



UNFATHOMABLE!

THE EFFORTS OF JOHN RYDER INSULTED BY SOME HORRIBLE SCORES

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THE ERASER

KENDALL HOLT + BOXING MEDIA REVIEW + ZOLANI TETE

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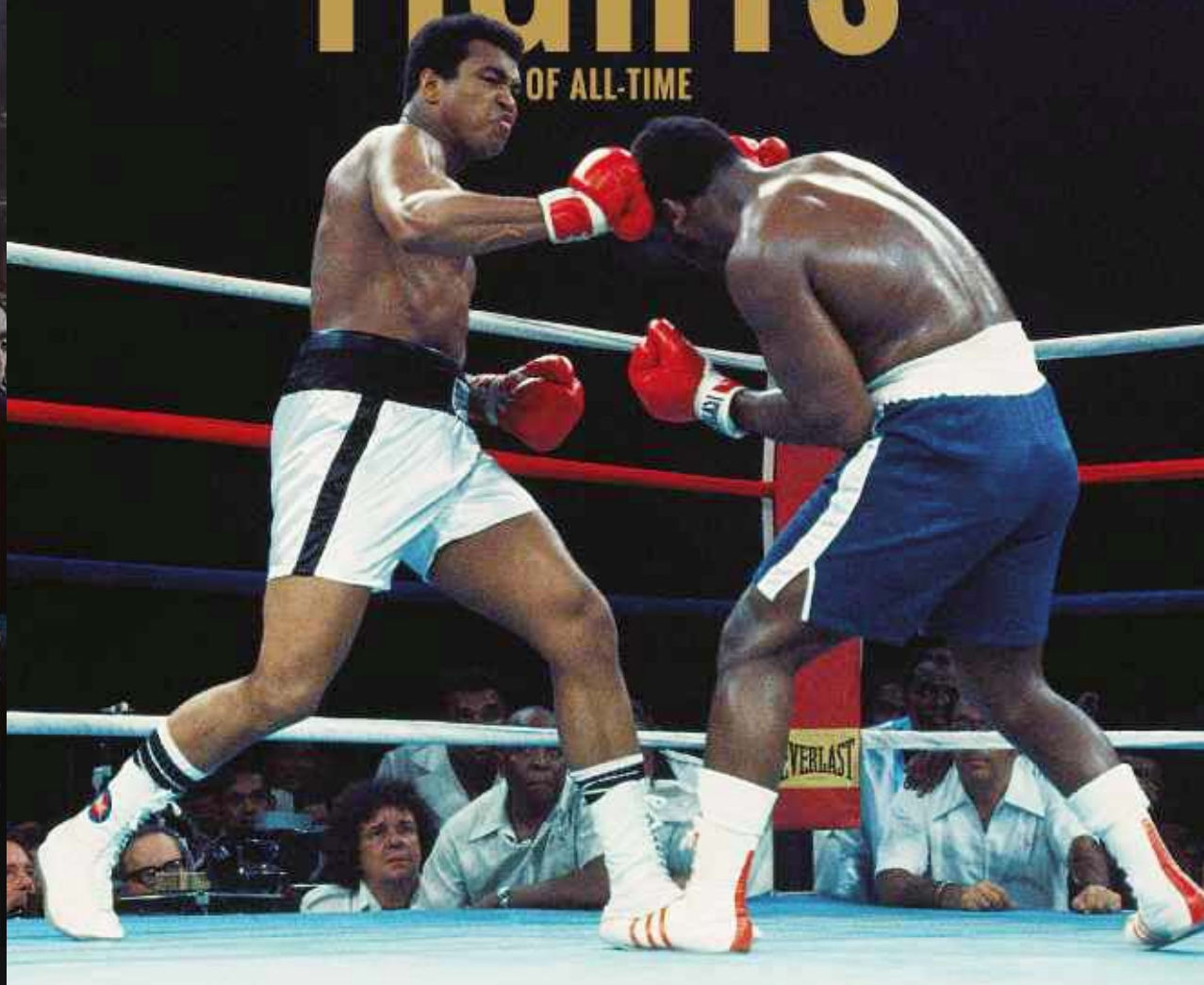
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UNMISSABLE

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Brad Strand

Photo: MARK ROBINSON/MATCHROOM BOXING



AND STILL:
Ryder watches Smith's
arm being raised



Cover photography
SEAN MICHAEL HAM/
MAYWEATHER PROMOTIONS &
MARK ROBINSON/MATCHROOM
BOXING

TIME TO APOLOGISE

Yet again, some sinister scorecards ruin a good honest scrap



Matt Christie
@MattCBboxingNews
Editor

HERE were positives to take from Liverpool's Echo Arena on Saturday night. John Ryder turned in the performance of his life. He fought brilliantly throughout his engrossing 12-rounder with local WBA super-middleweight champion Callum Smith. Pride should be oozing from every pore following that showing. Smith,

to his credit, refused to buckle under incredible pressure and defiantly showed his class despite the awful night he was having at the office.

But it was only Ryder who truly impressed. His height and reach disadvantages, which looked borderline ridiculous before any punches were thrown, were turned into advantages. He implemented Tony Sims' game plan to the letter. He gave it everything he had. Not only that, when Ryder was interviewed after Smith was named a clear winner, he remained polite and respectful when inside the sickness from such unfair scorecards must have been swirling.

The Londoner would have been forgiven if he'd turned the air blue. Forgiven if he'd effed and 'elled his way through a one-man protest live on Sky Sports. Because those cards that

went against him must have left him questioning why he's bothered dedicating so much of his life to the sport of boxing. One in particular, Terry O'Connor's 117-111 in Smith's favour, was completely unacceptable. The other two tallies of 116-112 cards weren't much better.

This is not to say a case could not be made for Smith winning the fight. But those horrible scores do nothing for Callum's reputation either. After so long striving for (and deserving) the headlines, he now finds himself making them as an accessory to a crime he did not commit. There were four rounds that really could have gone either way. Five that looked like clear Ryder rounds. Three that were undisputedly Smith's. Therefore, a score of 115-113 in Smith's favour was totally acceptable. But 117-111? Not a chance.

Yet again viewers were left scratching their heads as to how an official could come to such a wildly different conclusion to their own. Imagine a youngster watching that fight, falling in love with the action and excitement, and then hearing those tallies at the end. How do you explain them? How do you explain that three judges sit on different sides of the ring, they have 20 points to play with, at least one fighter must get 10 of them, yet it's all down to how 'they see it' and 'what they like'. You'd have an easier time explaining the complexities of Brexit.

Even those in the Liverpool Arena, the

majority there to support "Mundo", voiced their displeasure at the lopsided score that bared little resemblance to the close fight that came before.

It's a shame the British Boxing Board of Control do not allow the officials to justify their decisions in public. Or at least allow them to make a statement. While it's a bad idea to put them on record immediately after the contest, inviting knee-jerk reactions, it would only be fair – once the dust has settled – to hear exactly what they have to say. I know many officials would welcome this, particularly when

their integrity is out in the open and being dragged through the mud, while they hide in the dark in silence. And it's that silence, from the moment they leave their ringside seats only to reappear the next time it's their turn to officiate, that heightens that sense of wrongdoing.

From my experience of speaking to many British officials I know, they all care deeply about the sport and its fighters. Care deeply, too, if they feel like they have made a mistake. It bothers them. Some struggle to sleep for days and weeks after a fight. Yet we never get to hear about any of that remorse. We should. But most importantly of all, the fighters wronged by mistakes should hear them explained.

Because at this point, an apology is the very least that John Ryder deserves.

**IT WOULD BE
ONLY FAIR
TO HEAR THE
JUSTIFICATION
FOR THAT SCORE**

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Coming next time

● ARGUABLY the most intriguing contest of the entire year will be upon us as Anthony Joshua attempts to gain revenge over Andy Ruiz Jr in a Saudi Arabia showcase.

● AS well as examining the cases of victory from both sides and making our call, we hear from some of the world's top trainers as they reveal where the fight will be won and lost.

● WE speak to both camps, including unmissable work from Donald McRae as he delivers insight from the champion's camp.

● AVAILABLE to download from December 3 and the print edition is in stores on December 5.

On the website

● NEW online exclusives with Eddie Hearn, Deontay Wilder and the one and only Butterbean.

● FOR all the latest news, don't miss Elliot Worsell's *Boxing News At Five*.



THE JUDGES NEED TO BE PULLED UP

Photo: MARK ROBINSON/MATCHROOM BOXING



WE DID IT:
At this point,
Simms is
convinced the
man on his
shoulders has won
the fight

I've been around boxing a long time and I know John Ryder won that fight



**Tony
Simms**

**John Ryder's
trainer**

To lose like that was heart-breaking. I've been with John since he was 15 years old, I've seen him work his nuts off in the gym for years and years to get in that position for a world title. I've been with him when he's taken a chance in the away corner just so he can move forward. He wanted that world title so much. He deserved to win it, too.

I've been around boxing a long, long time and I know he won that fight. I knew he was winning during the fight and I knew, when that final bell went, he'd won and won it well. There was no doubt in my mind.

I heard the first score of 117-111 and I must admit I was surprised. I thought, 'Wow, they've given it to John by that much?' I thought it might be a bit closer than that what

with Smith being champion and it being in Liverpool. Then I heard the next two scores of 116-112 and I did not think for one second they were about to announce Callum Smith as the winner.

But what can you do? It happens all the time. You'll get scores like that and then you don't hear anything more about it. You just see the officials turn up at the next fight as if nothing has happened. Don't get me wrong, I have nothing but respect for Robert Smith. I know the pressure the British Boxing Board of Control are under. I know what a hard job he has. I don't blame him. I know they don't have much time or resources to be carrying out hearings and investigations every five minutes. I understand that. But when the judges put in moody scores they need to be pulled up.

It's ruined a kid's life and it's getting on my nerves. I'm telling the kids in the gym, 'Do everything right and everything will come to you.' But John did everything right and it didn't come to him did it? It makes me look like I'm telling lies to these kids.

It's not easy but we have to find a way to move with the times. I'd like to see open scoring implemented like they do with some of the WBC title fights, when you get the scores after every four rounds. At least then you'd know which way it was going, which way the judges are seeing the fight.

I have sent an email to WBA president Gilberto Mendoza. I want that fight reviewed but above all I want John to retain his status as the mandatory. We want a rematch. It's not fair for John to drop down and then have to fight for the right to be mandatory again.

John fought so well and followed the game plan exactly. He's had Callum Smith in his mind for a year. I said that beforehand at the press conference, 'I bet Callum hasn't had John in his mind for a year, he's been talking about Canelo and all these other big names.' But we had Callum in our minds.

If we do get the rematch I think John will beat him. I think he's got his number. The tactics were right and they'd be right next time.

But while I criticise the scoring it's only fair that I give credit to the referee, Michael Alexander. He's one of the best referees in the country and he was outstanding on Saturday night. He let them fight on the inside. If he'd have been breaking them up all the time, we might not be talking like this now.

John won that fight. But he won't be the champion nor fighting for the champion's purse in his next fight. He's never got big money, real big money. This fight should have changed that. It should have changed his life and changed the life of his wife and two kids.

Watching him at the end, it was choking, the unfairness of it all.

**'I HEARD THE FIRST SCORE AND
I WAS SURPRISED. I THOUGHT,
'WOW, THEY'VE GIVEN IT TO
JOHN BY THAT MUCH?'**



LETTER OF THE WEEK

THE 'O' MUST GO



WITH reference to the excellent piece in the November 7 issue, I agree that unbeaten records are rated far too highly these days. If the best really did fight the best, unbeaten records would be largely non-existent. When you examine unbeaten records of 40 fights or more, there is usually some obvious padding. Floyd Mayweather, the most talented boxer of his generation, marketed the 'O' as if it was the golden fleece. He desperately wanted to surpass Rocky Marciano's 49-0 record and the fact that he fought a debutant in his 50th fight proved that. I'd argue that some boxers actually improve after a defeat or two – Dereck Chisora and Anthony Crolla to name but two relatively recent examples. The fabled 'O' is merely a marketing gimmick that most true fans don't believe in.

Gary Wimbush

BLOODY NOSE FOR BOXING

THE sport of boxing received a bloody

nose with the verdict in the Callum Smith-John Ryder fight. Most boxing aficionados are not naive – decisions that stink out arenas can unfortunately be common at lower levels as the up-and-coming boxer gets the nod over the away fighter to keep the unbeaten record intact and maintain the upward trajectory of the prospect. That's bad enough, but in a world title fight it brings home to a wider public the rottenness that sometimes infects the sport at elite level. The powers that be need to put their heads above the parapet and regulate the sport in a way that ensures there's no repetition of this and the right boxer has his arm raised at the conclusion of the fight.

Andrew Collingbourne

TOTAL DISGRACE

THE unanimous decision for Callum Smith over John Ryder was a total disgrace. If the judges really thought that Smith was the winner then they

should have their licences revoked. How on earth could Terry O'Connor score it 117-111 to Smith? Ryder's team really thought their man had won – you could see the reaction in the corner. The wrong man got the verdict. There should be an immediate return bout, as this result has deprived Ryder of a deserved world title and, of course, the bigger paydays that go with it.

Raymond Lee (Essex EBA Secretary)

ROBBERY...? RIDICULOUS!

CALLUM SMITH showed against John Ryder that he's a class act. The calls from some quarters of a robbery are ridiculous. Smith picked Ryder off with great timing and distance for the majority of the fight. Ryder's success came when he rushed Smith and worked on the inside, which was fleeting. Ryder's style is more eye-catching and stays in the viewer's mind, but the more efficient, subtle work came from Smith.

Simon Collins

UNDEFEATED:
But too much emphasis is put on unbeaten records like Mayweather's

PhotoACTION IMAGES STEVE MARCUS



THE PANEL

WHERE DOES THE POWER OF DEONTAY WILDER RANK IN THE HISTORY OF HEAVYWEIGHT PUNCHERS?



Wayne Alexander
(Former EBU champion)

Wilder's power ranks up there with the best of the last 30 years. His record suggests he is probably in the top 10. He can knock out an opponent with one punch and with either hand. That kind of power reminds me of Mike Tyson, Lennox Lewis and George Foreman.



Declan Taylor
(Boxing Journalist)

There is no doubt that Wilder has to be considered among the biggest one-punch guys in the history of the sport and he has an argument for the number one spot. It's always a bit foolish to compare eras but his power is reminiscent of another Alabaman, Earnie Shavers.



Nigel Wright
(Former English champ)

Wilder is possibly the hardest one-punch hitter in history. Other big punchers like Tyson and Foreman would take you out with combinations whereas Wilder throws nothing and then boom, one punch and it's over. For me it's all about the speed.



Nathan Farrell
(Super-lightweight)

Mike Tyson used to put punches together. They also said his power wasn't the same if you survive six rounds with him. Wilder, though, has proven his power is as significant in the last round as it is in the first. He's on par with the hardest punchers of all time.

WHAT DID YOU MAKE OF THE SCORING OF THE CALLUM SMITH-JOHN RYDER FIGHT?

Wayne Alexander

I disagreed with it. I scored it 117-114 to Ryder. Smith fought the wrong kind of fight and was getting caught a lot up close with clean short hooks to the head and body. Scoring a fight is very subjective but should come down to who lands the most clean scoring punches. I believe Ryder did that.

Declan Taylor

The scoring was a disgrace and the sad thing is that it no longer comes as a surprise whatsoever. I personally made Smith a marginal winner (114-113) in a very close fight, so it was no robbery, but cards like 117-111 are genuinely damaging this sport.

Nigel Wright

I had this a lot closer. A lot of the rounds were hard to split. I think they shared four or five rounds and then it's a case of what work you prefer. I actually had Smith one, possibly two, rounds up. The 117-111 scorecard was ridiculous and that judge (Terry O'Connor) should be reassessed on his ability to judge.

Nathan Farrell

I think we saw the best version of Ryder against someone who has got a mega-fight in the back of his mind and was therefore never going to perform at his best. The fight went perfectly for Ryder, yet it still wasn't quite enough. Credit to Ryder. He's improved loads recently and his defence is underrated.

10 COUNT

SUPER-MIDDLE MEN

Paul Wheeler lists Callum Smith and Billy Joe Saunders' predecessors – the first 10 Brits to hold world titles at 168lbs

1. MURRAY SUTHERLAND (IBF)

EDINBURGH native transitioned from karate to boxing to become the inaugural IBF champion at super-middleweight in March 1984.

2. CHRIS EUBANK (WBO)

Enigmatic Brighton resident who won the WBO belt in September 1991 and retained it 14 times. Shared a fierce rivalry with Nigel Benn.

3. NIGEL BENN (WBC)

Big-hitting "Dark Destroyer" from Ilford guaranteed excitement and entertainment with his ferocious, all-action style. Earned his WBC title in October 1992.

4. ROBIN REID (WBC)

Like Benn, Runcorn's "Grim Reaper" picked up the WBC strap on the road (in October 1996). Pushed Joe Calzaghe hard.

5. JOE CALZAGHE (WBO, IBF, WBC & WBA)

Welsh southpaw raised in Newbridge who dazzled all-comers to retire unbeaten. Won 22 WBO title contests in a row after acquiring the belt in October 1997.

6. RICHIE WOODHALL (WBC)

Just under 18 months after a failed WBC title tilt at middleweight, the Telford boxer claimed WBC gold at super-middle in March 1998.

7. GLENN CATLEY (WBC)

Bristolian lost a close one to Woodhall but four fights later upset Markus Beyer on away turf in May 2000 to win the WBC crown.

8. CARL FROCH (WBC x2 & IBF)

Nottingham's "Cobra" never shirked a challenge, whether at home or abroad. Relentless and as tough as they come. Initial world title reign (WBC) began in December 2008.

9. JAMES DeGALE (IBF x2)

Skilful southpaw from Harlesden who frequently demonstrated his warrior spirit in the latter stages of his career. First obtained IBF glory in May 2015.

10. GEORGE GROVES (WBA)

Versatile Hammersmith operator who secured a world title (WBA) at the fourth attempt in May 2017. DeGale and Froch were his bitter foes.

NB. Only full WBC, WBA, IBF and WBO titles count.

Photo: ACTION IMAGES/ANDREW COULDRIDGE

IN THE BEGINNING:
The arrival of BoxNation is announced in 2011. The station soon became a fight fan's dream



CHANNEL OF CHAMPIONS

Looking back on some great times on the BoxNation sofa



Steve Bunce

@BigDaddyBunce

Voice of boxing

ANY week in British boxing that starts with Vinny Pazienza talking about fighting, sex and regrets and ends with tall tales from the glory nights of BoxNation being remembered is a decent week.

Paz was at Bar Sport in Cannock on Monday night telling bold stories of survival, lining up his rivals for merciless abuse and going through the graphic details behind some of his losses during a career that can be easily read like scripture across his face.

The unscrewing of his halo – the metal

contraption that was fixed to his head after he broke his back – made just about everybody squirm and Cannock is not famous for its squirmers. "My skull had grown over the screws and when it was time for doctor to take them out – I swear he was screwing them the wrong way, going in and not coming out," Paz recalls.

He talked about hard fights, easy fights (not many of those) and insisted that one of his opponents – a high-profile fight – had doctored his gloves and removed some of the padding. "He was hurting me and he don't hurt nobody – If I saw him now, I'd murder the guy," Paz vowed, sounding an awful lot like Tony Galento. He also admitted that for that particular fight he had been in bed all night and day with an adult movie star. "I guess that was also a factor, sure," he added. "I don't regret the sex, just the beating."

Paz was a special guest on BoxNation

once and he is typical of the men and women that filled both the sofa and the channel's output. It is too easy to forget that the first broadcast was live from York Hall on Friday September 30, 2011. Liam Walsh won a war that night, beating Paul Appleby for the Commonwealth super-featherweight title. It was a special start and just 24-hours later came the first world title fight when Steve Cunningham lost to Yoan Pablo Hernandez for the IBF cruiserweight belt in Neubrandenburg. I was ringside at both.

In the first year there were 68 nights of live boxing, fights from all over the globe. That is a figure and total that is unlikely to ever be broken and never forgotten by the loyalty of the subscribers.

In Liverpool for Callum Smith and John Ryder dozens of people came over with the same cherished BoxNation memories.



IRRESISTIBLE: Pazienza, alongside 1997 rival Herol Graham, struggles to keep the ladies at bay (as per)

When I was in Las Vegas for the YouTube fight, Shannon Briggs was remembering his appearances, laughing, shouting an issuing challenges to everybody from the BoxNation studio. Riddick "Big Daddy" Bowe was also a guest one afternoon, fresh from some type of MMA kicking-fight somewhere like Romania. Bowe was struggling to walk because of his injuries.

There was also a lot glory in the ring. The night Andy Lee won the world title and we danced up and down like children in the studio, the night Adrian Broner lost to Marcos Maidana. Those are nights that made the channel special. The early, early fights of Gennady Golovkin, the first fights of Gervonta Davis, the Floyd Mayweather series. The British names that came and went and never come back. Lost forever somewhere. There was also that odd feeling at being up at a hundred dawns after American fights and adjusting to the light or the drizzle of a new morning. That was a great feeling.

How about the night Tim Witherspoon came in at 2am and had to bring his baby daughter - we did a four hour live broadcast with her

sleeping gently next to him. We once did a show with a snowball the size of a football on the table. We also introduced the British public to dozens and dozens of young boxers for the very first time. It is an endless list of the finest fighters in the world and they first boxed on British television on BoxNation. The sofa also groaned with some of the greatest, that's not an exaggeration, fighters from the last thirty years.

One of my very first guests on the BoxNation sofa in October of 2011 was Anthony Joshua, a cameo before he went off to the World championships in Baku. He came back on the sofa with his silver medal when he returned. The rest is history, as they say. BoxNation had screened his final live.

On Wednesday (November 20), in Sheffield, Joshua went through the motions during a three-hour media day.

He served up a smart mixture of tales

to tease people before flying to Saudi Arabia a few days later. He suggested people had written him off, doubted him, admitted that he knew what went wrong in the summer in New York and talked about revenge, legacy and pride. He did have an edge, looked leaner, sure, but not necessarily smaller.

And to end the week, it's Liverpool close to midnight on the Saturday, when there was an unforgettable scene in the loser's corner. John Ryder and Tony Sims - boxer, trainer and loyal friends - stood in silence, like two men who had been witness to something they were not meant to see. They stood isolated, in shock

it seemed, waiting to be interviewed, but it looked like they were reluctant witnesses, like they had been detained against their will to give a statement to the police. There was a deep sense of loss on their faces. I scored it six rounds even.

WHEN ANDY LEE WON HIS WORLD TITLE WE DANCED UP AND DOWN LIKE CHILDREN IN THE STUDIO

THE PROMOTIONAL TAKEOVER BEGINS

Each week **George Gigney** will review the boxing media, from podcasts to live broadcasts, from newspapers to YouTube. This time, it's clear there's quite a big rematch approaching...

YOUTUBE

SKY SPORTS kicked their Andy Ruiz-Anthony Joshua II promotion into gear this week - it's hard to ignore the timing of it all, with several videos released during fight week for Deontay Wilder who, back in June, announced rematches with Luis Ortiz and Tyson Fury just days before the first Joshua-Ruiz fight.

Their first major offering was A *Heavyweight Upset*; a behind the scenes look at Ruiz's emphatic win over Joshua.

The main event itself is sufficiently dramatised, and the reaction shots of the commentary teams during that unforgettable third round are a lot of fun.

All-in-all it's an entertaining bit of promo and serves as a decent refresher for the more casual fans. For the initiated, though, there's not much new stuff here.

Sky followed this up with a Ruiz-Joshua debate edition of *The Gloves Are Off* featuring Tony Bellew, David Haye, Paulie Malignaggi and Carl Froch, chaired by Johnny Nelson.

All retired former world champions, each man is noticeably more honest about their own careers and feelings than they were as active fighters, using their own experiences to reflect on Joshua-Ruiz.

They cover it from every angle, including the criticism Joshua's trainer Rob McCracken came under. Froch - who was trained by McCracken - is quick to defend him, while Malignaggi feels he could have done more.

Nelson does a good job of pressing each man for definitive answers and he has everyone pick a winner - they all pick Joshua, though it takes their combined might to wrench Haye off the fence before he makes his pick.

Sky also dropped two separate interviews with Ruiz and Joshua themselves. Ruiz, speaking to Adam Smith, cuts a relaxed and confident figure, describing the punches that Joshua dropped him with as "lucky" and insisting

that all the pressure is on his British rival. They don't seem like empty words.

Joshua's chat with Fraser Dainton is more interesting. Visibly weary from training and sporting a head of longer hair and beard, Joshua's self-confidence remains, but toward the end of the interview a streak of defiance emerges.

"They think he's so great, so when I beat him I want everybody to bow to my feet and tell me how great I am," he growls.

The interview doesn't go into too much depth though, which seems a shame given the opportunity to investigate Joshua's current mindset.

Sky, however, seemingly couldn't find room for much content around Callum Smith - the world's leading super-middleweight - who was fighting on their channel that weekend.

One of the week's highlights was the DAZN *One Night* documentary, which also focused on the first Joshua-Ruiz fight. It features a range of talking heads; Sugar Ray Leonard, Evander Holyfield, Buster Douglas, Sergio Mora and Sylvester Stallone and Dolph Lundgren (AKA Rocky and Drago). It's a high-quality piece of film-making, nailing the drama of the first fight and offering a proper look at the American perspective. But the real star is Mike Tyson. His narration and views of the fight are giddy, insightful, bonkers and hilarious all at the same time. Somebody, anybody, please develop a TV series of Tyson watching fights and narrating them to camera.

Mike Griffin - the ref for the first Joshua-Ruiz fight and currently the best-looking referee in the sport - also features, though only long enough to say he doesn't think Joshua quit.



PODCASTS

Pick of the bunch this week is Tris Dixon's discussion with Micky Ward on the *Boxing Life Stories* podcast is a must-listen. Ward goes through his career, from the

three-year hiatus right through to his epic trilogy with Arturo Gatti. He even discusses how he perfected the left hook to the body; "It's not about power, it's about when and where you throw it."

Dixon does well to resist the temptation to jump straight into the Gatti trilogy, instead walking Ward through his career before getting to its truly defining moments. "I didn't know I had that in me," Ward says of their first war.

In a similar vein, the latest episode from *Macklin's Take*, hosted by former world title challenger Matthew Macklin and Sky Sports commentator Andy Clarke, saw the pair sit down with two-time British boxing trainer of the year Joe Gallagher.

It's a frank and honest interview - Gallagher admits he almost quit the sport 10 months ago and speaks about why he's taken a bit of a backstep from the limelight. He looks back on his career, detailing how he purposely played "the prat" in the build-up to Scott Quigg's fight with Carl Frampton in order to draw attention away from his fighter.

One of the most insightful podcasts around remains *5 Live with Costello & Bunce*. Previewing Callum Smith vs John Ryder, Mike and Steve highlighted Ryder's underrated pedigree, before that pedigree almost caused a shock. They both mentioned Deontay Wilder's boxing brain ahead of his fight with Luis Ortiz, describing how he measures opponents, setting them up, before unleashing his power. Yes, Wilder had his head boxed off, but he set Ortiz up beautifully for the right hand that finished it in the end.



BROADCASTS

With Adam Smith and Macklin out in Vegas for the Wilder-Ortiz rematch for Sky, the aforementioned Clarke fully stepped into the fray as lead commentator for the Smith-Ryder card in Liverpool, alongside Andy Lee.

With Clarke's extensive research and





WHERE IT ALL BEGAN:
Little Ruiz has big Joshua
in a whole world of trouble

knowledge and Lee's experience and keen eye, the pair do what all good commentary teams should; give the audience more than what they can see for themselves. They were fair and balanced throughout.

That being said, Bellew and Anthony Crolla on pundit duty didn't seem to

have a problem with the widely criticised scorecards, while Nelson – the only one of the three who couldn't be linked to Smith – had Ryder winning. Sky also cut to Callum's older brother Paul mid-fight for his assessment of things, and while he's a good analyst, there's no way he could be impartial in that situation.

Out in Vegas, I thought Smith and Macklin did a good job of calling the action, and I agreed with Macklin's score (6-0 to Ortiz at the time of the stoppage). Smith also got a great line out of Wilder after the fight: "They [his opponents] need to be perfect for 12 rounds, I just need to be perfect for two seconds."

RINGSIDE REST AND CARE

A team of ex-boxers gather at Abbey Road to record their charity anthem

ON Sunday November 24 a rabble of ex-boxers gathered in Abbey Road's legendary Studio Two – which The Beatles made famous and in where artists like Oasis, Pink Floyd, Kate Bush and Adele have all produced some major recordings – and belted out their very own masterpiece, *Never Give Up, Never Give In*.

The likes of John Conteh, Duke McKenzie, John H Stracey, Kevin Mitchell, Barry Jones, Stacey Copeland, Martin Power, Harry Holland, Johnny Oliver, Jimmy Batten, Billy Schwer, Nicky Piper and James Cook – among others – were all in attendance and used their angelic voices to lay down the vocals for the Simon Block-penned track which will be released next year.

The song is designed to raise money for the Ringside cause. Officially launched in January, with the aim of opening a residential home for ex-boxers, Ringside Rest and Care has gathered many thousands of pounds while also securing charity status.

The song will only heighten awareness. *Boxing News* editor Matt Christie, who also leant his vocals to the track, said: "This is a tremendous cause that *BN* has fully supported from the start. It was truly heart-warming to see so many champions at Abbey Road today, there were no egos on display at all, only good humour and a desire to help. Some, like John H Stracey, even set their alarm for 2am to make the trip. This level of support and commitment needs to be shown by the entire boxing community. Boxing has shown time and again what can happen when everyone unites. Let's all make this home a reality."



'I JUST NEED

ANTHONY JOSHUA rejected the idea of any psychological help ahead of his big-money rematch with **Andy Ruiz Jr** because, he says, he

"has not become a pussy overnight".

It is still not six months since Joshua was the victim of one of the biggest upsets in the history of heavyweight boxing when Ruiz dropped him four times en route to an unforgettable seventh round stoppage at Madison Square Garden.

Despite much advice to the contrary, Joshua decided to jump head first into an immediate rematch and the 2012 Olympic champion will attempt to reclaim his IBF, WBA and WBO heavyweight titles in Diriyah, Saudi Arabia on December 7.

Joshua will be now in the Middle East having done the bulk of the hard yards at his usual base at the English Institute of Sport, Sheffield. No expense has been spared on a variety of sparring partners such as Bryant Jennings, Andrew Tabiti and Dereck Chisora, who have attempted to recreate Ruiz's size and style.

However, when speaking to the media in Sheffield before he left, AJ revealed that none of his preparation has involved any additional psychological reflection of what went down in the iconic Manhattan venue on June 1.

"We haven't done anything differently mentally," he said. "I am a champion.

"I walked into the gym in 2008 and three years later I was Olympic champion. I have had one loss but I am not about to become a pussy overnight and not be able to fight.

"I can fight, that is it, I don't need to reflect on that, I just need to win.

"One loss can't strip your skin off overnight, when you put your solid foundations in, one chip in the brick can't destroy the whole building."

Joshua, who weighed in at 247 3/4lbs first time around (still some way short of his heaviest to date, 254lbs, when he beat Carlos Takam in 2017) also insisted that he has not slimmed down in order to better combat Ruiz's speed despite a series of recent photographs appearing to show a far leaner physique.

"I think it is more to do with the angles of the photos," he said.

"I am still as strong as ever, still as

Joshua sits down with the British press and outlines why the Ruiz rematch is just another day at the office, writes Declan Taylor

heavy as ever and in the heavyweight division. Weight is a big factor in the heavyweight division these days but I don't think it should be such a big deal.

"I leave it down to my sparring and how I prepare for the fight, I am not really focused on my weight, I am just focused on my sparring.

"I could weigh anything but it just comes down to how I perform in the ring. I am not interested in getting down or up to 110kg and then thinking I am fit. My diet is the same as before but I've just cut down on the salt.

"Everyone in the team has different opinions on my weight but I like going off of my sparring.

"If I am sparring 10 or 15 rounds at 120kgs then I am good. The sparring gives me all the information I need. If

Photo: SCOTT HAMMERTON/MATCHROOM BOXING

WORKING HARD:
Joshua holds his right hand high as he fires out his left during a recent session



TO WIN'

I sparred six times and after a chat with Rob I decided which one was my best spar, we will know what weight I was and adjust it to that.

"I will never get my weight down and then adjust my sparring to that. I am not concerned with anything apart from how I am performing in the ring."

David Haye, in particular, has recently suggested that Joshua's sparring in the build-up to the first Ruiz fight was inadequate ahead of the the 'dogfight' which unfolded at Madison Square Garden.

But an annoyed Joshua responded: "He has never been in my camp... And I only needed 16 fights to become champion of the world.

"I have always been a fighter. You cannot be lacking anything and I have

not been protected, Rob [McCracken] has not been telling my sparring partners to tie one hand behind their back."

McCracken, who came under intense criticism following June 1, also laughed off Haye's suggestion.

He said: "Since Josh has been a professional, sparring partners have always come here to try to rip his head off and make a name for themselves.

"We had some real good sparring with the likes of Andrew Tabiti and Bryant Jennings, real experienced guys and Tabiti is as quick as you can get for a

cruiserweight.

"This group of sparring partners has done really well and pushed him every step of the way and we still have three very important spars ahead where our

strategy is going to be carried out and they are still to come."

Unlike other media days of this nature for upcoming Joshua events, the media were not invited to watch the heavyweight train.

**'I AM NOT
FOCUSED ON
MY WEIGHT,
I AM JUST
FOCUSED ON
MY SPARRING'**

***Sky Sports Box Office
will exclusively show***

Ruiz vs. Joshua 2 on December 7.

Available to buy now at www.skysports.com/joshua



The COURAGE



SEVERE PUNISHMENT:
Frazier takes a right hand from Ali
during one of the most gruelling
fights in heavyweight history

Photo: MITSUNORI CHIGITA/AP/SHUTTERSTOCK

OF QUITTING

Throwing in the towel can cause rifts and criticism, but is also a corner's bravest move, writes **Alex Reid**

“

YOU'RE speaking to the perfect person, because I've been both sides of the fence," says Gary Lockett on the hardest decision a trainer has to make. "Early on in my career, I pulled a few fighters out and was accused of being too gung-ho with the towel. But then the Nick Blackwell-Chris

Eubank fight came around and there wasn't a problem until Nick fell unconscious, then people wanted to start pointing the finger."

As Lockett knows, trainers perform a tightrope act when it comes to pulling a fighter out. Do it too early and stand accused of being overprotective, as well ➤

► as becoming a scapegoat for a loss; of actively turning your own boxer against you. Leave a boxer to soak up punishment and you're labelled compassionless, the so-called brave corner. Far worse, you could see a fighter suffer serious injury.

In Lockett's eyes, it's a decision you're only qualified to make "if you know the fighter really well". He was willing to throw in the towel during Gavin Rees' WBC lightweight title fight with Adrien Broner in 2013, going against his boxer's wishes when the act of surrender came in the fourth round. "I disagree with my trainer stopping it," Rees said in the aftermath. "I was always going to get back up. I was going to get keep getting up until I got knocked out cold."

Presumably, this was exactly what Lockett wished to avoid. To this day, Rees does not accept that it was, in fact, a perfect intervention. Yet the two remain close, the ex-fighter understanding that Lockett was acting on his best interests. It is not always that simple.

In 2002, Buddy McGirt, the trainer who sparked a late resurgence in Arturo Gatti's career, almost ended the Gatti-Mickey Ward trilogy before it was even one-third of the way through.

During the incredible, punishing ninth round of Gatti-Ward I, McGirt stood up to the ring, towel in hand, set to halt the fight. As he did so, Gatti began to fire back and – with referee Frank Cappuccino focused on the action – McGirt was able to slip back unnoticed.

"When he got hit with that body shot, he had tears rolling

down his face," said McGirt in an interview on Showtime this year, admitting he also came close to ending the fight after that round as well. "When he went out for the 10th, I said: 'You got to show me something, baby, or I'm stopping it.'"

"His friend grabbed me by my pants and said: 'But if you stop it, he'll never speak to you again.' I said: 'I'm not going to let him get hurt – I don't give a f**k if he ever speaks to me again or not.' Let's see what happens."

What happened was Gatti dredged up the will to fight back. The incredible action and a disputed decision meant two money-spinning sequels, but it can't be overlooked that McGirt had been willing to step in and save his hurt fighter, despite knowing it would be kissing goodbye to future pay cheques. How many trainers can say that?

Eddie Futch could. The man responsible for the most famous rescue in boxing, when he pulled Joe Frazier out of his third fight with Muhammad Ali in 1975, surely knew how Smokin Joe would react.

"Eddie, listen up! Whatever you do, whatever happens, don't stop the fight!" Frazier had said beforehand. "We got nowhere to go after this... I mean it. This is the end of him or me."

Futch was unwilling to let it go that far. His words – "Sit down, son, it's all over. But no one will ever forget what you did here today" – became his legacy as he spared Frazier from three more minutes of punishment from Ali's fists. Yet it fractured things between them.

According to Mark Kram's *Ghosts of Manilla*, Frazier would

**YOU DID YOUR BEST:
Lockett comforts Rees
in the dressing room**

Photo: ACTION IMAGES/ANDREW COULDRIDGE



later say: "I got mugged by the ref in the second Ali fight, and Futch took Manila away from me." Or, even more bitterly: "He never did anything for me except collect 15 per cent of my purse. Eddie can't train nobody. He was just there to wipe me down."

Frazier's seething hatred for Ali spilling on to Futch is an example of how a boxer-coach bond can break after a disputed stoppage. Lockett is in a position where a majority of the fighters he has worked with – from Rees to Kerry Hope to Enzo Maccarinelli – have eventually accepted his call to end a fight. But that doesn't mean he hasn't suffered.

"It's very hard for me to talk about this," says Lockett when it comes to Blackwell and the brain injury he suffered against Eubank in 2016. "With Nick, every fight he had he lost the first four rounds – and then he'd come back down the stretch. So with that in mind, we tried to give him as much chance as possible.

"At about the eighth round, he was far behind. So I said to him: 'Look, I'm going to stop it' and he said: 'What? He can't even punch! Why would you stop it?'" Then in the 10th round, when his eye came up, I was going to pull him out – but Victor [Loughlin] stopped it anyway."

Despite collapsing after the fight and spending a week in a coma, Blackwell looked to have made a remarkable recovery. Until – later that year and away from Lockett's care and expertise – he chose to spar and was badly hurt once again. This time, recovery was even more challenging. Some aren't even that lucky.

Lockett's voice drops lower and lower as he finds the words about an even greater tragedy. "If you go six months [after the Blackwell fight], it's something that not everybody knows, but I had Dale Evans against Mike Towell."

This time, Lockett was in the other corner when a fighter was rushed to hospital post-fight. For Towell, there would be no miracle recovery. He was declared dead a day after the fight.

"It's the worst thing I've ever been through in my life," says Lockett. "I wouldn't wish it upon my worst enemy." Did either incident, running so close together, make him question if he could continue in the sport?

"I can remember, after the Blackwell fight, Liam Williams fought an eight rounder in Liverpool. I was trying not to show Liam that I was nervous, but I was just thinking: 'What if something goes wrong?'"

"When you've been through an incident like that, it's very hard to shake it. Liam got the job done, but there were a few fights where I was frightened, in a way, for the boys. I kept it to myself – and after a while, it sort of passed. I still get it every now and then – I tell myself to be professional about it. But these things still come up in my little old mind. I just keep it to myself."

McGirt can surely relate. In July, he was in the corner when unbeaten Maxim Dadashev fought Subriel Matias. "Max, I'm gonna stop the fight," said McGirt after the 11th round. "You're getting hit too much. Please Max! Let me do this, OK?"

Dadashev shook his head at his trainer's pleas, but McGirt held firm. A trainer cannot officially stop a fight, of course, but few officials argue when the corner have made their opinion clear. After the fight, McGirt explained: "He had no chance of winning, so why be a hero with his life?"

It was already too late. Dadashev had collapsed and vomited on the way to the dressing room. He died in hospital four days later. It's a heartbreaking reminder that even when a trainer does everything in their power to make the right call, stepping in ahead of a referee or doctor, it cannot always be enough.

Fast-forward one month and McGirt was in the corner when another Russian, Sergey Kovalev, fought Anthony Yarde. After Yarde's eighth-round comeback that saw him tee-off on

“

**IT'S THE WORST
THING TO HAPPEN.
I WOULDN'T WISH
IT ON MY WORST
ENEMY”**

Kovalev, McGirt read the riot act in the corner.

"Listen! If you take more shots like that, I'm stopping it – you understand? I'm going to give you this round to show me something! I know he's tired, but you're getting hit with too many punches."

Were McGirt's words a ploy to shake up Kovalev; to get his charge boxing behind his jab once again rather than getting into exchanges with a young puncher? Or was McGirt thinking of Dadashev and battling what Lockett spoke of; that little voice in your head, nervous,

post-tragedy for a different fighter? In a conversation with *Boxing News* last month, McGirt admitted it was a bit of both.

The outcome on this night was successful for McGirt and his boxer. Yet a trainer's responsibility never lessens. Few other coaches in any sport head into a contest focusing mainly on a winning strategy but also aware, deep down, they might have to make a life-or-death decision in the heat of battle – that they themselves could be the final instrument that triggers a defeat.

It's a heavy burden to bear. But those who feel it the most deeply, from Futch to McGirt to Lockett, are in fact the people any boxer should most urgently want in their corner – a trainer with the courage to quit when the time is right. **BN**

THROWING IN THE SPONGE

CHUCKING in a towel – the white flag of surrender – might seem an appropriate signal for capitulation. But the original phrase, from the 18th century, was to "throw in the sponge", a sponge the most common item a corner would use to wipe down a pugilist between rounds.

One of the first recorded reports of a thrown towel came in a January 1913 edition of US newspaper *The Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*: "Murphy went after him, landing right and left undefended face. The crowd importuned referee Griffin to stop the fight and a towel was thrown from Burns' corner as a token of defeat."

Yet the practice was already established. One early corner stoppage in a high-profile fight came in Jack Johnson's 1910 heavyweight title bout against the "great white hope" brought in to dethrone him, Jim Jeffries. With Jeffries badly hurt – and ringside spectators crying: "Don't let the n*****er knock him out" – one of Jeffries' seconds, Bob Armstrong, entered the ring with a white towel to end the fight. Occasionally, referees have ignored a trainer and thrown a towel back out of the ring. Graham Earl's corner threw in the towel during his 2007 fight with Michael Katsidis, only for Mickey Vann to remove it [below]. Earl knocked Katsidis down shortly afterwards, although was eventually retired by his team after the fifth round.



ACTION

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

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

SUPERPOWER

Wilder undoes all of Ortiz's fine work with a single punch, writes Paul Wheeler

🇺🇸 LAS VEGAS, NV

NOVEMBER 23

★★★★☆ MAIN EVENT

★★★★☆ UNDERCARD



UNDEFEATED WBC heavyweight champion **Deontay Wilder** kept hold of his title at the MGM Grand by defeating old rival **Luis Ortiz**

inside the distance for a second time – once again in dramatic fashion.

After a cagey opening two minutes, Ortiz landed a couple of swiping lefts before the first round was out. Looking light on his feet, the barrel-chested

challenger patiently probed with his southpaw jab in the second, searching for opportunities to whip his left hand over the top.

Wilder attempted to get his own jab going in round three, but Ortiz remained a threat with his heavy backhands. An overhand left hit the target from the Miami-based Cuban to exemplify this fact.

The savvy veteran continued his eye-catching work with the left hand in the fourth and fifth, stabbing Wilder to the body and closing the distance effectively with his smart footwork. Ortiz maintained his command over proceedings in round six, leaving the reigning titlist – making the 10th consecutive defence of his belt – lagging behind on the cards.

The man from Tuscaloosa, Alabama failed to throw enough leather again for

the vast majority of the seventh, but his vaunted power came to the fore at the end of the session – and in devastating style.

After Ortiz connected with a tidy combo, Wilder pawed at him with a jab before laying him out with a monster right hand out of nowhere to claim the knockout. The official time was 2-51. Kenny Bayless refereed.

"Next, we have the Tyson Fury rematch, scheduled for February," Wilder said post-bout. "After that, I'm looking for a unification fight."

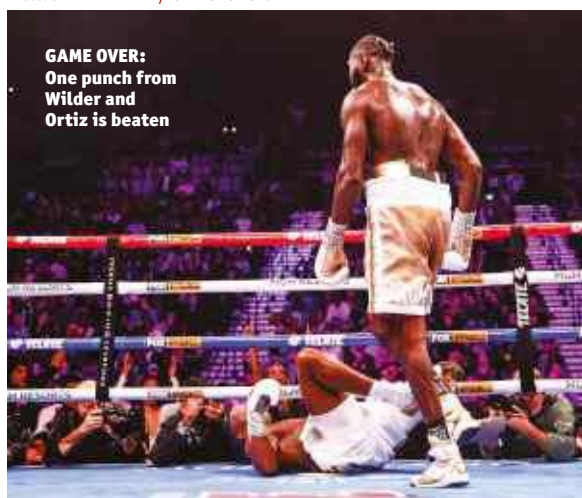
On the undercard, **Leo Santa Cruz** – boxing in the super-featherweight division for the first time – unanimously outpointed fellow Mexican-American **Miguel Flores** to win the vacant WBA crown and become a four-weight world title-holder.

Photo: SEAN MICHAEL HAM/MAYWEATHER PROMOTIONS



EASY DOES IT:
Ortiz prods the
careless Wilder

Photo: STEPHANIE TRAPP/TGB PROMOTIONS



THE EQUALISER

Why Wilder is one of the most dangerous heavyweights in history, in spite of his obvious flaws



Paul Wheeler

@paulwheelerBN

FULL RESULTS

Deontay Wilder (219 1/2lbs), 42-0-1 (41), w ko 7 **Luis Ortiz** (236 1/2lbs), 31-2 (26) 2NC; **Leo Santa Cruz** (129 1/2lbs), 37-1-1 (19), w pts 12 **Miguel Flores** (130lbs), 24-3 (12); **Brandon Figueroa** (122lbs), 20-0-1 (15), d pts 12 **Julio Ceja** (126 1/2lbs), 32-4-1 (28); **Eduardo Ramirez** (126 1/2lbs), 23-2-3 (10) 1NC, w rsf 4 **Leduan Barthelemy** (127lbs), 15-1-1 (7); **Jhon Gemino** (129 1/2lbs), 21-12-1 (11), w ko 5 **Arnold Alejandro** (129 1/2lbs), 11-1 (10); **Viktor Slavinskyi** (127 1/2lbs), 11-0-1 (6), w pts 6 **Rigoberto Hermosillo** (127lbs), 11-2-1 (8) 1NC; **Angel Alejandro** (130 1/2lbs), 8-0 (4), w pts 6 **Mark John Yap** (132lbs), 30-15 (15); **Omar Juarez** (142 1/2lbs), 6-0 (4), w ko 6 **Kevin Shacks** (143 1/2lbs), 3-5-3 (3); **Jose Manuel Gomez** (130lbs), 12-0 (5), w rtd 3 **Daniel Placeres** (129 1/2lbs), 8-3-1 (7); **Dustin Long** (198 1/2lbs), 3-1-2 (3) 1NC, w ko 4 **Marsellos Wilder** (197lbs), 5-2 (2) 1NC; **Shon Mondragon** (121lbs), 5-0 (2), w pts 6 **Juan Centeno** (122lbs), 4-4-1 (1); **Vito Mielnicki Jr** (147lbs), 3-0 (3), w rsf 2 **Marklin Bailey** (143 1/2lbs), 6-6 (4).

different, though. In the initial meeting, Ortiz had hit the deck in round five and Wilder had enjoyed clear periods of success. Not so in the rematch.

After six completed rounds at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, it was almost impossible to have the fight scored anything other than a whitewash in favour of Ortiz – forget how the judges had it. The classy Cuban southpaw, even at his advanced age, was looking light on his feet as he dictated the distance and controlled the tempo. His left hand was a continual menace to Wilder, who appeared wary to let his own shots go in response –

pawing jabs that largely fell short were all he could muster.

The first two minutes and 50 seconds of the seventh panned out in much the same manner as what had come before.

Ortiz's intelligent footwork brought him into range to land a solid combination, and it looked like another round in the bag for the veteran challenger, whose dream of becoming WBC heavyweight champion was seemingly edging closer. Then, it happened – Wilder's great equaliser came to the fore.

Within the closing 10 seconds of the session, a cataclysmic right hand cannoned off the jaw of Ortiz, depositing him onto the seat of his

trunks. After boxing near-perfectly for the preceding 20-plus minutes, Ortiz somehow found himself in the most undignified of positions – on his backside and out of the fight.

Such is the power of Wilder's power, no heavyweight is ever quite safe from the unbeaten American's dynamite-loaded gloves. You can be winning every round and evidently cruising to victory, but the threat is constantly there, like a disused landmine under the surface of the ground, long forgotten but with the capacity to explode and wreak havoc at any given moment.

Knowing that he possesses such devastating weaponry in his arsenal, Wilder is content to lose rounds. Crude and one-dimensional he may be, but his one dimension is incredibly effective. There is always the chance that he can pull a rabbit out of the hat – or a right hand out of nowhere.

If you attempt to outbox him for the 12 rounds, as Ortiz and Tyson Fury have tried, that nagging doubt must surely never leave your mind – 'One punch and all my hard work could go up in smoke.' Knockdowns salvaged a draw for him against Fury, while knockouts twice got him out of trouble against Ortiz.

The other option, of course, is to

go for broke and fight fire with fire by searching for a KO yourself. This, however, is a perilously risky tactic – do you really want to enter the danger zone and punch it out with the sport's biggest puncher?

Wilder's ability to remain in

the fight for as long as he is still swinging is a priceless trait to have. Even the greatest heavyweight of them all, the incomparable Muhammad Ali, would not be safe against Wilder until the final bell has tolled. Like it or not, that is the extent of his game-changing power. That is what makes him one of the most dangerous heavyweights in history, in spite of his obvious flaws.

LIKE A DISUSED LANDMINE... LONG FORGOTTEN BUT WITH THE CAPACITY TO WREAK HAVOC AT ANY MOMENT

The lively early rounds featured some good exchanges, but Santa Cruz (Rosemead, California) began to control the distance and dictate the tempo more in the middle frames – peppering Flores (Spring, Texas) with long jabs and fast flurries behind a tight, high guard.

The well-conditioned Flores employed intelligent movement and feints, yet Santa Cruz's relentless, educated pressure forced his foe to grab and hold on at times. This led to a point deduction from referee Tony Weeks in the eighth.

A clash of heads in the 10th left Santa Cruz with a cut by his left eye, but he was nonetheless a handy and worthy – albeit rather frustrated – winner after 36 minutes. The judges' tallies read 115-112 (Tim Cheatham) and 117-110 twice (Glenn Feldman and Julie Lederman). Santa Cruz called out Gary Russell Jr and Gervonta Davis following the contest.

Elsewhere on this TGB/Mayweather co-promotion, **Brandon Figueroa** and **Julio Ceja** combined to produce an all-action, toe-to-toe thriller (officiated by Jay Nady).

The undefeated Figueroa (Weslaco, Texas) and former WBC super-bantam boss Ceja (Palmdale, California via Mexico) demonstrated tireless engines and impressive chins throughout as they incessantly swapped fierce hooks and spiteful combinations up close.

After a torrid 12 rounds of non-stop warfare, Ceja – who came in four-and-a-half pounds over the 122lb limit – finished up with a bloodied mouth, while switch-hitting youngster Figueroa was marked up by the right eye.

The final scores were 115-113 to Figueroa (Glenn Trowbridge), 116-112 to Ceja (Lisa Giampa) and a 114-114 tie (Don Trella), resulting in a split decision draw overall. Let's hope we get to see a sequel next year.

THE VERDICT Even when being outboxed, Wilder has the power to turn a fight completely on its head.

Photos: MARK ROBINSON/MATCHROOM BOXING

AT RANGE:
Smith spears Ryder
but the smaller man
will soon close the
distance



TOO WIDE

The scores
rather than
Smith's win
cause raised
eyebrows
aplenty



**Andy
Whittle**

RINGSIDE

⊕ LIVERPOOL

NOVEMBER 23

★★★★☆ MAIN EVENT

★★★★☆ UNDERCARD

★★★☆☆ ATMOSPHERE



UPER-
MIDDLEWEIGHT
Callum Smith
maintained his 100
per cent record on
home soil at the M&S
Arena with a distance

victory over Islington's **John "The Gorilla"**
Ryder, completing a second successful
defence of his WBA title in the process.

But there was surprise at the margin
of his victory after a close-fought affair

refereed by Mike Alexander, during which
he was pushed hard throughout by the
gutsy Londoner.

Tallies of 116-112 twice, from judges
Francisco Alloza Rosa (Spain) and Jose
Roberto Torres (Puerto Rico), along with
a wider 117-111 from Terry O'Connor
might well have seen "Mundo" home -
but it's a while since I recall three scores
prompt such comment amongst seasoned
ringsiders, surprised not so much at the
result, but at the margin of Callum's
victory.

For what it's worth I thought the
challenger's strong last couple of rounds
should have proved enough for him to
nick it.

I was of the opinion that southpaw
Ryder, pressing for long periods and
increasingly getting in beneath Smith's jab,
was having more success in up close than

the taller champion was having from a
distance.

Both boxers had finished the fourth with
cuts by their right eyes (Callum finished
with two) and at that point after what had
been a slightly better start I had Smith just
ahead.

Yet the middle stages proved closer and
the visitor, buoyed by his success, came on
strongly as the end approached, taking the
last two for me and prompting wild scenes
of celebration - short-lived as it turned out
- at the final bell.

It's open to interpretation whether
Callum's performance, in which he
admitted being disappointed, was helped
by the fact he'd banked only three
championship rounds in the previous 14
months - or whether Ryder simply proved
a far tougher opponent than had been
anticipated.

What's certain is that if a hoped-for clash with Saul "Canelo" Alvarez does become reality, then a significant improvement will be required.

Belfast's **James Tennyson** took on Blackwood southpaw **Craig Evans** in a Celtic-flavoured final eliminator for the British lightweight title and secured a fourth consecutive inside the distance win.

One minute of the 11th remained when, despite the complaints of the battered, bruised and ultra-gutsy Welshman who had contributed to quite a war, referee Steve Gray rightly decided enough was enough.

Evans had been down from a fine right uppercut as early as the first, hot on the heels of a clubbing left which left him with a badly swollen eye.

Along the way, Craig had also fallen victim to a low blow, an errant elbow and a bash of heads in the eighth that flattened his nose. Yet he kept battling right until the penultimate session when, having been rocked by another huge left, he was rescued after shipping four or five weighty head shots.

The vacant Commonwealth cruiserweight title was up for grabs when Liverpool's **Craig Glover** went in against Bournemouth's **Chris Billam-Smith** and it was the taller, more polished visitor who went away with the title.

Referee Mr Lyson intervened with 75

seconds of the fifth remaining as Craig, trailing by a distance and already having been down from a right uppercut and a pair of lefts late in the previous round, and again from a left just moments earlier, crumpled once more under fire.

A super-welterweight 10 between local favourite **Anthony Fowler** and Derby's recently crowned English champion **Harry Scarff** went the way of the former, who took it 98-91 on the cards of all three judges (Alexander, O'Connor and Torres).

Harry, who will learn from the experience, had been hurt to the body early on. From that point onwards, bearing in mind he was away from home and in with a puncher, he proved a little reluctant to engage.

The contest moved away from him as a consequence and the busier Fowler, confidence growing, made sure in the ninth when he dropped Harry in centre ring with a short left.

Another British title eliminator, this one an all-Merseyside affair at super-lightweight between Liverpool's **Tom Farrell** and Birkenhead's **Sean Dodd**, was cruelly cut short after just four rounds.

An accidental head clash left Tom with a nasty cut running upwards from the bridge of his nose, a wound that survived an initial inspection but prevented any further progress once the session ended.

With a technical decision result required

as well as a likely rematch, it went to the cards with Dodd, slightly more the aggressor while it lasted, ahead 39-37 and 39-38 for judges Terry O'Connor and Steve Gray while Mike Alexander had it level at 38-38.

Callum's older brother **Stephen Smith** shook off a little more rust with a one-sided 60-54 win over Sandhurst's **Jonny Phillips**, who made it through to the finish despite having been under the cosh throughout, Swiftly frequently hurting him to the body. Mark Lyson refereed.

Light-heavy **Thomas-Whittaker Hart** stepped in against Croat **Josip Perkovic** and emerged victorious via the short route.

Referee Lyson halted it four seconds shy of the halfway mark in the fifth and penultimate session as the increasingly bested Perkovic half-turned away from the fray as Tom clipped him with one last right.

A pair of fours overseen by Steve Gray which pitched one-bout local novices **Tom Aitchison** and **Marcos Molloy** in against **Matija Petrinic** (Croatia) and Stockport's **Jamie Quinn** went pretty much to plan.

Lightweight Marcos bested Quinn 40-37 while up at super-lightweight Tom, mixing it up nicely, had it very much his own way and finished a shut-out winner.

THE VERDICT More fuel is added to the raging fire over how fights are scored.

FULL RESULTS

Callum Smith (167lbs 7oz), 27-0 (19), w pts
12 John Ryder (167lbs 7oz), 28-5 (16); **James Tennyson** (134 3/4lbs), 26-3 (22), w rsf 11
Craig Evans (134lbs), 20-3-2 (3); **Chris Billam-Smith** (198lbs 11oz), 10-1 (9), w tco
5 Craig Glover (198lbs 5oz), 10-3 (8); **Anthony Fowler** (153lbs 13oz), 11-1 (8), w pts 10
Harry Scarff (152lbs 15oz), 8-1 (1); **Sean Dodd** (139lbs 14oz), 17-5-1 (4), w td 4
Tom Farrell (140lbs), 17-3 (5); **Thomas Whittaker-Hart** (178lbs 7oz), 4-0 (2), w rsf 5
Josip Perkovic (180lbs 10oz), 6-11-1 (3); **Stephen Smith** (140lbs), 28-4 (15), w pts 6
Jonny Phillips (140lbs), 5-3 (2); **Tom Aitchison** (142lbs 7oz), 2-0, w pts 4
Matija Petrinic (139lbs 9oz), 1-2; **Marcos Molloy** (137lbs), 2-0, w pts 4
Jamie Quinn (136 1/2lbs), 6-95-2.



GREAT EFFORT: Huge underdog Ryder tears into the champion

The race for the Golden Contract intensifies inside the York Hall



Simon Euan-Smith

RINGSIDE

+ BETHNAL GREEN

NOVEMBER 22

★★★★☆ **WHOLE SHOW**

★★★★★ **ATMOSPHERE**

MTK GLOBAL launched the quarter-finals of their super-lightweight Golden Contract tournament at York Hall, with two early finishes and two distance bouts.

Frenchman **Mohamed Mimoune** floored and halted Northern Area champion **Darren Surtees** in the fifth, while Hackney's **Ohara Davies** forced Hawaiian **Logan Yoon** to retire after seven rounds.

Southpaw Mimoune, who beat Sam Eggington for the European welterweight title in Manchester in October 2017, showed a tight defence and was hard to tag, though Surtees (Thornley) landed a decent right to the head in the first, and dropped his man in the second with the same shot. It was a fair start from Surtees – 12-0 going in – but the knockdown seemed to galvanise Mimoune, and the Frenchman took control from the third.

Mimoune was pressing forward, landing with both hands, and though Surtees tried to stand off and counter in the fourth he could not stop Mimoune getting to him. Mimoune opened up to have Surtees ducking on the ropes, trying to fire back. Surtees kept hitting back in the fifth. Mimoune was warned for using the elbow, but was now really picking his punches – and finally a right to the head put Surtees down. He made it up, but referee Kieran McCann completed the eight-count and waved it off after 2-21.

Southpaw Yoon was also unbeaten going in (16-0), but couldn't handle Davies' non-stop pressure. Davies started getting through with rights to the head in the third, and Yoon was cut on the bridge of the nose. Yoon tried to attack in the fourth, but a left-right to the head had him staggering back. By the fifth Davies was beating him to the punch, and though Yoon tried to take the initiative in the sixth he was getting caught as he came in.

By the start of the seventh Yoon's face was looking lumpy, and though he tried he was being outworked. Davies landed with both hands, and the round ended with Yoon taking stick on the ropes. He sank wearily onto his stool, and his corner told referee Ian John-Lewis they were retiring him.

Photo: SCOTT RAWSTHORNE/MTK GLOBAL



FOUR STILL STANDING

FULL RESULTS

Mohamed Mimoune (139 1/4lbs), 22-3 (3), w rsf 5 **Darren Surtees** (140lbs), 12-1; **Ohara Davies** (139 1/2lbs), 20-2 (15), w rtd 7 **Logan Yoon** (138lbs 6oz), 16-1 (12); **Tyrone McKenna** (139lbs 6oz), 20-1-1 (6), w pts 10 **Mikey Sakyi** (138 1/2lbs), 8-3 (4); **Jeff Ofori** (139 1/4lbs), 10-1-1 (3), drew pts 10 **Kieran Gething** (140lbs), 9-2-2 (3); **Mauro Maximiliano Godoy** (143 1/4lbs), 32-5-1 (17), w rsf 5 **Tackie Annan** (138 1/4lbs), 12-7 (11); **Martin McDonagh** (138lbs 2oz), 7-1, w pts 4 **Josh Thorne** (138 1/4lbs), 1-14; **Elliot Whale** (146 1/2lbs), 1-0, w pts 4 **Eligio Palacios** (145 1/4lbs).

The other two quarter-finals went the full 10 rounds, with Belfast's **Tyrone McKenna** clearly outscoring Romford's **Mikey Sakyi**. Marcus McDonnell and Lee Every both had it 100-90, while Mr McCann scored it 99-91. Mr John-Lewis refereed. Southpaw McKenna won as clearly as the scores suggested, making full use of his reach advantage, but Sakyi hit back when he could and was always trying to make a fight of it. Sakyi bled from the nose and was marked on the right cheek.

Tottenham's **Jeff Ofori** and **Kieran Gething** (Abergavenny) battled to a 10-round draw, scores being 96-95 for Gething (John-Lewis), 96-94 Ofori (McDonnell), and 95-95 (Every). Under tournament rules, referee McCann had also been scoring – and, although his score wasn't given, it was announced that he had Ofori in front and so the Londoner progresses to the semi-finals.

I thought Ofori had done enough. He pressed forward constantly, and although Gething looked to counter I felt Ofori was generally outworking him. Gething was warned for headwork in the seventh and ninth, and in the ninth again for use of the elbow.

An all-overseas curtain-raiser saw

Argentina's Mauro **Maximiliano Godoy** drop Ghana's **Tackie Annan** twice and score a fifth-round stoppage. It was scheduled for six. Annan pressed forward but was caught as he came in. Godoy seemed to go up a gear in the fourth, and in the fifth a left hook to the body sent Tackie down for eight. Godoy went back on the attack – he was warned for a low left, and Tackie was given time

to recover, but Godoy poured it on with both hands and finally a left hook put Annan down by the ropes.

He was up at eight but referee Every waved it off after 2-37.

Two southpaws scored 40-36 wins in bouts handled by Mr Every.

Martin McDonagh (Sheerness) outscored the bullish **Josh Thorne**

(Bexleyheath). McDonagh kept on the move and landed as Thorne came in. Meanwhile, Londoner **Elliot Whale** made a winning pro start, dominating Spain-based Nicaraguan **Eligio Palacios** from the outset. Palacios bled from the nose and had a swelling below the right eye.

THE VERDICT Two cracking semi-finals are in store for the Golden Contract super-lightweights.

BY THE START OF THE SEVENTH YOON'S FACE WAS LOOKING LUMPY

ON THE ROAD BACK



Simon Euan-Smith

RINGSIDE

**+ BETHNAL GREEN
NOVEMBER 23**

★★★☆☆ WHOLE SHOW
★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

HAVING lost his Southern Area cruiserweight title to Nick Parpa last time out, Silvertown's **Daniel Mendes** returned to York Hall and punched out a clear verdict over former victim **Pawel Strykowski**.

Photo: ACTION IMAGES



Mendes clearly beats one of his old victims

Southpaw Mendes was in charge from the outset, placing his punches effectively while Strykowski (Poland) tended to fall short. Referee Lee Every scored it 60-55, improving on the 59-55 verdict Mendes took in the same ring in September last year. Strykowski played his part, always looking to hit back, and made a big effort in the fifth, coming forward and trying to beat Mendes to the punch. But Mendes stayed cool and countered as his rival came in – and Mendes was back on the attack in the last.

The one quick ending on the bill saw Slovakia's **Denisa Cicooova** ruin **Sangeeta Birdi's** UK debut, flooring and halting her rival in the second of a scheduled four-twos.

Birdi (born in Canada, based in Slough) won her pro debut in India, and had her southpaw opponent under pressure in the first. Cicooova hit back when she could but was under more pressure in the second – and then a left counter to the head had Birdi over. She was up quickly, but hadn't fully recovered by the end of the eight-count – Birdi tried to rally but Cicooova was on target with counters, and Mr Every waved it off after 1-44. Birdi was given oxygen in the corner.

Rod Douglas Jnr, loser of his last four, stopped the rot with an upset points win over Chadwell Heath's **Robert Asagba**. Mr Every scored it 39-37. A right to the head staggered Asagba in the second, but Douglas finished the session bleeding from a swelling below the left eye. There was quite a lot of holding, and tangling but overall Douglas was on target more and well deserved the win.

Southpaw **Lewis Syrett** (Tunbridge Wells), coming back after losing his unbeaten record to Sean Robinson in September's Ultimate Boxer competition, turned back the challenge of Norwich's **Duane "Mad Dog" Green**, referee Kieran McCann scoring 58-56. Green made it competitive, coming forward when he could and always looking to counter when Syrett launched an attack. But Syrett's extra skill meant he found the target more often. Both suffered damage to the right eye – Syrett a swelling, Green a cut in the corner.

Brandon Ball (Rochester) outpointed Bulgarian **Stefan Slavchev**, referee Mark Bates scoring 59-55. Slavchev had his moments, and hit back after being caught. But Ball made use of his longer reach, while Slavchev tended to fall short, and Ball consistently found the target with solid rights to the head.

Xhulio Vrenozi, an Albanian based in

Italy, scored his third win in the UK (all at York Hall) with a victory over Thornton Heath's **Richard Samuels**. Referee Bates scored it 59-55. Vrenozi switched stance, scored through the middle and picked his shots effectively. But Samuels came to try, getting close and working the body when he could – though he was under some pressure in the last, taking stick in Vrenozi's corner.

Having won their debuts here, two fighters came back after long layoffs to score their second wins.

Londoner **Conor Hinds** beat **Callum Ide** (Bognor Regis), referee McCann scoring 40-36.

Hinds pressured throughout, picking his punches, while Ide tried to move and work the jab, covering up when Hinds got close.

Jake Spring (Sittingbourne), whose last bout was in April 2014, showed no sign of rust in outscoring Kingsteignton's **Jamie Speight**, referee Every marking 39-37. A right knocked Speight's head back in the last, and a two-fisted attack had him holding on. Speight finished with a swelling under the left eye.

Connor Vian (Bristol) defeated Warminster's **Paul Cummings**, referee McCann scoring 40-36. Cummings tried to use his height and reach advantages but Vian got close and scored with both hands. Cummings bled from the nose in the last.

Two first-timers won by 40-36 in bouts overseen by Mr Bates – Amersham's Jamie Smith over Lithuanian **Dmitrij Kalinovskij**, and Slough's well-supported **Amar Kayani** over Islington's Jordan Grannum.

Olivia Goodwin promoted on behalf of Goodwin Promotions.

THE VERDICT First hurdle overcome after title loss for Mendes, even if it is going over old ground.

FULL RESULTS

Daniel Mendes (191lbs), 10-2 (1), w pts 6 **Pawel Strykowski** (199lbs), 3-10; **Connor Vian** (154lbs), 11-2-1 (1), w pts 4 **Paul Cummings** (153lbs), 2-43; **Conor Hinds** (169lbs), 2-0 (1), w pts 4 **Callum Ide** (170lbs), 0-29-2; **Rod Douglas Jnr** (160lbs), 3-4, w pts 4 **Robert Asagba** (163lbs), 5-3-1; **Jake Spring** (141lbs), 2-0, w pts 4 **Jamie Speight** (139lbs), 15-42 (2); **Brandon Ball** (131lbs), 6-1 (1), w pts 6 **Stefan Slavchev** (132lbs), 10-36-2 (4); **Jamie Smith** (195lbs), 1-0, w pts 4 **Dmitrij Kalinovskij** (197lbs), 13-60-4 (5); **Lewis Syrett** (155lbs), 7-1 (2), w pts 6 **Duane Green** (155lbs), 6-45-7; **Denisa Cicooova** (131lbs), 3-3 (2), w rsf 2 **Sangeeta Birdi** (131lbs), 1-1 (1); **Amar Kayani** (161lbs), 1-0, w pts 4 **Jordan Grannum** (163lbs), 5-66-2; **Xhulio Vrenozi** (153lbs), 16-2 (3), w pts 6 **Richard Samuels** (150lbs), 1-8.

Explosive Pauls blitzes tough Chapman in seven



Will Hale

RINGSIDE

+ PLYMOUTH

NOVEMBER 22

★★★★☆ MAIN EVENT

★★★★☆ UNDERCARD

★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

NEWQUAY'S **Brad Pauls** successfully defended his Southern Area middleweight strap at the Ocean City's Guildhall as broke down and then dispatched Chalk Farm's **Robbie Chapman** at 2-03 of the seventh in headlining a Sinfield Star Promotions card.

Chapman, dubbed "The Camden Caretaker", started well as he outworked the champion in the opener. Pauls was getting beaten to the punch by some neat, crisp combinations as he attempted to steal ground with half-steps forward.

The Londoner continued to catch Brad in the next as he avoided powerful left hooks to both jab upstairs and work the body.

The tide turned at the end of the third. After Robbie had pluckily sustained his attack downstairs, Pauls' hooks started to find the target, and a barrage near the close had Chapman's legs at sea and his nose dripping red.

The challenger took some hefty right hooks and uppercuts in the fourth before being decked after rocking from two clubbing shots from the same side. Chapman bravely beat the count but had a cut and bruised right eye at the end a torrid round.

The momentum fully swung in the Champion's favour over the next two. Brad jabbed well and closed the range to deploy hard left hooks to the head and body as Chapman no longer had the firepower to deny him.

Even though Robbie was slipping behind on my card, he grittily tried to find openings to work back into the fight when a furious right, then a right cross and straight left, sent him crashing down on the bottom rope. He bravely tried to rise, but third man Lee Cook rightly had seen enough.

Plymouth's **Darren Townley** scored a 39-37 four-threes win over Camden's **Lee Devine** on Chas Coakley's tally.

Darren was fairly open as he came forward aggressively in the opener and by the second the less-experienced Devine was looking for breathers.

Photo: PHILIP SHARKEY



SMASHED:
Chapman reels away
after taking a huge
Pauls right hand

BOMBS AWAY

FULL RESULTS

Brad Pauls (158lbs), 14-0 (9), w tco 7
Robbie Chapman (158lbs), 6-2; **Darren Townley** (147lbs), 10-3 (1), w pts 4 **Lee Devine** (143lbs), 0-2; **Constantin Ursu** (147lbs), 1-0, w pts 4 **Artur Davydenko** (147lbs), 1-5; **Conor Adaway** (125lbs), 1-0, w rtd 2 **Jules Phillips** (125lbs), 2-24; **Lewis Everson** (158lbs), 1-0, w pts 4 **Sergey Martirosyan** (161lbs), 2-6 (1); **Billy Stanbury** (163lbs), 1-0, w rsf 1 **Martin Kabrhel** (163lbs), 2-18-1 (2); **Marcus Hodgson** (131lbs), 3-0-1 w pts 4 **Edward Bjorklund** (129lbs), 1-31-1 (1).

Townley continued to plough in and make the fight over the final stanzas, but Lee to his credit employed effective lateral movement to last the course. The show featured three debutants fighting in their hometown. Firstly, former European under-18 bronze medallist **Constantin Ursu** overcame solid Ukrainian **Artur Davydenko** in a very entertaining battle of hooks by 39-37 on Coakley's tally.

Artur was floored extremely heavily by a massive left hand in the third from the Plymouth-based Moldovan but amazingly got up immediately - whereupon the pair continued exchanging full-bodied power shots from close quarters. Former amateur star Ursu is confident, fast and hurtful.

Secondly, **Conor Adaway** used fast hands and classy shot selection to force Islington's **Jules Phillips** to retire at 2-04 of the second of a four-threes officiated by Coakley.

Adaway bamboozled Jules in the first with his rapid punches off the jab and lead left uppercuts. Phillip's was struggling to contain the aggressor in the next when he was decked with a cluster punctuated by a right hand, which prompted the Londoner's corner to pull him out.

Lastly, **Lewis Everson** secured a 39-37 four-threes verdict over game Russian **Sergey Martirosyan** on Cook's slate.

Everson was wired in the first round as he launched salvos of hard hooks to the head and body. After settling down, he showed decent lateral movement and some quality shoulder rolls.

The pair elected to stand with their heads on each other's shoulders in

an gutsy display of in-fighting in the last. Bideford southpaw **Billy Stanbury** blasted out Czech **Martin Kabrhel** at 2:39 of the first in a scheduled four-threes in his paid bow.

The import was down three times in total as Stanbury cocooned him in a whirlwind of volume punching. After a heavy

left hand clobbered Martin to the canvas for the final time, referee Cook waved the affair off.

Cook was also the third man for **Marcus Hodgson's** 39-37 four-threes win over Lewisham-based Swede **Edward Bjorklund**.

Marcus was given a solid workout by Bjorklund, who mugged and showboated in a bout that was lacking in real accuracy from both.

THE VERDICT 'Newquay Bomb' Pauls confirms that he is indeed explosive.

'I HAD TO FIGHT IT OUT. I COULDN'T GO DOWN IN FRONT OF MY MARINES'

TIGERS ROAR

+ HULL

NOVEMBER 23

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

HULL-BASED Lithuanian **Evaldas Korsakas**, the super-welterweight Central Area champion, ended 2019 on a high with a comprehensive 60-53 victory over countryman **Arvydas Trizno** on Carl Greaves' Hull's Tigers show at KCOM Stadium.

What made this result more impressive was that tough southpaw Korsakas pretty much boxed the whole fight one-handed due to a hand injury; he's booked in for surgery this week. He put Trizno down during the final round with a cracking shot to the ribs, but his compatriot held on to hear the final bell. Fight of the night was the six-round war between Scunthorpe's unbeaten super-welterweight **Luke Fisher** and durable Devonian **Shane Medlen**.

Former three-time Combined Services champion Fisher was cruising to victory until he got caught by hurtful head shots towards the end of the second.

From that point on the fans were

David Wainwright sees local talents thrive on entertaining show



BODY SNATCHER: Korsakas aims for Trizno's midsection

Photo: IAN LYALL

treated to a real barnstormer as the fighters traded blows - and despite a final warning by referee Ron Kearney for pushing during a bruising fourth, Fisher prevailed comfortably by 59-57. There were first-time stoppages for Hull pair **Conor Seymour**, back after 19 months away from boxing, and **Lewis Sylvester**, over respectively Manchester's **Ryan Hibbert** and Hereford's **Dean Evans**. Referee Kearney rescued Evans after one minute 30 seconds of round two and stopped Hibbert from getting seriously hurt at one minute 21 seconds of round three. York's busy **Cam Shaw** won convincingly

over four rounds (40-37) over Batley's game **Nabil Ahmed**. This was Shaw's fourth professional fight in as many months, and he will be looking to keep this going in 2020.

Hull debutant **Chelsey Arnell** became the first female boxer from the city to fight for nearly 60 years and showed great determination to overcome early nerves to salvage a draw against tough Lithuanian **Vaida Masiokaite** over four hard-fought rounds.

THE VERDICT Korsakas and Fisher will aim for bigger fights in 2020.

FULL RESULTS

Evaldas Korsakas (158lbs 3oz), 10-7-3 (5), w pts 6 **Arvydas Trizno** (156lbs 9oz), 27-90-3 (7); **Luke Fisher** (151lbs 10z), 5-0 (2), w pts 6 **Shane Medlen** (151lbs 3oz), 2-3 (1); **Conor Seymour** (176lbs 6oz), 9-1-2 (1), w rsf 3 **Ryan Hibbert** (174lbs 9oz), 0-3; **Lewis Sylvester** (137lbs), 5-0 (1), w rsf 2 **Dean Evans** (138 1/2lbs), 8-34-3 (4); **Cameron Shaw** (126lbs 10z), 4-0, w pts 4 **Nabil Ahmed** (127 1/4lbs), 0-5; **Chelsey Arnell** (136lbs 10z), 0-0-1, d pts 4 **Vaida Masiokaite** (138lbs 2oz), 1-7-3 (1).

DOUBLE DELIGHT

+ BARNSELY

NOVEMBER 23

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

LEE APPELYARD secured an English title shot at a second weight with a points win on Ryan Rhodes and Stefy Bull's joint promotion at the Metrodome. Rotherham's Appleyard was a clear enough 98-92 winner in Howard Foster's eyes over Birmingham's **Ben Fields**. Fields seemed to empty most of his tank with a huge burst in the fourth but ex-English lightweight champion Appleyard had most of the contest his own way and looked fresher in the final stages.

Andy Brook oversaw the comfortable

Appleyard win sets up second title shot, writes Ashley Ball from ringside

60-54 triumph of Bradford's **Amin Jahanzeb** against **Taka Bembere** from Oldham as well as wins for **Nathan Bendon**, **James Flint** and **Kyle Yousaf**.

It was a straightforward shutout for West Yorkshireman Jahanzeb, who took charge of centre ring from the off. Sutton Coldfield's Bendon cut short an eight-rounder with Sheffield's **Levi Kinsiona** 52 seconds into the seventh with a left hook. Kinsiona lost his unbeaten record after being put down heavily and rising unsteadily in what had been a topsy-turvy contest.

Doncaster's Flint snuck by Gateshead's **Kris Pilkington** 58-57. Finishing stronger certainly played a part in Flint getting his hand raised. English flyweight champion Yousaf, from Sheffield, warmed up for a shot at the Lonsdale Belt with a routine 40-36 win over Chatham's **Ricky Leach**.

A trio of hometown fighters got their third, second and debut wins.

JA Metcalfe made a solid start to life as a pro, winning 40-36 in a dominant display against Middleton's **Darryl Sharp**. Teenager Metcalfe set a pace that former Central Area champion Sharp could not match.

Callum Simpson blitzed Chessington's **Richard Harrison** in just 2-26. Big combinations wobbled the away man and Foster jumped in with him bang in trouble on the ropes. Foster saw the final home man, Dempsey Wale, a 40-36 victor against Blackburn's Naheem Chaudhry and he also gave Sheffield's James Rayworth a 39-37 decision over London-based Victor Edagha.

THE VERDICT Appleyard ready to challenge for English belt again.

FULL RESULTS

Lee Appleyard (139lbs 3oz), 16-5-1 (5), w pts 10 **Ben Fields** (138 1/2lbs) 9-8-2; **Nathan Bendon** (146lbs 6oz), 3-1 (1), w ko 7 **Levi Kinsiona** (146 1/4lbs), 6-1 (1); **James Flint** (145lbs 2oz), 7-0-1 (2), w pts 6 **Kris Pilkington** (145lbs), 2-4-1; **Amin Jahanzeb** (131lbs), 6-0 (2), w pts 6 **Taka Bembere** (132lbs), 1-14 (1); **James Rayworth** (157 1/2lbs), 2-0, w pts 4 **Victor Edagha** (162lbs 6oz) 2-69-3 (1); **JA Metcalfe** (170 1/4lbs), 1-0, w pts 4 **Darryl Sharp** (172lbs) 5-66-1; **Dempsey Wale** (140lbs 6oz), 2-0, w pts 4 **Naheem Chaudhry** (146lbs 2oz), 2-61-1 (1); **Kyle Yousaf** (123 1/4lbs), 16-0 (7), w pts 4 **Ricky Leach** (130lbs 2oz), 3-48-1; **Callum Simpson** (177lbs 6oz), 3-0 (1), w rsf 1 **Richard Harrison** (179lbs 6oz), 4-42.

ON COURSE

Catterall beats Schwarzkopf while waiting for his WBO title shot, writes **Daniel Herbert**

DUBAI, UAE

NOVEMBER 22

★★★☆☆ CATTERALL-SCHWARZKOPF

★★★★☆ THE REST

JACK CATTERALL stayed busy while awaiting a world title shot when he outpointed Germany's **Timo Schwarzkopf** over 10 rounds on the D4G show at Caesars Palace Dubai.

The Chorley southpaw is mandatory contender for the WBO super-lightweight title held by Jose Ramirez, who is already committed to a defence against Viktor Postol in China on February 1.

So this was a rust-shedding exercise for Catterall, whose only previous outing in 2019 was a three-round KO of journeyman **Oscar Amador** in April.

And he won clearly in this Yuji Fukuchi-refereed contest with scores of 100-91 for judge Gary Kitanoski, 99-91 for Shehzad Janad and 99-92 for Dean Henry.

Catterall generally controlled matters with his superior boxing skills and

mobility. Schwarzkopf would plod in, only for the Lancashire man to pick him off with jabs and left crosses, from time to time stepping to one side to bang in a solid body shot.

Catterall's biggest concern was a cut on his right eye, which had started earlier on and reopened in the fifth when his Albanian-born opponent landed a left hook.

But Jack got on his bike to see out the session and two rounds later hurt Schwarzkopf for the first time with a left downstairs that made his knees dip.

The Chorley man boxed his way through the final six minutes to notch his 25th victory, 14 inside the distance, and now he can make plans for a 2020 title challenge.

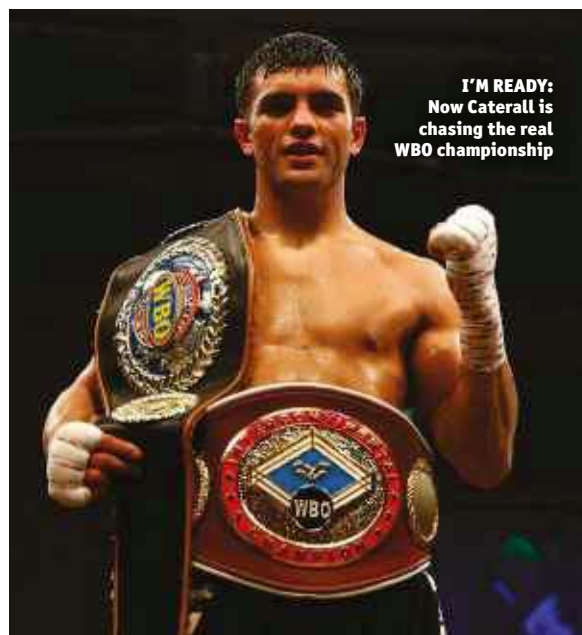
Another world-rated British boxer to remain unbeaten on the card was **Thomas Patrick Ward**.

The Rainton, County Durham super-bantam outboxed Mexico's **Martin Casillas** for a clear unanimous eight-round points victory on three 80-71 cards from judges Kitanoski, Henry and Ahmed Gharib.

There was also a unanimous eight-round victory for Indian super-middleweight star **Vijender Singh**, who beat Ghanaian veteran **Charles Adamu** on three scores of 80-68.

THE VERDICT Catterall gets some needed rounds in the bank while awaiting his big chance.

Photo: ACTION IMAGES



I'M READY:
Now Catterall is chasing the real WBO championship

FULL RESULTS

Jack Catterall (142lbs), 25-0 (13), w pts 10 **Timo Schwarzkopf** (142lbs), 20-4 (12); **Muhammad Waseem** (114 3/4lbs), 10-1 (7), w pts 8 **Ganigan Lopez** (112 1/4lbs), 36-11 (19); **Thomas Patrick Ward** (129 3/4lbs), 29-0 (4), w pts 8 **Martin Casillas** (127 1/2lbs), 20-12-1 (10); **Abilkhayr Shegaliev**, 8-0 (4), w pts 8 **Muhamad Sebiyala**, 19-13-1 (16); **Vijender Singh** (168lbs), 12-0 (8), w pts 8 **Charles Adamu** (167lbs), 33-15 (26); **Jayr Raquinel**, 12-1-1 (9), w ko 1 **Jack Amisa**, 21-47-3 (14); **Hasibullah Ahmadi**, 8-0 (2), w rsf 3 **Detnarong Omkratok**, 3-11 (1); **Rohan Date** (150lbs), 11-0-1 (8), w pts 6 **Justice Addy** (145 3/4lbs), 16-7-1 (14); **Sultan Al Nuami**, 1-0 (1), w rsf 1 **Charles Latuperissa**, 2-1-1 (1); **Fahad Al-Bloushi** (133lbs), 1-0 (1), w ko 1 **Sandro Tugushi** (134lbs), 1-7 (1).

JACK FLASH

Rafferty registers another early victory, this time against Valencia

OLDHAM

NOVEMBER 23

★★★☆☆ WHOLE SHOW

SHAW'S **Jack Rafferty** is developing a taste for inside-the-distance wins. Going in, four of his last five opponents hadn't made it through to the final bell and this latest one didn't either. Mexican **Fernando Valencia**, halted just twice in 26 previous outings, almost made it at Oldham Leisure Centre, but not quite. He was stopped in the sixth and last round of a bout officiated by Phil Edwards.

There was a return for Preston's **Mick Hall** who, far from easing his way back, jumped in with tough Sheffield-based Cameroonian **Serge Ambomo**. Hall didn't have it all his own way but he did do enough to earn a 39-38 points win from referee Darren Sarginson.

Another points winner was Manchester's **Sean Fennell** who, stepping up to six for the first time, was handed a 59-56 victory by Mr Sarginson at the conclusion of his bout against Derbyshire veteran **Lee Connelly**.

Bolton's **Osman Aslam** had an early night - a fourth and final-round stoppage coming his way against Spain-based Nicaraguan **Pablo Narvaez** in a contest refereed by Mr Edwards.

Manchester's **Zak Miller** showed plenty of promise en route to a 40-36 debut win (Phil Edwards refereeing) over Swindon's **Joe Beeden**. There were home successes too for Mancunians **Connor Burton** and **Dan Booth**, who notched respective triumphs over Bradford's **Jake Pollard** and Canning Town southpaw **Lee Hallett**.

Burton took the 40-36 decision of Mr Edwards and Booth edged home 39-38 on the card of Mr Sarginson.

The surprise of the night came in the fight between Blackburn-born **Asad Riaz** who, having won all four previously, came a cropper against one-fight Penzance novice **Dylan Courtney**. The Cornwall man controlled proceedings sufficiently enough to take the 39-36 verdict of referee Sarginson.

THE VERDICT Rafferty makes his mark on this Black Flash promotion.

NOTE THE November 16 Aberdeen show - reported on in last week's issue (November 21) - was a co-promotion between Kynoch Boxing and Northern Sporting Club.

FULL RESULTS

Jack Rafferty (151lbs 14oz), 11-0 (7), w rsf 6 **Fernando Valencia** (150lbs 14oz), 8-19 (4); **Sean Fennell** (136 3/4lbs), 6-0 (1), w pts 6 **Lee Connelly** (139lbs 10oz), 7-51 (4); **Mick Hall** (160lbs 14oz), 15-2 (2), w pts 4 **Serge Ambomo** (159 1/4lbs), 7-17-2 (3); **Connor Burton** (128 1/2lbs), 2-0, w pts 4 **Jake Pollard** (129 1/4lbs), 0-14; **Dan Booth** (149 1/4lbs), 4-0 (1), w pts 4 **Lee Hallett** (146 3/4lbs), 1-25; **Osman Aslam** (127 3/4lbs), 14-0 (6), w rsf 4 **Pablo Narvaez** (124 1/2lbs), 9-19-7 (1); **Zack Miller** (132lbs 14oz), 1-0, w pts 4 **Joe Beeden** (129lbs 2oz), 2-71-1 (1); **Dylan Courtney** (173lbs 14oz), 1-1, w pts 4 **Asad Riaz** (173 1/2lbs), 4-1.

NINE FOR MICK

Big left hand does for Hrazdira, writes Andy Whittle from ringside



NOVEMBER 22

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

A HANDFUL of four-rounders made up the bill in the sold-out banqueting suite at Elland Road.

Tattooed local cruiser **Mick Learmonth**, already ahead after a one-sided opener against the tough and grinning **Jan Hrazdira**, secured victory number nine when the visiting Czech turned away in obvious distress having been tagged by a meaty left.

I suspect a thumb in the eye may have been to blame for his discomfort but, whatever the case, it was all over with just 92 seconds of the second having elapsed.

Only shut-out of the night came in the contest between Leeds super-welter **Tom Young** and Bolton's **Chris Jenkinson**, while another Leeds favourite in **Luke Kelly** edged out Hull's **Zygmantas Butkevicius** in what proved an awfully close fought and thoroughly enjoyable tussle. Referee for the night Andy Brook awarded Luke a 39-38 victory at the finish.

There was only a point separating York's **Michael Fafera** and Latvia's **Raimonds Sniedze** too, Fafera bouncing back after being sent to the canvas by a left from the Riga native against the run of play in the third to claim a 38-37 win.

It quickly became apparent that there was a problem with Grantham-born debutant **Ben Croft** in his four against Derby veteran **Elvis Dube**. Croft was throwing little and what punches were attempted had no real weight behind them. By the halfway stage he was seemingly running on empty and it came as no surprise when Mr Brook waved a halt 24 seconds into the third.

Illness was duly blamed and, with hindsight, Croft really ought not to have boxed.

It was one of those days for illness it seemed, with guest of honour Joe Calzaghe being forced to pull out earlier in the day. But the assembled diners, who during the course of the evening raised a hefty sum for a local charity in the memorabilia auction, were royally entertained by excellent late sub Ricky Hatton.

FULL RESULTS

Mick Learmonth (201 1/2lbs), 9-0 (3), w rsf 2 **Jan Hrazdira** (199lbs 2oz), 3-15-1 (1); **Tom Young** (155 1/2lbs), 8-1 (3), w pts 4 **Chris Jenkinson** (158lbs 2oz), 11-71-3 (4); **Michael Fafera** (180lbs), 6-0 (2), w pts 4 **Raimonds Sniedze** (177 1/2lbs), 13-50-2 (9); **Luke Kelly** (157lbs), 3-0, w pts 4 **Zygmantas Butkevicius** (157lbs), 2-29; **Elvis Dube** (191lbs 2oz), 9-81-2 (6), w rsf 3 **Ben Croft** (190 1/4lbs), 0-1.

HOME COMFORTS

Just three rounds conceded as the house boxers excel



NOVEMBER 23

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

NORTH NOTTS ARENA in Workshop has become quite a popular addition to the circuit since debuting as a venue recently as 2016, this being the 12th time it had played host to the pros. The half-dozen bouts served up in this latest offering went down particularly well with the locals.

A single six-rounder, with the rest going over four, was the nominal bill-topper with popular **Josh Padley** from Armthorpe on the fringes of Doncaster securing win number three by overcoming tattooed **Liam Richards** 60-53. The Melksham veteran picked up a cut above the left eye as early as the second.

Another near-Doncaster operator, Hatfield's **Kyle Fox**, bounced back after slipping to the first loss of his career last time out at the hands of Sheffield's Anthony Tomlinson when contesting the Central Area welterweight title in May. On this night he took a 39-37 win over Driffield's experienced **Danny Little**.

There were third paid wins for both **Cameron Kaihau** and **Scott Hutsby**.

Warmsworth middleweight Kaihau had too much for Bradford's **Saif Zahoor**, who after losing out to the tune of 40-37 remains winless after four, while Heanor super-middle Hutsby saw off the challenge of Cambridge's Italian-born **Gianni Antoh**, who did enough to take one of the sessions to leave the score reading 39-37.

Local favourite **Declan Cairns** had wowed his supporters by needing just two and a half rounds to account for fellow first-timer **JJ Smith** of Maidstone on his debut here in June - and once again he sent the punters home happy, although he had to go the distance for the first time against Hyde's **Dale Arrowsmith**, the card at the finish reading 39-37 in his favour.

First-timer **Sam Spooner**, a super-welter from Bulwell in Nottingham handed Eastbourne's **Scott Hillman** a 45th career defeat with referee-for-the-night, Solihull's Chris Dean, adjudging him a shutout 40-36 winner.

FULL RESULTS

Josh Padley (138 1/4lbs), 3-0, w pts 6 **Liam Richards** (139lbs 9oz), 12-62 (1); **Kyle Fox** (156 1/4lbs), 7-1, w pts 4 **Danny Little** (154lbs 5oz), 8-63-2 (1); **Cameron Kaihau** (153lbs), 3-0, w pts 4 **Saif Zahoor** (156 1/2lbs), 0-4; **Jack Hutsby** (171lbs 7oz), 3-0-1, w pts 4 **Gianni Antoh** (172lbs 3oz), 1-11; **Declan Cairns** (156lbs), 2-0 (1), w pts 4 **Dale Arrowsmith** (158lbs 2oz), 2-32-1 (1); **Sam Spooner** (157lbs 7oz), 1-0, w pts 4 **Scott Hillman** (169 1/2lbs), 0-45.

FINE START

Mick Kane sees Grant best Bishop on his professional debut



NOVEMBER 23

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE

DEBUTANT **Jordan Grant** headlined the Kynoch Boxing-promoted Pugilism at the Plaza show at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, making a fine start to his professional career.

The Hamilton boxer faced Rochdale's **Andy Bishop** in a four-rounder in the light-heavyweight division and controlled the fight from start to finish, landing heavy body shots throughout. Every punch thrown seemed to be a power shot and it was clear Grant hoped to get the stoppage on his resume. Alas it wasn't to be, but it was a comfortable debut none the less, referee-for-the-night Kenny Pringle (Hamilton) scoring 40-36 Grant, to the delight of a large support.

Preceding the main event was another light-heavy four as Houston's **Darren Tarr** faced the experienced **Lewis van Poetsch** from Lydney. Tarr came out on top winning a 39-37 verdict, enjoying a good workout as he moved to 2-0. The following day, van Poetsch stole the show at the Southern Area Awards, where he was named 'Best Supporting Boxer' (Full report from those awards next week).

Eric Donovan put on a stylish performance, with a large support having come over from County Kildare not disappointed. The former Irish amateur star comprehensively outboxed Nicaragua's **Jose Aguilar** to win all six rounds at 60-54. The Irishman's movement and quickfire punches were too much for Aguilar.

The most competitive fight was a six-round featherweight contest between Barrhead's **Gary Rae** and **Brett Fidoe**. The Evesham man kept pushing forward and found some success on occasion, but Rae had the cleaner work and was a worthy winner by 58-56.

Opening the show was a heavyweight bout that saw **Kaseem Saleem** deliver a great right hand to stop **Shaun Duffy** (Birmingham) 52 seconds into the second stanza.

Both fighters were throwing plenty of leather in an entertaining contest and it was Duffy who had backed Saleem on to the ropes before being caught. The Dumfries man moves to 2-0.

FULL RESULTS

Jordan Grant (168lbs), 1-0, w pts 4 **Andy Bishop** (168lbs), 0-9; **Darren Tarr** (173lbs), 2-0, w pts 4 **Lewis van Poetsch** (167lbs), 9-114-2 (2); **Eric Donovan** (131 1/4lbs), 11-0 (6), w pts 6 **Jose Aguilar** (133 1/2lbs), 16-70-5 (6); **Gary Rae** (126lbs), 10-1 (2), w pts 6 **Brett Fidoe** (126lbs), 13-56-5 (6); **Kaseem Saleem** (280lbs), 2-0 (1), w rsf 2 **Shaun Duffy** (236lbs), 2-4 (1).

PREVIEWS

Previewing the best
upcoming fights
around the world

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

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

NO TIME TO WASTE

Photo: ACTION IMAGES/JASON CAIRNDUFF

KEY TO VICTORY?

Tete is significantly taller and his reach vastly superior to Casimero [pictured facing page]



TALE OF THE TAPE

ZOLANI TETE	JOHN RIEL CASIMERO
4/11	5/2
Mar 8, 1988/31	Feb 13, 1989/30
Mdantsane	Ormoc City
South African	Filipino
72ins	64ins
5ft 9ins	5ft 4ins
28-3 (21)	28-4 (19)
Orthodox	Orthodox
May 27, 2006/18	Jun 3, 2007/18
68	59
5-1 (2)	6-2 (4)

Tete's game of catch up starts with tough defence against Casimero, writes Matt Christie

★★★★★ MAIN EVENT

★★★★★ UNDERCARD



EVERYONE enjoyed the recent classic between Naoya Inoue and Nonito Donaire in the World Boxing Super Series bantamweight final.

Everyone except **Zolani Tete**.

In a cruel twist of fate Tete injured his right shoulder just days before he was supposed to meet Donaire in the semi-finals seven months ago. It was a tie many favoured Tete to win.

Stephon Young took his spot in the last four by default. Fans were robbed of Tete-Donaire but they soon got what they deserved when Donaire, after knocking

out Young, then collided with Inoue in the final. One hopes that Tete – still the WBO champion – also gets what he deserves.

He's made no secret of his desire to clash with Inoue, who beat Donaire on points, in a unification tussle. Tete would likely start as underdog but the granite-tough South African is the Japanese destroyer's closest 118lbs rival. He might also turn out to be his worst nightmare. Frank Warren, Tete's promoter, immediately declared his intention to match his charge with Inoue, who is now under the watchful eye of Bob Arum and Top Rank.

Before any of that can happen, though, Tete must get past Filipino puncher **John Riel Casimero**. The shoulder injury, reportedly diagnosed as tendonitis, means Tete has been out of action since he outscored tricky 2012 Olympic bronze

medallist Mikhail Aloyan over 12 rounds in the WBSS quarter finals last October. The injury and layoff (he didn't train for three months after it was treated in May) are not ideal preparation for a 31-year-old bantamweight. It remains to be seen if his problems will affect the fighter who looked almost invincible when he battered then-unbeaten Paul Butler in a Liverpool defence of the IBF super-flyweight title in 2015.

In Casimero he meets a fighter who is no stranger to wowing British audiences himself. In 2016 he slowly bludgeoned the ambition from a raw Charlie Edwards in a defence of the IBF flyweight title. A pressure fighter, with zap and power, not to mention a mean left hook, Casimero – also a former IBF light-flyweight boss – is far from an ideal challenger for a champion looking to shake off the

cobwebs. Since halting Edwards in 10 rounds, Casimero has won five bouts, four inside schedule, winning the WBO's Interim bantamweight bauble in the process.

However, in that time he has also been outpointed over 12 rounds in a non-title affair with countryman Jonas Sultan in a September 2017 outing that highlighted his flaws. Defensively, he's not nearly as gifted as he is in attack.

Weight issues were blamed for that disappointing performance but Casimero, 30, is a small bantamweight. Though he is significantly shorter, his raids inside will cause Tete problems if the South African fails to impose himself early.

It all makes for an interesting bout inside the Birmingham Arena. The upset shouldn't be written off entirely but expect Tete to box smartly amid moments of uncertainty as Casimero tries to stamp his authority on the bout. After 12 rounds, we expect Tete to be named a clear, and deserved, points winner.

The undercard can boast some solid domestic clashes. **Sam Bowen**, 27, defending his British super-featherweight title against **Anthony Cacace** is perhaps the pick.

Ibstock's Bowen famously (at least in

boxing circles) won the title in April 2018 – beating Maxi Hughes – while juggling full-time work with his career as a boxer. Since then he's won two, including a successful defence when he broke down Jordan McCorry in nine, and ditched his job to focus on his life inside the ropes. That could be ominous for Cacace.

The 30-year-old from Belfast has been guilty of not giving boxing his full attention in the past though for altogether different reasons to his opponent. But the southpaw will provide a stern test in a bout that has the potential for fireworks and – for the gamblers among you – value in the upset.

Bowen, though, seems unlikely to surrender his championship. Expect Bowen to drain the ambition from Cacace with raids to the body before turning the screw late on to notch his 12th inside the distance victory from 16 outings.

Chris Jenkins' British welterweight title defence with **Liam Taylor** is unlikely to be as entertaining but the outcome is no foregone conclusion. The challenger, from Middleton, earned his shot 12 months ago when he edged Tyrone Nurse over 10 rounds to reverse a loss from 2015 but it wasn't a performance to strike fear into the 147lbs weight class.

The champion's breakthrough was far more impressive. He dethroned Johnny Garton in a bout that upset the odds in March but provided several members of the hardcore with a tidy profit after they backed the Welshman to win. Jenkins since emerged from a bloody encounter with Paddy Gallagher to win a technical decision after the bout went to the cards in the ninth. Jenkins, nursing cuts around both eyes, took the verdict by a single point on all three judges' cards.

Interesting to note that Jenkins, based in Garnant, was outscored by Nurse in 2015 and, though he thrives against come-forward types like Garton, Taylor represents a different challenge entirely. Even so, the industry of Jenkins should do just enough to sway the judges' favour after 12.

New Malden's **Lerrone Richards** and **Lennox Clarke** do battle for the vacant British super-middleweight title. Halesowen's Clarke is unbeaten and strong but hasn't gone past four rounds since defeating Jahmaine Smyle over 10 two years ago. Richards isn't exactly a veteran of the 12-round distance himself but defeating Tommy Langford over the distance to pick up the Commonwealth strap provides the superior seasoning. Richards can do the same to Clarke here.

THE VERDICT A must-win for Tete as he chases Naoya Inoue.

ONE TO WATCH: Bowen and the bearded Cacace pose for the camera

DEFENSIVELY, CASIMERO IS NOT AS GIFTED AS HE IS IN ATTACK

Photo: ACTION IMAGES/DAMIR SAGOLJ

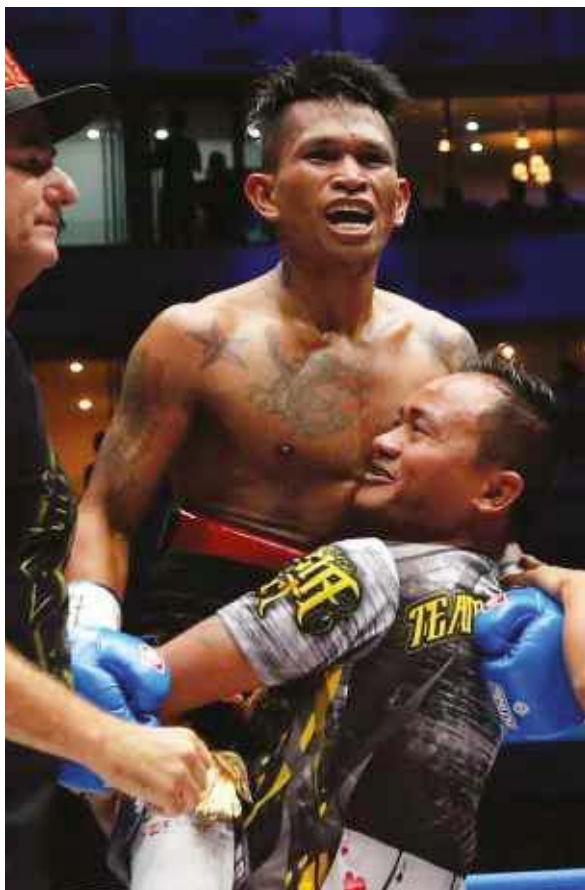


Photo: ACTION IMAGES/ANDREW COULDRIDGE



NO MISTAKES

Frampton must beat McCreary to reboot his career, writes Daniel Herbert

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

WHEN **Carl Frampton** boxes **Tyler McCreary** at the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Las Vegas on Saturday (November 30), he'll be hoping for better luck than the last time he fought in Sin City.

It was in January 2017, at the MGM Grand along the famous Strip, that the Belfast star suffered a split decision loss to previous victim Leo Santa Cruz that cost him not only the WBA featherweight title but also a lot of the momentum he had built up over the years.

Frampton split from Cyclone Promotions to hook up with Frank Warren's Queensberry outfit and then signed a deal with US giants Top Rank, who promote this event (televised on BT Sport 1 in the UK and on ESPN+ in the US).

He also left trainer Shane McGuigan to join Jamie Moore, but a run of three comeback wins was halted when Josh Warrington outpointed him in an IBF title

defence 11 months ago.

Then an August return against Emmanuel Dominguez in Philadelphia was scuppered by a freak accident a few days before – Frampton was sitting in a hotel lobby when a heavy ornament fell onto his left hand and broke a metacarpal.

So the McCreary fight is a chance for Frampton to get back in the ring and also generate interest in a potential challenge to WBO super-featherweight champion Jamel Herring, like Carl promoted by Top Rank.

To that end, the McCreary non-title 10-rounder is made at 128lbs, halfway between feather and super-feather. Over the years Frampton has always needed hard work to get his solid 5ft 5in frame down to first 122lbs (where he won IBF and WBA titles), then

126, so an extra couple of pounds will help him – especially as he turns 33 in February.

McCreary ought to provide a decent workout without upsetting the applecart. A gymmate of former IBF champion Robert Easter Jnr, McCreary is unbeaten

in 17 (one draw) but this will be his first fight scheduled for more than eight rounds.

A former good amateur, he accumulated pro experience steadily until being held to a six-round draw in March by Mexican journeyman Roberto Castaneda.

Then in July he won an eight-round split decision

over Filipino Jessie Cris Rosales, who in his previous fight had been stopped in four by exceptional Shakur Stevenson. For Rosales, Tyler weighed 133 1/2lbs, so he'll have to shift some weight from his 5ft 9in frame for the Frampton match.

The Belfastman is aware of the problems posed by McCreary's physical advantages. Frampton said: "He's got a good jab and he's tall, so it might be difficult to get past it. But the tactics we want to apply in this fight will work well. It might take me a few rounds to get used to his height but once I do I'll be fine."

Frampton's optimism appears justified. It may take him a few rounds to find his timing and range, but after that Carl should take control for a clear points victory as he gets his career back on track.

While the Frampton fight represents the chief interest for British and Irish fans, there are two significant bouts billed above it.

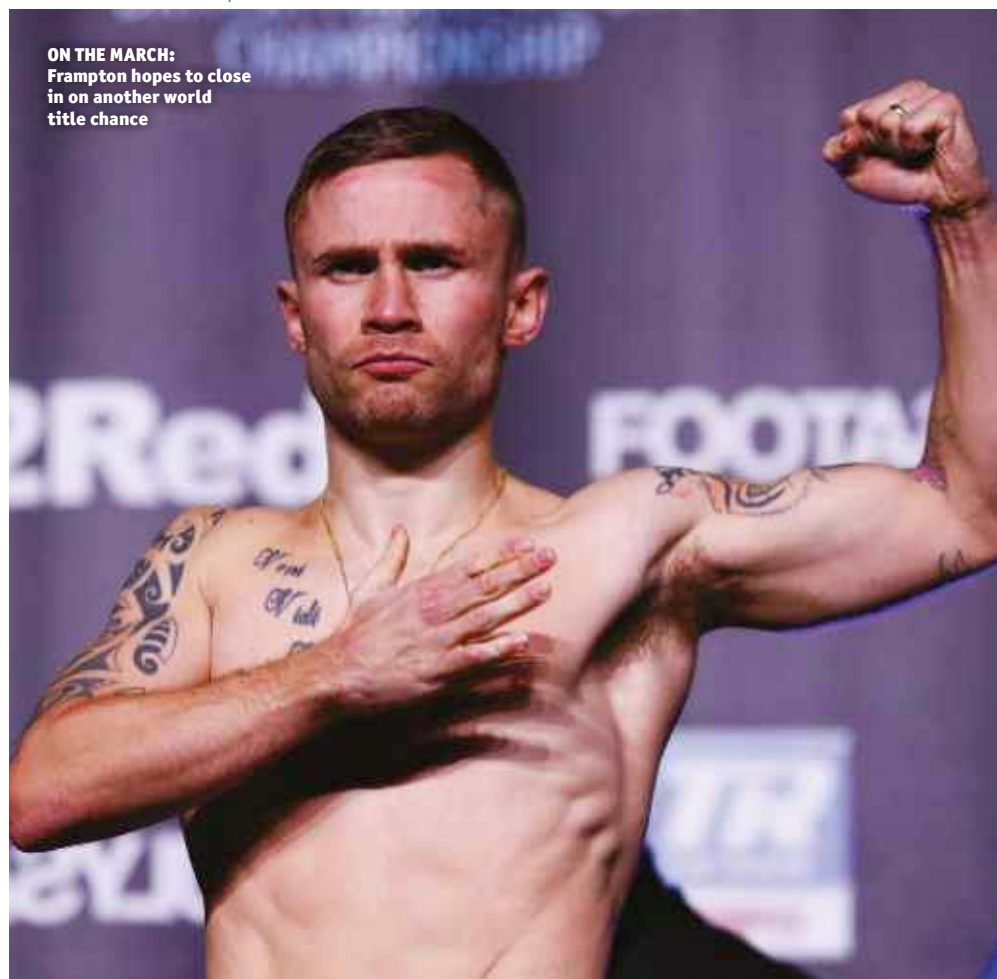
Exciting **Oscar Valdez**, 26-0 (20), has relinquished his WBO featherweight title to make his super-feather bow with a 10-rounder against fellow Mexican **Andres Gutierrez**, 38-2-1 (25).

A couple of years ago a cut chin suffered when slipping in the shower forced Gutierrez out of a fight against Frampton the next day. Valdez can win on points.

And a super-welterweight 12-rounder sees New York-based Dominican Republic puncher **Carlos Adames**, 18-0 (14), favoured to overcome Brazil's 30-1 (22) **Patrick Teixeira**. **BN**

THE VERDICT A victory for Frampton will likely lead to a super-featherweight world title shot.

Photo: ACTION IMAGES VIA REUTERS/JASON CAIRNDUFF



ON THE MARCH: Frampton hopes to close in on another world title chance



TURNAROUND:
Bowes celebrates with his
Commonwealth title

TO THE LEFT

Matt Bozeat
previews an
all-southpaw
double title
clash

★★★★☆ MAIN EVENT

HISTORY could be made at Bethnal Green's York Hall on Friday (November 29) when Commonwealth super-lightweight champion **Philip Bowes** looks to add the vacant British title with victory over **Akeem Ennis-Brown**. At 35, Bowes can become the oldest to win British honours at 140lbs, while Ennis-Brown bids to become the first to bring the Lonsdale Belt to Gloucester.

Then again, neither could happen. So well matched are southpaws Bowes and Ennis-Brown, a draw is a definite possibility. Promoter Mickey Helliet hopes that doesn't happen. Helliet, who manages Bowes, promotes without television and doesn't fancy staging a rematch.

"It's going to be very tough to make money," he said. "If we don't lose money and Phil wins, that's a really good night for us."

Helliet and Bowes have written a small hall success story. Bowes turned pro at 27 after reaching the last eight at the Commonwealth Games representing Jamaica and losses to Joe Hughes, Johnny Coyle and Glenn Foot suggested that Southern Area level was probably his

ceiling. The switch to Helliet came after the loss to Foot in May 2017.

"When he came to me, Phil was heading for the scrapheap," said Helliet.

"I told him: 'If you sell tickets and work hard in the gym, I will get you sensible fights that will get you up the rankings and into title contention.'"

Bowes, 20-3 (3), won a Commonwealth title eliminator against Vusumzi Tyatyeka (20-5) on points and then banged out Benson Nyilawila (10-1) in two rounds for the vacant belt in February. In his first defence in March, he outpointed Tom Farrell (16-1). A scheduled defence against Iddi Mkweru in July fell through days before the show after the Tanzanian couldn't get a visa, to the frustration of Bowes – and Ennis-Brown.

The 24-year-old put himself forward for the fight, but the way Bowes tells it, Mkweru was already lined up, so Ennis-Brown wasn't needed. Ennis-Brown subsequently said in interviews that Bowes had ducked him – infuriating the East Londoner. These exchanges have added an edge to what Helliet describes as "a match between real chess players." Expect lots of thinking and feinting – and some sorcery.

"I use what I call 'ring magic'," said

TALE OF THE TAPE

PHILIP BOWES	AKEEM ENNIS-BROWN
@philipbowes	@RiiddyRival
Jun 12, 1984/35	DOB/AGE Sep 14, 1995/24
Leytonstone	HOMETOWN Gloucester
English	NATIONALITY English
5ft 11ins	HEIGHT 5ft 11ins
20-3 (3)	RECORD 13-0 (1)
Southpaw	STANCE Southpaw
Oct 8, 2011/27	DEBUT/AGE Jul 11, 2015/19
13	KO PERCENTAGE 8
WWWWW	LAST FIVE FIGHTS WWWWW
17	FIGHTS AT YORK HALL 2

Ennis-Brown. "From the first bell I put a spell on them. It's tough when you're in there with me. It's hard to hit me. I break your will, I break your heart."

Bowes says he knows what Ennis-Brown means.

"He just nicks rounds by throwing a few shots and then running away," Bowes said.

"You think to yourself: 'He's got nothing, I'll get him in the next round,' but before you know it, you're five rounds down and thinking to yourself: 'How am I losing this fight?' By the time Glenn Foot woke up against him, he only had one round left."

Foot is a common opponent. He unanimously outpointed Bowes for the vacant English title and a few weeks later, he lost the St George's belt to Ennis-Brown on a majority verdict. Subsequent wins over Chris Jenkins (19-2-1) – on a technical points decision after the Welshman was cut – Darragh Foley (15-2-1) and Bilal Rehman (12-0) are further proof that Ennis-Brown is good at what he does. He is a southpaw with long arms, loose shoulders and quick feet. Opponents have found that if they wait too long, Ennis-Brown lands jabs and disappears and if they commit, he's hard to hit and quick to counter.

Foley had success when he was able to crowd Ennis-Brown. "Riiddy" likes to have the last word in exchanges and by doing so, he gives opponents chances. Last time out in March against Rehman, Ennis-Brown looked to counter off the front foot and took a few. But when he was caught, he fired back with more. Ennis-Brown isn't just a fancy mover. He can fight as well.

Ennis-Brown, 13-0 (1), turned pro at 19. Part of his education has taken place behind closed doors in sparring and everywhere he's been, Ennis-Brown has made a good impression. He's beaten the better opposition as well and doesn't really suit Bowes, who likes to stand off and walk opponents onto punches. Talking to those in the trade who know, most lean towards Ennis-Brown – and we will do the same.

THE VERDICT History beckons for either Bowes or Ennis-Brown.

Unbeaten and undisputed, Cecilia Braekhus was considering retirement before she made some key changes to find her focus again, writes Thomas Gerbasi

JUST FOR LIFE



told me before her last couple fights that she was still finding motivation despite winning all the belts at 147 pounds with no real challenge left in sight in that division.

Maybe it's because I caught her. She laughs again before admitting that after making history in May of 2018 by becoming the first woman to be featured on HBO World Championship Boxing, that ever-present optimism and motivation for what was next was waning.

Braekhus did fight twice more after defeating Kali Reis on HBO last year, successfully defending her titles with a win over Inna Sagaydakovskaya two months later before closing out HBO's boxing program with a victory against Aleksandra Magdziak Lopes last December.

But then, it was time for a break.

"It was very important," she said of the 11-month stay on the sidelines that will end on November 30 when she meets Argentina's Victoria Noelia Bustos in Monte Carlo. "Actually, my last fight, I was kind of wondering if this was it. And that was just because I was very tired; mostly tired mentally. Being a fighter, there's so much going on, not just inside the ring, but also outside the ring. So for me to just disappear for a couple of months was a big deal and exactly what I needed to get back fully motivated."

And though the 38-year-old's in the ring ledger shows nothing for 2019, she has not been idle this year, as she followed up her break from all things boxing with a switch in trainers from Johnathon Banks to Abel Sanchez and, perhaps even more notable, a signing with Matchroom Boxing.

"I had to decide what I wanted to do," said Braekhus. "After HBO shut down (its boxing program) I had a choice to make. I am in that stage of my career that this will probably be some of my last fights, and what my next decision would be was pretty important. We talked to a lot of different potential options, and after a long process, this was the best option we landed on and I'm very, very happy about everything."

The alliance with Eddie Hearn's outfit gives Braekhus another worldwide broadcast outlet through DAZN, and it also puts her in line for the super-fights she's wanted, ones that can allow her to put a final stamp on a career that will undoubtedly land her in the hall of fame. And the excitement in the Colombia-born Norwegian's voice is evident when discussing future battles with Katie Taylor and Amanda Serrano.

"That's one of the reasons why I chose Matchroom, because I'm hoping it will get me closer to fighting both Katie Taylor and Serrano," she said. "I love both of these girls inside the ring and outside the ring, and I know I'm the one to beat them both, and I hope we

HE laugh is instant, genuine and infectious. Undisputed welterweight champion Cecilia Braekhus was in Mexico for the recent WBC convention, and the topic that garnered such a reaction was my assertion that I was a bit skeptical when she

can make both of those fights happen. I also think what they [Matchroom] are doing right now with DAZN is great and I love the way they're using social media, so it's the full package and I'm very happy with what we achieved."

Finding new mountains to climb has been difficult for Braekhus, whose list of accomplishments include the aforementioned HBO date, becoming one of boxing's rare undisputed champions, becoming the Boxing Writers Association of America's first recipient of the Christy Martin female fighter of the year award, and leading the ultimately victorious fight to remove the ban on professional boxing in her adopted home country of Norway. And though she's beaten all comers at 147 pounds en route to a perfect 35-0 (9 KOs) record, that defining showdown with someone deemed as her equal has eluded her thanks to timing, weight, or a mixture of all of the above.

That may finally change in 2020, and while she is in the twilight of her career as she approaches 40, having Sanchez – who has trained the likes of Gennadiy Golovkin and Terry Norris – in her corner has also given the "First Lady" a positive jolt of energy leading into the Bustos bout as she trains in the high altitude of Big Bear, California.

"It's a lot of different things," said Braekhus when asked why the pair clicked. "Of course there's Abel and all the experience he has training multiple world champions up in Big Bear. It's high altitude, but it's also the group up there. Training with hungry, young fighters really gives me a run for my money and the training is very hard."

Braekhus talks of fighters leaving the mountain during camp because they had enough, and while that would mark Sanchez as a disciplinarian to most, she sees him as a motivator who also has a sneaky sense of humor.

"People don't know that he's really funny," she said of her new coach. "He's hilarious, and when you are doing this kind of training, the number one thing for you is to have a good motivator, and Abel is definitely that. So I feel very safe with his boxing experience and having young, hungry up and coming guys who are looking for belts and glory. They go to every training session like I did when I was their age, like every session is their last one. All these aspects together, it's very good for me."

So will we see Braekhus adding some knockouts to the nine already on her record?

"I can definitely tell you that you will see a big difference, for sure," she laughs. "He (Sanchez) is very, very aggressive in his style and with the Mexican style, and I'm not saying I'm gonna lose everything I have (already shown), but I can say you will see a huge difference next time I'm in the ring."

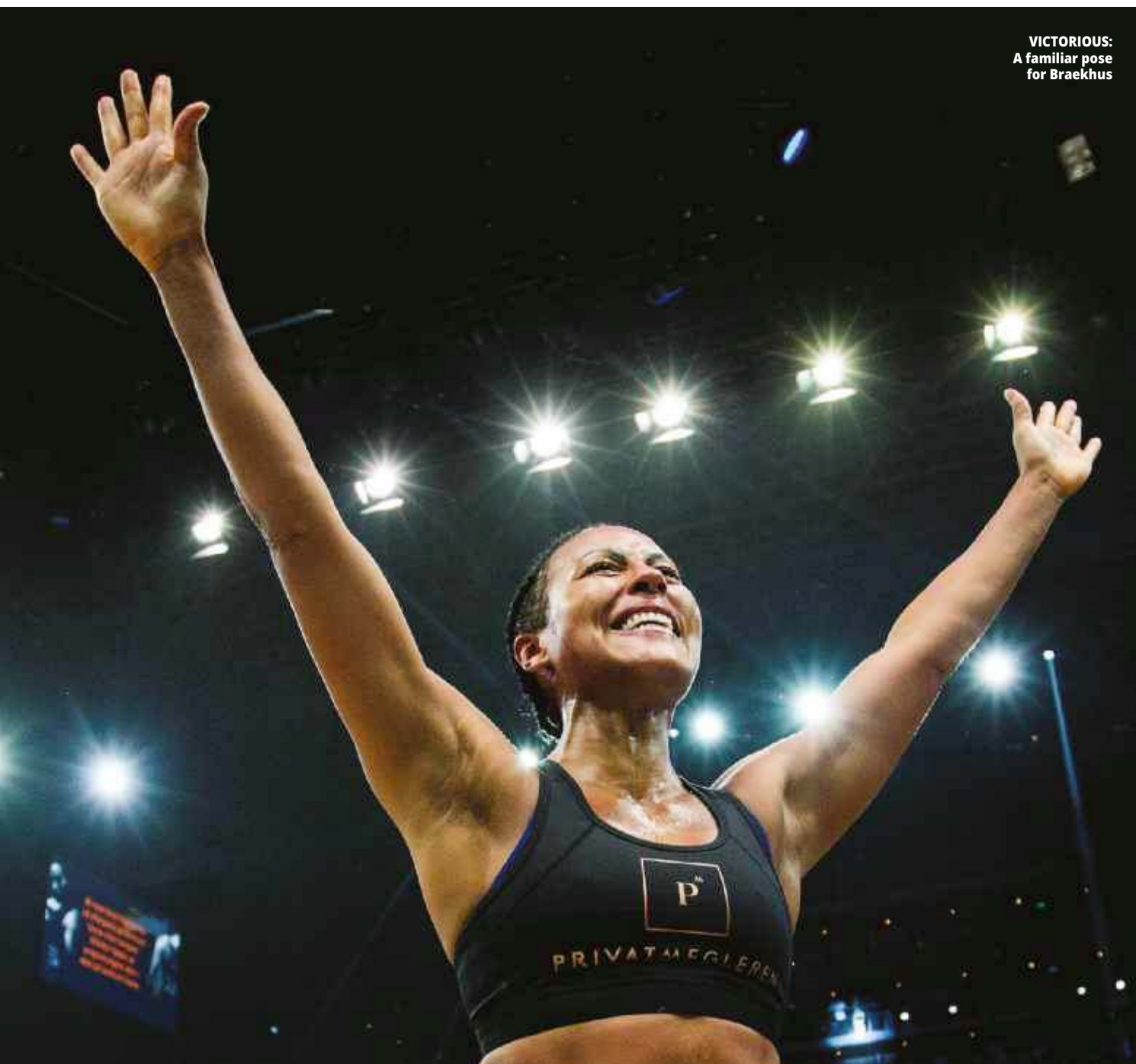
Sounds like the lady with nothing to look forward to at the end of 2018 has made a 180-degree turn as 2019 comes to a close.

"Oh yes, definitely," Braekhus said. "I have some great motivation, and hopefully next year will provide me with the biggest fights. All in all, it's been like a second wind for me. I'm very happy, very motivated and I'm ready to make a statement on Saturday." **BN**



AFTER MY LAST FIGHT I WAS KIND OF WONDERING IF THAT WAS IT. I WAS VERY TIRED, THE BREAK WAS A BIG DEAL"

VICTORIOUS:
A familiar pose
for Braekhus



ALL TO PLAY FOR

Braekhus is joined by Cordina, Fury and Besputin in Monte Carlo

★★★★☆ WHOLE SHOW

WHILE **Cecilia Braekhus'** welterweight title defence against **Victoria Noelia Bustos** looks like a nailed-on 10-round points victory for the champion, there are plenty of other bouts on this Matchroom card, at the Casino de Monte Carlo, which are harder to call.

Cardiff's **Joe Cordina** encounters his toughest test as a professional when he takes on Mexico's **Mario Enrique Tinoco**

in a 12-round super-featherweight bout.

Tinoco violently emerged from obscurity in May when he upset Jordan Gill in Nottingham, stopping the fancied Briton in eight rounds. Was Tinoco really that good or was Gill having a bad night? Undoubtedly, Team Cordina will have prepared for the former. Cordina has the air of a very special fighter and the pick is for him to win a lopsided verdict on the cards.

At welterweight, Russian prospect **Alexander Besputin** can win the spurious

WBA welterweight secondary strap with a 12-round points win over fellow unbeaten countryman, **Radzhab Butaev**.

At heavyweight, **Hughie Fury** eases back against **Pavel Sour** of the Czech Republic. Fury needs a statement win after some indifferent form at the top level. Expect him to win inside the first four. In the same division, unbeaten Chinese southpaw **Zhilei Zhang** gets a test of sorts against the Ukraine's tough but limited **Andriy Rudenko**.

RATED R

Kendall Holt was forced into boxing by a father who would go to prison for child abuse. His mother, inside for murder, couldn't help him. Now he wants to return on his own terms, writes **Elliot Worsell**



It should have been no different to any other school day. He should have woken up, got dressed, eaten breakfast, brushed teeth, rolled eyes, grunted, and left. There should have been no time for conversation. No time for

questions. No mention of murder.

"Do you know what it means?" Barry Porter asked his son.

He meant murder.

In response, a 10-year-old shook his head, more shock than ignorance, then listened to his father tell him to read the newspaper, where, as promised, Kendall Holt found her name, Debra Holt, and the word, that word. His father wasn't lying, Kendall established, but the rest of the article washed over him. Only the important details stuck: his mother's name and the words murder and arrested.

He didn't acknowledge the specifics of her crime nor consider his mother committing a crime to be particularly shocking. Arrests, after all, were par for the course in a city like Paterson, New Jersey, and Kendall knew enough about Debra Holt, his mother, to realise that him ending up in care at the age of five, then being raised by his father from seven, had been no unfortunate mix up.

"I don't even remember what the article said," Holt recalled. "All I remember was that it said she had been convicted of murder and that she put her face in her hands and was crying when she said she did it."

Additional words Holt ignored at the time but would later understand included manslaughter, guilty and 15 years. Yet the remaining details were sketchier. Some

accounts said Debra Holt was dealing drugs when she stabbed and killed a thief who encroached her turf and tried making off with her merchandise. Others said Debra and three men she met at the Alexander Hamilton Hotel were convicted of killing a homeless man during an evening of random, senseless violence – an act known as 'thrill killing' – on September 15, 1990.

"To this day I really don't know anything about it," Kendall said. "Even when I asked her about it last year, she was reluctant and hesitant to talk about it. I just left her alone."



Nobody was around to ask Kendall Holt if he knew what child abuse meant. He just experienced it.

Nor, before that, did anybody ask him if he wanted to box. He just did it.

It all started when Holt, at seven, was given a pair of boxing gloves by his father, manipulated into a fighting stance and taught how to punch. His preference, had he been allowed one, would have been to do karate because it looked cool on TV, but Barry stressed to his son there was no money in karate and ordered him to instead put his hands up and fight his brother, Barry Jnr.

"I was just like any other kid," Holt said. "I was running around the neighbourhood doing little mischievous things, like chasing girls, playfighting with friends and learning how to do backflips and cartwheels. The only difference between me and everyone else was that I had a militant father who taught me how to box because that was his favourite sport."

"Obviously growing up in one of the worst parts of New Jersey, one of the first things you learn as a young boy is how to defend ➤"



THERE WAS A TIME WHEN BOTH OF MY PARENTS WERE IN JAIL AT THE SAME TIME. MY MOTHER WAS INSIDE FOR MURDER AND MY FATHER WENT AWAY FOR CHILD ABUSE"



POINT TO PROVE:
Holt is considering
a return after six
years out

Photo:
ED MULHOLLAND/
USA TODAY SPORTS



WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal,
providing you various content:
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fresh magazines, hot games,
recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price
Cheap constant access to piping hot media
Protect your downloadings from Big brother
Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

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Brand new content
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► yourself. If other kids deem you to be weak, they will exploit you."

Because he lived with his trainer, Kendall's days were regimented, gruelling and always based around boxing. "Is your homework done?" would, under Barry's roof, be a question asked not because a father wanted to keep abreast of his child's academic progress but because he wanted to steer his mind away from books and back towards boxing. After homework, he had a hundred press-ups to complete. After that, there was a bag in the basement that needed punching.

Other times he would spar his brother, older by a year and heavier by 25 pounds, in the backyard. "For me," Holt said, "boxing was not fun growing up."

Be that as it may, both Holt boys were good at it. They progressed from the backyard to the local park in no time and it was here their father, armed with gloves and a timer, would make them fight other children in the neighbourhood.

"Living in a neighbourhood where there's poverty, you have a lot of kids, and most of them went to the park and were aggressive," said Kendall. "Fighting, that was in our nature. That's what we did growing up. A lot of kids wanted to fight. That's how they released aggression. They got their dukes up and settled things."

"When I was going to those neighbourhoods and

beating up other kids, people started recognising me around town. That part of it was fun."

From the park they upgraded to the boxing gym in the Fifth Avenue housing project and demonstrated all the skills their father had for six months been teaching them. The better his boys got, the more excited Barry became. The more hopeful he became. The more militant he became. The more violent he became.

The less fun it became.

"There was one time in my life when both my parents were in jail at the same time," Kendall said matter-of-factly. "My mother was inside for murder and my father went away for child abuse."

●●

As a teenager, Holt used a little of what he learned from his mother and a little of what he learned from his father to excel both in the ring and on the streets. Often the two worlds collided.

"In my first ever fight I fought this tall kid called Alfonso," Holt said. "I won a decision after three rounds and he was later, as a juvenile, in jail with my brother. Those two started talking and they realised I had fought Alfonso in the amateurs. They called me one day and I spoke to both of them on the phone. An interesting coincidence, right?"

Kendall didn't want to go the way of his brother and Alfonso but did briefly carry guns and deal crack



IN CHARGE:
Torres
outpoints
Mike
Arnaoutis
in 2007

Photos:
ED MULHOLLAND/
USA TODAY SPORTS

cocaine. He did so because jobs at K-Mart and local movie theatres weren't giving him the life he desired and because slinging drugs had long been considered the quickest way out of Paterson.

Had other options been available, Holt, when graduating high school, would have gone to college to study physiotherapy. He would then have looked to repair damage rather than cause it. "But my father wasn't signing me up for college so we were getting into arguments and he would be yelling at me a lot," he said. "He would have a go at me for not taking out the garbage or for not doing this and that. After that I was like, 'You know what? I'm going to turn pro.' I pursued a professional boxing career to make enough money to leave his house."

Holt, who lost just five times as an amateur, cared little for world titles or tokens of success and instead used boxing to escape – from his father, from Paterson, from his past, from a bleak future. By March 2001, he had made his professional debut. Within a month he had a nickname.

"The night after my second pro fight in Ohio, Hasim Rahman knocked Lennox Lewis out and afterwards described the knockout as being 'Rated R,'" he explained. "I was in the hotel watching that and from that point on I took that name."

"Hasim Rahman Jr, years later, actually asked me how I got that name. I told him, 'It was because of your dad.'"

Before any of his wins could be described as Rated R, Holt had to contend with a shocking first-round loss at the hands of Thomas Davis, his own video nasty, in 2004. "I was reluctant for years to watch the fight back," he said. "You have to have a short memory. If you dwell on that it's going to hinder you from progressing. It happened, I accepted it and I just mind-dumped it and moved on."

Eight months later, Holt was paid \$15,000 to box Olympian David Diaz, 26-0 at the time, in a fight he was expected to lose. Diaz had the momentum and support network Holt lacked but an edge in power secured Holt an eighth-round stoppage victory.

"My trainer didn't think I would win that fight," Holt said. "He thought Diaz was too aggressive and too strong and the press agreed. I was like, 'No, this kid can't beat me. Trust me.'"

"There were all these TV cameras and reporters around for that fight. Everything you see on TV or read about in magazines, I was experiencing that night. I had dreamed about that."

As a result of this breakthrough, Holt was able to give up his job in 2006 and concentrate solely on boxing. He had a manager and a signing bonus and could afford to get a car and pay bills. "It wasn't a lot," he said, "but it kept the lights on and meant I could go to the gym full time."

Later that year Holt, with renewed dedication, spoiled the unbeaten record of South Africa's Isaac Hlatshwayo via unanimous decision, before then outpointing Mike Arnaoutis, the WBO's number one contender at super-lightweight. He was now on a roll and the world title Barry Porter always wanted was within touching distance of his son, a reluctant avatar.



PROUD:
But Holt
questions his
own legacy

The day before he left New Jersey for Barranquilla, Colombia, Holt was picking up a chicken dinner from a local restaurant when he was suddenly forced to dodge bullets from the guns of two Paterson gangbangers shooting each other. He bobbed and weaved, got out the way, and made the flight the next day. In doing so, two things became clear: one, Holt's defensive instincts were sharp, and two, Barranquilla, despite its reputation, was unlikely to faze him.

As it turned out, it was while in Barranquilla, in 2007, that Holt started to embrace all he had so long looked to avoid. There, in his first world title fight, Holt went back and forth with heavy-handed local Ricardo Torres in the most hostile of environments and couldn't have felt more comfortable.

"I remember thinking this can't be a championship fight because it seems too easy," he said. "But then he hit me with a punch that was so hard I thought he broke my jaw. And I was excited for that. Why? Because this was something I'd seen on TV and heard about. Champions overcoming adversity. Muhammad Ali fought damn near 12 rounds with his jaw broken. I was super excited to think I was in a championship fight and my jaw was broken. I finally felt like a professional boxer."

Holt was controversially stopped in the 11th round of a WBO title fight many felt he was winning and the calls for a rematch, shouts tough to ignore, were answered 10 months later. This time they would fight in Las Vegas. This time Holt would be spared the enmity of Barranquilla but find himself decked by a Torres right hand after just 12 seconds.

"I threw a jab and Torres came over the top of it," he recalled. "But I wasn't paying ➤"

“

HE HIT ME SO HARD I THOUGHT HE BROKE MY JAW. I WAS SUPER EXCITED THAT I WAS IN A TITLE FIGHT AND MY JAW WAS BROKEN. I FINALLY FELT LIKE A PROFESSIONAL BOXER"



SIXTY-ONE SECONDS OF CHAOS:
Holt hits the mat twice [above] before rebounding to stop Torres in the opening round

Photos: ACTION IMAGES/REUTERS/STEVE MARCUS



► attention because I had just seen Mike Tyson at ringside. I was like, Holy s**t, Mike Tyson is watching me. I then throw this lazy-ass jab and he goes over the top of it and I go down. After that I thought, You know what? Let me focus.

"We're throwing punches and I'm trying to grab him to stop his onslaught. I end up going back down. What made me mad was when I got up he hit me with a hook that nobody ever talks about. That right there p****ed me off. Once I got p****ed off, I thought, All right, man, let's go to war."

Stung into action, Holt's violent riposte left Torres sprawled on the bottom rope, unconscious, and concluded one of boxing's greatest one-round title fights.

"I started retreating but I was bobbing and weaving, which was something I actually worked on in camp," he said. "A lot of people don't know this, but I knocked him out with a straight right hand, and I went into that fight with a fractured right hand. It was pure adrenaline.

"After the fight I was in the hospital with all these other boxers and MMA fighters and my hand was hurting. But I was super happy. Why? Because I was champion of the f**king world.

"In the ring they wanted to dry the blood off, and I was like, 'No! Let it flow!' This is what I grew up watching, champions fighting and bleeding. Let me bleed. Now I feel like a world champion. Why? Because this is what I grew up witnessing champions go through. Let me look like a champion."

The image of a bloody Holt fleeing a crumpled Torres to vault the top rope is the enduring one from his 12-year professional career. The video, meanwhile,

all 61 seconds of it, will never slip through the cracks.

"Every year somebody is posting it on social media and I'm getting tagged by thousands of people," Holt said. "It lives on like it's new, like it just happened yesterday, but it's almost 12 years old. It's always on these 'Greatest Knockouts' DVDs and I also made the cover of *Boxing News*. That was great for me. I have that cover hanging up in my house."

**

Like lives in Paterson, Kendall Holt's spell as WBO super-lightweight champion was eventful but brief. It consisted of just one successful defence, a decision win over bitter rival Demetrius Hopkins, before Timothy Bradley cut the reign short in April 2009.

"A fighter's first goal is to become world champion," Holt, 28-6 (16), said. "I became champion of the world and there were red carpets and I was hanging with all types of celebrities. I felt like a star. I had hundreds of thousands of dollars and I was taking care of my family. But once I lost the title the itch to get it back was just not there."

Subsequent victories against Julio Diaz and Tim Coleman suggested he still had it, while losses to Kaizer Mabuza, Danny Garcia and Lamont Peterson suggested otherwise.

To be safe, Holt went to school to become a dialysis technician and learn about the human body. With this education came knowledge and with knowledge came work and with work came regular income and distractions. Soon enough, he had no time for boxing and, rather than officially retire in 2013, simply drifted away from a sport he never liked all that much in the first place.

"If I'd had representation I would have continued



with my career," he said. "In fact, even though I was inducted into the New Jersey Boxing Hall of Fame last November, I still have hopes and aspirations of making a return. I still want to come back.

"I want to win another world championship. People say, 'Oh, anybody can do it one time but it's the real fighters who do it multiple times.' I look at it now and think, Maybe I'm not a real world champion. The way I won my championship was controversial (some believe he knocked out Torres with an accidental headbutt). But, s**t, I won it. I want to win another one, though."

Holt, inactive for six years, currently works as a biometric screener, which sees him visit corporate businesses to help employees save money on health insurance. He draws blood and checks cholesterol and sugar levels, body fat percentage and body mass index (BMI), and works for 30 dollars an hour.

"I'm a self-contractor," he explained. "The good thing about that is I can make my own hours but when there's no work there's no money. I have to be mindful of that."



As well as a working man, Holt is a father to two boys, aged 16 and 14. His own father had eight children, but Kendall has never been one to follow his lead.

"I didn't want my son to go through what I went through," he said. "I was determined to not be like my father in that way.

"My oldest son had a couple of fights and won the New Jersey Golden Gloves. He asked me if he could do it when he was younger, and I started letting him go to the gym. But I wasn't taking him all the time. I wasn't pushing him. So little by little he got away from it."

Holt didn't chase him. Nor did he chase his mother upon her release from jail. They reconnected and remain in contact, but 15 years is a long time and

a lot can and did happen in that period. Debra left behind a boy and returned to find a man.

"She came out and has been working consistently since," said Kendall. "She moved to Georgia a couple of years ago, she has her own house, and she's raising my brother's son. We have a mother-son relationship but it's long distance. It is only what it can be."

That Holt, now 38, finds it easier detailing physical damage, the kind accrued in a boxing ring, than psychological damage could perhaps explain why he stuck with boxing for as long as he did. It could also explain why he wants to come back.

"Everyone says, 'Man, I can't believe you went through this. How did you survive? Why aren't you a hoodlum out in the street with a long police record?'

"But they look at my upbringing as this dramatic thing that happened. To them it was chaos, whereas to me it was normal. It was a part of my life.



I DIDN'T WANT MY SON TO GO THROUGH WHAT I WENT THROUGH. I WAS DETERMINED NOT TO BE LIKE MY FATHER"

"I moved past it, grew up and followed the law. I became a productive member of society. I didn't want to go to jail. I took this path and some people in the same situation took another path. My brother, for example,

took the other path.

"My wife says I have mommy issues. But I don't know. I have thought about it a few times in the last couple of months, but I haven't been able to pinpoint where it has affected me. I'm sure it has but I just don't know where."

According to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the meaning of an R rating is as follows: Restricted – Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

"Rated R", therefore, was more than just a Rahman-inspired nod to Kendall Holt's preferred type of knockout. It was, for a boxer who spent the first half of his life witnessing scenes unsuitable for young eyes, with empty seats either side of him, also sadly fitting. **BN**



CHAMPION:
Holt scores his final win in a world title bout against Hopkins

Photo:
TOM CASINO/
SHOWTIME

**HEAVYWEIGHT**

over 200lbs/14st 4lbs

1. **ANDY RUIZ JNR** 33-1 (USA)
2. **TYSON FURY** 29-0-1 (ENG)
3. **DEONTAY WILDER** 42-0-1 (USA) *[above]*
4. **ANTHONY JOSHUA** 22-1 (ENG)
5. **DILLIAN WHYTE** 26-1 (ENG)
6. **KUBRAT PULEV** 28-1 (BGR)
7. **JOSEPH PARKER** 26-2 (NZL)
8. **DERECK CHISORA** 32-9 (ENG)
9. **OSCAR RIVAS** 26-1 (COL)
10. **OLEKSANDR USYK** 17-0 (UKR)

CRUISERWEIGHT

200lbs/14st 4lbs

1. **MAIRIS BRIEDIS** 26-1 (LVA)
2. **KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI** 31-2 (POL)
3. **YUNIER DORTICOS** 24-1 (CUB)
4. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK** 57-4-1 (POL)
5. **ILUNGA MAKABU** 26-2 (COD)
6. **NOEL GEVOR** 24-2 (GER)
7. **KEVIN LERENA** 23-1 (RSA)
8. **ALEKSEI PAPIN** 11-1 (RUS)
9. **ARSEN GOULAMIRIAN** 25-0 (FRA)
10. **ANDREW TABITT** 17-1 (USA)

LIGHT-HEAVYWEIGHT

175lbs/12st 7lbs

1. **ARTUR BETERBIEV** 15-0 (RUS)
2. **CANELO ALVAREZ** 53-1-2 (MEX)
3. **SERGEY KOVALEV** 34-4-1 (RUS)
4. **OLEKSANDR GVOZDYK** 17-1 (UKR)
5. **DMITRY BIVOL** 17-0 (RUS)
6. **ELEIDER ALVAREZ** 24-1 (COL)
7. **JEAN PASCAL** 34-6-1 (CAN)
8. **MARCUS BROWNE** 23-1 (USA)
9. **BADOU JACK** 22-2-3 (SWE)
10. **JESSE HART** 26-2 (USA)

SUPER-MIDDLEWEIGHT

168lbs/12st

1. **CALLUM SMITH** 27-0 (ENG)
2. **BILLY JOE SAUNDERS** 29-0 (ENG)
3. **CHRIS EUBANK JNR** 28-2 (ENG)
4. **CALEB PLANT** 19-0 (USA)
5. **JOSE UZCATEGUI** 28-3 (VEN)
6. **DAVID BENAVIDEZ** 22-0 (USA)
7. **JOHN RYDER** 28-5 (ENG)
8. **ANTHONY DIRRELL** 33-2-1 (USA)
9. **AVNI YILDIRIM** 21-2 (TUR)
10. **JUERGEN BRAEHMER** 51-3 (GER)

**MIDDLEWEIGHT**

160lbs/11st 6lbs

1. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN** 40-1-1 (KAZ)
2. **DANIEL JACOBS** 35-3 (USA)
3. **JERMALL CHARLO** 29-0 (USA)
4. **SERGIY DEREVYANCHENKO** 13-2 (UKR)
5. **DAVID LEMIEUX** 40-4 (CAN)
6. **RYOTA MURATA** 15-2 (JPN)
7. **DEMETRIUS ANDRADE** 28-0 (USA)
8. **ROB BRANT** 25-2 (USA)
9. **WILLIE MONROE JNR** 24-3 (USA)
10. **KAMIL SZEREMETA** 21-0 (POL)

SUPER-WELTERWEIGHT

154lbs/11st

1. **JULIAN WILLIAMS** 27-1-1 (USA)
2. **JARRETT HURD** 23-1 (USA)
3. **ERISLANDY LARA** 26-3-3 (CUB)
4. **BRIAN CASTANO** 16-0-1 (ARG)
5. **TONY HARRISON** 28-2 (USA)
6. **JERMELL CHARLO** 32-1 (USA)
7. **JAIME MUNGUIA** 34-0 (MEX)
8. **DENNIS HOGAN** 28-2-1 (IRL)
9. **LIAM SMITH** 28-2-1 (ENG)
10. **TERRELL GAUSHA** 21-1-1 (USA)

WELTERWEIGHT

147lbs/10st 7lbs

1. **ERROL SPENCE JNR** 26-0 (USA)
2. **TERENCE CRAWFORD** 35-0 (USA)
3. **SHAWN PORTER** 30-3-1 (USA)
4. **MANNY PACQUIAO** 62-7-2 (PHL)
5. **DANNY GARCIA** 35-2 (USA)
6. **KEITH THURMAN** 29-1 (USA) *[above]*
7. **YORDENIS UGAS** 24-4 (CUB)
8. **EGIDIJUS KAVALIAUSKAS** 21-0-1 (LTU)
9. **RAY ROBINSON** 24-3-2 (USA)
10. **SERGEY LIPINETS** 16-1 (RUS)

SUPER-LIGHTWEIGHT

140lbs/10st

1. **JOSH TAYLOR** 16-0 (SCO)
2. **REGIS PROGRAIS** 24-1 (USA)
3. **JOSE RAMIREZ** 25-0 (USA)
4. **VIKTOR POSTOL** 31-2 (UKR)
5. **IVAN BARANCHYK** 20-1 (BLR)
6. **PABLO CESAR CANO** 33-7-1 (MEX)
7. **MAURICE HOOKER** 26-1-3 (USA)
8. **KIRYL RELIKH** 23-3 (BLR)
9. **JOSE ZEPEDA** 31-2 (USA)
10. **EDUARD TROYANOVSKY** 28-2 (RUS)

**LIGHTWEIGHT**

135lbs/9st 9lbs

1. **VASYL LOMACHENKO** 14-1 (UKR)
2. **LUKE CAMPBELL** 20-3 (ENG)
3. **RICHARD COMMEY** 29-2 (GHA)
4. **JAVIER FORTUNA** 35-2-1 (DOM)
5. **YVAN MENDY** 43-5-1 (FRA)
6. **TEOFIMO LOPEZ** 14-0 (USA)
7. **RANCES BARTHELEMY** 27-1-1 (CUB)
8. **DEVIN HANEY** 24-0 (USA)
9. **LEE SELBY** 28-2 (WAL)
10. **EMMANUEL TAGOE** 31-1 (GHA)

SUPER-FEATHERWEIGHT

130lbs/9st 4lbs

1. **MIGUEL BERCHELT** 37-1 (MEX)
2. **GERVONTA DAVIS** 22-0 (USA)
3. **RENE ALVARADO** 32-8 (NIC) *[above]*
4. **JAMEL HERRING** 21-2 (USA)
5. **TEVIN FARMER** 30-4-1 (USA)
6. **LEO SANTA CRUZ** 37-1-1 (MEX)
7. **ANDREW CANCIO** 21-5-2 (USA)
8. **MASAYUKI ITO** 26-2-1 (JPN)
9. **SHAVKATDZHON RAKHIMOV** 15-0 (RUS)
10. **JASON SOSA** 23-4-4 (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHT

126lbs/9st

1. **GARY RUSSELL JNR** 30-1 (USA)
2. **JOSH WARRINGTON** 30-0 (ENG)
3. **CARL FRAMPTON** 26-2 (NIR)
4. **OSCAR VALDEZ** 26-0 (MEX)
5. **KID GALAHAD** 26-1 (ENG)
6. **CAN XU** 18-2 (CHN)
7. **TUGSTSOGT NYAMBAYAR** 11-0 (MNG)
8. **SHAKUR STEVENSON** 13-0 (USA)
9. **JHACK TEPORA** 23-0 (PHL)
10. **CLAUDIO MARRERO** 24-3 (DOM)

SUPER-BANTAMWEIGHT

122lbs/8st 10lbs

1. **EMANUEL NAVARRETE** 29-1 (MEX)
2. **REY VARGAS** 34-0 (MEX)
3. **DANIEL ROMAN** 27-2-1 (USA)
4. **TJ DOHENY** 22-1 (IRL)
5. **ISAAC DOGBOE** 20-2 (GHA)
6. **BRANDON FIGUEROA** 20-0-1 (USA)
7. **RYOSUKE IWASA** 26-3 (JPN)
8. **RONNY RIOS** 32-3 (USA)
9. **TOMOKI KAMEDA** 36-3 (JPN)
10. **AZAT HOVHANNISYAN** 18-3 (ARM)

BANTAMWEIGHT

118lbs/8st 6lbs

1. **NAOYA INOUE** 19-0 (JPN)
2. **NONITO DONAIRE** 40-6 (PHL)
3. **NORDINE OUBAALI** 17-0 (FRA)
4. **EMMANUEL RODRIGUEZ** 19-1 (PRI)
5. **JASON MOLONEY** 20-1 (AUS)
6. **LUIS NERY** 30-0 (MEX)
7. **TAKUMA INOUE** 13-1 (JPN)
8. **JOHN RIEL CASIMERO** 28-4 (PHL)
9. **CARLOS CUADRAS** 39-3-1 (MEX)
10. **JOSHUA GREER JNR** 22-1-1 (USA)

**SUPER-FLYWEIGHT**

115lbs/8st 3lbs

1. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA** 40-3 (MEX)
2. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI** 47-5-1 (THA)
3. **DONNIE NIETES** 42-1-5 (PHL)
4. **KAZUTO IOKA** 24-2 (JPN)
5. **KAL YAFAI** 26-0 (ENG)
6. **JERWIN ANCAJAS** 31-1-2 (PHL)
7. **ATHENKOSI DUMEZWENI** 12-2 (RSA)
8. **ANDREW MOLONEY** 21-0 (AUS)
9. **GIDEON BUTHELEZI** 22-5 (RSA)
10. **FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ JNR** 32-4-1 (MEX)

FLYWEIGHT

112lbs/8st

1. **CHARLIE EDWARDS** 15-1 (ENG)
2. **CRISTOFER ROSALES** 29-4 (NIC)
3. **KOSEI TANAKA** 14-0 (JPN)
4. **ARTEM DALAKIAN** 19-0 (UKR)
5. **MORUTI MTHALANE** 38-2 (RSA)
6. **VINCENT LEGRAND** 31-0 (FRA)
7. **JULIO CESAR MARTINEZ** 14-1 (MEX)
8. **GIEMEL MAGRAMO** 23-1 (PHL)
9. **WULAN TUOLEHAZI** 13-3-1 (CHN)
10. **McWILLIAMS ARROYO** 19-4 (PRI)

LIGHT-FLYWEIGHT

108lbs/7st 10lbs

1. **KEN SHIRO** 16-0 (JPN)
2. **HIROTO KYOGUCHI** 14-0 (JPN)
3. **CARLOS CANIZALES** 22-0-1 (VEN)
4. **ELWIN SOTO** 16-1 (MEX)
5. **HEKKIE BUDLER** 32-4 (RSA)
6. **FELIX ALVARADO** 35-2 (NIC)
7. **EDWARD HENO** 14-1-5 (PHL)
8. **REIYA KONISHI** 17-2 (JPN)
9. **TETSUYA HISADA** 34-10-2 (JPN)
10. **DANIEL VALLADARES** 21-1 (MEX)

STRAWWEIGHT

105lbs/7st 7lbs

1. **KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART** 20-0 (THA)
2. **WANHENG MEENAYOTHIN** 54-0 (THA)
3. **WILFREDO MENDEZ** 31-0 (PRI)
4. **VIC SALUDAR** 19-4 (PHL)
5. **BYRON ROJAS** 27-4-3 (NIC)
6. **DEEJAY KRIEL** 15-1-1 (RSA)
7. **JOEY CANOY** 15-3-1 (PHL)
8. **LITO DANTE** 16-10-4 (PHL)
9. **JOSE ARGUMENTO** 23-4-1 (MEX)
10. **PEDRO TADURAN** 14-2 (PHL)

POUND-FOR-POUND

The best of the best

1. **CANELO ALVAREZ** 53-1-2 (MEX)
2. **VASYL LOMACHENKO** 14-1 (UKR)
3. **NAOYA INOUE** 19-0 (JPN)
4. **TERENCE CRAWFORD** 35-0 (USA)
5. **OLEKSANDR USYK** 17-0 (UKR)
6. **ERROL SPENCE JNR** 26-0 (USA)
7. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN** 40-1-1 (KAZ)
8. **ARTUR BETERBIEV** 15-0 (RUS)
9. **LEO SANTA CRUZ** 37-1-1 (MEX) *[above]*
10. **MIKEY GARCIA** 39-1 (USA)

● If a fighter has been inactive for over a year, he will be removed from the rankings, unless he has a fight officially scheduled. Once removed due to inactivity, a fighter cannot be reinstated until he has fought again.

● Each fighter is ranked on the results they have achieved in their own specific weight division (excluding the pound-for-pound list).

● Each fighter is ranked in the division in which their most recent significant fight took place. With regards to catchweight fights, common sense will (hopefully) prevail.

● If a fighter is suspended for failing a drug test, he will be removed from the rankings. He will be eligible for reinstatement after completing a ban, but will be removed indefinitely if he reoffends.

NOVEMBER

FRIDAY 29

York Hall, Bethnal Green

Philip Bowes v Akeem Ennis-Brown (Bowes' Commonwealth & vacant British super-lightweight titles). (Promoter: Mickey Helliet).

Ponds Forge Arena, Sheffield

(FreeSports TBA)

Tommy Frank v Martin Tecuapetla; Felix Williams v Josh Wale; Kash Ali v Artur Kubiak; Sufyaan Ahmed v Ricky Starkey; Kane Salvin v Daniel Alder; Keanen Wainwright v Ivan Godor; Perry Howe v Nathan Junor; Nathan Owen v Josh Thorne. (Promoter: Dennis Hobson).

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow

Trigger Wood v Paul Allison (vacant Scottish Area middleweight title); Martin Harkin v s/o. (Promoter: Kynoch Boxing).

O2 Academy, Bournemouth

Lee Cutler v s/o; Jimmy Cooper v s/o; Jack Simpson v s/o; Dean Dodge v s/o; Pete Nurdin v s/o; Alex Jones v s/o. (Promoter: Bendall's Boxing Promotions).

SATURDAY 30

Arena Birmingham (BT Sport 2 6pm & ESPN+)

Zolani Tete (holder) v John Riel Casimero (WBO bantamweight title); Sam Bowen (holder) v Anthony Cacace (British super-featherweight title); Chris Jenkins (holder) v Liam Taylor (British welterweight title); Lerrone Richards v Lennox Clarke (vacant British super-middleweight title); Sam Maxwell v Connor Parker; Hamzah Sheeraz v s/o; Shabaz Masoud v Stefan Nicolae; Dennis McCann v s/o; Nathan Heaney v Nelson Altamirano; George Davey v s/o; Ryan Kelly v s/o; Eithan James v s/o; River Wilson-Bent v s/o. (Promoter: Queensberry Promotions).

York Hall, Bethnal Green

Liam Dillon v Youssef Khoumari (vacant English super-featherweight title); Ekow Essuman (holder) v Curtis Felix Jnr (English welterweight title); Ryan Walker v Piotr Mirga (vacant Southern Area super-bantamweight title); Linus Udofia v Tyler Denny (vacant English middleweight title); Jumanne Camero v Justin Menzie; Darrell Church v Dominic Felix; Ellis Zorro v Dmitrij Kalinovskij; Liam Shinkwin v Jamie Speight; Tom Ansell v Carl Turney; Sheikh Waziri v s/o; Jack Owen v Ben Thomas; Dana Zaxo v Darryl Sharp; Denis Denikajev v s/o; Mo Gharib v Lee Devine; Jordan Dujon v Paul Cummings; Dalton Miller v Rod Douglas Jnr. (Promoter: Goodwin Sports).

Holte Suite, Villa Park, Birmingham

Jack O'Keeffe (holder) v Ishmael Ellis (Midlands Area lightweight title); Matt Windle v David Seymour (vacant Midlands

Photo: STEPHANIE TRAPP/RINGSTAR



Area flyweight title); Lewis Coley v s/o; Jordan Cooke v s/o; Louis Fielding v s/o; Shaun Cooper v s/o; Sam Eggington v s/o; Alex Fearon v s/o. (Promoter: Tommy Owens Promotions).

Oasis Leisure Centre, Swindon

Ryan Martin v Mziwoxolo Ndwayana; Sam Smith v Germaine Brown (vacant Southern Area super-middleweight title); Bec Connolly v Rachel Ball; Luke Watkins v Erik Nazaryan; Bradley Townsend v s/o; Duane Winters v Jose Aguilar; Jensen Irving v Richard Samuels; Harry Webb v Qasim Hussain; Johnny Ward v Genadij Krajevskij; Vladimir Georgiev v s/o; Jay Munn v Kevin McCauley. (Promoter: Neilson Boxing).

Active Living Centre, Pontypool

Gavin Gwynne v Abdon Cesar; Jake Tinklin v Zoltan Szabo; Robbie Vernon v s/o; Geraint Goodridge v Lewis van Poetsch; Jordan Withers v Victor Edagha; Joshua John v Ricky Leach; Lloyd Germain v Saif Zahoor. (Promoter: Sanigar Events).

Kings Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

Kaash Buttery v Michael Mooney; Jamal Le Doux v Danny Shannon; Rhasian Earlington v Jone Volau; Jamie Stewart v MJ Hall; Ryan Bithell v Callum Ide.

(Promoter: Carl Greaves Promotions).

Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, Nevada

(BT Sport 1 2.45am & ESPN+)

Carl Frampton v Tyler McCreary; Oscar Valdez v Andres Gutierrez; Carlos Adames v Patrick Teixeira; Arnold Barboza Jnr v William Silva; Adam Lopez v Luis Coria; Andy Hiraoka v Rogelio Casarez; Brian Mendoza v Larry Gomez; Guido Vianello v Colby Madison; Jared Anderson v Stephen Kirnon; Xander Zayas v Virgel Windfield. (Promoter: Top Rank & Star Boxing).

Casino de Monte Carlo, Salle Médecin, Monaco (Sky Sports Action/Main Event 7pm & DAZN)

Alexander Besputin v Radzhab Butaev; Joe Cordina v Mario Enrique Tinoco; Cecilia Braekhus (holder) v Victoria Bustos (WBC & WBA & IBF & WBO female welterweight titles); Hughie Fury v Pavel Sour; Zhilei Zhang v Andriy Rudenko; Victoire Piteau v Raphaëlle Lachaume; Nayan Deslion v Jose Domingo Peireira Mendoca; Thulasi Tharumalingam v s/o. (Promoter: Matchroom Boxing).

Nosalowy Dwór, Zakopane, Poland

Krzysztof Włodarczyk [pictured] v Taylor Mabika; Damian Kiwior v Ivan Njegac.

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, South Brisbane, Australia (FITE TV)

Anthony Mundine v John Wayne Parr. (Promoter: DDP Sports Management).

Vaba Lava, Narva, Estonia

Robert Helenius v Mateus Roberto Osorio.

Arena La Paz, Mexico

Joselito Velazquez v Adrian Curiel.

Pabellón de la Vall d'Hebron, Barcelona, Spain

Melania Sorroche (holder) v Violeta Gonzalez (European female bantamweight title); Moussa Gholam v Chonlatarn Piriapinyo; Kerman Lejarraga v Anderson Clayton.

DECEMBER

THURSDAY 5

The Hangar, Costa Mesa, California (DAZN)

Mihai Nistor v Christian Mariscal. (Promoter: Golden Boy Promotions).

Terminal 5, New York (UFC Fight Pass)

O'Shaquie Foster v Alberto Mercado; Stephan Shaw v Gregory Corbin. (Promoter: DiBella Entertainment).

AMATEUR SCENE

The very best action, previews and news from Olympic-style boxing
With JOHN DENNEN | @BoxingNewsJD

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

AZIM GETS THROUGH

The Youth Olympic medallist holds off Duniak's challenge in NABGC semi-finals



Matt Bozeat
RINGSIDE

+ BIRMINGHAM
NOVEMBER 24

YOUTH Olympic bronze medalist **Hassan Azim** had a scare in the semi-finals of the NABGC championships at Tudor Grange Kingshurst.

Ivan Duniak (Rotunda) pushed him to a split points decision in Class D at 69kgs. For a round and a half, Azim (Hoddesdon) mostly fell short with his punches before finding his range and in the final minute of the second Azim landed left hooks, bringing cheers from his many supporters. The third was another tight round and Azim landed enough right hands to nick it.

Also in Class D, there was late drama when **Jamie Edwards** (Triumph) and **Connor Sams** (Northumberland Fire and Rescue) met. For two rounds, Edwards was mostly on the receiving end against the strong Sams, looking to add to the Development title he won last season. Midway through the last, Edwards detonated a right hand that turned Sams' legs rubbery and the referee gave him a standing eight count. Edwards, who won his previous two bouts in the competition inside a round, couldn't find another similar punch and once his head had cleared, Sams was back on the front foot.

Edwards' clubmate **Bradley Goldsmith** is on course for back-to-back NABGC titles after reaching the Class D final at 75kgs. The 21-year-old southpaw reached the semi finals with three straight first-round stoppages and though **Curtis Fitzsimmons** (Middleton Select) made it through to the final bell, he was well beaten.

Eastside's **Ibrahim Shakil** was crowned Development champion

Photo: TEAM GB/LUMIX UK



HIGH LEVEL:
Azim is a Youth
Olympic medallist

in Banbury a few weeks ago and he's through to this weekend's NABGC final in Class D at 52kgs following a unanimous points win over **I. Naseeb** (Phoenix Fire).

In Class C, **Josh Martin** (Stoke Staffs) and **F. McGowan** (Salisbury) put everything into their 81kgs clash. Martin won a really hard battle unanimously on the scorecards. The taller Martin was relentless, walking through some heavy punches to drive McGowan into the corners and unload flurries to body and head.

The bell to end the first came at a good time for McGowan, moments after a volley of punches made his knees dip, and the second was another tough round for him. He was grabbing early in the session and took a count late, but in between, McGowan gave as good as he got, crashing some heavy punches off Martin's chin that he ignored.

The third was more of the same, Martin taking a few, but landing more and handing McGowan another count to put the seal on his victory.

Punch of the day was thrown by another boxer from the Potteries, **Shay Johnston**, who had his father, ex-professional Danny, in his corner. Boxing for Orme, Johnston crashed a left hook off **Faiz Raja's** chin in the opening round of their Class B clash at 75kgs, turning the Ingles' boxer's legs rubbery.

The referee decided on the completion of the 'eight' count that Raja was unable to continue.

The referee insisted the crowd applaud both **Cody Smith** (Hull Boxing Centre) and **Lloyd Farrington** (Hoddesdon) after they produced a grandstand finish to their Class B semi final at 54kgs. Smith won on points.

At 60kgs **Ellis Grant**, a former Schoolboy champion from Transport ABC, really shone, outpointing **Brian McDonagh** (Pinewood Starr) on a split. The well-supported McDonagh found Grant slippery and heavy handed in a good bout.

The towering **Connor Young** (Oldhill) also impressed, handing **Joshua Slater** (Ashton Albion) two counts on the way to a unanimous

points win that took him through to the final at 80 plus kgs. For a round, Young, beaten in the Development final a few weeks ago, boxed on the move before coming down off his toes in the second to produce a moment of real quality. He opened up Slater's guard with a feint and then drilled a left-right through the gap, the punches landing cleanly to knock him onto his heels. The referee stepped in for an 'eight' count and Joshua took another in the last.

The best action in Class A came at 80kgs where the stocky and strong **Joe Harris** (Technique) tore into **Teon Graham** (Priory Park) for two rounds – handing him a count in the opener and bloodying his nose – before Graham fired back in the last.

Harris took a count after shipping some heavy shots, but had done enough in the opening two rounds to win unanimously.

At 63kgs, Bell Green body puncher **Jenson Todd** edged out **L. Biswana** (Gemini) on a desperately close split decision after a very watchable bout.

England take victory against Ireland in team match



Matt Bozeat

RINGSIDE

+ CANNOCK

NOVEMBER 23

EUROPEAN champions **Royston Barney-Smith** and **Shane Patterson** were winners for England in their 4-3 victory over Ireland at Bar Sport.

15-year-old Barney-Smith, twice a European Schoolboy gold medalist, outpointed **Martin McCullough** in a match between southpaw counter-punchers that never ignited. In each round, there were more feints than punches thrown as both were reluctant to lead off and risk making a mistake.

Barney-Smith took more chances, landed more punches and at the final bell, four of the five judges had him winning, his 43rd win in 48 bouts.

The match between Patterson, 2018 European Schoolboy champion, and Ireland's **Mustafa Edris** was another meeting of left handers, unanimously won by the Englishman. Again, there weren't too many clean punches landed and when they did engage, midway through the second round, Edris ended up taking a count.

Photo: MANJIT NAROTRA/MSN IMAGES



TAKING HIS CHANCES: Barney-Smith meets McCullough

EURO CHAMPS IN ACTION

After a cagey opening round and a half, the Irish teenager decided to be more positive and ran into a blurring flurry of punches that made him touch down in the centre of the ring.

The wins for Patterson and Royston-Barney added to a points victory for **Kelsey Oakley** over **Breda Marie Quilligan** to put England 3-1 up at the interval.

Combination puncher **Savannah Stubley** extended the lead by unanimously outpointing **Nicole Clyde** in a Youth flyweight contest. Stubley met every Clyde advance with combinations to body and head and when she

stepped in behind her punches midway through the opener, she drove Clyde into a neutral corner to force a standing count.

Clyde didn't find her range until the final minute of the second round and that set up a closer final round. Again, Stubley got the better of it.

Ireland won the last two contests of a good night's boxing. **Niamh Fay**, crowned European Youth champion earlier this year, was all over **Sameenah Toussaint** until the referee waved the bout off midway through the second after handing the English boxer a third count.

Evelyn Igharo was a clear winner of the final bout, unanimously outpointing England's spirited **Chloe McDermott** in a Youth contest.

Chloe Gabriel, this year's European Junior champion, had got Ireland off to a winning start, picking clean singles against **Megan Bainbridge** to win unanimously on the scorecards.

In a club bout, Leicester Unity's **Vinny Huczmann**, bronze medalist at the European Junior championship, kept **Reece Harris-Mann** (Scarborough) under control with his lead hand and won unanimously.

ELLIS EXCELS

Trowbridge shines while Sains thrills, writes **Daniel Herbert**

THERE were notable displays of skill and power when the London vs Essex/South East quarter-final of the NABGC Championships was held at Dagenham Roundhouse on November 17.

The skill came in the all-southpaw Class C 49 kgs bout (a national semi-final because of no other Southern entries) between Guildford City's **Ellis Trowbridge** and **Harry Mullins** (Churchills). Both excelled, but Trowbridge - cheered on by his father Duke McKenzie, former three-weight world pro champion - was that little bit sharper.

The power came from

Repton's **Jimmy Sains** at 69kgs in Class D. In these championships last year Sains had closely outscored **Rio Gordon**, but this time he blew the Harwich boxer away inside a round.

A short right dropped Gordon early on before a follow-up attack brought him a standing count. But just when it seemed the Essex boxer might survive the crisis, an explosive right hand sent him crashing down for a knockout ending.

Repton lost two very tight 3-2 split decisions against Kent Gloves 56kgs entries. Southpaw **William Birchall** beat **Khalil Osman Ghadiri** in Class C and **Lewis Southgate** edged switch-

hitter **Amo Singh** in Class D.

Hassam Hassim, already tall for 52kgs, dropped down to 49 and enjoyed a huge height advantage over **Ben Litwin** (Turners BA) in their Class D national semi. But Litwin used his much more seasoned technique to win unanimously, even putting a count on the Fisher novice in round two.

Another unlikely Class D pairing saw Earlsfield light-heavy **Omar Augustine**, a NABGC champion last term, prove too strong for unheralded Peterborough Police's **Brian Lawless**, who took two counts in the last but gamely reached the final bell.

GB CHAMPS

THIS year's GB championships will take place on December 5 at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield (doors open at 6.45pm, boxing begins at 7.30pm).

Tickets are on sale now at the advanced sale price of £10 at <http://www.ticketsdirect.org.uk/gbchamps>. Groups who purchase ten tickets will receive two free tickets.

The GB Boxing selections, including Will Cawley, Youth Olympic champion Karol Itama and more exciting talents, will compete against boxers from England and Wales. Any home nation boxer who defeats a member of the GB Boxing squad gains an assessment to join the Olympic programme as a funded athlete.

Full line up and preview in next week's issue of the magazine.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

Morrison and Tetteh made history this week in 1973 in the first British title fight contested by immigrant boxers



Alex Daley

@thealexdaley

Historian & author

BRITISH boxing's absurd 'colour bar' cast an ugly shadow over the domestic scene for almost 40 years. This archaic rule, which effectively barred black and mixed-race boxers from British title fights, was confined to history in 1948 when Dick Turpin, son of a Guyanese father and a white English mother, outpointed Vince Hawkins to become king of the middles.

In the early 1970s, another racial barrier of sorts was being knocked down. In 1968, the BBBoFC had passed a rule allowing immigrants to box for British titles if they had lived in the country for at least 10 years. This paved the way for Jamaica-born Bunny Sterling to become the first immigrant British titlist when he stopped Mark Rowe on cuts in 1970. Five years later another Jamaican immigrant, Bunny Johnson, became the first black British heavyweight champion when he demolished Danny McAlinden. Between these two milestones was another landmark fight. It happened this week in 1973.

On November 27 that year, Joe Tetteh, who was born in Ghana, and Jamaica-born Des Morrison took part in the first British title fight contested by two immigrant boxers. It was also the inaugural battle for the light-welterweight crown (today super-lightweight). The 140lb division had been

introduced in Britain as junior-welterweight in 1967 but was scrapped in 1969, only to be relaunched as light-welter four years later. The match between Tetteh and Morrison provided an intriguing showcase for the new weight class. Here were two quality operators at opposite ends of their careers – one a seasoned veteran, the other a promising young prospect.

Tetteh had been a pro since 1957, fighting solely in Africa before coming to Britain in the early 1960s. By the time he met Morrison he'd fought 75 times (45-25-5) in 12 different countries. Former world titlist John H. Stracey, who sparred with Joe at Canning Town's Royal Oak gym, credited the Ghanaian with teaching him many tricks of the trade. "He was so clever," recalled John. "At times he would stop me and tell me I wasn't doing this or that. They were good lessons." Tetteh, an ex-Commonwealth champion, was supposed to be 31 in 1973, but *BN's* coverage of the fight suggests he was actually 35. For him this was undoubtedly the last roll of the dice. Morrison (21-2-2), by contrast, would have seen the fight as a likely launch pad to bigger and better things. At 23, the Bedford-based Jamaican had only been a pro for three years. He was, however, an excellent boxer.

'HE WOULD STOP ME AND TELL ME WHERE I WAS GOING WRONG'

Tetteh entered the ring at Shoreditch Town Hall wearing Ghanaian tribal garments to the accompaniment of drum beats, which gave the occasion a special ambience. From bell to bell Joe attacked while Morrison elected to jab and move. The fight was a thriller that went the full 15 rounds, but scoring it was a highly subjective matter. Some onlookers favoured Tetteh's relentless aggression, others Morrison's stylish work. When referee

James Brimmell raised Morrison's hand at the end of this tough encounter, much of the crowd booed. The sporting press were widely split: *BN's* Graham Houston felt Tetteh deserved the decision, as did Reg Gutteridge of the *Evening News*, who thought Tetteh had "won beyond reasonable doubt";

but for *The Sun's* Colin Hart, Morrison was a worthy if narrow winner.

Morrison lost the crown in his first defence, falling in 11 rounds to Pat McCormack four months later. Des continued for another eight years and challenged unsuccessfully three more times for light-welterweight honours. For Tetteh it was the end of the road. He had three more bouts (all defeats) before retiring in 1974, after a KO loss to lightweight legend Ken Buchanan.

GOOD CAUSE

News from Frank Warren's recent charity dinner show



Simon Euan-Smith

simonoldtimers@gmail.com

EBA correspondent

BOXING people have always been renowned for their generosity. If there's a good cause that needs supporting, you can rely on them to rally round and give unstintingly of both money and time. And, while this is of course not the reason, it does a lot to raise the profile of an EBA if it's seen to be supporting a good cause – to be concerned about the present, not simply be reminiscing about the past.

Nordoff Robbins is a great charity that provides music therapy across a wide spectrum – from elderly people with Alzheimer's Disease, to young children with autism, all can benefit. And the boxing community has supported it for a long time. In recent years, Frank Warren has put on an annual dinner show at the London Hilton. On the Dinner Committee is London EBA Secretary and Treasurer

Ray Caulfield – and, Ray, along with long-time LEBA member (and former European and British super-middleweight champion) James Cook MBE, arrange for a number of former champions to attend, each hosting a table. This is an additional selling-point for the evening, and ensures it's always well-supported.

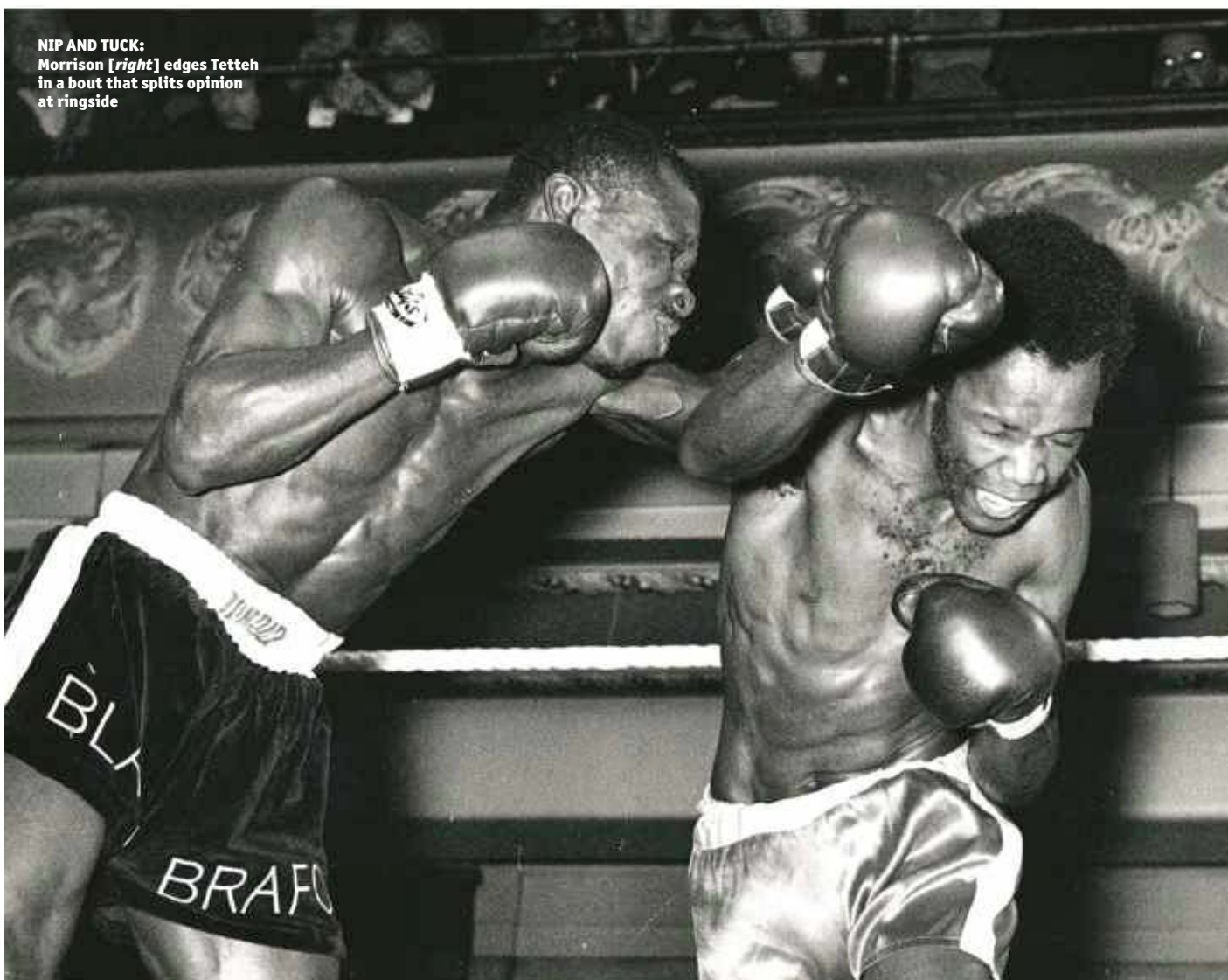
This year Ray said to me: "Come along and see for yourself what it's like!" So I did, and the atmosphere was tremendous – so many people packed into one room to support a worthy cause. There were nine former world champions present – Billy Schwer, Maurice Hope, Barry Jones, Colin McMillan, Darren Barker, John Conteh, David Haye, Charlie Magri and Tyson Fury – the last-named receiving this year's Nordoff Robbins Boxing Icon Award. LEBA members present included Chairman Charlie Wright and committee

members Bob Cheeseman and Peter Stanley. Several members of Essex EBA also made it, as did Home Counties Chairman (and Star referee) Bob Williams.

With an excellent meal, cabaret provided by Rick Astley, auction brilliantly conducted by Charlie Ross (whom many will know from BBC TV's *Bargain Hunt*), and former Speaker of the House of Commons John Bercow being amongst those present, it was a terrific evening. And by providing so many champions LEBA can certainly claim to have contributed to its success. Another London member present was writer Mike Taub, an avid supporter of LEBA's Young Guns (one of whom, Harvey Horn, won in the evening's main event). In the current *Seconds Out*, LEBA's monthly newsletter, Mike pays tribute to recently deposed British super-welterweight champion

Photos: LARRY BRAYSHER

NIP AND TUCK:
Morrison [right] edges Tetteh
in a bout that splits opinion
at ringside



Ted Cheeseman (Bob's nephew). Ted was gutted at the verdict for Scott Fitzgerald, but, as Mike says, "At 24, he's young enough to come again. A return is a natural." Yet another example of an EBA supporting today's fighters.

Mike also pays tribute to the late Roy Beaman, mentioning that it was Roy's former conqueror, Kenny Field, who had telephoned him with the sad news of Roy's death. The affection and respect between former opponents is something people outside boxing find hard to understand, but it's something you can see at virtually any EBA meeting. Kenny was willing to take on the big-punching Roy, and beat him on points (Empire Pool, Wembley, March 1961) – but confessed to Mike that watching Roy in action was "frightening".

We're coming up to the Christmas

Photo: ACTION IMAGES



RIISING STAR: Horn gets another win on Frank Warren's charity show

party season. This Sunday (December 1), LEBA will be staging their annual do, with buffet and cabaret, after the normal monthly meeting at the Sports Bar and Grill, Old Street. One week later (December 8), Brighton EBA hold their Christmas party at The Romans, Manor Hall Road, Southwick. And on December 15, Home Counties have their do at Bricket Wood Sports & Social Club, Oak Avenue, Bricket Wood, St Albans. I hope they all go well, and get plenty of support. I know Croydon are contemplating going to both Brighton and Home Counties – and, as I've said before, supporting other EBAs is vital. If your Association is staging a Christmas party, do let me have the details, and I'll happily publicise it.

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

BRAD STRAND

Paul Wheeler talks to a man who has revealed a dark deodorant secret

Photo: SIMON DAVID PHOTOGRAPHY

When and why you started boxing:

I was nine years old when I started boxing. I was a bit little at school, so my dad decided to take me to Kirkby ABC.

Favourite all-time fighter:

My favourite fighter ever is Thomas Hearns because of his big right hand.

Best fight you've seen:

Any of Canelo Alvarez's fights that I've seen on TV.

Personal career highlight:

As an amateur, it'd be winning the England Boxing Senior National Elite Championships – formerly known as the ABAs – in April 2018. [Strand, boxing for Everton Red Triangle, beat Kings Heath's Liam Davies in the bantamweight final].

Toughest opponent:

It'd be either [highly decorated amateur] Peter McGrail or [unbeaten professional] Andrew Cain in sparring. The hardest people I've been in the ring with are from my gym.

Best and worst attributes as a boxer:

I'd like to think that I don't have any weaknesses. My main strength is my speed.

Training tip:

I'd just advise you to stay dedicated and train hard.

Favourite meal/restaurant:

My favourite meal is pasta. I love eating at Casa Italia in Liverpool.

Best friends in boxing:

[Unbeaten pro] Nick Ball is my best friend in the sport. We were at Kirkby ABC together.

Other sportsman you would like to be:

I'd be a professional footballer if I wasn't a boxer.



'WHEN I WAS 12 I WANTED TO QUIT BOXING BUT MY DAD JUST TOLD ME TO KEEP GOING'

Last film/TV show you saw:

I've been watching the series, *Power*, recently.

Who would play you in a film of your life:

I'd pick Tom Cruise to play me.

Have you ever been starstruck:

No, I don't think I have you know.

Last time you cried:

I think it was probably at my auntie's funeral about eight months ago.

Best advice received:

When I was about 12, I wanted to quit boxing, but my dad just told me to keep going. If I hadn't listened to him then I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now.

Worst rumour about yourself:

I haven't heard any bad rumours about myself yet.

Something not many people know about you:

I wear women's deodorant! I like using the pink Sure spray.

FAST FACTS

Age: 25 Twitter: @bradstrand123 Nickname: n/a Height: 5ft 7ins
Nationality: English From: Liverpool Stance: Orthodox Record: 2-0 (1)
Division: Super-bantamweight Titles: n/a Next fight: Strand is due to make his third pro appearance on Friday February 28 in his hometown of Liverpool.

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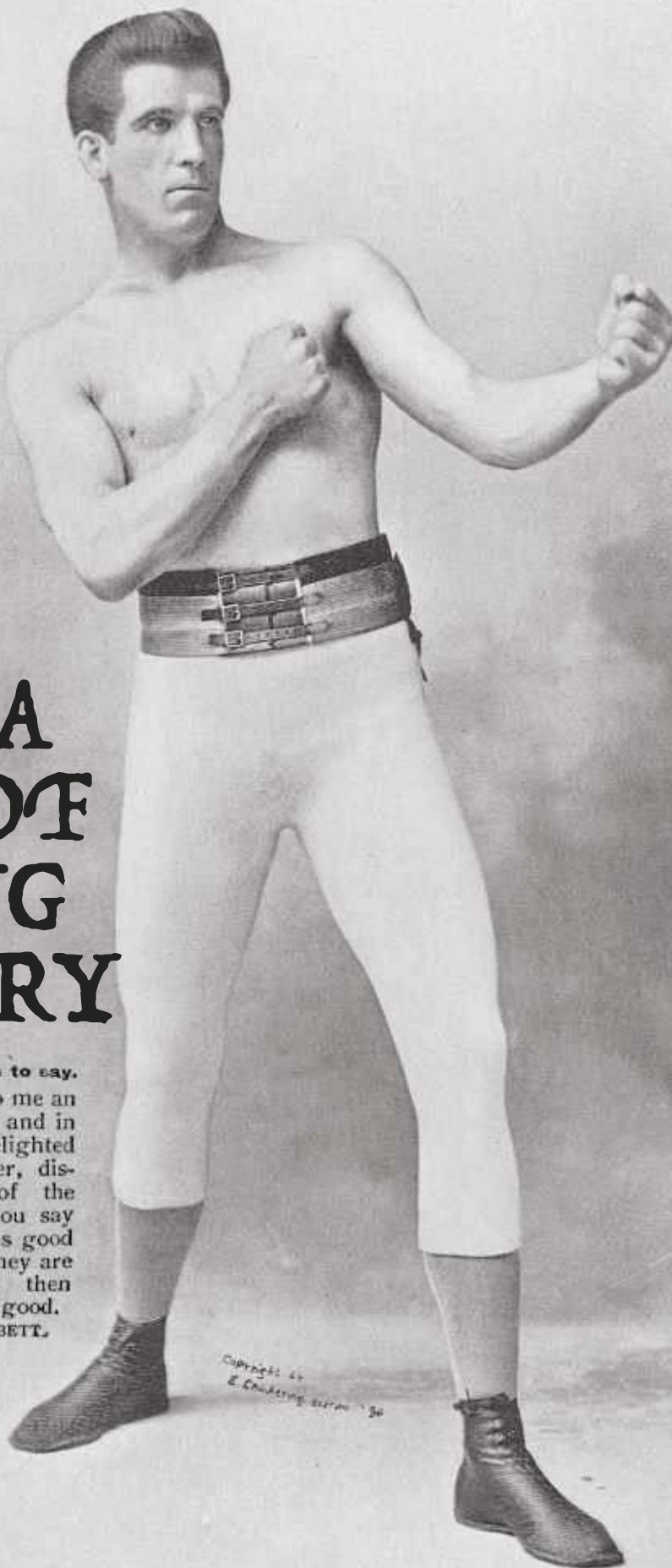


OWN A PIECE OF BOXING HISTORY

What a World's Champion has to say.

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

JAMES J. CORBETT.



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