

## Sadam Ali, Fighter/Promoter

Written by Chris Wheat, SPECIAL FOR TSS  
Wednesday, 30 May 2012 17:43

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When featherweight legend Prince Naseem Hamed fought Kevin Kelley at Madison Square Garden in 1997, eight-year old karate student Sadam Ali sat in awe as he watched the slippery British knockout artist thrill the crowd. From that point forward his karate gi gathered mothballs; the young Sadam gave up martial arts for the sweet science.

Flash forward to the present as the undefeated welterweight prospect received an encouraging phone call from his boyhood idol Hamed. "I've always wanted to meet or talk with him," Ali explains. "He called me about a month ago and we had a very positive conversation. He was really nice and gave me a lot of pointers and encouragement. All the things an up and coming fighter would want to hear."

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With that personal highlight and having already achieved a career milestone by being the first Arab-American to represent the United States at the Olympic Games, Ali has earned another accolade by becoming the youngest licensed boxing promoter in the U.S.

His newly formed World Kid Promotions, which will hold its inaugural card on June 2nd at Brooklyn's Aviator Sports Complex with Ali as the headliner, is designed as a vehicle to keep Ali active as a boxer and free from any long-term commitments with established promoters. No other boxers are currently signed to World Kid Promotions, and while New York-area boxers will be featured on the card, Ali sees WKP as a company that will focus solely on keeping him active and moving up the welterweight ranks.

With an interesting and very marketable storyline coming out of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics, Ali did not lack from promotional offers upon turning pro. However, since the start of his professional career, both the boxer and his father/manager David Ali have been wary of signing on the dotted line with any promoter offering the exposure and TV dates deemed so crucial in establishing a pathway to an eventual title opportunity. Ali agrees that maintaining his contractual independence has come with a price. "It has definitely slowed me down a bit, remaining a free agent makes it difficult to get the fights you want," Ali remarked before a recent training session. "Now I won't have to sit at home on the couch waiting. I can stay active at my own pace, doing what I need to do to advance my career."

Without harboring any bitterness toward the promotional establishment and with a keen understanding of how the fight game operates, David Ali has been steadfast in his resolve to keep Ali a promotional free agent until such time as signing a contract will be in the best interest of Ali the fighter. Citing numerous examples (Luis Collazzo's differences with Don King Productions being one) of talented boxers having to sit on the sidelines because of promoter apathy and/or contractual entanglements losing prime career years to inactivity, Ali is determined not to allow that to happen to his son. "I want to dispel the notion that all we are trying to do is wait for the highest bidder," Ali stated firmly. "This is not just about the signing bonus, but the overall scope of the agreement. Sure, the signing bonus is important, but so are the third and fifth years of the contract and what the long-term benefits are for the boxer."

With a record of 14-0 (8 by KO) in three and a half years of boxing as a pro, Ali has been a fairly active fighter, although he would prefer to have had at least four more fights at this juncture. Starting World Kid Promotions should remedy any career lag time. With his own gym in Brooklyn's Bay Ridge neighborhood, where he trains at least six days a week, Ali is a fighter who stays in condition to be active and therefore wants to compete as often as possible. He

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expects to be in the ring at least once every three months under the WKP banner.

With hall of fame legend Sugar Ray Leonard providing the original blueprint for success at remaining a promotional free-agent and Floyd "Money" Mayweather currently carrying that torch, Sadam Ali hopes to learn from those icons and add his personal stamp to the formula.

Citing a substantial and loyal fan base that has followed him from the beginning of his career through his recent regular appearances at New Jersey's Prudential Center, both the fighter and his father are very confident that that audience will turn out in force in Brooklyn and make the June 2nd show a success. With junior middleweight prospect Eddie Gomez of the Bronx added as co-feature, there may also be some promotional synergy in the works. Gomez is a Golden Boy-promoted fighter and was added to the show after discussions between WKP and GBP. With Oscar De La Hoya's company planning a splashy debut at Brooklyn's Barclays Center in the fall, perhaps there will be a spot for the World Kid on that card. If not, preliminary plans are in place for a second WKP show in September or October.

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