

Dibella Looks To Close Out 2009 On A High Note

Written by Robert Mladinich
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It has been an eventful year for promoter Lou DiBella, the man whose conscience forced him to promotionally disassociate himself from super middleweight Jermain Taylor, the longtime star of his stable who was brutally knocked out in the final round of bouts against Carl Froch and Arthur Abraham.

He also shared in the heartbreak of junior welterweight Paulie Malignaggi, after the fighter boxed the ears off of Juan Diaz in Diaz's hometown of Houston, only to lose a decision that was hard to fathom even by boxing's often unfathomable standards.

Malignaggi received much-deserved redemption this past weekend in Chicago, when he once again boxed the ears off of Diaz and rightfully came away with the decision.

On Wednesday, December 16, DiBella will close out the year with a small but stellar installment of his extremely popular Broadway Boxing series at B.B. Kings Blues Club & Grill in the heart of Times Square in New York.

Headlining the show will be super bantamweight Guillermo Rigondeaux, 3-0 (3 KOS), a two-time Olympic gold medalist for his native Cuba who fights out of Miami. Although he has only been a pro for seven months, Rigondeaux, a veteran of over 400 amateur fights who is now working with the esteemed trainer Freddie Roach, scored a sensational third round stoppage of 71 fight veteran Giovanni Andrade in his last bout.

He will square off against the much more experienced Rafael Tirado, 24-7-3 (16 KOS), of Ecuador in an eight-round bout.

"A case could be made that Guillermo is the most impressive amateur of all time," said DiBella. "Even after three pro fights, he has the type of talent that demands being showcased. New York City is the perfect place to get him out in front of the best boxing fans in the world."

Also being showcased is heavyweight sensation Tor Hamer, 9-0 (7 KOS), who in just 14 months as a pro has created quite a national buzz. The search is on for the next great American heavyweight and a compelling argument could be made that Hamer will be the one to fill that void.

Besides creating a name for himself at several New York venues, the 6'2", 235-pound powerhouse has laced the gloves up in Mississippi, Tennessee, Florida and Oklahoma. Only three of his nine opponents have had losing records, and nearly all hit the canvas with a frightening thud.

The 26-year-old Hamer will look to make short work of the normally resilient Domonic Jenkins, 13-11-1 (6 KOS), of Dallas, who has only been stopped four times.

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Hamer, a native New Yorker who the Village Voice, the city's pre-eminent alternative weekly newspaper, dubbed the "Gentleman Boxer" because of his unique background, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Penn State. He is also a certified personal trainer whose wide range of interests includes acting and modeling.

His manager, marketing guru Adam Cohen, has entered into a relationship with the No Mas clothing line, which in addition to licensing a Muhammad Ali brand has established a Team Tor brand. Among the items branded are T-shirts and hats emblazoned with the mantra "Fight Tor Fight."

Cohen, a graduate of Wheaton College whose interest in boxing was culled by his father Philip, an old-time ticket broker who was dear friends with Rocky Graziano, insisted on one T-shirt having a vintage look that "young adults would feel comfortable wearing to a party."

Cohen expects the Hamer brand, as both a hard-punching heavyweight and a marketing commodity, to explode in the very near future. His efforts have already resulted in the boxer being the subject of a cover story in the Village Voice, as well as a guest on the late-night Carson Daly television show.

As long as Hamer keeps fighting – and winning in the explosive fashion that his fans have become accustomed to – he is sure to become the brand that Cohen has long envisioned. Besides having such a compelling personal story, he is a New Yorker by birth and an old-school knockout artist by nature.

That has always been a winning combination, especially at times like these where there is such a dearth of exciting heavyweights.

Among other things, Cohen will use the power of the Internet to launch a full-scale media blitz on the man he considers to be the next great American heavyweight.

"I want Tor's career to have a viral aspect to it," said Cohen. "Most boxing stories are rags to riches. His story is different, but besides being a very exciting fighter he is very smart and intellectual. He has a different kind of story that is easy for the fans to embrace."

In other bouts:

Joel Torres, 11-0-1 (7 KOS) vs. Georgie Estrellas, 10-2-1 (7 KOS), lightweights.
Orlando Del Valle, 7-0 (5 KOS) vs. Noe Lopez Jr., 5-4 (4 KOS), super featherweights.
Gabriel Bracero, 7-0 (0 KOS) vs. Carl McNickols, 6-2 (6 KOS), junior welterweights.
Joe Smith Jr., 2-0 (2 KOS) vs. Gevonte Davis, 4-5-1 (2 KOS), light heavyweights.
Christian Martinez, 1-0 (1 KO) vs. Gabriel Morris, 1-4-1 (0 KOS), junior welterweights.

Tickets range from \$55 to \$125 and can be purchased by calling DiBella Entertainment at 212-947-2577 or by logging onto the DiBella Entertainment web site at: www.dbe1.com

Also visit the No Mas web site at www.nomas-nyc.com .