School is almost out, and summer is around the corner, but there is no break for the pre-eminent teacher of the game we call the sweet science.

The great Angelo Dundee speaks of boxing with the sincerity of a famous composer that cares achingly about his craft. You know he was in the gym working with the likes of Carmen Basillo, Muhammad Ali, and Sugar Ray Leonard, and thus, there will always be a place on TSS to soak up his remembrances.

The man is an active ambassador of the game, a diplomat who generously spreads his wisdom of the fight game with the intent to promote the well-being of the sport.

Our conversation last month focused on the importance of amateur boxing and the toughest fight of Muhammad Ali's career. This time around, we chat about the essence of a young Cassius Clay and the ingredients of a few secret training methods.

Ray Markarian: How do you feel about the state of boxing today as a whole?

Angelo Dundee: Well, I like what is happening with these new matches. The public is beginning to have some faces to be recognized. All we have to do is give the fans what they want. Right now, boxing is at a bit of a low. But I am not worried. It will come around. Giving the fighters a chance to talk is important as well. It begins to be trouble when the fighters do not speak English and the media uses the information from the interpreters. It is not the same when it is like that. That was why I always told Muhammad to speak his mind. I told him that it got to be old to listen to the secondary party. The corner men and the managers did all the talking back in those times.

RM: How did you begin working with Cassius Clay?

AD: I'll tell you what happened. At the time, Cassius was working with Archie Moore and Dick Sadler. During training with those guys Cassius used to always say, "When am I gonna fight?" Then they would always tell him, "You're not ready kid." You see what happened there is Archie was still a champion. He was still fighting. So, you can't have two star powers and expect one to develop. They clashed. So what happened is at one point Archie gave Cassius a broom in the gym and told him to sweep the Kitchen floor. Then Cassius said, "I don't even sweep the kitchen floor for my mother."

RM: Wow!

AD: Then Cassius got back to Louisville and spoke with a guy named Mallus and he told Clay, "Hey kid, are you looking for a trainer? There is this guy in Miami Beach that has a good group of fighters and I think you should give him a call." During the interview, they asked me how I was going to handle Clay and I said, "Slowly." And that is how I got the job. (Dundee laughs)

RM: Ok, so you wanted to take things slow with Clay, just to develop him?

AD: Well you don't do any fancy, especially with a big kid. When I got the kid he was like 185 pounds and he grew naturally, never touched a weight. He was just a natural workout type of fighter. You know, there is no better training regimen to have when there is a kid willing to train. That is what I had with Muhammad.

RM: He never touched a weight, huh? What other types of methods did you use to train him?

AD: Well he became a heavyweight naturally. We worked a lot on the speed bag, heavy bag, and did the road work. He used to love to do roadwork but I had to tone it down a lot. I made him cut it down to three miles. None of my fighters ran more than three miles. They are not marathon runners. They have to work with their legs, do you know what I mean?

RM: Right. Were there any other types of secretive training methods?

AD: I will tell you something, I never used a pad with him either. You know, fighters love to hit pads when the trainers wear them on their hands, but I didn't do it. You see the reason why I didn't like pads are because the punch goes in a different angle; it doesn't go in the center. You know when you train by throwing a punch on the pad; you are either throwing it to the right or throwing it to the left of the face. But I think you have to get the muscle tone in the direction the punch is supposed to go, which is in the center.

RM: I hear you.

AD: But that was just with me you know, I have my own style. I respect other guys and what they do. But I did it my own way and I get a kick out of it.

RM: So did you use the same method with the other fighters that you trained, like Sugar Ray Leonard and others?

AD: Well yeah, but you never train each fighter the way you trained the other guy. You train the fighter according to what is there. Every regimen was different. It is not a team sport. It is an individual sport. You get a midget, you make him smaller. If you get a tall guy, you keep him tall. You have a guy that could go five rounds, so you try to get the most out of him in those five rounds worth of action. You train each fighter different because there are no two alike in this world. To me, it bothers me whenever I hear the words "team sport." See listen, there is no teams with these fighters, they are all by themselves.

RM: What else do you have going on Angelo? Tell me a little about this new World Boxing League that you are involved with.

AD: Well, I am going out to the Boxing Hall of Fame in June. And, we are working on this World Boxing League that was created by a man named Phil Penston. Let me tell you, I love it because it is good for fighters, they get a pension, they get insurance, and guaranteed pay. There are going to be six weight divisions: heavyweight, light heavyweight, middleweight,

welterweight, lightweight, and featherweight. We want to get it going for the next year and keep things rolling. These guys are going to have rules and regulations. It is going to be great; I am really excited about this.

RM: An idea of an organized Boxing League is something I have been pondering for a while now. I think it would be great for the sport of boxing if it had the proper infrastructure.

AD: It is going to be great Ray, believe me, I am really excited about this. This stuff is legit. It is going to be organized. There are going to be teams of fighters representing cities throughout the world and there is going to be playoffs at the end of each year. It is a great way for young fighters to get involved in the sport.

RM: Ok, sounds good…. Let's change speeds, who do you consider to be the best fighter in the game today?

AD: I like Kelly Pavlik and Mayweather. There are a couple of other guys, but they aren't there yet.

RM: One more question, before you go. If Sugar Ray Leonard fought Floyd Mayweather jr. in their primes, what would happen?

AD: Leonard would beat him. There was certain things that Ray Leonard could do that Mayweather wouldn't be able to handle. You see that is a hypothetical question. I think the guy that could realistically beat Mayweather right now is Cotto. Cotto has strength, body shots, and pressure that would knock Mayweather off kilter. Realistically, Cotto is the guy out there that could do it. You know, another guy that is a heck of a fighter is that Pavlik kid. He is going to get better and better. Man, he is a busy puncher and he uses his reach effectively. He is a great looking fighter that is only going to get better; he is not going to get worse. He is in the prime of his career for God sake.

RM: Thank you for your time Mr. Dundee.

AD: No problem, anytime.

Contact: Raymond.Markarian@yahoo.com