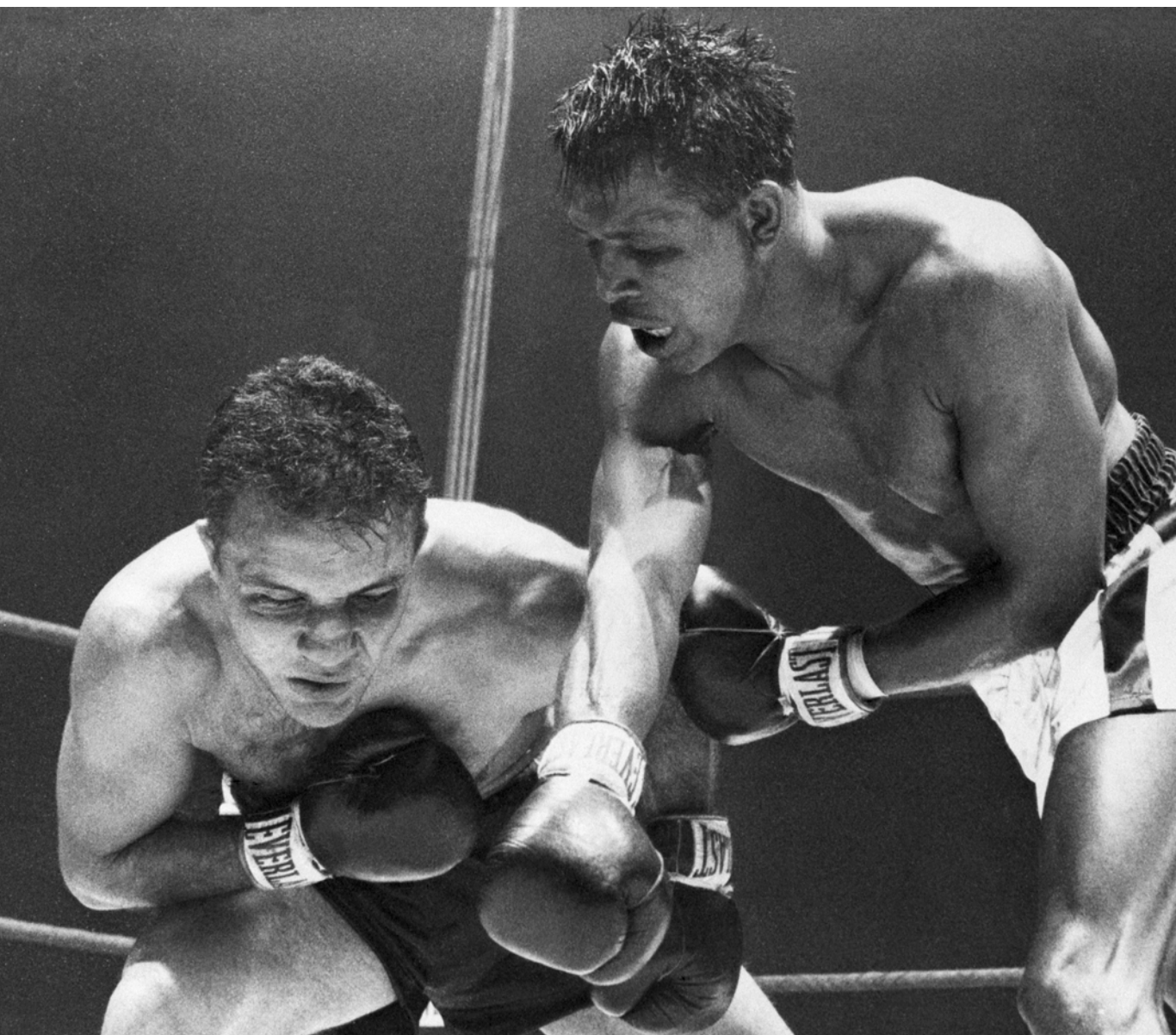
One of the allures of a non-title bout for a champion was that he usually didn't have to make the weight limit; with no title being contested, he could spare himself having to drain down to the last ounce. Fighters in the lighter weight classes particularly appreciated this.

There were times, however, where champions appeared to take advantage of non-title fights. Back in the 1930s, champions such as Maxie Rosenbloom fought so many non-title bouts that journalists began to complain. The main beef was that a non-title contest put champions in a position where they didn't have

to train hard or fight their best but could still collect a paycheck and not risk their belts. The National Boxing Association grappled with the issue for years. One proposal was to limit the number of non-title contests a champion could undertake without defending his crown, while many states passed legislation that a champion couldn't fight there unless he was defending the title.

The vogue for such bouts faded by the 1960s but didn't completely disappear. When Roberto Duran was the lightweight champion in the 1970s, he took part in more than 20 non-title bouts, an unfathomable number to fans of today.

When he ventured into the welterweight class, Duran was matched against former titlist Carlos Palomino at Madison Square



Garden in June of 1979. With no title belt to be seen anywhere, Duran outhustled, outfoxed and outslugged the gallant Palomino, winning a 10-round decision. Pat Putnam of Sports Illustrated was moved by Duran's artistry, describing how the Panamanian brought to boxing “a sense of almost surrealistic beauty.” Who needs a title when you're dealing with surrealistic beauty?

In April of 1977, 13,996 fans packed the Forum in Inglewood, California, to see Carlos Zarate fight Alfonso Zamora. Strangely enough, Zarate was the WBC bantamweight titlist and Zamora owned the WBA belt, yet the bout was scheduled for a 10-round non-title event.

There were suspicions. Seasoned journalists suspected the fight might not be absolutely on the level or that it would go to a draw, which would set up a more lucrative unification bout later. This wasn't a totally inconceivable theory. It had happened many times before. Many top fighters of the past were masters of looking mediocre in a non-title bout and then destroying their opponents in return

bouts for the title. Sportswriters saw such things happen so often in the 1940s and '50s that they still expected it in the 1970s.

But the “Battle of the Z-Boys” turned into a crazy brawl that upended all conspiracies and expectations. It included a fan invading the ring and a skirmish between Zamora's father and Zarate's manager, Cuyo Hernandez, who had once been Zamora's manager.


As for the fight itself, Zarate stopped Zamora in four rounds, dropping him three times and cutting him to ribbons. Zarate's decisive victory killed any thought of a rematch and squashed any notion that the bout was a set-up. “When both boys fought like two guys on a ledge with hatchets,” wrote syndicated columnist Jim Murray, “the fight mob was astounded.”

Need more proof that non-title bouts have been a valued part of the boxing game? Consider the trilogy between Arturo Gatti and Micky Ward, which took place between 2002 and 2003.

The Gatti-Ward trilogy comprises 30 non-title rounds.

Gatti had held a title and Ward had challenged for one, but it was this three-bout non-title series that made them into certified legends. Two of the three were chosen as The Ring's Fight of the Year.

Gatti had a long, colorful career, but chances are good that if his name comes up these days, it is in reference to the non-title bouts with Ward. When was the last time you reminisced about Gatti beating Gianluca Branco for a vacant WBC title?

Some will say the Davis-Garcia bout would be more meaningful if they were fighting for a belt, but those same people couldn't name a third of the many title holders competing today. The fact is that Davis and Garcia are following a great tradition. Once the bell rings and the punches start flying, neither they nor the viewers will be thinking about titles. 

BETTMANN

AL BELLO



World-class boxers, such as Canelo Alvarez and Daniel Jacobs, seldom fight more than twice a year (although the Mexican superstar managed three bouts in 2021).

BOXING IS BROKEN (HOW DO WE FIX IT?)

PART 2: INACTIVITY

By Steve Kim

The NBA currently has a lingering issue: Too many of its stars are being sat down for games while healthy. It's called "load management," and the thinking is that for the long-term durability and health of the players (and the

bank accounts of the owners), it would be prudent to save them for more important games in the playoffs.

This has caused grumbling from the past generation of players who regularly played all 82 games – often back-to-back during the league's early years – while having to fly commercial. It's also an issue with fans, who many times spend their hard-earned dollars for tickets only to see their

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preferred player sitting on the bench in street clothes.

Television ratings for the league have declined to a point where now the league understands that consumer trust in their product is an issue. The NBA is now thinking about tying in their post-season awards to a percentage of games played to be eligible. It will be interesting to see how this will affect their next collective bargaining agreement.

You could argue that with an 82-game schedule, resting the body is logical.

But what is boxing's excuse?

This is a game that is driven by its stars, who are generally considered the elite in the sport. But an alarming trend – which has been a couple of decades in the making – has only gotten worse. Boxing's biggest names are fighting less and less per year.

Here's a look at the activity level for the past three years (excluding the 2020 "COVID year"), using The Ring's year-end pound-for-pound list as a guide:

2019 (RING P4P LIST, AS OF DECEMBER 28)

1. **Canelo Alvarez** – two fights (Daniel Jacobs W 12, Sergey Kovalev TKO 11)
2. **Vasiliy Lomachenko** – two fights (Anthony Crolla KO 4, Luke Campbell UD 12)
3. **Naoya Inoue** – two fights (Emmanuel Rodriguez KO 2, Nonito Donaire UD 12)
4. **Terence Crawford** – two fights (Amir Khan TKO 6, Egidijus Kavaliauskas TKO 9)
5. **Oleksandr Usyk** – one fight (Chazz Witherspoon TKO 7)
6. **Errol Spence Jr.** – two fights (Mikey Garcia UD 12, Shawn Porter SD 12)
7. **Gennadiy Golovkin** – two fights (Steve Rolls KO 4, Sergiy Derevyanchenko UD 12)
8. **Juan Francisco Estrada** – two fights (Srisaket Sor Rungvisai UD 12, Dewayne Beamon TKO 9)
9. **Artur Beterbiev** – two fights (Radivoje Kalajdzic KO 5, Oleksandr Gvozdyk TKO 10)
10. **Manny Pacquiao** – two fights (Adrien Broner UD 12, Keith Thurman SD 12)

- 19 fights total, 1.9 average per boxer
- Nine boxers with two fights
- One boxer with one fight

2021 (RING P4P LIST, AS OF DECEMBER 25)

1. **Canelo Alvarez** – three fights (Avni Yildirim TKO 3, Billy Joe Saunders TKO 8, Caleb Plant TKO 11)
2. **Oleksandr Usyk** – one fight (Anthony Joshua UD 12)



3. **Terence Crawford** – one fight (Shawn Porter TKO 11)
4. **Naoya Inoue** – two fights (Michael Dasmarinas KO 3, Aran Dipaen TKO 8)
5. **Josh Taylor** – one fight (Jose Ramirez UD 12)
6. **Errol Spence Jr.** – no fights
7. **Juan Francisco Estrada** – one fight (Roman Gonzalez SD 12)
8. **Vasiliy Lomachenko** – two fights (Masayoshi Nakatani TKO 9, Richard Commey UD 12)
9. **Kazuto Ioka** – two fights (Francisco Rodriguez Jr. UD 12, Ryoji Fukunaga UD 12)
10. **Tyson Fury** – one fight (Deontay Wilder KO 11)

- 14 fights total, 1.4 average per boxer
- One boxer with three fights
- Three boxers with two fights
- Five boxers with one fight
- One boxer with no fights

2022 (RING P4P LIST, AS OF DECEMBER 31)

1. **Oleksandr Usyk** – one fight (Anthony Joshua SD 12)

2. **Naoya Inoue** – two fights (Nonito Donaire TKO 2, Paul Butler KO 11)
3. **Terence Crawford** – one fight (David Avanesyan KO 6)
4. **Errol Spence Jr.** – one fight (Yordenis Ugas TKO 10)
5. **Canelo Alvarez** – two fights (Dmitry Bivol LUD 12, Gennadiy Golovkin UD 12)
6. **Dmitry Bivol** – two fights (Canelo Alvarez UD 12, Gilberto Ramirez UD 12)
7. **Vasiliy Lomachenko** – one fight (Jamaine Ortiz UD 12)
8. **Josh Taylor** – one fight (Jack Catterall SD 12)
9. **Jermell Charlo** – one fight (Brian Castano KO 10)
10. **Artur Beterbiev** – one fight (Joe Smith Jr. TKO 2)

- 13 fights total, 1.3 average per boxer
- Three boxers with two fights
- Seven boxers with one fight

So, basically, while it's pretty much accepted that the elite boxers nowadays perform twice a year, the reality is that we're seeing more blue-chip fighters who only get out

Anthony Joshua and Oleksandr Usyk only fought once in 2021 and 2022 – against each other.

there once over the course of a calendar year. There are the usual reasons, such as injuries (like Spence getting ruled out of his scheduled 2021 showdown with Manny Pacquiao with a detached retina) and other issues that have kept that number down.

But it's evident that with the millions of dollars the upper echelon procures, there is less of an incentive to get out there more often. Yet it must be pointed out that it wasn't always that way. There was actually a time when marquee boxers were much more active. We looked back at 1993 and 2003 to see just how often boxing's best were seen in those years.

1993 (RING P4P LIST, AS OF JANUARY 1, 1994)

1. **Pernell Whitaker** – two fights (Buddy McGirt UD 12, Julio Cesar Chavez D 12)
2. **Julio Cesar Chavez** – six fights (Greg Haugen TKO 5, Silvio Rojas KO 3, Terrence Alli TKO 6, Pernell Whitaker D 12, Mike Powell TKO 4, Andy Holligan TKO 5)
3. **James Toney** – seven fights (Iran Barkley TKO 9, Govoner Chavers TKO 9, Ricky Thomas TKO 10, Glenn Thomas UD 10, Danny Garcia TKO 6, Larry Prather UD 10, Tony Thornton UD 10)
4. **Michael Carbajal** – three fights (Humberto Gonzalez KO 7, Kwang Sun Kim TKO 7, Domingo Sosa TKO 5)
5. **Orlando Canizales** – three fights (Clarence Adams TKO 11, Derrick Whiteboy NC 3, Juvenal Berrio UD 12)
6. **Evander Holyfield** – two fights (Alex Stewart UD 12, Riddick Bowe MD 12)
7. **Ricardo Lopez** – four fights (Kwang Soo Oh TKO 9, Saman Sorjaturong TKO 2, Toto Pongsawang TKO 11, Manny Melchor KO 11)
8. **Roy Jones Jr.** – four fights (Glenn Wolfe TKO 1, Bernard Hopkins UD 12, Thulani Malinga KO 6, Fermin Chirino UD 10)
9. **Kennedy McKinney** – three fights (Richard Duran UD 12, Rudey Zavala TKO 3, Jesus Salud UD 12)
10. **Yuri Arbachakov** – three fights (Muangchai Kittikasem TKO 9, Ysaias Zamudio UD 12, Nam Hoon Cha UD 12)

- 37 fights total, 3.7 average per boxer
- Four boxers with 4+ fights
- Four boxers with 3 fights
- Two boxers with 2 fights

BOXING IS BROKEN (HOW DO WE FIX IT?)

Certainly two of the top three names on this list skew the numbers, but the point is that Chavez was a superstar, while Toney was making good money as an HBO staple. In between his appearances on high-profile Don King cards on Showtime, Chavez would stay busy with what were basically club fights in Mexico. “Lights Out” would routinely bounce around smaller platforms to stay active before having his bigger bouts on HBO. He was also willing to take less money for these outings. These two are among the very last world champions who willingly participated in non-title and tune-up bouts in between their more lucrative assignments.

This is something that rarely happens in the modern game. Either boxers are unwilling to go into training camps so often, or managers are unwilling to bend on their contracted minimum paydays (which will lead to their fighters being slotted twice a year on the networks that are aligned with their promotional company). The reality is that there are only so many television dates and so much money in a yearly budget.

Basically, once you win a major world title, regardless of your age, you are now relegated to boxing twice per year, unless you have the drawing power of a Canelo Alvarez, who fought four times in an 11-month stretch in 2020-2021.

Now here’s a look at the pound-for-pound landscape 20 years ago:

2003 (RING P4P LIST, AS OF JANUARY 14, 2004)

1. **Roy Jones Jr.** – two fights (John Ruiz UD 12, Antonio Tarver MD 12)
2. **Bernard Hopkins** – two fights (Morrade Hakkar TKO 5, William Joppy UD 12)
3. **Shane Mosley** – two fights (Raul Marquez NC 3, Oscar De La Hoya UD 12)
4. **Oscar De La Hoya** – two fights (Luis Ramon Campas TKO 7, Shane Mosley LUD 12)
5. **Floyd Mayweather Jr.** – two fights (Victoriano Sosa UD 12, Phillip Ndou TKO 7)
6. **Manny Pacquiao** – three fights (Serikzhan Yeshmagambetov TKO 5, Emmanuel Lucero TKO 3, Marco Antonio Barrera TKO 11)
7. **Kostya Tszyu** – one fight (Jesse James Leija TKO 6)
8. **Erik Morales** – three fights (Eddie Croft TKO 3, Fernando Velardez TKO 5, Guty Espadas KO 3)
9. **James Toney** – two fights (Vassiliy Jirov UD 12,

Evander Holyfield TKO 9)

10. **Antonio Tarver** – two fights (Montell Griffin UD 12, Roy Jones Jr. LMD 12)

- **21 fights total, 2.1 average per boxer**
- **Two boxers with three fights**
- **Seven boxers with two fights**
- **One boxer with one fight**

The template for modern-day activity had pretty much been set by that point. Back then, the two major premium cable outlets, HBO and Showtime, would basically slot two dates a year for fighters who they were associated with. While box-office stars like De La Hoya would be on pay-per-view events, oftentimes exclusive network deals would inhibit the ability of boxers to go out and seek more fights on other platforms.

You’d probably be correct in saying that some boxers aren’t happy with working so infrequently, compared to their predecessors. The argument could also be made that they have been forced to be content with this schedule.

RICHARD MACKSON / CONTRIBUTOR



Pound-for-pound stars used to fight more than once or twice a year.

Munguia and Gilberto Ramirez, who also have a good number of bouts). He has proven to be not only a gifted prizefighter, but one who has performed so often that he has been seen by the masses frequently. Building a brand means you have become a familiar face to the general public, not just the hardcore fans of the sport.

How many boxers of Canelo’s stature can be built moving forward if fighters in their early-to-mid 20s (with less than 25 fights) are relegated to performing every six-to-eight months?

Ryan Garcia, with his ability to market himself on social media, could be the exception to the rule – especially if he is able to defeat Gervonta Davis in their high-profile showdown on April 22.

So is there any solution?

Well, you could start off with the sanctioning bodies and have guidelines on how often their champions should defend their titles. For instance, the World Boxing Council states in Article III of its rules, under the “Championship Obligations,” that “a WBC champion should strive to defend the title in mandatory or voluntary defenses at least three (3) times a year.”


This is probably news to Errol Spence Jr. and Jermall Charlo, who have fallen far short of that recommendation by the WBC.

The WBO states in its rules (Section 5 – Defense of Titles) that anyone below the heavyweight class “shall defend his title at intervals not greater than nine (9) months” from either the acquisition of the title or the last defense.

If the sanctioning bodies would tighten their regulations and then – and this is the tricky part – actually enforce them, you could create more traffic in each division. But alas, oftentimes the tail wags the dog in this racket, and these organizations often take directions from their favored promoters.

But really this falls on the fighters themselves. Yeah, in this current system, there will be a select group of boxers who will live well and earn a lucrative living. Yet if they yearn for true stardom, the type that gets them eight-figure paydays and national endorsements, it will take more than just getting the usual biannual slots on a network.

They will have to find ways to fight more often and make the sacrifices to make it happen.

But will any of them take less to eventually earn more? 

In the 21st century, there have been some anomalies. In 2012, Nonito Donaire garnered the Boxing Writers Association of America’s Fighter of the Year award after being made a priority by Top Rank, fighting four times on HBO against the quartet of Wilfredo Vazquez Jr., Jeffrey Mathebula, Toshiaki Nishioka and Jorge Arce.

Then in 2013, Gennadiy Golovkin expedited his rise with four bouts against Gabe Rosado, Nobuhiro Ishida, Matthew Macklin and Curtis Stevens. At this stage, “GGG” wasn’t a full-fledged attraction who commanded seven-figure paydays and license fees from HBO. Also, his bout with Ishida took place in Monte Carlo on an independent broadcast.

As you fast-forward, Alvarez is the only member of the pound-for-pound list who has had more than two fights in a year since 2021. Currently his record stands at 58-2-2 (39 KOs), and at age 32, he has a chance to come close to or surpass 70 fights. Most careers these days will not even have 40.

There’s a reason why Alvarez is a bona fide star. No, it’s not only because he’s Mexican (after all, so are Jaime



There are many ways to watch boxing these days; DAZN and ESPN are just two of more than a dozen platforms that showcase the sport.



HOW TO WATCH BOXING IN 2023

THE RING'S GUIDE TO STREAMING AND BROADCASTING PLATFORMS THAT FEATURE THE SWEET SCIENCE

By Diego Morilla

There was a time – several decades, in fact – when live boxing was watched on three major terrestrial television networks in the U.S. Basic and premium cable channels threw their hats into the ring in the 1980s, and the two big subscription networks – HBO and Showtime – eventually ruled boxing during the 1990s and 2000s. However, since HBO left the sport in late 2018 – an exit that coincided with the birth of the streaming



HOW TO WATCH BOXING IN 2023

revolution – boxing programming has been splintered across more platforms than can be counted on both hands.

Let's face it, the era of traditional network-televised boxing is over.

Even if you still have cable in your home (greetings from the 21st century, dear ice age caveman) you can still access most of your combat sports-related TV channels from a computer or cell phone through their related apps. And if you add all the free streaming options (from Facebook Live to YouTube and beyond) the options are endless.

Compiling a comprehensive list of such media outlets is a daunting task, with more and more popping up every day or merging with other previously existing companies, each one of them with a unique subscription model.

Here is our attempt to list and describe most of them, with a brief basic knowledge of their services.

DAZN

dazn.com

Platform: Streaming via app or web
Subscription model: \$225 per year, with special pay-per-view events available separately.

The current superstar of boxing's streaming firmament has seen its share of ups and downs in terms of revenue model and programming, but it remains one of the main players in the field, in large part because of its association with Matchroom and Golden Boy Promotions. Initially advertised as the one platform that would put an end to the pay-per-view era, DAZN ended up having to resort to that old formula to generate the kind of income it needed. But as far as overall quality of programming and star power, it is still at the top of the heap.

ESPN/ESPN+

espn.com

Platform: Cable channel/streaming via app or web



Subscription model: \$7 per month/\$70 per year, with special pay-per-view events available separately.

A giant that needs no introduction. However, ESPN has fallen in and out of love with boxing several times. Right now it seems to be more committed than ever to keep the sport on its grid, basically because as a non-premium (basic cable) TV network it needs eyeballs on the screen more than ever. In an era where no one has the time (or maybe attention span) to watch entire games on weekdays anymore (why would you when you can get a Twitter alert for every slam dunk

and then watch the replay for free?) boxing still grabs enough attention to drive ESPN's viewership numbers up. Top Rank, the network's promotional partner, does its part by delivering elite champions and the sport's top prospects every month. Let's hope its commitment remains high.

FOX SPORTS

foxsports.com

Platform: Cable channel/streaming via app or web
Subscription model: Requires paid subscription to a cable or streaming platform, with special pay-per-view events available at an extra cost.

BETTMANN

Same as above, but with a sweet four-year deal with Premier Boxing Champions that may have come to an end in 2022. There has been no official word on the partnership ending, so PBC could continue one of its main sources for boxing content. A solid broadcasting team and a regular schedule complete the promising picture of the "other" all-sports cable giant vying for the best possible boxing content out there.

SHOWTIME

sho.com

Platform: Cable channel/streaming via app or web

Subscription model: \$10.99 per month, with special pay-per-view events available separately.

The last dinosaur from one of boxing's golden eras. The exit of HBO left Showtime as the only premium cable channel holding the fort in the boxing business. It has used this opportunity to grow into one of today's powerhouses thanks to high-profile fights delivered by main promotional partner PBC, and a stellar broadcasting team.

BLK PRIME

watchnow.blkprime.com

Platform: Streaming via app or web

Fox PPV has broadcast big events, such as Pacquiao-Thurman.

Subscription model: \$3.99 per month, with special pay-per-view events available separately.

One of the new kids on the block, BLK Prime is, in its own words, "a subscription video-on-demand company that offers multicultural content to a diverse audience worldwide," and it is apparently in it for the long run. The platform, which recently announced a weekly Tuesday fight series beginning in May, announced its arrival by broadcasting the Terence Crawford-David Avanesyan fight in December. Time will tell if it's able to compete with the big dogs.

PROBOX TV

proboxtv.com

Platform: Streaming via app or web
Subscription model: \$1.99 per month/\$18 per year.

The scrappy upstart of the bunch, ProBox usually stages fights and broadcasts them from its own facility in South Florida, and always with a stellar cast of talents and former fighters manning the microphones. Lots of young, up-and-coming talents are featured, for those of you who like to catch fighters in the early stages of their development.

GOLDEN BOY BOXING

[YouTube @GoldenBoyBoxing](https://www.youtube.com/@GoldenBoyBoxing)

Platform: Streaming via app or web
Subscription model: Free on YouTube

Not exactly a busy platform, as Golden Boy uses it only to broadcast its DAZN undercards and other smaller shows from the Southern California area, but it's a terrific source of content with great quality throughout the available offerings.

HOW TO WATCH BOXING IN 2023

COMBATSPORTSNOW.COM

Platform: Streaming via web
Subscription model: Pay-per-view events.

Mostly used for combat sports other than boxing, but they occasionally schedule boxing matches in a pay-per-view setting with rather steep pricing. If you enjoy the odd MMA card or want to brag about watching an event named “Bodies on the Floor” around the watercooler on Monday, this is your stop.

PPV.COM

Platform: Streaming via app or web
Subscription model: Special pay-per-view events.

Basically a third-party carrier of fight cards already available

elsewhere, for those who prefer the freedom of ordering events here and there without committing to downloading an app or subscribing to a service.

THOMPSON BOXING PROMOTIONS

YouTube @ThompsonBoxing

Platform: Streaming via app or web
Subscription model: Free on YouTube.

Looking for exciting neighborhood brawls mostly from Southern California, with a bold and fun broadcasting team (including The Ring’s Editor-In-Chief) and a chance to see a few of tomorrow’s future stars? Search no more. You’re home. The 23-year-old developmental series streams 10 shows a year.

FITE TV

fite.tv

Platform: Streaming via app or web
Subscription model: \$4.99 per month/\$49.99 per year, with special pay-per-view events available separately.

One of a handful of new companies that is making some noise. Sometimes quite literally. Watching a boxing card and then a Metallica concert on the same night? Yeah, I can break a 10 for that! Bare-knuckle fight fans (hello, mom!) and (ugh...) “boxer-vs.-YouTuber” fans will also feel right at home here with this platform, which was purchased by Triller (the social media company

The PBC showcases most of its events on Showtime.



Golden Boy cards are broadcast on DAZN and its YouTube channel.

held the rights for most of the most popular sports in the country, and that includes boxing. But it has had its lunch stolen by a few other companies in certain sports, and boxing is one of them. It is now limited to rather small and regional fights, but you will definitely get a glimpse of the next big thing to come out of the country if you stay tuned long enough.

ESTRELLA TV

estrellatv.com

Platform: Cable channel/Streaming via app or web
Subscription model: Free on the web and via app.

Your classic Mexican entertainment/telenovela network with the occasional fight card aired live and for free. And some of those soap operas are bizarre enough for a fight fan to enjoy them, too! Not a bad deal!

FIGHTNIGHTLIVE/ FLOSPORTS

FloSports.tv

Platform: Streaming via app or web
Subscription model: \$12.50 a month (on a yearly subscription)

Founded in 2006 with the goal being “to give underserved sports the love they deserve,” FloSports is (according to its promotional material) a subscription video streaming service offering live and on-demand access to hundreds of thousands of competition events across 25+ vertical sport categories in the US and abroad. Its talent roster includes Siddique Farooqi and veteran boxing scribe Michael Woods calling the action from ringside. It has broadcast over 65 boxing events so far. **RING**

that brought us Mike Tyson vs. Roy Jones Jr.) in 2021.

CANELA TV

canela.tv

Platform: Streaming via app or web
Subscription model: Free to subscribe.

Hola desde Mexico! If tough Mexican fighters are your thing (and they are everyone’s thing, that’s for sure) you may want to register here and check out the weekly content. Some of tomorrow’s champs are already cutting their teeth there; you don’t want to miss them. Great boxing movies available as well.

UFC FIGHT PASS

ufcfightpass.com

Platform: Streaming via app or web
Subscription model: Starting at \$9.99 per month, with yearly rates and special pay-per-view events available separately.

Mostly a vehicle for Dana White’s

MMA behemoth league/sanctioning body/promotional outfit/all of the above, but it also carries some interesting boxing cards, including Tom Loeffler’s highly regarded 360 Promotions developmental series.

BXNG TV

bxngtv.com

Platform: Streaming via app or web
Subscription model: Special pay-per-view events.

Another option in the combat sports landscape, mostly limited to boxing and Muay Thai, with each event payable separately.

TYC SPORTS PLAY

tycsportsplay.com

Platform: Cable channel/Streaming via app or web
Subscription model: Available with your cable subscription (depending on region).

Hola from Argentina! TyC Sports was once the local sports giant that



BLACK SHEEP RISING

LONG OVERSHADOWED BY THE FANFARE AROUND HIS OLDER BROTHER, **DAVID BENAVIDEZ** IS NOW FIRMLY IN THE LIMELIGHT AFTER HIS VICTORY OVER **CALEB PLANT**

By Norm Fraumenheim



He's an unlikely story, a slow starter in the ring and in life. In the beginning, he was impossible to miss. Then, he was easy to ignore and even mock, mostly because of his own mistakes and immaturity.

But David Benavidez, the brother of a prodigy and never a celebrated prospect himself, has crashed the party, suddenly a star who fans, media and rivals are just beginning to discover.

Fourteen years ago, he was a chubby 12-year-old lost on the floor of a busy Phoenix gym filled with more-accomplished names and emerging prospects. He was notable for only one reason: Pound-for-pound, no kid was bigger.

But pound-for-pound has taken on new meaning for Benavidez. At 26,

David Benavidez solidified his status at The Ring's No. 1-rated super middleweight with a unanimous decision over fellow former titleholder Caleb Plant on March 25.

BLACK SHEEP RISING

he's lost the pounds and found the fighter, an identity that continues to emerge in an unfolding story of self-discovery.

His name is appearing for the first time in the various pound-for-pound ratings, which are nothing more than a debate. They're often silly and always subjective, but they're also a measure of respect and perhaps popularity.

Whatever they mean, they represent another marker in Benavidez's stubborn march to prominence. Put it this way: He's in the argument. He put himself there with a fighting style that, so far, defines his career. He moves forward, ever forward.

That's how he beat Caleb Plant, who led through the early rounds, yet got bulldozed over the final six on March 25. It was a victory that might not have ranked among Benavidez's best. The unanimous decision is only the fourth scorecard victory on a 27-0 record. Blame a brave Plant (22-2, 13 KOs) for much of that.

In terms of what Benavidez's victory did for his name recognition and marketability, none is more significant.

"I feel like I'm just beginning, just entering my prime," Benavidez said. "Now, the sky is the limit."

He sold out 13,865 available seats at Las Vegas' MGM Grand Garden Arena on a night when Taylor Swift and the NCAA Basketball Tournament were in town. In his first pay-per-view appearance on Showtime, he got fans buzzing, before and after the opening bell.

With the victory, he puts his face alongside Tank Davis, Ryan Garcia, Jaron Ennis, Shakur Stevenson, Devin Haney and Naoya Inoue. Call them the Youngbloods, a generation with the potential to sustain a business battered by failed negotiations for Terence Crawford-Errol Spence Jr. and Tyson Fury-Oleksandr Usyk.

In the here-and-now, it's a face that unlocks potential for an immediate blockbuster, Benavidez vs. Canelo Alvarez, in what could be the biggest fight in the history of the Mexican-versus-Mexican-American rivalry since Julio Cesar Chavez vs. Oscar De

La Hoya.

"I want to prove myself," Benavidez said about 90 minutes after beating Plant. "Canelo has already proven himself, but I feel like he needs to give me the opportunity too. It's not like I'm begging. I've been the mandatory for the past two fights. So, it's something I've earned, especially after this. I showed I deserve to be in there."

Benavidez, the World Boxing Council's interim titleholder at super middleweight, has been calling out Alvarez, the undisputed champ, for years. But Alvarez has always been among those quick to dismiss Benavidez as unworthy.

After his trilogy victory, a decision over Gennadiy Golovkin in September, Canelo – annoyed at the inevitable question – said impatiently that Benavidez had fought no one.

Before that, the Mexican pay-per-

view star said he didn't want to fight fellow Mexicans, although it's never been clear whether that included the American-born Benavidez, whose father – and trainer – Jose Sr. is of Mexican descent. His mother is from Ecuador.

Benavidez's victory over Plant strengthens the argument that he's ready and worthy of a shot at Alvarez. Yet, Canelo can fairly argue that his win over Plant in 2021 is more impressive. He knocked Plant out in the 11th round.

A knockout of Plant was one of Benavidez's many pre-fight promises. Profanely and repeatedly, Benavidez vowed a violent end within six rounds. But that didn't happen. Plant was never off his feet.

After 10 rounds, Benavidez led 97-93 on judge Steve Weisfeld's scorecard and 96-94 on Dave Moretti's card.

STEVE MARCUS



Benavidez was patient and elusive during the early rounds ...

Bivol, who upset Canelo last May at light heavyweight. Canelo wants a rematch, but it's not clear whether he'd do it at 175 pounds or risk his undisputed championship at 168.

"I have nothing against Canelo," said Benavidez, who backed off the insulting tone he and his father used when accusing Canelo of ducking him. "I know he has a lot of options."

But time is running out, at least it is in terms of Canelo's boxing career. He's 32. For most fighters, that's not old. But Canelo is not most. Canelo has 62 bouts. He's been fighting professionally since he was 15. Wear, tear and erosion take an inevitable toll.

Compare that to Benavidez, who sees his Plant victory as just the opening moment in his prime time. He has options that Canelo no longer has. He can wait. Canelo can't.

That might mean a couple of fights against alternate names at super middleweight. Lewkowicz has mentioned David Morell, The Ring's No. 4-rated super middleweight. Maybe WBC middleweight titleholder Jermall Charlo comes up in weight to challenge. Charlo was at ringside on March 25.

Or maybe Benavidez moves up to 175, perhaps against Bivol. He sparred with the Russian before the WBA titleholder's stunning, one-sided upset of Canelo. By all accounts, Benavidez often had the upper hand against the 2022 Fighter of the Year. The light heavyweight showdown with Bivol may be more realistic than a shot at Canelo anyway.

Benavidez has already talked about a move up in weight. At 6-foot-2, he doesn't have much choice. Soon, super middleweight won't be an option anymore. He's going upscale, perhaps in every sense of the word.

In terms of the pounds, that might be just another unlikely twist. As a kid, he says, he was once at about

Tim Cheatham had it even, 95-95. Respectively, their final cards were 117-111, 116-112 and 115-113.

Alvarez held a bigger advantage over Plant after 10 rounds than Benavidez did. Canelo went into the 11th to finish Plant ahead on all three cards – Weisfeld 98-92, Moretti 97-93 and Patricia Morse-Jarman 96-94.

"I know I could get better," said Benavidez, who conceded Plant's speed gave him trouble, especially early. "But I feel like the only fight that people want to see at super middleweight is me versus Canelo. So let's give it to them."

Benavidez's promoter/manager, Sampson Lewkowicz, also has renewed hopes for a rich Canelo showdown. After Benavidez blew out former middleweight champion David Lemieux in May 2022, Lewkowicz said then there was little chance

of fighting Canelo. He called it "a fantasy."

But, Lewkowicz said after Benavidez's decision over Plant that he had changed his mind.

"I really don't think Canelo has anywhere else to go," Lewkowicz said. "Ask the fans. They don't think so. They think he should fight David now. Right now."

But Eddie Hearn, Canelo's current promoter, has other ideas. Canelo is scheduled for a May 6 tune-up against Brit John Ryder, currently The Ring's No. 3-rated super middleweight and Canelo's WBO mandatory, at home in Guadalajara. For the first time in more than a decade, Canelo will fight in Mexico. It's a chance for him to test his wrist. He underwent surgery after beating Golovkin.

Then, there's talk about a rematch with the Hearn-promoted Dmitry

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250 pounds.

Put those 82 pounds in reverse, and it's a little like the marks on a home's old wall that parents use to measure and remember their kids as they grow from toddlers to teenagers. For Benavidez, it's kind of an upside-down tale of the tape. But that's boxing.

Yet even by the sport's twisted standards, the Benavidez story is unusual. He's in the very strange position of being a former two-time titleholder while also unbeaten. He has lost the WBC's version of the 168-pound title twice, first for testing positive for cocaine in September 2018 and then for failing to make weight before a victory over Roamer Alexis Angulo in August 2020.

But what's unusual may have also been predictable. Few would have foreseen stardom in somebody who was seen as the "other" Benavidez.

He was the kid brother of a boxing prodigy, Jose Benavidez Jr. In 2009, Jose Jr. became the youngest national champion in the Golden Gloves' long, fabled history. He was 120-5 as an amateur. He was a prospect before he was old enough to drive.

There was never any doubt about whether the pro ring was in Jose Jr.'s future. He went on to sign with Top Rank as a junior welterweight prospect. In 2018, he probably gave the feared Crawford his toughest bout, taking him into the 12th and final round before losing a stoppage

in Omaha, "Bud's" hometown.

Jose Jr., now 30, says he's training and still hoping to fight. But the former contender has another role. He's in the movies. He plays Felix Chavez in Creed III. He's spent a lifetime rehearsing the role. But not in a drama club, community playhouse or on a high school stage.

"I didn't go to school," Jose said in Las Vegas as the smack talk raged between his brother's camp and Plant's camp during public workouts a few days before the showdown.

... but he turned up the heat over the second half, punishing Plant.



STEVE MARCUS

ALEJANDRO SALAZAR/PIX IMAGES/ICON SPORTSWIRE VIA GETTY IMAGES



He was joking. Kind of.

The Benavidez brothers wandered off the Phoenix streets and into Central Boxing not long after Mike Tyson showed up at the old downtown gym. It's no coincidence, perhaps, that Tyson would later go on to give David his popular new nickname, The Mexican Monster.

Tyson saw the monster in his infancy.

So, too, did Jose Jr.

It was at Central, Jose Jr. said, that he saw what David had yet to discover for himself. They'd run through the gym, bouncing off bags, ring ropes and each other like kids on playground swings. But they'd also spar. The baby fat couldn't hide Benavidez's real identity – he had the DNA of a born fighter, Jose Jr. said.

"I saw it in him before anyone

Benavidez's team believes he's ready for Canelo and Dmitry Bivol.

did," Jose Jr. said. "I knew it before he did. I just did. I'm not surprised he is where he is."

For everyone else, the realization came slowly. Unlike his older brother, there wasn't much of a prelude for David. He had only 15 amateur fights.

Then as a pro, David would appear on Jose Jr.'s undercards, both in Phoenix and on the road. It was then, however, that an edgy instinct would suddenly appear, almost in a flash.

Fans would go to small cards at Celebrity Theatre in downtown Phoenix to see Jose Jr. They'd leave talking about David.

He loved to fight then.

Loves it now more than ever.

Plant's insightful trainer, Stephen "Breadman" Edwards, has seen it. He's tried to counter it.

"David's got a mean streak," Edwards said before March 25's opening bell.

It kicks in during later rounds. It did against Plant and Anthony Dirrell before him. Allow Benavidez to gain some momentum, and it appears, an incoming storm – a mean mayhem – from which there is no escape. No shelter.

"Before I even ever knew I wanted to be a boxer, my dad put me in there," David Benavidez said. "But now I really love what I do.

"What I hit, I hurt."

He keeps it simple.

Scary, too.



Nine rounds of pulse-pounding action culminated in a heart-stopping 10th that Hollywood couldn't dream up, making Corrales-Castillo I an instant classic.

THREE MINUTES |

DIEGO CORRALES VS. JOSE LUIS CASTILLO, ROUND 10 (MAY 7, 2005)

by Paul D Gibson

Diego "Chico" Corrales should be living it up as a retired boxing legend now. He should be cherishing his wife and children. He should be spending time with his loving mother, stepfather and the two brothers who idolize him. Basically, he should be enjoying his existence and easing

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towards middle age in the comfort of the substantial spoils he earned the hard way throughout an 11-year, 45-fight professional boxing career.

But he's not, of course. A motorcycle accident in Las Vegas claimed Diego on May 7, 2007, on the second anniversary of his epic meeting with Jose Luis Castillo. And anyway, those who knew Chico best will tell you that he was not a man to ease himself towards anything in life. Rather, the natural ardency of his soul propelled him along with an often-reckless abandon. It can be a lazy writer's cliché that a warrior fighter's trials in the ring reflect a fraught life on the outside, but for Corrales at least, there is some truth in drawing such a parallel.

Every day, and every round, was a roll of the dice for Chico, and he never stopped chasing longer odds and higher stakes. It is a mindset that forges greatness and blesses us with heroes. But it is the same mentality that tempts tragedy and robs us of some of our finest before they even reach one score and ten.

During a childhood mottled with the violence that was part and parcel of gang culture on the streets of Oak Park, Sacramento, fighting chose Corrales as much as the other way around. An abusive and alcoholic biological father exited the scene mercifully early, so it was his mother, Olga, and the man Diego would call his real father, Ray Woods, who raised him and his brothers, Esteban and Daryl.

Woods happened to be the boxing director at the Sacramento Police Athletic League, and with little Chico displaying a keen nose for trouble and a penchant for scrapping on the street, the boxing gym quickly became an environment within which his excess energy and anger could be controlled or spent with minimal collateral damage.

After an amateur career that contained just a handful of defeats in more than a hundred contests, he turned pro and let his heavy hands compile a 33-0 record. At just 22



Castillo (left) and Corrales were cut from the same warrior-class cloth.

his time and emerged from prison a bloated 180-pounder who would have struggled to make weight for a light heavyweight bout. But Chico was still only 25, and a perceived injustice at how the particulars of his conviction had played out in the media and affected his family ensured a fire fueled by dreams of revenge and redemption raged within.

He walked straight back into the gym, reeled off four stoppage wins in less than five months, and then collided head-on with the Cuban Casamayor in a firework display in the Mandalay Bay Casino. Both men hit the canvas and both were in trouble before the fight was halted at the halfway mark. A splintered gum shield had shredded the inside of Corrales' mouth and, though he pleaded with the ringside doctor through a mouthful of his own warm blood, the medic had to end it.

Chico reversed the result by winning a split decision in a rematch five months later, and few then would have begrudged him a few months of well-earned laurel resting. Instead, he vacated that hard-won WBO 130-pound belt and immediately challenged the unorthodox, hard-hitting and unbeaten Acelino Freitas for the 135-pound version. It was another classic in which Corrales was losing before he dropped "Popo" in the eighth, ninth and 10th to elicit a *não mais* from the Brazilian champion.

The quest to dominate a heavily stacked lightweight division had effectively been whittled down to two men and, with little fuss, Diego Corrales versus José Luis Castillo, holder of the prestigious Ring Magazine title, was made for Las Vegas on Cinco de Mayo weekend, 2005.

Though nobody could have foreseen just how special the fight would be, there was undoubtedly an air of heightened expectation before

years of age, he claimed the IBF junior lightweight title from the unbeaten Roberto Garcia, now one of boxing's foremost trainers. Future pound-for-pound king Floyd Mayweather Jr. was the same age, and when Corrales signed a seven-figure deal to face the WBC champ in early 2001, it looked like the only direction his life was headed in was up.

In fact, the exact opposite was true. Mayweather put a weight-drained Corrales down five times in the MGM Grand before Woods brandished a white towel in the corner to save his son from himself. Chico soon descended much further when convicted of domestic abuse following

an earlier violent confrontation with his pregnant wife, Maria. He was an all-or-nothing type of guy, and as he began a 14-month stay in the Deuel Vocational Institution correctional facility, he was certainly closer to securing the latter.

José Luis Castillo fought Mayweather as well. A year after he outclassed Corrales, Floyd stepped up a division to challenge for Castillo's WBC lightweight title. Pretty Boy was awarded the decision but, to this day, there are many who believe the Mexican deserved the nod. In a rematch eight months later, Mayweather learned from his mistakes and won more convincingly,

but it did nothing to diminish Castillo's standing as one of the great lightweights of his time.

Born in Empalme, Sonora, halfway down the coast of the Gulf of California, Castillo served his apprenticeship in the notoriously punishing environs of Mexicali and Tijuana. He accepted the moniker "El Temible," meaning the fearsome one, and in knocking out 17 of 18 featherweight opponents while still only a teenager, he did his best to live up to the nickname. By the time he was 24, he'd lost a few cracks at national titles, but everything in life is relative. Such is the country's depth that there is no shame finishing second

in a contest to be the best Mexican in any weight class below 140 pounds.

By the new millennium, he'd matured into the 135-pound body that would prove to be his optimum fighting build. And in June of 2000, he shocked the world by ripping the WBC strap from around the highly rated Stevie Johnston's waist. Mayweather proved too slippery in a pair of defeats, but Castillo recovered and bested Juan Lazcano, Joel Casamayor and Julio Díaz in consecutive fights between 2004 and 2005. El Temible was back on top of the world.

Diego Corrales was waiting for him at the summit. He had served

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the first bell. Mexican legend Julio César Chávez accompanied Castillo on his ring walk, while the recently vanquished Freitas was seen in Corrales' posse. At ringside, the likes of James Toney, Winky Wright and Shane Mosely all looked thrilled just to be there as fans.

These were two massive lightweights in every sense of the word and neither possessed a reverse gear. Having never been down in 59 contests, Castillo's chin was thought to be impenetrable, while Chico was widely regarded as one of the pound-for-pound hardest punchers in boxing. The American was on record as saying he would go through hell and die in the ring before quitting, while Castillo was born with the grit in his soul that is a prerequisite of all great Mexican fighters. With two such ferrous wills to win colliding, something or nothing or everything had to give.

Both understood implicitly that in boxing, as in life, you often have to take before you can give. And what they prized more than anything was the glory bestowed on those fighting men who leave it all in the ring and give the fans a night about which all in attendance can later boast, "I was there." There are no guarantees in boxing, but it is fair to say that if the styles of any two fighters could be relied upon to blend together into a perfect fistic cocktail of action and heart and skill, it was Corrales and Castillo.

The opening stanza set the tone but was not without its subtle surprises. The Mexican was more renowned for roughhouse tactics, but as both combatants sought to seize the initiative, the rangier Corrales showed he was just as prepared to mix it up on the inside with low blows, forearms and rabbit punches. In response, the partisan crowd let loose with the first chants of "Ka-Stee-Yo! Ka-Stee-Yo!" When referee Tony Weeks stepped in at the bell, they were already slugging toe-to-toe.

They spent the second even closer together. It was said that Corrales' own father feared for his son against the heavier, more rugged Castillo, and

Chico now looked to be proving a point. With a two-and-a-half-inch height advantage, the American should have been boxing at distance, controlling the space with a stiff jab, and making room to leverage the power his famous long arms could generate. Instead, he burrowed in close and brawled, apparently content to trade trenchant hooks until someone landed a big one. Perhaps it was a private message to his old man: You shouldn't have doubted me after that fifth knockdown against Mayweather, Dad, and you shouldn't be doubting me now. I'm tougher than all these guys.

While Castillo had famously never been decked in 15 years, Corrales had already climbed off the canvas eight times in his professional

career. As his chin absorbed right uppercut after brutal right uppercut in round three, it looked like a ninth knockdown was a simple matter of time. Then, midway through the fourth, a gaping wound appeared in the flesh just above Castillo's left peeper where his eyebrow tailed off. It may have been the work of Corrales' slashing right hands, but it was ruled an accidental head butt, meaning that if the blood flow caused a stoppage from the fifth onwards, we would go to the scorecards.

Corrales was by now occasionally taking a step back to open up the fight and snap off a couple of jabs before swinging for the fences, but they were mere fleeting digressions from the attritional infighting that was dominating the battle. Success from

these close-quarter exchanges were being evenly shared as they took it in turns to land first or hardest. A flurry from Castillo at the end of the sixth probably won him the round and had a young Julio César Chávez Jr. bouncing jubilantly beside his father four rows back.

Corrales roared back in a seventh in which an inflating bubble of purple flesh on his cheekbone threatened to swell his left eye shut. Perhaps spurred on by the sudden dwindling of his vision, he landed a sweet left in the dying embers of the round that caused Castillo to involuntarily curtsy in recognition. The brutal intensity continued to build throughout the eighth and ninth as we all began to wonder where on earth, or elsewhere, this fight was taking us. It didn't so

much ebb and flow as violently hurl itself from one corner to another. When one man was wobbled or buzzed, he always seemed to instinctively unleash an immediate juddering reply to prevent his foe gaining the momentum a clean hit normally affords. The result was a ferocious war on a knife edge.

At a time when lassitude ought to have been taking its pricey toll, there was simply no let-up. More than that, the accuracy and voracity of the attacks endured unabated. Each round was an incessant show of quality and commitment to the cause, totally devoid of any hint of the trumpery that other fighters employ to steal a second or two of respite when the pace suddenly ups. The standing ovations that greeted every

The exchanges were brutal, but Castillo inflicted more damage.

concluding bell just kept growing in volume and duration.

When the fighters rose for the tenth, Corrales' right eye was now also beginning to swell out of view while his left had become little more than a slit. As the ref checked the tape on Castillo's gloves, Chico, as was his custom, blessed himself. The two men then touched gloves, something they had not done habitually at the beginning of the previous nine rounds; looking back it is almost as if they knew.

Ten seconds in, a short electric left that Corrales probably suspected was designed for his temple kept low and caught him flush on the chin to send him down in installments. The punch took mere milliseconds to throw, but a full three seconds more were needed for Chico's crumpled body to complete the journey to the canvas floor. From bowed head, he dropped to a knee. From that knee he toppled sideways onto a supporting elbow. There, his center of gravity continued ricocheting around his core and the reverberations rolled him onto the flat of his stomach. From this position he spat his gum shield out, rose as far as his two knees, glanced at his corner, and then focused on the referee's count. At eight, he stood up.

"Do you want to continue?" Weeks asked him. The question was as good as rhetorical.

Corrales' trainer, Joe Goossen, did his best to buy a few extra recovery seconds by prevaricating with the mouthpiece as the ref implored him to reinsert it, but he was surely merely delaying the inevitable. An impassive Castillo, the only calm Mexican in the house, stood patiently in the neutral corner and he could see that Chico was gone.

Ten seconds later, Corrales fell again, another slow collapse onto the ring floor the result of a couple of left hooks and a right uppercut through a now-faltering guard. His gloved



NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES



NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

fight fumbled to again remove his gum shield, a gesture that in another fighter would have signalled that he'd had enough. He then rolled over, eyed the referee, and rose once more. This time at nine and more gingerly than before.

He wandered sleepily to his corner as Weeks rightly deducted a point for the mouthpiece shenanigans. The gregarious Goossen, his standard garish shirt giving him the appearance of a Miami Vice bad guy, was waiting. "You gotta fucking get inside on him now," he growled. Joe has acting credits himself, but in the movie of this story, Nick Nolte is tailor-made to play him.

When Corrales turned, there was a discernible change in his countenance. It wasn't that the weariness had dissipated, but he somehow managed to muster a spark to light where before the deleterious effects of the knockdowns had caused only darkness. Suddenly Chico was alive again.

While still in retreat, he was at least now slipping as many punches as he absorbed. Then, out of

nowhere, he landed a right hook that jolted Castillo. A left then pushed the Mexican back on the ropes, where they continued to plow into one another with renewed purpose. One way or another, they were going to end this now.

A banging right and a couple more cuffing lefts shunted Castillo to an adjacent side of the ring. He was flotsam on the tide now but was still attempting to fire back. Corrales paused momentarily and then planted his feet and whaled. This was to be the site of the final stand. Chico's back is to the camera, but I imagine him simply swinging with his eyes shut, waiting to either stop or be stopped.

Weeks, who was excellent throughout the fight, was in position, poised to interject at that sickening moment a fighter's neck turns to jelly and his heavy head lolls drunkenly and defenselessly. It arrived at two minutes and six seconds. Corrales simply raised his right hand, spat out his gum shield, and walked away. It was truly remarkable.

Only Diego knew how much he gave in that unforgettable Round 10.

It was fitting that Al Bernstein, perhaps the most astute, erudite and balanced boxing analyst of the past 40 years, was on hand to offer an immediate assessment of what he had just witnessed from ringside.

"That might be the single most extraordinary comeback within a round to win a fight ..." he began before pausing, almost as if he understood the historical significance of what had just transpired and wanted to ensure he did not taint it with unnecessary hyperbole or bombast. Having checked himself, he continued with his train of thought, "... that has ever happened."

The two warriors embraced and praised one another before Corrales was asked by Showtime's Jim Gray: "How would you describe this fight?"

"An honor," was his simple reply. It was all ours, Chico. It was all ours. **RING**

FROM BASSOONIST TO BOXER, **HANNAH RANKIN** HAS FOLLOWED HER PASSIONS TO A REMARKABLE SET OF ACHIEVEMENTS

By Thomas Gerbasi

ONE-WOMAN SYMPHONY



Hannah Rankin lost her WBA 154-pound title to Terri Harper after a spirited 10-round fight in Nottingham last September.

We'll all remember the Dos Equis beer commercials featuring "The Most Interesting Man in the World."

Seventeen years after that campaign started, the most interesting woman in the world may have been found in Luss, Scotland, and while she isn't pushing beer to the masses, she has a life resumé most would envy.

Meet Hannah Rankin.

"You know what, I actually had that moment the other day," she laughed when asked if she ever got a minute to reflect on where she's been over the course of her 32 years. "I thought, 'Wow, I've done some really, really cool things in my life,' and I wouldn't change it for the world."

First off, and for our purposes here, Rankin is a former junior middleweight champion who is on the hunt for another title. But she's also an acclaimed bassoonist, an entrepreneur whose Team Rankin Ltd recently signed on as a sponsor for Commonwealth bantamweight champion Johanna Wonyou, and a social activist for the non-profit BoxWise. Her work with that organization, designed to keep U.K. youth off the streets through boxing, garnered her an invitation to 10 Downing Street in London to talk about the initiative with the British minister of education.

"We went there to discuss the potential of having BoxWise as part of the sporting curriculum," she said. "So yeah, it was amazing. We got to meet the famous cat (Larry) from Number 10 (laughs), and we were in that giant room where they had all those meetings during COVID. They were all sitting around that big, long, round table and I was like, 'This is so surreal.'"

ONE-WOMAN SYMPHONY

It is surreal – actually all of it is – because here’s a young woman standing up for her sport and the ability it has to develop not only fighting ability, but intangibles like character and discipline and the value of hard work. Boxing has saved countless lives, but you would never think that it saved the life of Rankin, whose career path seemed to be classical music, even though she did take Taekwondo as a kid with her younger sister. Boxing, though, arrived at a pivotal moment in her life.

“Boxing found me at the right time,” Rankin explains. “I moved to London to start my master’s, and after my first term, my mum was diagnosed with cancer. And six months later, she passed away. And boxing, at that time for me, was my savior. I had a different family of people that I didn’t have a long-term relationship with, like my normal family; it’s a different family in the gym. These were people just there to support me, help me train, and I could train so hard so just for one split second I wasn’t thinking about this situation with my mum and going through all the heartache of it.”

After her mother Clare’s passing, Rankin participated in white-collar boxing events to raise money for cancer research. Music was still a big part of her life, but her new passion grew as she got deeper into the sport.

“Boxing suddenly gave me this sort of hope,” she said. “It was a different sort of life that I could really focus on that hadn’t been associated to my mum. Because obviously my music career, I did a lot of that with my mum, and was really, really close to her with that. It was something different for me but also just came at the right time, so it’s why I want to give so much back to it whenever I can and also give other people the opportunity to use boxing, because it helped build my confidence. It helped me deal with frustrations and anger and grieving. And it was also there for me to find a fascination in and a love for something new.”

That love for the game hasn’t left



Rankin celebrates her points win over Sarah French in June 2019.


end of the year, when she decided Maria Lindberg to take the WBA and IBO belts at 154 pounds. The toughest bassoonist you’ll ever meet was a world champion.

And still playing music. Rankin admits that she did show up to rehearsals with a black eye occasionally. As for the reaction, “Oh, they already knew,” she laughs before explaining how boxing actually helped her on stage.

“I used to suffer really badly from performance anxiety. I wasn’t bad for orchestra, but for solo performing, I used to get really, really nervous, and boxing massively helped me to get over those nerves. It suddenly put everything in perspective. It’s like, ‘Well, no one’s going to try to punch me in the face when I’m playing Mozart unless I’m really unlucky.’ (laughs) So it really enabled me to enjoy the attention, the solo moment of being up on stage, and I started to really love it.”

Rankin was loving boxing just as much as a world champion, even though tragedy nearly struck in her first title defense last May, when her stoppage of Alejandra Ayala sent the Mexican challenger into a coma. Thankfully, Ayala recovered, and a relieved Rankin was able to move on with her own career.

Last September, Rankin lost her titles to Terri Harper, but against Logan Holler in March, she was sharp and back on track as she scored a shutout decision victory. Next up, the most interesting woman in the world wants to get some more belts for her trophy case. What, no more music goals? Let’s ask the million-dollar question: Become a world champion again or play a solo gig at Carnegie Hall in New York City?

“I knock them out, I become a world champion again, and I’ll finish up at the Carnegie Hall.” 

Rankin. She got her master’s degree in 2016, and in 2017, with trainer Noel Callan in her corner, she turned pro with only those white-collar fights as an amateur career. Yes, there was a lot of tough love and learning on the job, but Rankin persevered, winning five of her first six pro fights to earn a shot at the WBA super middleweight title against Alicia Napoleon.

She lost to the New Yorker on that night in August 2018, then dropped another title fight to unbeaten Claressa Shields three months later, this one at 160 pounds. Rankin wasn’t winning, but she was competitive and going the distance, making her someone to keep an eye on. Along the way, she was learning a business that

you can’t figure out from books.

“My coach, Noel Callan, and myself have been doing this for ourselves from the very beginning, and we’ve built Team Rankin into a company and now it’s Team Rankin Ltd. There’s a lot of things that have gone into creating that. I didn’t go the traditional route – I wasn’t a Team GB athlete to come out and work with a massive promoter straight away. I’ve had to do a lot of the business side myself. So I understand how the business works. I think I’m a little bit more aware of these things, like how you get an opponent, what’s got to be paid for. When you have an opponent coming, it’s not just them; you’ve got the teams and there’s medicals and

ROB CASEY - SNS GROUP / CONTRIBUTOR

there’s lots of other things that need to be involved. And I think when you’ve done it all yourself, you start to pick up on these things. You start to learn. And, for me, it’s a fascinating learning situation to learn about how to build a business within the boxing world.

“And it’s what I say to young fighters, all of them coming through: It’s A) so important you get a good team around you, and B) that you remember that you are the business, you are the product. And so, at the end of the day, if you want people to sponsor you, you want people to support you and know who you are, you have to do social media, you have to work with people to get sponsorship and do what is required

of you when they do give you sponsorship. People don’t just give away money for nothing. You have to learn why they’re going to give it to you and why they want to work with you.”

Over the years, Rankin has been one of the top female boxers in the social media universe. Savvy, active and accessible, she takes fans into her life and career while building her base to a point where sponsors do want to get involved.

By the time 2021 rolled around, Rankin was winning more than she was losing, but she couldn’t get over the hump in world title fights, losing to Patricia Berghult and Savannah Marshall. That all changed at the

WORLD BEAT



U.K.

BY ARCHIBALD JAMES

February proved a relatively quiet month inside U.K. boxing rings, with Leigh Wood's failed defense of his WBA featherweight title the only bout of note. The Nottingham hero once more packed his city's biggest arena to the rafters but came unstuck in the seventh round to a perfect left hook from the formidable Mauricio Lara. Wood appeared well up in the fight, but the 25-year-old Mexican forever carries the equalizing power to end a contest at any given moment. Kudos to trainer Ben Davison for making the call to stop the action when he did. With Josh Warrington having been strategically placed in

Leigh Wood outboxed Mauricio Lara before trading hooks with "Branco" at the end of Round 7.

the front row for a bit of argy-bargy with whoever was going to emerge victorious, it was clear what Eddie Hearn had in mind next. But Wood has already activated a rematch clause and will run it back against Lara on May 27 in Manchester.

With little else to be reported, it was left to the humble British chicken to dominate the month's headlines. For too long sat on the sidelines, playing second fiddle to its wild boar compatriot or the prolific Mexican cow, our feathered friend finally emerged from the shadows thanks to Conor Benn's debilitating addiction to omelettes. The WBC moved from the bog-standard contamination excuse to the more novel overdosing on eggs to explain the failure of two separate VADA tests, two months apart, ahead of Cool Hand Conor's abandoned bout with Chris Eubank Jr. Good enough for the sanctioning organization, which didn't hesitate to welcome the PPV star back into

its arms with a top 10 rating. "Eff you, then," was Benn's diplomatic response to the rest of the planet who still need some convincing.

It's boxing, and he makes plenty of people plenty of money, so Benn will be back in a ring soon enough regardless of any sanctions he faces. The only questions are where, when and against whom. His promoter, Hearn, was at one stage giddily dropping hints that Manny Pacquiao in a jurisdiction comfortable licensing Benn against a 44-year-old without a win since 2019 would be next. More recently, talk of the original Eubank Jr. fight being revived has come to the fore. Abu Dhabi is more than happy to stage it, but the British Boxing Board of Control is on record saying it would be unlikely to grant Eubank Jr. permission to take that fight. It is one of many grubby sagas that looks likely to taint boxing for some time yet.

March opened up with Ohara



MARC ATKINS / STRINGER

Davies heading north to Newcastle to face local favourite Lewis Ritson in a 140-pound WBA final eliminator. In what was perhaps a career-best performance, Davies focused on the body to break Ritson down before stopping him in the ninth. Two Tanks is now mandatory challenger, but as the WBA continues to labor through its process of naming a single champ in each weight class, he must wait for the winner of Alberto Puello and Rolando Romero in May to then face Ismael Barroso before learning of his opponent and date. It could well be 2024 before Ohara gets his shot. Or 2025. Or ...

Post-Matchroom life has begun in earnest for WBO cruiserweight titleholder Lawrence Okolie. The Sauce had not fought for over a year as his exit from Matchroom grew as messy as you'd expect after publicly comparing Eddie Hearn to *Django Unchained's* evil plantation owner, Calvin Candie. In fairness, Matchroom did a decent job building him, so Hearn can be forgiven for having a public moan on

how Okolie and Joshua Buatsi both suddenly decided the grass would be greener elsewhere. Hearn mentioned some mysterious advisers, for which the fighters ditched AJ's 258 MGT management outfit, as being instrumental in the departures. These advisers clearly have strong links to Boxxxer, as that is where the pair have ended up.

Okolie made his Boxxxer debut in Manchester Arena on March 25 against the unheralded but undefeated David Light. With Antipodean fighters often benefitting from a lack of strength in depth as they Hoover up regional titles and ascend the rankings, few gave Light much of a chance. The New Zealander proved tough but limited across the full 12 rounds of a fight so poor that plenty had booed and headed home long before Okolie was deducted a point for holding in the

Conor Benn's PED controversy is a black eye for British boxing.

11th, never mind hanging around for the final bell. It's not the first time seats have emptied early when Okolie boxes, and Sky Sports may be already questioning the serious financial outlay on someone whose fighting style has been compared to a panicked octopus.

Okolie's old manager, Anthony Joshua, then returned to action the following weekend. We need to go back to 2020 to find the previous time AJ had his hand raised in victory inside a boxing ring, but he'd naturally remained in the top five with all four governing bodies, nevertheless. He'll be expecting a title shot of some description before too long, but until then a 10-rounder against the American Jermaine Franklin, a man fresh off a defeat to Dillian Whyte, would have to suffice. Pulses were not racing for this one, so the move back to the comfier environs of the O2 Arena was a wise decision. Defeat may have signaled the end of the road for Joshua, but there was little danger of that in a fight that didn't heat up until some

handbags between the fighters after the final bell. He did better than Whyte, but that's about all you can say on the performance.

Looking ahead, another British standout expecting a world title shot soon is the WBO interim titleholder, Joe Joyce. He'll face off against China's Zhilei Zhang on a Frank Warren bill in the Copper Box Arena in London on April 15. Joyce has plowed through everyone put in front of him to date, with Joseph Parker and Daniel Dubois among the most notable scalps. He must be a tough man to match at this stage, so all involved deserve credit for making the fight. The Juggernaut will be an odds-on favorite, but most had Zhang beating Filip Hrgovic last time out, so it should be brutally competitive while it lasts.

Before leaving the heavies, it would be remiss not to mention the small matter of Tyson Fury versus Oleksandr Usyk for all the marbles, although the frequency with which the saga lurches from the fight being on, to off, to back on again may render this paragraph completely redundant by the time I've finished writing it, never mind the day it gets published. As it stands right now, however, it's off and Usyk is instead eyeing up his WBA mandatory, Dubois. As second prizes go, this is right down there with the worst for boxing fans who are becoming sadly accustomed to the reality that boxing is a sport in which the best avoid the best, year in, year out.

The last major fight of April sees Joe Cordina with the chance to regain a belt he never lost in the ring when he challenges Shavkatdzhon Rakhimov for the Russian's IBF junior lightweight strap. Cordina claimed the title last June when he stopped Kenichi Ogawa in the second round with a Knockout of the Year contender. But when a serious hand injury and subsequent surgery delayed a scheduled mandatory defense last November, the IBF thought it appropriate to immediately

strip the 2016 Olympian. "I feel like I've been robbed," Cordina tweeted at the time. Rakhimov stopped the Brit Zelfa Barrett in Abu Dhabi to seize the vacant belt, but Cordina is a different class of fighter and will enjoy home advantage for this one. A lively Motorpoint Arena in Cardiff will be fully expecting to reanoint their king.

THAILAND

BY WASIM MATHER

What an exciting time for boxing fans in Thailand, with four huge fights looming during the first half of this year. With a long history in this sport, the country has produced 50 world titleholders as recognized by the four major sanctioning organizations – WBC, IBF, WBO and WBA. They also have an ardent fan base that is extremely proud of past champions like hall of famer Khaosai Galaxy, Chatchai Sasakul, Veeraphol Sahaprom, Yodsanan 3kBattery and many more. The fight culture of Thailand is electric and is like no other, but that's a story for another time. In the next few months, there will be two world title defenses, a WBA interim flyweight title fight and a WBC bantamweight eliminator bout.

★ ★ ★

Petchmanee CP Freshmart vs. Yudai Shigeoka

First up is a fight that boxing purists are seemingly excited about; it will take place on April 16 in Tokyo, Japan, between WBC strawweight titleholder Panya Pradabsri (aka Petchmanee CP Freshmart) and Yudai Shigeoka (6-0, 4 KOs). Pradabsri (39-1, 23 KOs), The Ring's No. 2-rated strawweight, has successfully defended his belt three times and is coming fresh off a win against Norihito Tanaka, who once challenged for a world title against Pradabsri's stablemate Thamanon Niyomtrong (Knockout

CP Freshmart), The Ring's No. 1-rated strawweight who holds the WBA belt. Tanaka came out tough against Pradabsri, but the champion adjusted and worked behind a strong jab to win by unanimous decision. It will be interesting to see what adjustments the Thai fighter makes before facing Shigeoka.

This will be Pradabsri's fourth time fighting beyond the border of his home country and the first time he will make an appearance in Japan. His last fight outside of Thailand took place five-and-a-half years ago in Datong, China, where he lost to Chinese boxer Chaozhong Xiong in what many believe was a controversial majority decision.

Twenty-five-year-old Shigeoka, seven years younger than his foe, hails from Kumamoto, Japan. He has an impressive resume, considering his short professional career. The southpaw ended his amateur career with a record of 82-10 before making his professional debut in 2019. In just six fights, he has made it to world title contention, defeating Cris Ganoza, Tsubasa Koura and Tatsuro Najashima. Interestingly, Yudai will fight on the same night as his brother Ginjiro, The Ring's No. 8-rated strawweight who will take on No. 9-rated Rene Mark Cuarto for the vacant interim IBF junior flyweight title.

This is a good matchup for both fighters and a good test for Shigeoka, who has fantastic skills, power and youth on his side. Fighting on home ground in front of his fans will certainly work in his favor. As for the champion, he has a considerable edge in experience over his Japanese foe.

★ ★ ★

Sirichai Thaiyen vs. John Ramirez

Later in the month, two-time flyweight title challenger Sirichai Thaiyen, alias Yodmongkol CP Freshmart (64-4, 42 KOs), will fly to the U.S. to face Los Angeles junior bantamweight John "Scrappy"



LEFT: MAOKI FUKUDA; GOLOVKIN; CLIFF HAWKINS; MURATA; KYODO NEWS

Knockout CP Freshmart (aka Thammanoon Niyomtrong), boxing's longest-reigning titleholder, will have to wait until May to defend his belt.



WORLD BEAT

Should he fight the same way he fought Maloney, it might be a long night for the Thai veteran. Gaballo has stopped 21 opponents in 26 encounters. Further, he has fought multiple times outside of the Philippines against some solid opponents.

SOUTH AFRICA

BY DROEKS MALAN

It was not a good run on the world scene for South African boxing – or African boxing, for that matter.

The WBC strawweight eliminator between Ayanda Ndulani (13-2-1, 4 KOs) and Luis Castillo (20-0-1, 13 KOs) that was supposed to take place at the end of February was postponed to the end of March

John “Scrappy” Ramirez will face veteran Sirichai Thaiyen.

Ramirez (11-0, 8 KOs). The bout will be for the WBA interim 115-pound title and the winner will face Joshua Franco or Kazuto Ioka. Thaiyen has not been updated on whether his clash will take place on the same card.

Thaiyen, from the central Thai province of Saraburi, made his professional boxing debut in 2009 and holds a 12th-round stoppage win over Koki Eto of Japan, which earned him an interim flyweight title in 2013. His first world title challenge, for the WBA flyweight belt, came in Argentina against Juan Carlos Reveco. He had Reveco down in the second, but the Argentine stopped the Thai fighter in the fifth. Thaiyen also challenged Ukrainian fighter Artem Dalakian five years ago in Kiev, but that did not go well for him. Dalakian had Thaiyen down three times before the bout was stopped in the eighth round.

This will be a classic encounter between the prospect and the veteran. Ramirez is young and hungry coming off a win over the rugged Luis Villa Padilla of Mexico. If he wins, he'll be within reach of a world title. The veteran might very well hang up his gloves, should he lose. In this scenario, we have a fighter with everything to gain and the other with nothing to lose. It will be intriguing to watch.

Nawaphon Sor Rungvisai vs. Reymart Gaballo

Nawaphon Sor Rungvisai (58-2-1, 48 KOs) is the younger brother of former WBC junior bantamweight titleholder Suriyan Sor Rungvisai. As with most fighters that come from Nakhon Ratchasima, he started off his career in Muay Thai. In 2017, he fought against Mexico's Juan Hernandez in Bangkok for the vacant WBC flyweight title, but Hernandez stopped the Thai in the third round. In a WBC bantamweight eliminator in Australia last year, the Thai was outclassed by Jason

Maloney in a very one-sided fight. Now the 31-year-old Rungvisai will face Reymart Gaballo, with the winner to fight the winner of Nonito Donaire vs. Alexandro Santiago for the now-available WBC title vacated by Naoya Inoue.

Beating Gaballo (25-1, 21 KOs) will be no walk in the park. The Filipino unsuccessfully challenged for the WBC bantamweight title in December 2021, losing to Nonito Donaire by knockout in the fourth round. Before that, however, he defeated Emmanuel Rodriguez for the interim title and is coming off a win in which he dropped Ricardo Sueno four times in just two rounds.

This fight, supposedly taking place in May in the United States, is an encounter between two contenders who have fallen short in the past. It will only be Rungvisai's second fight outside of Thailand. Despite his experience and several past encounters with Filipino boxers, Gaballo is a world-class opponent and Rungvisai will need to make some adjustments and changes.



and then canceled when Ndulani's promoter severed all ties with the boxer. This leaves his management on its own to negotiate the eliminator with Castillo's promoter. It seems that the fight will now happen in Mexico. When contacted for comment, Ndulani's manager, Kholisile Cengani, stated: "We are waiting for our passports to be finalized. As soon as that is done, we will announce the date. But, yes, we are now going to Mexico."

The title reign of WBC cruiserweight champion Ilunga "Junior" Makabu (29-3, 25 KOs) came to an end in his third title defense when he was stopped in the final round by former WBC 168-pound titlist Badou Jack (28-3-3, 17 KOs).

Fighting in Diriyah, Jack was a man with a plan and after a slow opening round started circling around his opponent in the second, staying on the outside of Makabu's lead foot. Jack landed a left hook to the body, followed by a right hook upstairs moments later, and then touched Makabu with a straight right to the body. Makabu pressed forward but struggled to land.

It got worse for the champion in the fourth round, when a right from Jack dropped him on his back. He got up and steadied himself and to his credit kept pushing forward, jabbing to the head and body of Jack to find an opening, only for the challenger to get back on his bicycle. Whenever it looked like Makabu was on the verge of getting some offense going, Jack clipped him coming in with an eye-catching shot, usually a right.

Makabu had his best round in the sixth, finally landing his hooks and uppercuts on the inside and catching Jack with his southpaw left at the end of the round.

The challenger, however, swiftly changed the fight back in his favor in the seventh, moving while landing jabs and straight rights – a big right backing up Makabu for the first time toward the end of the round.

Makabu continued to press hard, showing his grit, but Jack was just a step ahead. A sweeping right dropped Makabu again in the 11th, and he was taking punishment on the ropes when the bell rang.

It was desperate times for the Congolese warrior, and with South African trainer Damien Durandt urging him to go for broke, he did just that, going after Jack at the beginning of the 12th. It was ill-fated, as Jack nailed Makabu on the button with an overhand right. Makabu staggered backward into the ropes and Jack jumped on him, raining in shots, forcing the referee to rescue a helpless Makabu at the 0:54 mark.

Makabu went out on his shield, but it seems that many wars have finally caught up to him. Still, it was a remarkable performance by the 39-year-old Badou Jack.

Southpaw heavyweight Chris Thompson (12-4-1, 7 KOs) traveled to Ekaterinburg, Russia, and gave undefeated Evgeny Romanov (18-0, 12 KOs) all sorts of headaches with his awkward stick-and-move style. Thompson boxed well behind his jab, but the occasional offensive flurry was not enough in the eyes of the judges. They predictably preferred the rather plodding aggression and occasional power shot from Romanov, awarding him a unanimous decision over eight rounds.

On the same card, national 140-pound champion Prince Dlomo (16-12-1, 6 KOs) was dropped three times in the fifth before finally being knocked out at 0:39 of the sixth by undefeated Khariton Agrba (11-0, 7 KOs). Dlomo was conscious but clearly had endured enough and was counted out on his knees.

AUSTRALIA

BY ANTHONY COCKS

Three minutes ain't long when you're boiling an egg.

Former WBC 154-pound

titleholder Tony Harrison learned that the hard way when The Ring's now-No. 1-rated junior middleweight Tim Tszyu knocked him out in nine rounds at Qudos Arena in Sydney, Australia, on March 12.

Harrison (29-4-1, 21 KOs) arrived in Australia with the sort of hard-edged bluster you would expect from a resident of the Motor City. The 32-year-old Detroit native questioned Tszyu's pedigree, labeled him a "park fighter" and claimed the 28-year-old Sydneysider was simply trading off his famous father Kostya's last name.

All that counted for naught once the first bell rang.

After a feeling-out round from both fighters, Tszyu (22-0, 16 KOs) took control of the bout and never looked back. Harrison had some early success with the jab, but it was Tszyu's timing and accuracy that was the story of the fight, hurting the American in the third and increasing the pressure with each passing round. Tszyu controlled the distance and picked his shots perfectly, landing hard blows to both the body and head as he systematically broke down his more seasoned opponent.

Before the fight, Tszyu predicted a ninth-round stoppage and proved to be true to his word. A pair of right hands late in that frame shook Harrison to his boots, and the follow-up barrage snapped his head back like a slingshot. Harrison hit the deck and although he beat the count, referee Danrex Tapdasan wisely waved off the contest at the 2:43 mark of the ninth.

It was a methodical, brutal and brilliant performance.

"I think it's just a little step in my career. It was a big message to a lot of people," said Tszyu, who landed 45 percent of his power punches in the fight and 60 percent in the ninth, according to CompuBox.

"He's very smart and experienced in what he does. When I started throwing, I got a bit excited, and then I thought about how [undisputed junior middleweight champion

Jermell] Charlo knocked him out and he went with uppercuts. So for that split second, he was in my head, and I started throwing the uppercuts.

"I knew he was going to slow down in the later rounds. I actually predicted Round 9 to my team.

"Round 9 was when I was going to start picking it up and start landing the shots. I didn't know the exact shot that I landed first to rock him, but I knew that he was slowing down."

Next up for Tszyu is a shot at Charlo (35-1-1, 19 KOs), who is recovering from an injured left mitt suffered in late December in the lead-up to his scheduled January 28 bout with Tszyu.

"The message was sent clearly. You know what's up. You know what's next. I'm coming," Tszyu said.

Harrison was magnanimous in defeat.

"The better man won," he said. "They've done a good job over there. His timing, his reaction is very good.

He just beat me, so all I can say is he's up for Charlo."

ALEX WINWOOD TARGETS AUSTRALIAN RECORD

Nobody can say that Alex Winwood (2-0, 2 KOs) lacks ambition.

The 25-year-old junior flyweight from the Perth suburb of Mandurah took a massive step up in class when he faced experienced southpaw Tibo Monabesa (21-2-2, 8 KOs) over 10 heats in his hometown on March 3 in just his second pro bout.

The destructive puncher dismantled his Indonesian opponent, dropping him once in the third and twice in the fourth to head to the dressing room early.

Winwood's manager Tony Tolj – who also handles the Ring-rated Moloney twins Jason and Andrew – believes his charge has the skills to become Australia's fastest world champion, trumping Hall of Famer Jeff Fenech's record of just seven bouts.

It will take some astute matchmaking to position Winwood for a world title shot, but Tolj is confident he can get it done.

"We believe in his ability and we think he has outperformed himself in each of his pro outings," he said. "The Moloneys' trainer, Angelo Hyder, says he is the biggest puncher he has ever worked with, and that includes Danny Green and Vic Darchinyan."

The plan is to move Winwood down to the strawweight division, where the target will be WBC titleholder, The Ring's No. 2-ranked Petchmanee CP Freshmart (39-1, 23 KOs) of Thailand.

"Alex is a massive puncher at light flyweight and we know he can punch like that at minimumweight (105 pounds), because he doesn't struggle to make the 108-pound weight class," Tolj said. "He's a mixture between Roy Jones Jr. and Mike Tyson: speed, movement and power."

Winwood's only fear is that opponents will avoid him.

"Everyone says that the lighter weights can't punch," he said. "The same people that are saying that haven't seen me fight."

BROCK JARVIS SURVIVES SCARE TO KO MARLON PANIAMOGAN

It was supposed to be an easy night at the office to get Brock Jarvis back in the win column, but his fourth-round knockout victory over Marlon Paniamogan at Carriageworks in Sydney on March 8 asked as many questions as it answered.

What weight should he be campaigning at? How solid is his chin?

Boxing at a catchweight of 65½ kg (144¼ pounds), the 5-foot-9 Jarvis came in right at the limit and



MARK KOLBE/GETTY IMAGES

Tim Tszyu made some believers with his TKO of Tony Harrison.

didn't look like he had much room to spare. It's hard to believe the Jeff Fenech protégé was campaigning at junior featherweight just four short years ago.

The 25-year-old Jarvis was his usual aggressive self against Paniamogan, 28, but the Filipino rocked him with a right hand in the second stanza that sent him into the ropes.

Jarvis survived the onslaught and rallied back, stopping Paniamogan with a left rip in the fourth frame.

Trainer Fenech shrugged off the almost-disastrous second round.

"He got hit, but that's boxing. It's two guys who want to punch each other in the head," he shrugged. "But when you can turn a fight around like Brock did, it's really special."

It was Jarvis' first bout back after being starched in the opening round by junior welterweight contender Liam Paro (23-0, 14 KOs) in Brisbane last October.

There is no doubting the toughness of Jarvis, but other questions still remain.

JAPAN

BY YURIKO MIYATA

Fans who couldn't wait to see

Naoya Inoue challenge Stephen Fulton will have to be patient, as the WBC/WBO 122-pound title bout has been postponed due to a training injury suffered by the Japanese superstar.

"It's a very tough decision for me to cancel the title match scheduled for May 7 due to an injury to my hand in this training camp," Inoue posted on Twitter in his own language (not specifying which hand was injured) on March 22.

"I owe a deep apology to Team Fulton, everyone working on the fight, and all the fans who were looking forward to it. I promise you all that I will do my best to get back on track to put on my best performance on the day it is

rescheduled."

Inoue's manager, Hideyuki Ohashi, told the media that the injury occurred during a sparring session. Inoue was pushing himself to hit harder against very durable sparring partners from Mexico in preparation for his debut in the junior featherweight division, his fourth weight class.

On March 29, Ohashi announced that the new date for the showdown will be July 25 and will take place at Ariake Arena in Tokyo.

Fulton-Inoue wasn't the only title bout that was unexpectedly scuttled. Another anticipated fight, the junior flyweight unification bout between the Ring/WBA/WBC champion Kenshiro Teraji and WBO titlist Jonathan Gonzalez, was scratched from the April 8 card at Ariake Arena when the Puerto Rican stylist was diagnosed with pneumonia.

The cancellation of the main event was made official by Teiken Promotion on March 24, the same day that Teraji held a media workout.

"I heard about it last night and of course was disappointed, but it is what it is," said Teraji, who claimed the coveted Ring belt via a brilliant stoppage of domestic rival Hiroto Kyoguchi last November. Teraji only wish after that victory was to immediately face another champion.

"I just want to fight whoever is strong to prove myself the best," he said. "My goal is still the same: undisputed."

Teraji must wait for another day to challenge for his third sanctioning organization belt. In the meantime, Teiken's Akihiko Honda arranged for a substitute challenger for Teraji, with the lead candidates originally being Gerardo Zapata, a southpaw from Nicaragua (14-1, 5 KOs), and Anthony Olascuaga (5-0, 3 KOs), a Californian who had recently sparred with Kenshiro in Los Angeles and is currently training at the Teiken Gym in preparation for an April 15 fight in South Korea.

Olascuaga, a 24-year-old L.A.

native coached by veteran trainer Rudy Hernandez, got the nod when it was clear that Zapata would not have enough time to obtain a visa for the April 8 date.

"We said yes with two weeks' notice, because opportunities sometimes only come one time, so we must take them," Hernandez, who has coached Olascuaga since the boxer was 14 years old, told The Ring. "My biggest joy is that he can perform and show his talent. Win, lose or draw, we want people to want to see him again."

Before the new matchup was made official, Hernandez left L.A. for Japan, where he's worked corners more than 100 times dating back to the 1990s championship run of his late brother, Genaro Hernandez. He knew the final announcement would come during his flight.

Teraji and Olascuaga may have been destined to fight since the day they exchanged punches in sparring sessions at the Maywood Boxing Club in the Los Angeles area in 2017, right after the Japanese fighter first won the WBC title. Hisashi Teraji, Kenshiro's father and manager, called Olascuaga, who was still a teenager at the time, "Genius Tony." Five years later, the experienced champion made a short visit to reunite with Olascuaga, who had an extensive amateur career, for some sparring work last December.

Although the main event is no longer a title-unification bout, it's an intriguing matchup with some storylines, and the card – presented by Amazon Prime – remains stacked.

"I will steal the show," boasted young bomber Jin Sasaki during the press conference. In his toughest challenge to date, Sasaki will attempt to defend his WBO Asian Pacific welterweight title against veteran puncher Keita Obara. Obara has already experienced two world title elimination fights and an IBF junior welterweight title challenge against Eduard Troyanovsky in Russia in 2016.



Former two-division titleholder Kiko Martinez, The Ring's No. 8-rated featherweight, will travel to Japan for the first time since beating the popular Hozumi Hasegawa to retain his IBF 122-pound title in Osaka in 2014. The veteran Spaniard will take on rangy southpaw Reiya Abe for mandatory challenger status to newly crowned IBF featherweight titleholder Luis Lopez of Mexico.

Takuma Inoue, The Ring's No. 10-rated junior featherweight, will drop back down to bantamweight to face former WBA 115-pound titleholder (and The Ring's No. 10-rated 118-pounder) Liborio Solis in a bid for the WBA bantamweight title that his older brother Naoya vacated in January.

"It's my time to become a world champion and eventually clean up the 118-pound division that my brother has left to move up," Takuma said.

Fighting phenom Tenshin Nasukawa, who never lost in a combined 47 kickboxing and MMA bouts, will finally make his boxing debut in a six-round junior featherweight bout against Yuki Yonaha, who sports a 12-4-1 (8 KOs) record. Having passed the pro licensing test in February and completing two training camps in the U.S., Nasukawa says he's prepared

Fans will have to wait until July 25 to witness Fulton-Inoue.

for the new world of professional boxing. "My life is all about challenges and fighting," he said. "I want to see how far I can go."

American fans can watch the Teraji-Gonzalez card live on ESPN+.

Hours later, Japanese fans enjoying their Sunday brunch will tune into the WBC lightweight elimination bout between unbeaten Shuichiro Yoshino, who recently cracked The Ring's rankings, and highly touted American standout Shakur Stevenson on premium satellite network WOWOW, broadcasting live from Stevenson's hometown of Newark, New Jersey (where it will still be Saturday).

It's a big jump in class for Yoshino. He has to compete with the super-skilled Stevenson, his first southpaw opponent in the pro ranks, and it will be his first fight outside of Japan.

But Yoshino has a winning attitude. He's collected all of the regional titles – Japanese, OPBF and WBO Asian Pacific – and he cleared tough tests against former WBO 130-pound beltholder Masayuki Ito and former contender Masayoshi Nakatani last year.

The performance against Nakatani, who had faced Teofimo Lopez, Felix Verdejo and Vasiliy Lomachenko, was superb. Yoshino gradually broke down the tall slugger with combinations, dropping Nakatani down in the fifth round and taking no time to finish him off. His manager, Takashi Misako, told me that Yoshino did not hesitate to say "Yes, I want it" when he was offered the chance to fight Stevenson, who has been avoided by many top lightweights.

Yoshino's father and uncle were amateur boxers, and he began competing in the sport while in junior high school. Despite winning four national high school tournaments while compiling an amateur record of 104-20 (with 55 stoppages), he quit boxing after college.

Yoshino returned to boxing two years later – this time as a professional, making his debut in the welterweight division in 2015, with the goal of fighting in lighter weight classes. He began attracting attention by his fourth pro bout, already down at lightweight, beating former Japan and OPBF titlist Yoshitaka Kato via eight-round unanimous decision in April 2017. Six months after that, he won the vacant national title and defended it seven times. Having made 2022 a big year, he wants to make 2023 an even bigger one.

"My dream of fighting in America is coming true," Yoshino said. "I am happy and excited to fight Shakur Stevenson. I know it is hard to win by points and I will do whatever I can to confuse him, to break him down mentally, as I know that finishing him is the only way for me to win."

"I am simply bigger and more powerful, as I am dropping down from 147 pounds and he is coming up from 130 pounds. I will win and make my name," added the 31-year-old husband and father of one boy during his press conference on February 7.

Another determined Japanese samurai may be witnessed soon.

RICHARD A. BROOKS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

BUCHANAN NO. 1 IN FISTIC CLEVERNESS?

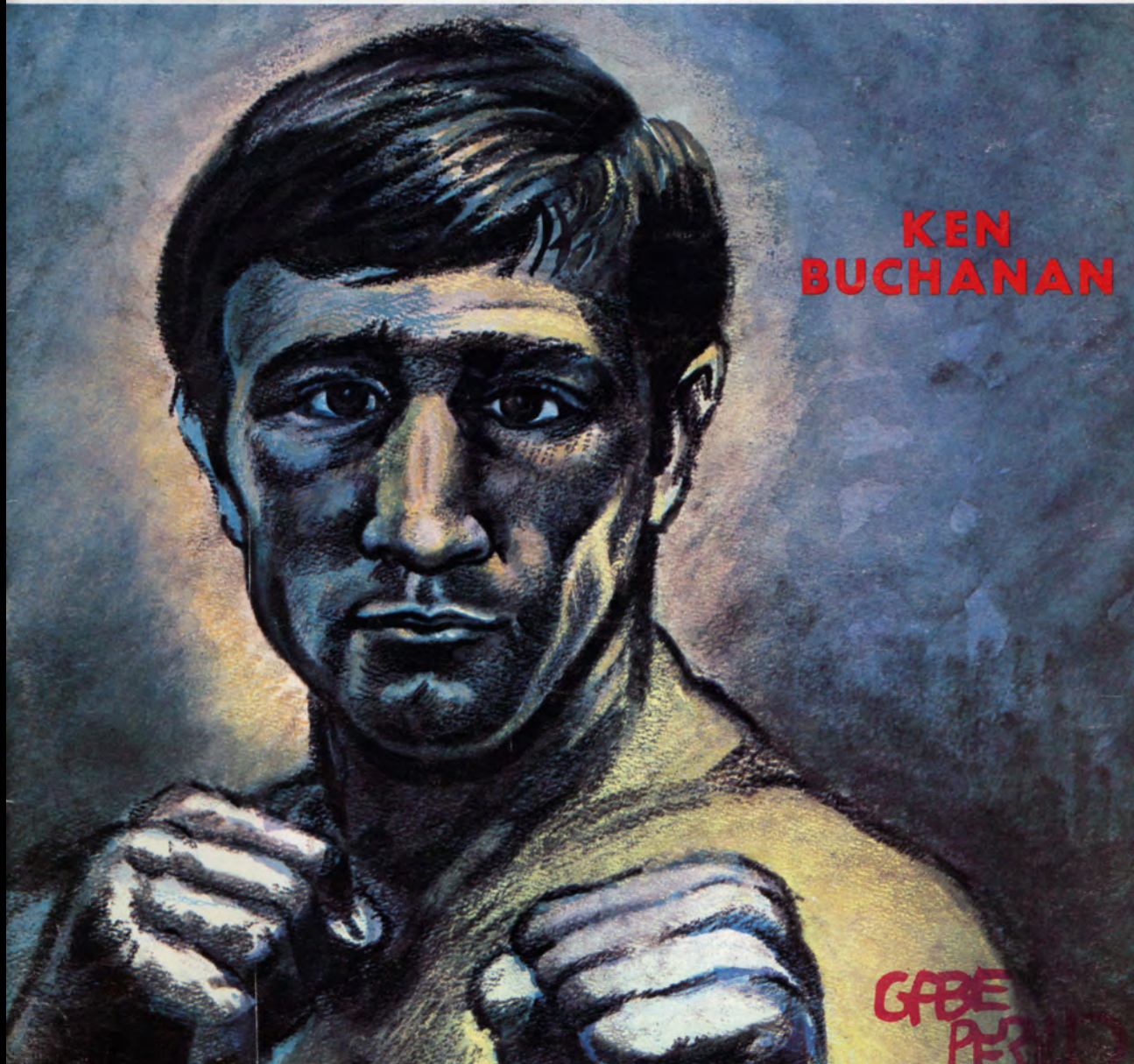
The RING


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Scottish great Ken Buchanan arrives at London Airport with his wife Carol on September 16, 1971, three days after he defended his Ring Magazine and WBA lightweight titles against former champ Ismael Laguna in New York City. Buchanan, who recently passed away at the age of 77, finished his pro career with a 61-8 (27 KOs) record and was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2000. A brilliant technical boxer with incredible heart and conditioning, Buchanan was well-received wherever he fought, which included England, Spain, Puerto Rico, the U.S., South Africa, Canada, Italy, Denmark, France, Zimbabwe, Japan, and, of course, his native Scotland. 

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COMING UP



The anticipated April 22 Gervonta Davis-Ryan Garcia showdown matches the two most popular and explosive lightweights.

APRIL

APRIL 15 – Joe Joyce vs. Zhilei Zhang, heavyweights, London (BT Sport). Also, Mikaela Mayer vs. Christina Linardatou, lightweights.

APRIL 16 – Petchmanee CP Freshmart vs. Yudai Shigeoka, strawweights (for Freshmart's WBC title), Tokyo. Also, Ginjiro Shigeoka vs. Rene Mark Cuarto, strawweights.

APRIL 22 – Gervonta Davis vs. Ryan Garcia, lightweights, Las Vegas (Showtime/DAZN PPV).

APRIL 22 – Shavkatdzhon Rakhimov vs. Joe Cordina, junior lightweights (for Rakhimov's IBF title), Cardiff, U.K. (DAZN).

MAY

MAY 6 – Canelo Alvarez vs. John Ryder, super middleweights (for Canelo's undisputed championship), Guadalajara, Mexico (DAZN PPV).

MAY 6 – Magomed Kurbanov vs. Michel

Soro, junior middleweights, Ekaterinburg, Russia.

MAY 13 – Jason Moloney vs. Vincent Astrolabio, bantamweights (for vacant WBO title), Stockton, Calif. (ESPN/ESPN+). Also, Zhanibek Alimkhanuly vs. Steven Butler, middleweights (for Alimkhanuly's WBO title).

MAY 20 – Chantelle Cameron vs. Katie Taylor, junior welterweights (for Cameron's undisputed championship), Dublin, Ireland (DAZN). Also, Terri Harper vs. Cecilia Braekhus, junior middleweights (for Harper's WBA title).

MAY 20 – Devin Haney vs. Vasiliy Lomachenko, lightweights (for Haney's undisputed championship), Las Vegas (ESPN+). Also, Junto Nakatani vs. Andrew Moloney, junior bantamweights (for vacant WBO title).

MAY 27 – Mauricio Lara vs. Leigh Wood, featherweights (for Lara's WBA title), Manchester, U.K. (DAZN).

MAY 27 – Luis Alberto Lopez vs. Michael Conlan, featherweights (for Lopez's IBF title), Belfast, U.K. (ESPN+, BT Sport).

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