Thursday Don King helped land John Ruiz his fourth shot at the World Boxing Association heavyweight title. That's twice as many times as Ruiz has tried to sue King to get out of his promotional contract with the king of bombast, but who's counting?

Fortunately for Ruiz, not King.

"Working together works!'' King crowed from the tarmac in Buenos Aires as he prepared to fly back to Florida after having joined with Ruiz's attorney, Tony Cardinale, at the WBA Convention to pressure the WBA Governing Board into enforcing their own rules (which happens less often than the sport would like).

If they did, King knew, the WBA would have to grant the No. 2 ranked Ruiz an immediate shot at the WBA interim title against top rated former champion Nikolay Valuev after title holder Ruslan Chagaev tore his left Achilles tendon in his final day of sparring for a planned title defense against Valuev.

The injury forced the undefeated Chagaev to pull out of a mandatory defense against Valuev for the second time and left him unable to fight until the end of the year. More importantly, it meant Chagev would fail by a wide margin to defend the title against the mandatory challenger within a year as per the WBA's rules after first winning it by outpointing Valuev last April.

This was also the third title fight Chagaev had to withdraw from due to injury, an injury that is likely to sideline him for six months or more. Faced with those facts, the WBA named him "champion in recess'' and ordered that Valuev and Ruiz square off for the interim title with Chagaev ordered to be ready to face the winner by June 26, 2009.

"This is great!'' King boomed. "Johnny gets an opportunity to become a three-time heavyweight champion. Yes, he does. He tried to sue me twice but I don't pay any attention to that. I do all I can for them and when they try to walk away from me I just say, 'Forgive them Father for they know not what they do.''

In this case, Ruiz knew exactly what he was trying to do when he left Las Vegas and headed to Buenos Aires with Cardinale in tow. He was going there to try and continue reviving his career after having first lost the WBA title to Valuev by a hotly disputed majority decision in Berlin on Dec. 17, 2005 and then a title elimination fight to Chagaev by a majority decision 11 months later.

Ruiz is now on a two-fight win streak that included a dominating, one-sided 12-round victory over three time title challenger Jameel McCline in March. In a sense, he can now add to that a win over the WBA or at least winning over King. Well, sort of.

"Everybody knows Don is the best promoter in the world,'' Ruiz said. "But he really hasn't

fulfilled our contract. He can be the best for you or he can be the worst for you. I hope he's going to help me.''

That remains the subject of some debate because if he chooses King can simply ignore not only those two lawsuits but also the whole issue because, typically, he has a promotional piece of both fighters. King remains Ruiz's promoter but also is Valuev's co-promoter along with Germany's Wilfried Sauerland. Not coincidentally, Sauerland was also briefly Ruiz's manager but only until he got him beat by Valuev in Germany.

King said he hopes the fight will not go to purse bid. If it does it will be a 50-50 purse split and that's very likely to be the case in any event. King said he would try to put together a deal to bring the fight to either New York's Madison Square Garden or to Las Vegas, although his reasoning may not be that reassuring to Ruiz.

"I think it belongs in America,'' King said. "The big guy is an attraction. He should be in Las Vegas or New York. And with Johnny's new trainer (Manny Siaca) we're seeing a difference in John Ruiz.''

Since Ruiz stands 6-3 and Valuev is seven feet tall, it was clear who King was talking about. Yet, as always, he was keeping his options open.

"If Ruiz wins he's a legit champion,'' King said. "They can't get around it. That's up to Johnny. He fell down but he's come out of this smelling like a rose.''

In a sense so did Ruslan Chagaev, who will have defended the WBA title only once since first winning it April 14, 2007, by the time he's again healthy. Chagaev (24-0-1, 17 KO) claims he'll be ready to fight by the end of the year but Ruiz came to the WBA Convention armed with the opinion of a Boston Celtics' team doctor who claimed it's unlikely he'll be ready for at least a year.

Whatever the truth of that, the present truth is that Ruiz and Valuev will square off, possibly by Aug. 31, according to King, in their second title fight in three years with the winner in position to cash in again against Chagaev before a likely shot against WBC champion Samuel Peter, who is also promoted by King.

That could set up the eventual winner emerging with half of the title belts around his waist and thus equal bargaining power with present IBF-WBO champion Wladimir Klitschko in what would be a big-money unification fight late next year.