

Boxers Like What They See of Revamped MSG

Written by The Sweet Science
Monday, 23 December 2013 17:00

Starting Friday, December 27 at 11:00 pm, immediately following coverage the Knicks-Raptors game, MSG Network will present “The Garden Transformed: Year Three,” the final installment of the original series that takes a behind-the-scenes look at Madison Square Garden’s unprecedented, three-year, top-to-bottom Transformation. A new episode from the five-part series will air each night Friday through Tuesday.

“The Garden Transformed: Year Three,” which features award-winning actor Billy Crudup providing the voiceover, will showcase the final phase of the \$1 billion project, which took place during the offseason and was completed in time for the New York Knicks’ final preseason game in October. Highlights from the series include: the new Chase Square 7th Avenue entrance that is nearly double in size and features two 600 square foot ceiling video screens showcasing ground-breaking content, two new spectacular Chase Bridges with one-of-a-kind views of the action, the EIGHTEEN/76 Balcony, the new Signature Suite Level and GardenVision, a state-of-the-art, center-hung multimedia display.

Some of the Garden’s biggest boxing stars stopped in over the summer to see the Transformation’s progress, including Gerry Cooney, Larry Holmes and Miguel Cotto, who donated his trunks from the 2011 Margarito fight to be featured in one of the Garden’s 20 new Defining Moments exhibits on the expanded Madison and Garden Concourse levels.

“This place for me means home,” said Cotto. “I hope I have another opportunity to be here again. Now people can see the trunks I used for the fight and people can connect to such a big moment in my life.”

The series focuses not only on the construction itself, but on the personalities of the people who worked day in and day out on the enormous project, many for all three years, driven by their dedication to the beloved Arena. In addition to boxers, the show includes all new interviews with a number of athletes and celebrities, who over the years have left an indelible mark on the legendary building as they return to The Garden to see the Transformation’s progress for themselves.

Special guests throughout the series include: former New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani; actors Michael J. Fox and Luis Guzman; Rangers’ goaltender Henrik Lundqvist; Knicks’ stars Raymond Felton and Tim Hardaway Jr.; college basketball coaches Jim Boeheim and Steve

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Lavin; and WWE legends Bruno Sammartino and Triple H.

Additional Boxing Quotes:

Gerry Cooney: “Madison Square Garden is the greatest place on Earth and I started my career here when I was 16 years old. I’ve been coming back every since.”

Cooney on his famous bout with Ken Norton in 1981: “I thought I was in for a really tough fight, I thought I was going to have a long night ahead of me. I hit him with a right hand to the body and I spun him into the corner. Then I had the hail Mary punches going on. Every time I turned to the side and look at the referee – ‘is it over?’ – and he said no, I came back.

Larry Holmes: “Coming back to New York today and any time I come here to New York, it always brings me back to this place right here, Madison Square Garden. I never had it in my wildest dreams that I was going to be fighting here. When I told people that I was going to fight here, you think they believed me? No!”

Holmes to construction workers when an elevator bell sounds: “Don’t ring any bells around here!”

Holmes on sparring with both Ali and Frazier: “Those were the days. I was just little boy trying to learn how to fight. And how do you learn how to fight? You’ve got to go with the best. Working with both guys, my workouts were easier when I was with Muhammad Ali. Ali was a cakewalk; he didn’t try to kill you. Joe Frazier was on your ass all the time. He was trying to take you out. Ali could have taken me out, but he didn’t try to do that. But Joe Frazier tried to take me out every day.”

Holmes on Ali and Frazier: “Those guys will do down in history as the greatest two fighters ever. Joe didn’t like Ali because he had a big mouth, but one of the things about Muhammad Ali, he could back it up.”

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Holmes on The Garden: “I think it’s important for the heavyweight champion to fight here, because this is history. If you haven’t fought at Madison Square Garden, you haven’t fought nowhere. That’s the way I saw it then and that’s the way I see it now. There are a lot of arenas around, but none like this. To be a champion, you’ve got to come here.”

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