

## Promoter Bob Duffy: Wouldn't that be something?

Written by Robert Mladinich  
Tuesday, 06 February 2007 19:00

---

When Bob Duffy of Massapequa Park, Long Island, retired from the NYPD as a highly respected detective in the early nineties, he thought he had left the chaos of working for a large, unyielding bureaucracy behind.

He took a full-time position as the director of boxing for the New York State Athletic Commission, where he ran the day-to-day operations of the then-beleaguered organization. At the time the commission was a political patronage mill and Duffy was a one-man army. Most observers believed him to be the only one there with either personal integrity or even a rudimentary knowledge of the sport.

One of Duffy's proudest moments came in 1995, when he ran all of the administrative tasks, as well as the weigh-in for the Oscar De La Hoya-Jesse James Leija fight at Madison Square Garden on his own.

Many of the other officials were busy wangling complimentary tickets or trying to pose for photos with De La Hoya, who at the time was ascending to boxing's stratosphere.

In the fall of 2000, Duffy resigned in disgust from the commission. He said that the political appointees who the late Jack Newfield and Wallace Matthews once described as "political hacks, know-nothings and no-shows," were placing the safety of fighters in great jeopardy.

In good conscience, Duffy could no longer be part of such a broken system, which has since been revitalized and is doing an exemplary job.

Duffy is one of the few people in boxing that you rarely hear anything bad about. In a sport where character assassination is an art form, that is a heady compliment.

Today, the 57-year-old Duffy is one of the busiest grassroots promoters in the New York metropolitan area. His company, Ring Promotions, which has offices at the fabled Gleason's Gym in Brooklyn, promoted eight shows in 2006, and already has two on tap for this year.

In the main event on February 16, he has the extremely popular, hard-punching junior welterweight Irishman James Moore, 9-0 (7 KOS), fighting Edson Aguirre, a winner of 12 of his 18 fights who hails from North Carolina, in the main event at the historic Plattduetsche Park restaurant in Franklin Square, Long Island.

In the last show Duffy promoted there, in October, Duffy honored legendary referee Arthur Mercante of Garden City. It was a stirring tribute that anyone who was in attendance will never forget.

Duffy is also running what will be the final show at another historic location, the Huntington Town House, on March 23. That venue, to which Duffy regularly attracted a heady corporate

## Promoter Bob Duffy: Wouldn't that be something?

Written by Robert Mladinich  
Tuesday, 06 February 2007 19:00

---

clientele, has been a local institution for decades, but will be shutting its doors for good in the not too distant future.

In addition, Duffy is a key player in the promotion of the March 16 St. Patrick's Day Eve show at The Theater at Madison Square Garden, where a sellout is assured for a main event featuring the explosive John Duddy, a native of Ireland who fights out of New York.

Duddy will be taking on Anthony Bonsante of Minnesota, a tough competitor who is best known for his appearance on season one of "The Contender" reality television series.

Also in the works is a spring show at the Roseland Ballroom in Manhattan featuring a prominent former heavyweight contender who is looking to make one more run at a world title.

"I've never been so busy in my life," said the eternally optimistic Duffy, whose sharp mind always seems to be moving a mile a minute. On the weekend of February 2 alone, he brought three fighters to upstate Rochester, New York, to do battle on an ESPN 2 show.

"People ask me why I do what I do because there is so much stress involved," he said. "But this is what I love, so I consider myself very lucky."

Duffy, who is on the board of the Veterans Boxers Association, Ring 8, a wonderful organization that helps fighters in need, says that boxing got in his blood while growing up in the projects on Manhattan's West Side.

In those days, the fifties, boxing was in its heyday and Duffy often ventured to the fabled Stillman's Gym on Eighth Avenue.

While he wasn't bad with his fists, he realized that actual fighting was not his forte and joined the NYPD instead. As a Queens detective one of his partners was Bill Clark, who later became the executive producer of "NYPD Blue."

One memorable case that he worked on was the murder of an off-duty police officer who was shot point blank in the head outside of a Queens bar. The killer, a wannabe Irish gangster named Patrick Bannon, was on the lam for months.

"I played a small part in that case, but it was a tough one," said Duffy. "It was one of the few cases where the department would stop at nothing to get their man. The manhunt was intense and relentless. Bannon was finally arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to 50 years to life."

Duffy is much too positive of a thinker to let any of his logistical obstacles take away the joy he is experiencing as a grassroots promoter. He loves working with hot young prospects like Moore and Pawel Wolak, a native of Poland who now resides in Brooklyn.

He is also thrilled to be promoting a young heavyweight sensation from Venezuela named Wilmer Vasquez, who made his pro debut on one of his Long Island shows late last year. Vasquez will be lacing them up again on February 16 in Franklin Square.

## **Promoter Bob Duffy: Wouldn't that be something?**

Written by Robert Mladinich

Tuesday, 06 February 2007 19:00

---

Vasquez scored more than 50 knockouts in 58 amateur fights, and is being mentored by, among others, the legendary Roberto Duran. He punches with ferocity and has the stoic facial demeanor of a hired assassin. While a lot of things can happen on the road to a title, Duffy says that Vasquez, as well as Moore and Wolak, all have the skills, devotion and desire to become world champions.

Just being around them, he says, makes him realize he's doing just what he should be doing with his life.

"The sky is the limit for these guys, and I'm just thrilled to be associated with them at any level," said the refreshingly candid Duffy.

Moreover, he asserted, while alluding to the sport's two biggest power brokers, "I don't care about ever becoming the next Don King or Bob Arum. I just want to keep treating people right, putting on competitive shows, and doing what I love to do."

However, after a moment's pause, he adds, "But, who knows? Maybe someday, some young promoter will be interviewed and he'll say, 'I want to be the next Bob Duffy. He treated fighters fairly, put on competitive matches, and was always true to his principles.' Wouldn't that be something?"