

Boxing in Asia, Singapore Slingin'

Written by Scott Mallon

Tuesday, 05 December 2006 19:00

The city-state of Singapore is a major business hub in Asia; known as the Lion City, it officially gained its sovereignty in August of 1965. Generally thought of as the country with strict laws and harsh punishment, it has the highest standard of living in Southeast Asia. Despite its extraordinary growth and prosperity, the country has never been thought of as a major sports powerhouse and its professional boxing scene only has been sporadic at best in the past few decades. In the past 6 months however, two pro cards have taken place and more are planned in the future.

Singapore's boxing history began in the 1930's, before it achieved its independence. In the forties and fifties, the country was known as "The Mecca of Boxing" in Asia and produced a handful of journeymen fighters.

In 1989, Indonesian fighter Ellyas Pical successfully defended his WBA super bantamweight belt against Mike Phelps of the U.S.

It would be seventeen years before another event would take place; in June of this year, The Sweet Science was on hand to see Indonesia's Daudy Bahari score a unanimous decision over Bart Abapo of the Philippines.

The number of fights and the pool of Singaporean fighters in the past thirty years has dwindled to zilch but promoter John Leung and manager-trainer Barry Pestana are doing their part to bring back the days of old.

This Thanksgiving at the Sun-Tec Convention Center, Leung's company, Pure Details, promoted a show headlined by Philippine fighter Dondon Sultan (14-7-2, 7 KOs) and Eddie Delic (11-7-2, 2 KOs) of Australia for the vacant WBF (World Boxing Foundation) welterweight bauble.

Sultan won the belt when he scored a twelve-round unanimous decision in a sloppy but engaging matchup. Delic started quickly and controlled the fight until he suffered a cut in round four from an unintentional headbutt. The remainder of the bout was competitive but Sultan was too strong and in the end the judges scored in his favor.

"I'm so thankful I have finally achieved my dream of winning a world championship," said Sultan. "Maybe now I can box in Las Vegas in a big-money fight."

That's the idea in boxing, to make the big money, but Sultan has quite a ways to go before he's ready for Mayweather, Cotto or Margarito.

The Thanksgiving show consisted of four pro and two amateur bouts and while the bouts weren't exactly Ali-Frazier or Hagler-Hearns, they were entertaining. The crowd got their money's worth and boxing in Singapore took another baby step forward.

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"We certainly hope to make Singapore a major boxing hub here in Asia," said Leung. "Hopefully we can get some more sponsors and continue to promote better and better events."

WBF president Mick Croucher concurred, stating "Singapore has the corporate muscle and definitely has the ability to become Asia's premier boxing venue."

Only time will tell...

On the undercard:

Emmett Gazzard (5-0, 5 KOs) without a doubt the best fighter on the card, dished out a beating to Thailand's Saensak Singmanasak (12-15-2, 6 KOs) before stopping him in round six of a scheduled twelve-round bout.

Two Singaporean fighters fought on the card, one winning and one losing.

In a scheduled four-round bout, David Alexis (0-1), the thirty-eight-year-old Singaporean making his pro debut was on TKO'd in the first round by Dennadai Sithdara (6-4, 2 KOs) of Thailand. Alexis had an extensive amateur background, winning a bronze medal in the 1993 SEA Games but was ill prepared for his first pro bout and was taken out in 2:30.

Mohammad Nor Rizan took on Thailand's Pornthep Kawponkanpim (7-6, 2 KOs) in his second pro start. It looked as if another fight wasn't going to make it to the second round when Nor Rizan flattened the Thai but the thirty-five-year-old Kawponkanpim rose to meet his fate and was pummeled for three straight rounds before the referee finally called a halt to the slaughter. Nor Rizan has some skills but it will be interesting to see how he fares when he faces someone who fights back with his fists instead of his face.

Showdown in Singapore Results:

Sun-Tec Convention Centre

Dondon Sultan UD12 Eddie Delic(Wins WBF Welterweight Belt)Judges scores: 115-112, 115-112, 117-113

Emmett Gazzard KO6 Saensak Singmanasak

Dennadai Sithdara TKO1 David Alexis

Mohammad Nor Rizan TKO3 Pornthep Kawponkanpim

News and Notes

On the December 5th King's Birthday celebration, former WBA trinket holder Yodsanan Sor Nanthachai (50-3-2, 39 KOs) stopped Iran's Omid Gholizadeh (0-6) to win his fiftieth fight and sixth straight since losing his belt to Panama's Vicente Mosquera. Sor Nanthachai has been

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languishing since the loss and at thirty-six doesn't have much time left to make a run at a title. Certainly not enough to be wasting his time against fighters of the caliber of Gholizadeh. The Iranian boxer has fought all his fights inside Thailand and has yet to win a fight.

Also on the card, featherweight Chonlatarn Piriypinyo (17-0, 8 KOs) scored a seventh round TKO over Vinvin Ruffino (12-6-2, 5 KOs) to keep his run at a WBC belt alive.

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Ring Magazine has launched a ratings advisory panel to help make The Ring Ratings even better. The panel consists of over thirty journalists from four continents who will review the ratings on a weekly basis and if necessary make recommendations. The editors will continue to make the final decisions, however all recommendations will receive serious consideration. The Ring Ratings Advisory Panel is the latest step in the publication's effort to restore much-needed credibility and integrity to the sport of boxing. The WBA's ridiculous situation with their cruiserweight champions is just one more of the countless examples illustrating how The Ring Ratings are advantageous to the alphabet soup policies.

Travis Simms is apparently the WBA Super Welterweight Champion of the World "In Recess," whatever that means.

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On the undercard of the Winky Wright – Ike Quartey matchup, Filipino sensation Rey "Boom-Boom" Bautista (21-0, 16 KOs) continued his roll towards a super bantamweight title. Bautista's constant barrage of body shots caused sixty-two fight veteran Brazilian champion Giovanni Andrade to throw in the towel at the start of round four in their scheduled twelve-round bout. Bautista's style is reminiscent of a scaled down version of Tito Trinidad; his economy of motion and pinpoint accuracy are certain to garner the Filipino a title.

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Japan's Nobuo Nashiro, one of the four super flyweight belt holders, scored a unanimous decision over Eduardo Garcia of Mexico to make the first successful defense of his title. Nashiro won the WBA's belt in July of this year when he TKO'd Martin Castillo in round ten.

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The WBC has ordered a face-off between two of their top ranked Thai fighters in the super bantamweight division. Saenghiran Lookbanyai (Singwancha), ranked second, and Napapol Kiattisakchokchoi, who holds the top spot, are scheduled to meet at the beginning of next year. The date and locale of the fight will be announced later this month.

Upcoming Title Fights in Asia

December 17, 2006 - Chungmu Art Hall, Seoul, KoreaRodolfo Lopez vs. In Jin Chi

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December 20, 2006 - Ariake Colosseum, Tokyo, Japan Koki Kameda vs. Juan Jose Landaeta

December 23, 2006 - Indoor Tennis Stadium, Jakarta, Indonesia Muhammad Rachman vs. Benjie Sorolla

January 3, 2007 - Ariake Colosseum, Tokyo, Japan Cristian Mijares vs. Katsushige Kawashima
Edwin Valero vs. Michael Lozada

February 18, 2007 - Philippines Z Gorres vs. Fernando Montiel
Gerry Penalosa vs. TBA
Jimrex Jaca vs. TBA

February 24, 2007 - Tenggara, Indonesia Chris John vs. Jose Rojas