Where else but in boxing could a major outdoor sporting event at Yankee Stadium be threatened by a bar mitzvah?

That's the beauty of the sport. One never knows from one day to the next how it will make headlines but one thing is sure – it often won't be what you expected.

Hall of Fame Promoter Bob Arum is the last man to promote a fight at Yankee Stadium, having staged the Muhammad Ali-Ken Norton bout in the old stadium on Sept. 28, 1976. That stadium is gone now but Arum has been hoping to reprise that event at the Yankees' new edifice, which just opened up last year across the street from the remains of the House That Ruth Built.

His plan was to bring popular Puerto Rican ex-welterweight champion Miguel Cotto back to New York in June, as he's done for several years now on the same weekend as the annual Puerto Rican Day Parade, but this time he wants to put him in the Stadium rather than at Madison Square Garden. Cotto has regularly sold the Garden out so Arum figured he could maximize the crowd and Cotto's still considerable popularity by matching him against reigning WBA junior middleweight champion Yuri Foreman, a popular Jewish fighter who hails from Gomel, Belarus but who has been residing in Brooklyn for long enough that the Jewish community has adopted him as its own.

"It may be the biggest Jewish sporting event of all time, certainly since David fought Goliath," David Efune told the Associated Press. Honest he did.

The David and Goliath fight has had some traction, not to mention Biblical significance, so it's a bit debatable whether or not Foreman-Cotto will rival that over-the-weight match but if it's going to happen at Yankee Stadium Arum will need more than a slingshot to get it done.

His problem is not with Stadium officials, who apparently are all in favor of hosting the first fight at the new Stadium. His problem is with a family whose bar mitzvah (the Jewish coming-of-age ceremony for a 13-year-old boy as he moves into manhood) has been scheduled to occupy several of the lounges at the Stadium on June 5, the same night Arum and Yankee Stadium officials say would work for them.

According to Arum and AP, "Part of the (bar mitzvah) deal was for a half hour or so they could use the big screen in center field to show pictures and all that sort of stuff. Obviously, you can't do that if a fight's going on."

True but there are other factors at work here, as there always seem to be in boxing, and it could work to Arum's advantage.

First, the undefeated Foreman was born in Belarus but emigrated to Israel when he was nine. It was there that he began to box in earnest at an Arab-owned gym. He has often joked about the

eagerness with which many of the fighters there agreed to spar with him but in the end things worked out. For him, not for them.

He eventually moved to New York, became a three-time New York Golden Gloves champion and a top amateur before turning professional with Arum as his promoter. But boxing was not Foreman's sole obsession, as it is for so many other fighters.

He also is intent on becoming a rabbi, studying the Talmud in the morning, boxing and training in the afternoon and evening and several times a week taking rabbinical classes. He is, as you might expect, a strict adherent to orthodox Jewish regulations and so one sees a potential opening to clear this all up.

Would it be too much to ask for Foreman to attend the ceremony as maybe an honored guest a few hours before he tries to punch Cotto in the nose? After all, the fights right downstairs!

Maybe he could even suggest having the kid make the ring walk with him from the locker room, the WBA 154-pound belt held aloft by Foreman's new young friend.

Why not? This is boxing, where the theatre of the absurd usually makes a lot of sense.

If Roy Jones, Jr. could play in a semi-pro basketball game the afternoon of a world title fight or conduct a nationally-televised press conference in a ring he was going to be fighting in only an hour or so before the match why not see if Foreman can hang out at a bar mitzvah at the Stadium before he fights? Surely he understands the significance of the moment and the kid would go for it.

Failing that, Arum has a June 12 date on hold at the Garden but his first choice is still June 5 at Yankee Stadium. Were this a First Communion party or a baptism Arum had to get around, his chances of negotiating a settlement might be a tad more difficult. But Yuri Foreman (28-0, 8 KO) is a compelling and popular figure within the Jewish community who has refused to fight on the Jewish Sabbath in the past, obeying rules that forbid such activities from sundown Friday night until three stars appear in the sky on Saturday night rather than showcase himself on ESPN's Friday Night Fights. He's a hero to many Jewish kids, so why not make a new fan for himself?

Arum has gotten around the Sabbath problem by assuring that a Foreman-Cotto fight at Yankee Stadium will not begin any earlier than 11:30 p.m., well past the end of the Jewish Sabbath and leaving Foreman plenty of time to arrive at the arena – where ever it is – and prepare himself to fight.

With that much time before the main event couldn't he drop by a bar mitzvah and sign a few autographs, shake a few hands and throw a few jabs before having the young boy and his family join him on the ring walk from the locker room to the corner opposite Miguel Cotto?

Now that's a bar mitzvah to nobody would forget, including fight fans watching at home.