

Brooklyn Has A Rich Boxing History

Written by Steve Farhood

Tuesday, 16 October 2012 09:24



Devon Alexander, Danny Jacobs, Peter Quillin, Paul Malignaggi, Danny Jacobs, Erik Morales, Pablo Cano, Eddie Gomez, Dmitriy Salita, Luis Collazo pose in front of the Barclays Center on Monday. (Tom Casino)

The opening night of big-time boxing at the Barclays Center serves as a link to history -- and a time when Brooklyn and boxing were linked as closely as Peter Luger's Steakhouse and the porterhouse for two.

Boxing's ties to Brooklyn date back no less than 130 years:

* John L. Sullivan, who was the first heavyweight champion of the modern era, fought in Brooklyn in 1882, just before the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge.

* The legendary lightweight champion Joe Gans fought in Brooklyn in 1896 and 1897. In 1898, Brooklyn, which had been independent, became part of New York City.

* The great middleweight champion Harry Greb first fought in Brooklyn in 1917, one year after a Polish immigrant named Nathan Handwerker began serving hot dogs from a stand on Surf Avenue in Coney Island.

* Jack Dempsey fought an exhibition in Brooklyn in 1918, just as the population of the borough reached 2-million. (It is now estimated at 2.5-million.)

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In fact, most of the stars of boxing's golden age fought in Brooklyn at some point in their careers. Tony Canzoneri (47 times) led the way. Native New Yorkers Rocky Graziano (18 times) and Benny Leonard (14 times) appeared regularly. Sugar Ray Robinson, Jake LaMotta, Sandy Saddler, Kid Gavilan, Abe Attell, Kid Chocolate, Joey Giardello, Terry McGovern, Battling Nelson, Ad Wolgast and Tommy Loughran are some of the hall of famers who fought in Brooklyn.

In all, there have been 37 world title fights in Brooklyn, most of them coming at various athletic clubs that have long since shut their doors. James J. Jeffries won the world heavyweight title at the Coney Island AC in 1899, knocking out Bob Fitzsimmons. The last world title fight was on August 5, 1931, when Slapsie Maxie Rosenbloom retained the New York World light heavyweight title with a decision over Jimmy Slattery at Ebbets Field.

Eighty-one years later – on Saturday, October 20 -- there will be four world title fights on one card.

In one of those fights, Brooklyn's own Paulie Malignaggi

will make his first defense of the WBA welterweight title. Eleven years ago, Malignaggi turned pro on the last major fight card in Brooklyn, at KeySpan Park (now MCU Park) in Coney Island.

Malignaggi is about as Brooklyn as it gets. While you might associate Michael Jordan with North Carolina, Al Capone with Chicago and Mae West with Hollywood, they were all born in Brooklyn as well.

So were a string of heavyweight champions: Floyd Patterson, Michael Moorer, Mike Tyson, Shannon Briggs and Riddick Bowe -- all born within a few miles of one another.

Other recent champions born in Brooklyn include Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, Junior Jones, Zab Judah, Luis Collazo, Mark Breland and Kevin Kelley.

The Dodgers left Brooklyn after the 1957 baseball season, and the demolition of Ebbets Field, the site of many a major fight card, began in 1960.

A new chapter in Brooklyn's history begins on Oct. 20. The Dodgers aren't likely to ever come back, but boxing has returned, and the Barclays Center is its new home.

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World championship boxing returns to Brooklyn with an inaugural night of fights at the new Barclays Center on October 20 headlined by Unified Super Lightweight World Champion Danny Garcia against future Hall of Famer Erik Morales presented by Golden Boy Promotions in association with Box Latino and supported by Golden Boy Promotions sponsors Corona, DeWalt Tools and AT&T. In the co-featured attractions, Brooklyn's own Paulie "Magic Man" Malignaggi puts his WBA Welterweight World Championship on the line against hard-hitting

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Pablo Cesar "El Demolador" Cano, number one rated WBO middleweight contender Peter "Kid Chocolate" Quillin of Manhattan takes on unbeaten Hassan N'Dam for N'Dam's WBO Middleweight World Championship in a fight presented in association with Asventure Promotion and Devon Alexander faces Randall Bailey for Bailey's IBF Welterweight World Championship in a bout presented in association with The Great Promotions and DiBella Entertainment. The SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING telecast begins live at 8:00 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast). Preliminary fights will air live on SHOWTIME EXTREME® beginning at 7:00 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast).

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Radam G says:

Yup! Brooklyn has a rich history of boxing. A real long list of hardcore whup@\$e\$. Holla!

Radam G says:

I musta' fo'got! Nice copy! Brooklyn is no doubt the birthplace of tons of the famous and infamous.

A sidenote: For all the groupies, boys, fanboys, pals and peeps of Fam May, Pops Joy May was born in The Bronz. His 60th birthday is Friday. And I'll be at da party in Sin City. Catch a bus, plane, copters or sumptin, and show up all that can. I won't be in pink, I think! Haha! Holla?

SouthPaul says:

RSVP me. I'm there.

Look at Morales in that pic...always serious ... He ain't never been caught with a smile on his face. Hardcore Mexicano. A Mexicans Mexican! Love that dude.

deepwater says:

hope ole morales has one last war in him. he is an all time great. Ill be there at the barclays

ali says:

Wish this card was on the west coast Brooklyn ppl should have a great time watching this card

brownsugar says:

just read another interview between alphabet Champ Hassan N'Jikam N'Dam and Peter Quillen,.. most of the media is treating that guy like he's the contender,.. Quillen gets 5 pages to N'dam's single page.

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I hope Quillen wins,.. but I expect N'Dam to have much more to say in the ring than he's been allowed to say in the press.

looking forward seeing how that plays out. My early thoughts is that N'Dam moves too much and my be able to tap-tap his way to a less than thrilling victory. (if he's still in shape)