DiBella Entertainment inks top middleweight contender Matthew Macklin to a multi-year promotional deal

NEW YORK, NY (August 3, 2011) – DiBella Entertainment has added Irish middleweight contender Matthew "Mack the Knife" Macklin to its ever-growing stable of fighters. Macklin, 29, is an intelligent boxer-puncher, who has shown that he is not afraid to engage or press the action when necessary. He is currently ranked #4 by the WBA, #7 by the WBO, and #12 by the IBO, and has nothing but big fights on his mind as he joins the same promotional roster as middleweight champion Sergio Martinez and middleweight contenders Andy Lee, Brian Vera, Ronald Hearns, Peter Manfredo, Jr., and Ishe Smith.

There are times when a loss brings more positive attention to a fighter's career than any of his previous victories. Coming off his most recent fight, a controversial loss to "Super" WBA middleweight titlist Felix Sturm, that statement could not be truer of Macklin, 28-3 (19 KOs). But now, Macklin is looking for redemption under a new promotional banner, a deal to bring him to the United States that was facilitated by Brian Peters, his manager since 2005.

"I am really happy to be signing with DiBella Entertainment," said Macklin. "I've known Lou DiBella for many years. I met him in Manchester when Paulie Malignaggi fought Lovemore Ndou in 2008. We spoke about doing something together last year, but the timing wasn't right. I feel that we're now on the same wavelength. I'm excited about the future and I feel that I am in very good hands with Lou."

Born in Birmingham, England, to Irish parents, Macklin was studying law at Coventry University while simultaneously competing as an amateur boxer. After winning the national senior Amateur Boxing Association of England welterweight title in 2001, Macklin made the decision to put his studies on hold, to the ire of his parents, in order to pursue a professional boxing career.

In Glasgow, Scotland, on the undercard of future featherweight champion Scott Harrison, Macklin stopped Ram Singh in just 112 second, on November 17, 2001. Going on to win his first nine bouts, six by knockout, Macklin built up enough of a reputation to challenge for the British junior middleweight title. Fighting Andrew Facey on November 6, 2003, Macklin lost a razor-thin 10-round decision by one point, with a score of 96-95.

Macklin bounced back from that defeat winning three straight before fighting professionally in Ireland for the first time against Michael Monaghan for the Irish middleweight title, on May 14, 2005, his 23rd birthday, at National Stadium in Dublin. Macklin won the belt with a fifth-round knockout, at 1:28 of the frame.

Three months after winning the Irish middleweight title, Macklin traveled across the pond to get his first taste of fighting in the United States, winning two bouts by knockout, stopping Leo Laudat in three in Atlantic City, and Anthony Little in two in Philadelphia.

Three fights later, Macklin would engage Jamie Moore in one of the best fights of 2006, in his second attempt to win the British junior middleweight crown. Fighting Moore at George Carnall Leisure Centre in Manchester on September 26, Macklin was quickly drawn into a brawl and the two continued to fight in the trenches for over nine brutal rounds, before the Irishman would succumb to a knockout halfway through the 10th frame.

“I fought Jamie Moore at the wrong weight,” said Macklin. “Although I shouldn’t have fought Moore’s fight, making weight was the problem in that bout. I felt weak, I had no stamina and no reflexes. I stayed at welterweight and junior middleweight for far too long. I am a middleweight.”

Maintaining a busy schedule over the next two years, Macklin would win his next six fights, three by knockout, including a 10-round decision over veteran Yori Boy Campas. Macklin then returned to his hometown of Birmingham to challenge Wayne Elcock for the British middleweight title on March 14, 2009, winning by TKO in the third. Macklin followed that up with a fight against Finnish Amin Asikainen six months later and destroyed him inside one round to add the European title to his collection.

After defending the European title in two of his next three victories, Macklin was poised to make a big slash on the world-boxing scene with a bout against former junior middleweight champion Winky Wright set for Las Vegas. However, that bout did not come to fruition when Wright pulled out after suffering an injury in training. A WBA eliminator against Khoren Gevor next presented itself with the winner to face Felix Sturm. Contractual issues led to Macklin pulling out of that contest, but he was rewarded with a direct shot at Sturm and, despite losing a highly controversial split decision on the champion's home turf, made a statement with his dynamic performance.

"I went over to Germany and I proved myself. I felt that I won," said Macklin, who lost the split decision by two votes of 116-112 for Sturm and a 115-113 tally in his favor. "I feel that if we fought 100 times, I would beat him every time. If it were up to me, I'd fight him next, although I don't think he has any intention of pursuing a rematch with me. If he wants to fight me again, it's an easy fight to make, as he is his own promoter. I think he knows that he cannot beat me. He's not going to come to Ireland or England. Fighting Sturm in New York would be great, but I would go back to Germany if I had to. I'd expect a fairer crack at the fight. I think the German officials would be under a lot more pressure to make sure things were on the level, given the controversy of our first fight.

"I think the Sturm fight was an eye-opener for the boxing public at large. Sturm is a leading man in the middleweight division and I think I proved that I am among the top three middleweights of the world."

DiBella Entertainment President Lou DiBella is excited about his new recruit.

"I viewed signing Macklin as a no-brainer," said DiBella. "I have Sergio Martinez, the real middleweight champ, the best in the world. But clearly Matthew handled Sturm with ease and he has a claim at being the second-best middleweight in the world. He's going to want a shot at Sergio and eventually that will make sense.

"I'm very, very happy with the deal," he continued. "I happen to like the kid very much and that is part of it. There are certain guys who have very pleasing styles for TV. This guy rumbles but he also has skills. He's fun to watch and made a case that he stands near the top of the middleweight division with the way he fought Sturm."