

BOXING BOOST

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL FIGHT FANS

July/August - ISSUE 12

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skipper
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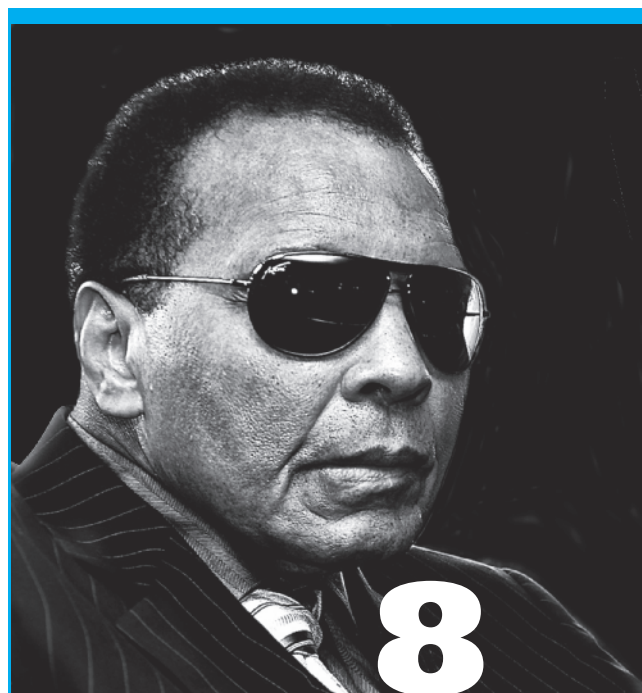
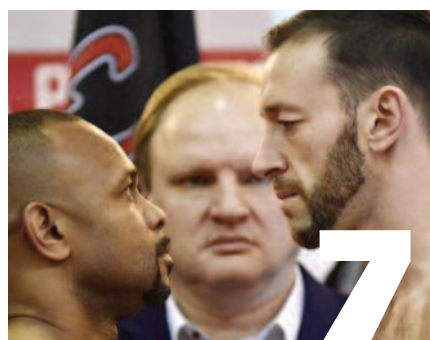
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Many thanks to the FA of Wales for the cover picture of Ashley Williams



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A message from Enzo

"It's an honour to be involved with Bocsio. In my many years of involvement with world champion boxers I've worked with a lot of magazines, but this is something special, a platform to talk about boxing as it really is.

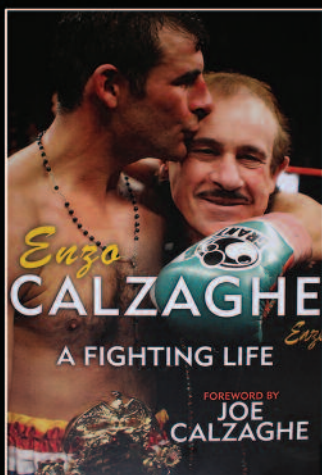
"Remember that you can put your questions to me through the Bocsio website. Whatever it is you've got to send my way, I can guarantee that I'll tell you things as they are and give an honest answer."

Enzo Calzaghe

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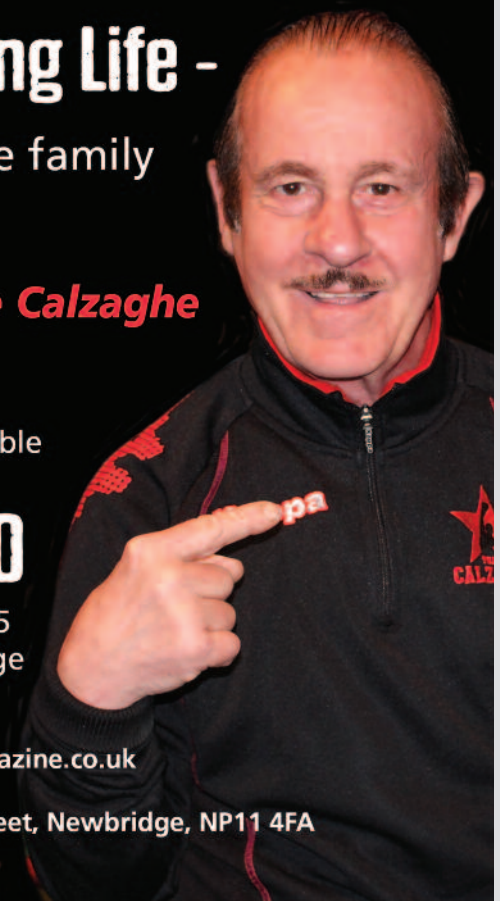


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Wales skipper Williams' KO views

Wales and Swansea football captain Ashley Williams takes time out from his rather hectic summer schedule starring in Euro 2016 to talk boxing with Graham Thomas

Ashley Williams is used to punching above his weight as the first Wales captain to take his team to the finals of a major football tournament since 1958.

He's been enjoying the experience with the Dragons in France at Euro 2016 and led the team to the top of their qualifying group following epic clashes with Slovakia, England and Russia.

But away from football, the Swansea City skipper is a fan of most other sports, including boxing. He grew up in the West Midlands, before a career in non-league football led to his big break with Stockport County.

From there, he joined Swansea City in 2008 and was a key member of the squad that climbed the tables to reach the Premier League five years ago.

A good friend of Swansea's recently retired former cruiserweight world champion Enzo Maccarinelli, Williams describes himself as a boxing enthusiast, rather than an expert. Bocsio caught up with Ashley during a break between matches to discover his boxing hit-list.

Who are your favourite fighters of all time?

Mike Tyson and Floyd Mayweather.

What's the most memorable fight you've seen?

Ricky Hatton v Floyd Mayweather, December 2007.

Who's your favourite current fighter?

Anthony Joshua. He's clearly the best around at the moment and I'm enjoying watching his career progress.

What's your favourite fight that you've attended?

Carl Froch v George Groves II at Wembley, May 2014. It was enjoyable, but I didn't know much about what was happening close up because I was in a box, rather than at ringside.

It's better to watch on the TV screen than from the box itself, so, to be honest, I may as well have stayed

at home!

Who's your favourite Welsh boxer?

Enzo Maccarinelli. He's a good mate of mine and if I didn't say he was my favourite Welsh fighter, then he'd probably knock me out!

He's brave and a battler. I see him around quite a bit, because my kids and his kids always seem to be at the same



Photo courtesy of FA of Wales

places – whether it's football or something else – so I chat with Enzo a lot.

Have you ever boxed?

Only after a night out and that was a while ago. I never boxed as a kid. We didn't box at my school.

What could footballers learn from boxers?

I really admire the discipline they have, particularly towards their training. When they're preparing for a fight, because of the weight issue, their preparation is very strict – stricter than maybe we are in football when preparing for a game, although we have more matches, obviously.

What could boxers learn from footballers?

Maybe they could do more on the analysis side of things. On the other hand, how much can you analyse a guy getting knocked out if it's just one hit?

The old Wimbledon team of the 'Crazy Gang' – including Vinny Jones and John 'Fash the Bash' Fashanu – would memorably sort out any differences on the training field by putting the gloves on. If Swansea City did the same, who would be the guy to avoid?

No-one in particular. Oh, hang on. Maybe you'd want to avoid Lukasz Fabianski, our goalkeeper, because he's Polish and sometimes he can go a bit mad. He's normally pretty quiet, but I reckon, if needed, he could look after himself.

You probably wouldn't want to fight Kyle Bartley, either. He's a big guy and he's got a good reach. Jefferson Montero would be pretty quick, but I'm not sure he'd want to get involved.

Wayne Rooney is a big boxing fan and supposedly has the odd bout in his kitchen, if Twitter is to be believed. If there was a box-off between you and Rooney, who would win?

I have no answer to that one!

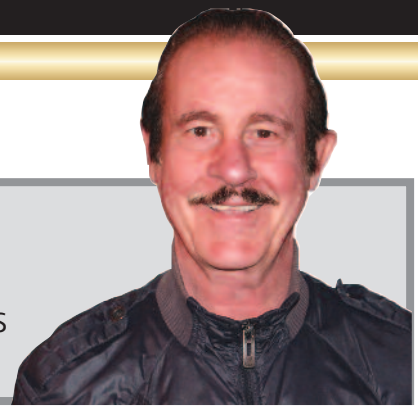
Anthony Joshua or Tyson Fury?

Joshua. To be fair, I think Fury is good fun, but I prefer Joshua.



Photo courtesy of www.swansea-city.net

In his regular Bocsio column, former Ring Magazine trainer of the year Enzo Calzaghe reflects on Enzo Maccarinelli's retirement and how it fits into problems in the wider boxing world



Enzo Calzaghe: When should a fighter quit the ring?

I felt sad when I saw Enzo Maccarinelli's first-round loss to Dmytro Kucher, having known him for so many years, taken him to the world title and trained him for all of his six world cruiserweight belt fights.

What a fighter he's been, I tip my hat to him. So much heart, so much guts... too much guts, he's too tough for his own good and in the past he's never known when to quit. Immediately after the loss, Enzo did say that was it for him and boxing – I hope he sticks to that decision, it's something I'm going to call him to talk about. Enough is enough.

Enzo went down hard again, that's happened to him too much. He's taking big shots, powerful shots to the head, for no reason. We all know what can happen when that goes too far – just look what happened to Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier. With heavy punches landing to the head... what happened to Ali can happen to anybody. That's why when I had to pull fighters out, I pulled them out. I did that in America when Gary Lockett was in trouble in the third round against Kelly Pavlik... Gary thanked me for that, and so did his father.

I'll 100% from my heart tell Enzo that what you've done has been good for boxing, but now leave it there. He's got a heart of gold, he's been a champion and done everything you can in the sport... but enough is enough, call it a day and enjoy life. That won't be easy for him because he's been involved in the sport since he was a kid, he loves it. But he can stay in boxing as

a trainer – he loves keeping fit himself – and in the media. He's looking after his father's old gym in Bonymaen and that's fantastic, he can use all he's learnt to teach kids how to be proper boxers. I'll explain to him that boxers need to forget about money – what's more important is his health, to think about his wife and kids

Timing your exit right isn't just Enzo's problem, you see it all the time in the sport. People find it hard to work out when to quit because it's all

**"THESE OLD FIGHTERS ARE
MAKING SUCKERS OUT OF
THE PUBLIC WHO ARE
PAYING TO WATCH DEAD
WOOD"**

about the spondoola. Some people can't afford to give it up, but others just won't let the money go. People want to make money and then spend too much... that's the world, I can't change it.

Look at Roy Jones Jr – what's it all about, going to Russia to fight all-comers? That guy was amazing to me, a super-legend, but I haven't got a clue what he thinks he's doing now. It's got to the stage where he's losing his legend status – how could you have envisaged that happening 10 years ago? Look at Shane Mosley, why is he keeping going? Doesn't he

have any pride?

These people were champions and it's like they don't know what that meant to kids, to people on the street. I do believe it's all about the money, about the pay-per-view. It's making suckers out of the public who are paying to watch dead wood, to watch rematch after rematch when the first bout was diabolical. Wladimir Klitschko v Tyson Fury was garbage last time, so why have we got it again? It'll be the same old Klitschko, push-push-push... I look at these things and think 'what the hell am I watching? Sport can be fantastic, why am I watching this?' We're even being charged pay-per-view to watch fighters who aren't champions. Where does it stop? The public want to see the super fights.

There are freaks like Bernard Hopkins who can go on. He's cagey, unique, he knows how to avoid getting hurt. But now he's proved he can be a champion past the age of 50, what else is there? Why doesn't he call it a day? Floyd Mayweather Jr's last fight was diabolical and if he returns to get the record of 50-0 it'll be against a picked opponent. The public want to see a real fight, not running. If he comes back again he'll be cutting his own throat, it'll be an insult to boxing.

When my son Joe's career was coming to an end he stared into my eyes and said 'I've lost my hunger'. Forget being a father, as a boxing trainer that meant everything. When he said that to me, I knew it was done. What it's ultimately about is respect for yourself.

Big Macc: Six of the best

Enzo Maccarinelli announced his retirement in June after his first-round loss to Dmytro Kucher. Sean Davies marks the fantastic career of the Bonymaen banger with a look back at six of his greatest fights

Bruce Scott (28 June, 2003)

Over-excited early career headlines on Maccarinelli heralded him as 'Swansea's Mike Tyson', but he faced a long, hard road back after a knock-out defeat to Lee Swaby in his fourth bout. Ten quick wins followed in three years before Maccarinelli – none of whose fights had gone beyond four rounds – secured a shot at the experienced Bruce Scott for the vacant WBU cruiserweight title.

The bout was the chief support for Joe Calzaghe v Byron Mitchell at the Cardiff International Arena, and it would play a full part in one of the most thrilling nights in Welsh boxing history. Maccarinelli was dropped heavily in the first, leaving his senses scattered and his legs wobbling as ringside observers wrote off the youngster's future in the game. A generous count by the referee helped him make it to the end of the round, though, and he emerged a different fighter.

The Swansea man used his boxing skills, fast hands and accurate punching to stay out of danger while surprising Scott with some stinging blows. In the fourth, Maccarinelli completed a spectacular combination with a short, brutal left hook that left Scott out for the count.

Marcelo Fabian Dominguez (8 July, 2006)

Nine more early stoppage wins followed the Scott victory before Maccarinelli faced formidable Argentine Marcelo Fabian Dominguez for the interim WBO world title at the Millennium Stadium. The showdown was amongst the most impressive of the Welshman's career as he boxed superbly to wear the dangerous Dominguez down before stopping him in the ninth.

Wayne Braithwaite (21 July, 2007)

WBO champion Johnny Nelson retired before Maccarinelli could fight him, meaning that Swansea's first world champion secured his belt outside the ring. His first two defences were first-round wins – against Mark Hobson and Bobby Gunn – meaning a more serious test was demanded.

Promoter Frank Warren brought

former WBC champion Wayne 'Big Truck' Braithwaite to the Cardiff International Arena, a man whose boxing ambitions were very much alive. But Maccarinelli again boxed superbly to keep the Guyanese at bay, going the full distance for the first time in his eight-year career to claim a comfortable points win.

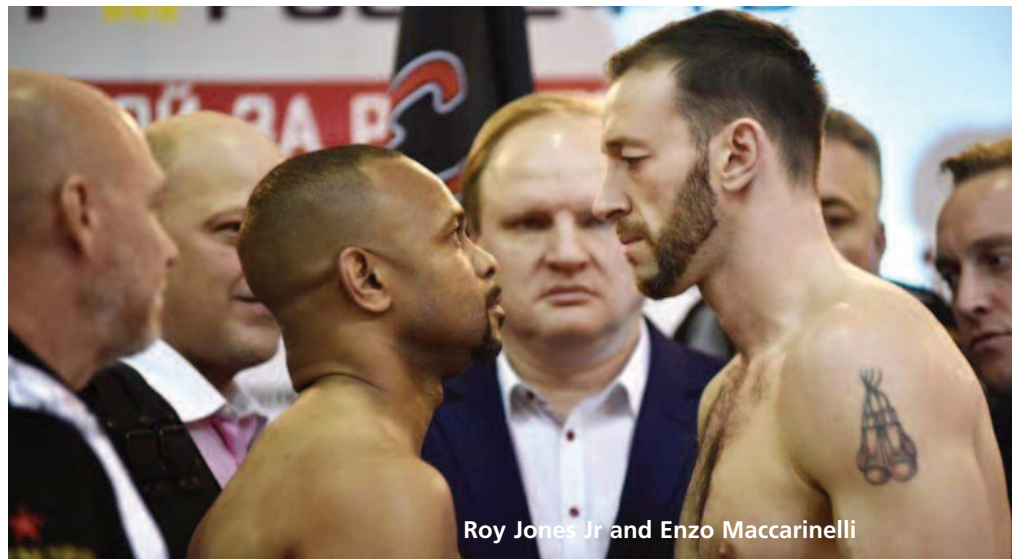
Alexander Kotlobay (27 April, 2010)

Maccarinelli's crushing 2008 defeat to David Haye derailed his career, while personal problems played their part in horrible knock-out losses against Ola

throughout the 11 rounds, on edge in the expectation that Maccarinelli may have been heading for another heavy knock-out loss. But he boxed superbly to build up a comfortable lead, before finishing off his opponent in typically heavy-handed fashion. The victory gave him the Commonwealth title, meaning he became just the fourth Welshman to have held British, Commonwealth, European and world belts.

Roy Jones Jr (12 December, 2015)

If Maccarinelli could have hand-picked the name he wanted on his record as



Roy Jones Jr and Enzo Maccarinelli

Afolabi and Denis Lebedev that left many screaming for his retirement.

When he was shipped out to St Petersburg to face Alexander Kotlobay for the vacant European title he was very much the opponent, expected to be an easy touch for the fast-rising Russian. The Welshman hadn't read the script, though, silencing the vocal home crowd with a first-round knock-out win.

Ovill McKenzie (17 August, 2013)

The Kotlobay win hadn't rid Maccarinelli of his demons, and a crazy three years followed that included stoppage defeats against Alexander Frenkel and Ovill McKenzie. The latter loss was controversial in the extreme and a rematch was arranged for Cardiff's Motorpoint Arena.

The home crowd held their breath

his final victory, surely it couldn't have been any bigger than that of Roy Jones Jr? While everyone, including Maccarinelli, will acknowledge that this was barely a shadow of the real Jones, the American showed glimpses of his attacking genius in this unlikely bout in Moscow. The Swansea man was all business, using his size, reach and boxing skills to dominate his opponent, wearing him down to the body before ending things with a brutal fourth-round assault.

**Enzo is the only world champion from Swansea, one of just 12 Welsh world champions and one of only four Welshmen to have won British, Commonwealth, European and world titles. Congratulations from all at Bocsio on a superb, thrilling career*

What did Wales' best heavyweight make of Ali?

The boxing world remains in mourning for the Greatest, Muhammad Ali. Sean Davies delves into the archive for a 1964 view of Ali from the Welshman who went the distance with Joe Louis, Tommy Farr

The man who shook up the world brought that same planet to a stop in June. Reflections on the passing of the Greatest, Muhammad Ali, could easily fill this edition of *Bocsio*, whether we chose to focus on his stunning fight career, his fearless anti-war and civil rights stands, or simply his inestimable value as a celebrity and entertainer. But adding to the mountains of words that have already been written on the greatest sportsman of all time is difficult, so I wanted to take a little local angle that amused me and that has escaped the voluminous coverage that's followed Ali's death.

If you visit the BBC Sport website, try searching for 'Tommy Farr's opinion on Muhammad Ali'... you should find a video from a 1964 show called *Champions' Way*, hosted by Harry Carpenter. The pundits on the show are renowned trainer and former European middleweight champion Eddie Thomas, plus Wales' greatest heavyweight, Tommy Farr.

The pair are shown the fight where Ali – or Cassius Clay as he was, during the fight – had just 'shaken up the world', by dethroning 'the big, ugly bear', world heavyweight champion Sonny Liston. Although still early in his career, Ali had long talked about being 'the Greatest', and the scale of his win over Liston led Carpenter to ask

whether the new champion really could be one of boxing's all-time greats.

That prompted an incredulous response from Farr, the man who had gone the full 15-round distance with Joe Louis in New York's Yankee Stadium in 1937. "The best heavyweights I can think of – and there are at least half a dozen – they would have separated Clay from his wits inside a round," said Farr. "Yes he's undefeated, but when you start ranking him as one of the greats... please, let's leave Joe Louis out of it, he doesn't rate with several more I can think of."

Neither does it seem that Farr had a particularly high opinion of the man Ali had defeated. "Look at Liston, he's just pawing at Clay," said the 'Tonypandy Terror'. "Liston's a 'never-was-er'." When challenged on this by Carpenter, who pointed out the fighters such as Floyd Patterson that Liston had destroyed, Farr – never short of a one-liner – replied: "My elder sister could've beaten Patterson!"

Few people could challenge Farr in full flow, but throughout his tirade Thomas is wearing a slightly quizzical look, eager to express his rather different take on Ali. "You're not giving credit to this youngster, Tom," said Thomas. "If Clay shuts his mouth I think he'll go down as one of the best heavyweights we've had. With what he did to Liston, you've got to take

your hat off to him and accept him. If it'd gone on I think he'd have knocked Liston out."

A disgruntled Farr clipped in with: "Eddie, you should have a hut on the pier if you're going to go predicting the future!"

Carpenter said that he still felt Ali showed some of the mistakes of the amateur who had won Olympic gold in 1960, and the panel took a look at that fight in Rome. This prompted Farr to take exception to some of the idiosyncratic traits of Ali's fighting style, railing at his right-hand leads and the way that he punched off the wrong foot. "Those are the two most awful faults in boxing and leave him open to the counter punch," said Farr.

Thomas chose to stress the inherent ability that Ali had, but agreed that the 'faults' needed to be knocked out of the youngster's style. "He needs a trainer that's very strong with the whip to make him keep that right hand up, and if he does that I don't think he'll ever get knocked off his feet," said Thomas.

For all the great trainer's admiration of Ali, his criticisms highlight the fighter's true genius and originality, and the champion would continue to buck the restraints of boxing orthodoxy for the rest of his career. What price for the opinions of Farr and Thomas on Ali's right-hand leads against George Foreman in Zaire?



Tributes to Ali from Bocsio's writers

"I had the good fortune of interviewing Ali a couple of times and – although his health was clearly poor – you did feel as though you were in the presence of greatness. He was, quite simply, the most famous person on the planet and he gave the sport a platform it has never reached before, or since. As a kid I queued up for three hours to get his signature at Sports Pages bookshop in London – and all I can say is, it was worth it. He might not have been the finest boxer ever to step into a ring – it would have been close between Ali and Sugar Ray Robinson – but he was certainly the biggest entertainer."

Niall Hickman, Bocsio

"Ali, for me, was simply the greatest of all time, the speed of a flyweight with the punch of a heavyweight, superb foot movement and blistering hand speed. He was brave as well as beautiful, he fought prejudice with charisma and humour. Recognisable the whole world over, he put boxing on the front pages as well as the back pages."

Andrew Collingbourne, Bocsio

"In his personal life I always considered Ali to be an enigma. In boxing terms he was quite simply the yardstick, the benchmark... call it what you will, but I believe he is subconsciously what we use to measure other boxers by. Everything about him was so near perfect. Every punch he threw, his footwork, his hand speed, his head movement, his grace, his power, his attitude, his charm and charisma. This to me is what Ali is and always will be. He is 'the Yardstick'."

Richie Garner, Bocsio

"Ali, like his most memorable quote, did 'float like a butterfly and sting like a bee', at times he made the noble art look effortless. Ali told us all from the beginning of his journey that he was 'the Greatest' before proving the notion over the years that followed. Ali was much more than just a boxer, he was a leader of men, a philanthropist, a family man... he was the full package. The world seems a lonely place without his

presence, we will never see another Muhammad Ali."

Paul Daley, Bocsio

"Ali was an inspirational figure to me. Although I was too young to have seen him box his legacy drew me to the sport and showed me what can be achieved through it."

Jack Cox, Bocsio

"Ali was the greatest heavyweight of all time, but that barely hints at the extent of his legacy. He was stripped of his title for refusing to join a morally unjustifiable war, and I always choke at the footage of him from that time, asking adoring crowds 'who's the champ' and receiving the vociferous chants of 'Ali! Ali! Ali!' in response."

Sean Davies, Bocsio

A small selection of the tributes from the wider world...

"He is the greatest boxing and greatest sporting icon of all time [but he also] transcended the sport with his personality and style. He was my inspiration and in 1,000 years people will look back and say he was the greatest"

Joe Calzaghe

"His fight outside the ring would cost him his title and his public standing. It would earn him enemies on the left and the right, make him reviled, and nearly send him to jail. But Ali stood his ground. And his victory helped us get used to the America we recognise today."

Barack Obama

"With an incomparable combination of principle, charm, wit and grace, he fought for a better world and used his platform to help lift up humanity."

Spokesman for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

"You were a champion in so many ways. You 'fought' well. Rest well."

Bernice King, daughter of Martin Luther King

LOCKING UP ALI'S GLOVES

There are hundreds of lesser-known-but-brilliant Ali stories contained in Thomas Hauser's seminal biography Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times. As a press man, one of my favourites relates to his late-career second showdown with Joe Bugner, which took place in Malaysia. In the words attributed to late, lamented US sports writer Vic Ziegel:

"Ali was in splendid form in Malaysia. He and Bugner had already fought each other once, and at first it seemed there wouldn't be much to write about second time around. But then, a few days before the fight, there was a rules committee meeting. And you've been to those meetings; you know how boring they are. The three-knockdown rule will or won't be waived; the ring doctor can or can't stop the fight.

"Ali and Bugner picked out their gloves, and gave them to someone from the local boxing commission for safekeeping. And then the commissioner explained that the gloves would be kept in a local prison until the fight. And all of a sudden, Ali, who was just trying to stay awake, perked up, raised his hand like a kid in school, and said, 'Wait a minute! You're putting my gloves in jail?' Well, from that point on he was unstoppable. And what we heard with perfect comedic timing for the next 10 minutes was, 'This is awful! How can you do that? How can you put my gloves in jail? They ain't done nothing – yet!'"

Eubank shatters Doran's title dream

Chris Eubank Jr proves too good for Tom Doran in their clash for the British middleweight title

Tom Doran came up predictably short in his bid to become the first British middleweight champion from Wales since 1928, proving to be over-matched as he was stopped by Chris Eubank Jr at the O2 Arena on 25 June.

The Connah's Quay man was defending the longest current unbeaten run in Welsh boxing (17-0) and showed the pride that came with that record, surprising Eubank with some sharp, beautifully timed shots. But the 26-year-old champion belongs at world level, and he dropped Doran three times before the fight was stopped in the fourth.

The bout – on the undercard of Anthony Joshua's brutal seven-round win over Dominic Breazeale for the IBF heavyweight title – was Eubank's first since March when his heavy fists ended the career of Nick Blackwell. He now has a super-fight with WBA and IBF middleweight champion Gennady Golovkin firmly in his sights.

"It's all about making statements," said Eubank Jr, whose only loss was a split-decision points defeat to current WBO champion Billy Joe Saunders in November 2014. "I feel I'm at world level now and can be challenging for world titles. Gennady Golovkin –



everybody's scared of you but I'm coming for you and I'm coming for your belts. [Billy Joe] Saunders, I'm coming after you too. You're going to get it. Anybody with belts, I'm coming from you. I want the hardest, toughest challenges out there for me."

Golovkin is regarded as one of the top pound-for-pound fighters in the world, having won all 35 of his fights and claimed 32 knock-outs along the way.

Meanwhile, 28-year-old Doran – an aircraft engineer by trade – did enough to suggest that he can return to win a domestic title.

"I took a chance and it didn't pay off this time, but you know what they say... a setback is just a set-up for a major comeback," said Doran in the aftermath. "Credit to Chris Eubank Jr, he was a class act. On the plus side, I got announced to the ring by Michael Buffer at the O2 Arena in front of 17,000 people, that's what dreams are made of. It was an amazing experience, I'll be back."

The Deesider's manager, Dave Coldwell, said: "I'm proud of Tom. I knew he was the underdog, but he

"ON THE PLUS SIDE, I GOT ANNOUNCED TO THE RING BY MICHAEL BUFFER AT THE O2 ARENA IN FRONT OF 17,000 PEOPLE, THAT'S WHAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF. IT WAS AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE, I'LL BE BACK"
Tom Doran

gave his best – that's all you can ask. Eubank was just too good and I wish him well against Golovkin."

A step up to world level for Eubank could clear the way for another British title shot for Doran. If he wins that and achieves his dream, he will become just the fourth British middleweight champion to come from Wales, following in the footsteps of early 20th-century legends Tom Thomas, Johnny Basham and Frank Moody.



Cardiff awaits another big fight night

Bocsio's Paul Daley previews another action-packed card at Cardiff's new Ice Arena Wales, where Liam Williams faces Gary Corcoran and the great Guillermo Rigondeaux defends his world title against James 'Jazza' Dickens

British and Commonwealth light-middleweight champion Liam 'the Machine' Williams will face his second opponent in as many months when, on 16 July, he headlines another major show at Cardiff's newly built Ice Arena Wales. The 24-year-old, looking to make up for lost time after a long inactive spell with a hand injury, faces a fellow unbeaten prospect in unbeaten WBO intercontinental champion Gary Corcoran.

The Frank Warren show will be the hall-of-fame promoter's first in Wales since Nathan Cleverly's loss to Sergey Kovalev in 2013. Williams featured on the undercard that night, when he beat Darren Codona, but his career has advanced considerably since then and he now headlines his first show, which will be televised by BoxNation.

The fight represents the biggest challenge to date for Williams, as his 25-year-old opponent holds a ranking of number five with the WBO. Londoner Corcoran took the unbeaten records of Rick Godding and Rick Skelton before capturing the intercontinental title with an impressive decision win over Bristol's Danny Butler.

"I've got the ability to box or fight Liam, so I'll be prepared for whatever he brings to the table," said a confident

Corcoran. "I know I'm a better fighter than him and I'm going to prove it. He doesn't have as good an engine as me and it will show on the night. I want to be British champion this year and really push on from there; Liam is standing in the way."

Williams is coming off a quick demolition of Argentina's Gustavo Alberto Sanchez in June, where he showed no ill effects from the

A message from Enzo Calzaghe
"IT'S GREAT TO SEE FRANK WARREN BACK IN WALES, I WORKED WITH HIM FOR OVER 10 YEARS PROMOTING MANY WORLD CHAMPIONS. HE'S ALWAYS BEEN A TOP PROMOTER, A LEGEND, NUMBER ONE... THERE'S ONLY ONE FRANK WARREN!"

aforementioned hand injury that had kept him out of the ring for 13 months prior to stopping Kris Carslaw in December last year. The hard-hitting Clydach Vale fighter is on a six-fight knock-out streak and is convinced that Corcoran will meet the same fate, Williams' desire fuelled by some heated Twitter exchanges between the rivals

"To be honest with you, I don't like the man at all," says Williams. "Gary thinks a lot of himself and I'm not sure why. He's a confident man, but I'm not sure where he gets that confidence from. On his day he can be dangerous, but I'm going to batter him, he won't be able to handle my power."

In addition to this exciting domestic clash, Ice Arena Wales will see a world



Liam Williams
Photo by Sophie Merlo

title decided for the second time in as many months, following Lee Haskins' successful defence of his IBF bantamweight title against Ivan Morales in May. This time, WBA super-bantamweight king Guillermo Rigondeaux will grace a Welsh ring for the first time when he puts his title on the line against Liverpool's James 'Jazza' Dickens.

The two were scheduled to face each other on 12 March, but the fight was called off in farcical fashion. Rigondeaux, having set-up camp in Russia, was unable to secure the right visa for the UK, meaning that the bout was cancelled at the last minute. The Cuban has been plagued by promotional issues which have threatened to derail the expectations that many have for the pound-for-pound star.

Now signed to Jay Z's Roc Nation promotional label, Rigondeaux will be looking to make up for time spent on the sidelines. But having not fought since November, he may find Dickens a tricky prospect. The Liverpoolian, who holds the British super-bantamweight title, has only lost once in 23 contests. Having had his dreams of a shot at the world crown scuppered once by his opponent's paperwork problems, he'll be motivated to seize this opportunity.

A packed undercard will include Andrew Selby, Bradley Skeete, Dale Evans, Jamie Conlon, the ever-improving Alex Hughes and the return of Gary Buckland.



Guillermo Rigondeaux

Warning sent to 'reckless' Selby

As the pundits salivate over the development of British flyweight champion Andrew Selby, the Barry man has been chided by one of the coaches who knows him best



The records just keep on tumbling for Wales' greatest amateur, Andrew Selby, who has had an electrifying start to his professional career. The Barry flyweight, 27, claimed the British title in his last outing, which was his fifth professional fight in his eighth month as a professional, making him the fastest Welshman to win a Lonsdale Belt in the fewest number of fights. His thrilling, all-action 12-round points win over Louis Norman at Ice Arena Wales had the pundits ringside in Cardiff salivating.

"He's one of the most skilled fighters I've ever seen live," said WBA

and IBF super-bantamweight champion Carl Frampton. "He switches, he can take a clean shot, he's a showman... with his showboating he gives a great performance. What a fighter, he's unbelievable. He'll be ready for a world title in the next couple of fights. He's clearly got the fitness for 12 rounds, he doesn't stop. It'd be a travesty if he doesn't become a multi-weight world champion."

The praise was backed up by Frampton's promoter, Barry McGuigan: "It was an incredible performance in just his fifth professional fight," said the former

WBA featherweight champion. "He's got huge mobility, skill, switch-hitting ability... he's just very, very, very impressive. One little thing he's missing is a little bit of power, with experience he might learn to sit down on his punches, but what an immense talent. He's adjusted from three rounds to 12 in a very short space of time, if he can do that after five fights what's he going to do in 10 or 15?"

Selby set out at an incredible, lightning pace against Norman and looked like he might be about to stop his opponent within the first six rounds. But the game Leicestershire man rallied, firing back and making

the home fighter work for the full 12. He also found the mark with some heavy punches of his own, notably the uppercut that left Selby's face marked. That prompted some constructive criticism of the new champion's performance from one of the men who knows him best, former WBC super-middleweight champion Richie Woodhall, who described him as 'reckless'.

"One of Andrew's biggest problems is that he's so good that he gets complacent," said Woodhall, who worked with Selby for years in his coaching role with the Team GB Olympic squad. "He did that in the amateurs, you can't do it in the professional game. Occasionally when he's moving away he'll drop his hands and relax, and that's when you've got to jump on him.

"But he's the most talented boxer I've worked with in Team GB, and that's saying something. He could be boxing for a world title within his next four or five contests, he's got the look of a Vasyl Lomachenko about him... he's got such a long amateur career behind him that he's already got the foundation and experience. In the pros he's got to do it in the next three or four years, because if you're at the top as a flyweight in your mid 30s you're very much the exception, smaller fighters burn out more quickly. This fella's special... but he's got a lot to learn."

The next stage in Selby's journey of development is back at Ice Arena Wales on 16 July. When this edition of Bocsio went to press, the opponent was unknown with promoter Jamie Sanigar suggesting that this would be a non-title, 10-round bout. The reason for that would seem to be more about finding a worthy challenger for the British belt who is prepared to face Selby at this stage of his career.

"It's proved very difficult to get him a title defence," said Sanigar, who suggested that his fighter was willing and able to move up and down between flyweight and bantamweight for the right bouts. "Although we've made the calls, none of the British contenders out there fancy the challenge. They probably recognise that he will move on in time and are happy to wait for their chance. We're not overly concerned about titles at this stage, it's about finding the right opponent for Andrew's career progression and someone who can give him the rounds and experience for what lies ahead."

What's next for the Selby record collection?

Wales' greatest ever amateur fighter Andrew Selby has hurtled into the pro ranks as the Welshman to win a British title in the shortest period of time, and in the fewest number of fights. Here are just a few more records that may be in his sights...

AFTER ROARING TO the British title with a thrilling 12-round win over Louis Norman at Ice Arena Wales in May, Andrew Selby suggested that he might cool his heels a little before pushing for higher honours. "I want to be a world champion, but there's no rush," he said. "There's no point chucking me into the deep end straight away after I've only had one 12-round fight, maybe I'll go for the European title next."

Trainer Chris Sanigar suggested the team may look to go 'old school' by securing the Lonsdale Belt and collecting the Commonwealth and European crowns, while Andrew's brother – world featherweight champion Lee – said: "Andrew can compete for a world title within 12 months, but we want him to be ready to defend it. We want him to be world champion for a long time."

If this sounds in any way like a holding tactic, it's worth setting Selby's achievements and future targets against the background of history and the record books.

Fastest Welshman to a Commonwealth title

With just five fights under his belt, Selby has Liam Williams' record of 13 fights well within his grasp if he chooses to go down the Commonwealth route. But, having turned pro last October, Selby will need to get his skates on to beat the 11 months it took Brian Curvis to get to the title. Cameroon's Thomas Essomba is the current Commonwealth flyweight champion.

Fastest Welshman to a European title

Selby broke Robbie Regan's record to become the Welshman to win the British title in the fewest number of fights, and he could displace the Blackwood man's place in the European ledger, too. Regan won

the European title in his 13th fight, while the fastest Welshman to the crown was Dai Dower (25 months). France's Thomas Masson is the current European flyweight champion.

Fastest Welshman to a world title

The inimitable Joe Calzaghe was the fastest Welshman to a world title, his memorable win over Chris Eubank coming 48 months into his professional career, beating Steve Robinson's record by just a month. But that four-year mark looks well within Selby's capabilities, and he could also easily beat Barry Jones' record of 18 fights to a world title.

**What other records could Selby have in his sights? Let us know @bocsio or facebook.com/Bocsio*





Carl Frampton

**"THE
TRAVELLING
FRAMPTON
ARMY WILL BE
ON BOARD BIG
TIME"
Barry McGuigan**

McGuigan memory inspires Frampton for Santa Cruz

Paul Daley looks ahead to a thrilling super-fight in New York on 30 July, where Carl Frampton steps up a division to challenge Leo Santa Cruz

Carl Frampton will need little extra motivation when he goes head-to-head with one of boxing's best in WBA featherweight champion Leo Santa Cruz at the Barclays Center in New York on 30 July. But if he's seeking an extra spur, it could be the knowledge that he's challenging for a title that his mentor Barry McGuigan claimed in memorable fashion back in 1985.

Irish eyes smiled on McGuigan when he faced off against long-reigning WBA featherweight champion Eusebio Pedroza at Loftus Road, the 'Clones Cyclone' dropping the Panamanian in the seventh before winning a unanimous decision.

Frampton will be hoping for a similar outcome 31 years later, the 29-year-old Belfast man aiming to become a two-weight world champion, having previously claimed the IBF super-bantamweight title when he beat Kiko Martinez in 2014. He went on to defend the belt three times, the last of the trilogy in February. That was a decision victory over long-time nemesis Scott Quigg in Manchester, a unification bout that also gave Frampton the WBA crown.

In reference to McGuigan's historic night, Frampton said: "It's fitting that I'll have the chance to recapture this title. This is the fight I wanted and I'm 100% confident that the belt will be coming home to Belfast. Santa Cruz is a strong and aggressive undefeated champion, but his style is made for me. We've been chasing this fight for a long, long time and that's because we know we have the tools to beat Leo."

Yet some might say you should be careful what you wish for... A previous 33 opponents have believed they had the style to beat Santa Cruz, but the man from Mexico remains undefeated. He's coming off the back of two impressive wins, a five-round stoppage of Frampton-victim Martinez preceded by a decision victory over former world champion and compatriot Abner Mares.

Frampton has a little catching up to do against Santa Cruz, who is already a three-weight world champion. Preparing for the bout from a base in southern California, the 27-year-old made a slight change to his camp, training alongside his brother. He's also been dealing with the news that his father and head trainer, Jose, has

been diagnosed with stage three myeloma, bone cancer of the spine that requires chemotherapy and surgery.

Santa Cruz, looking back at the moment that he and his brothers broke the devastating news to their father, was not prepared for the response. Jose faced it in the same way he had many other hardships in his life, taking it in his stride and saying "This is nothing". Santa Cruz recalls: "There were no tears, no nothing. We were all crying, but he said, 'No matter. It don't scare me. I'll beat it'."

It's that stubbornness and courage, handed down from father to son, that has got 'El Terremoto' where he is today. In facing such an opponent, Frampton will take any advantage he can, and his camp hopes that the venue will work in their favour.

"They wanted a west coast venue, which would have played to the Hispanic community," said McGuigan. "We wanted the east coast to connect with the Irish-American and Anglo audience. There'll still be plenty of Hispanic interest in Brooklyn, of course, but the travelling Frampton army will be on board big time."

Selby moves on from Warrington disappointment

IBF featherweight champion Lee Selby targets the biggest fights in the division after the acrimonious ending of his plans for a major summer bout with Josh Warrington

Lee Selby's summer plans seemed well in place after his hard-fought win over tough mandatory challenger Eric Hunter in April. A long-running war of words with Leeds featherweight Josh Warrington looked set to end with a lucrative July showdown at Elland Road, a major Wales-England clash that would grab public interest and pack out the football stadium.

It was the sort of fight many would argue Selby has earned after his hard, underdog route to the top, a big-money showdown that most pundits would see as an easy night's work for the Barry man. But the bottom fell out of the plans in May, Warrington pulling out of talks for the fight with claims that his forthcoming wedding meant he couldn't commit to the deal.

"This is a plain and simple case of Josh Warrington losing his bottle at the thought of facing me," said Selby.

Leeds fans. I would have taken him apart because I belong on a different level to him."

In response, Warrington accused Selby of being a "cry baby", but the champion now seems intent on moving on from this war of words and targeting the other champions in one of the toughest, deepest divisions in boxing.

"I need to get a win over either WBC champion Gary Russell Jr, WBA 'Super' champion Leo Santa Cruz or Carl Frampton, who faces Santa Cruz on 30 July," said Selby. "That will catapult me to the top, or very near to it. I want all the champions at featherweight. You've also got Abner Mares fighting Jesus Cuellar for the WBA regular title."

The WBO version of the belt is vacant following Vasyl Lomachenko's step up to super-featherweight, and will be contested between the fast-

next opponent will be a top-class fighter and, beyond that, I'll most definitely be targeting the winner of Santa Cruz against Frampton.

"If Frampton wins then we can have a massive unification fight over in the UK. If he can keep his footwork up for the full 12 rounds and keep Santa Cruz's pressure off, then he could win. If Frampton stops and holds his feet like he did late on in the fight against Scott Quigg then Santa Cruz can capitalise with that relentless style of his. He'll just be on him constantly, so Frampton really needs to keep his feet moving or Santa Cruz will win.

"Physically, they're both super-bantamweights, really. Santa Cruz has only fought up at featherweight recently and they were against former super-bantamweights, too. He hasn't boxed a true featherweight yet, and obviously neither has Frampton."

"I'VE HEARD SOME PRETTY FEEBLE REASONS BEFORE FOR RUNNING AWAY FROM A FIGHT BUT THIS WAS A NEW ONE EVEN ON ME"

Lee Selby on Josh Warrington

"There is surely nothing worse than a boxer talking the talk, telling all his fans this is what he wants to happen, then pulling out. Warrington is running scared... the excuse is he wants to get married towards the end of August and needs to concentrate on that. I've heard some pretty feeble reasons before for running away from a fight but that's a new one even on me. I was looking forward to the challenge of silencing Warrington's

rising Oscar Valdez and fellow unbeaten prospect Matias Carlos Adrian Rueda at the MGM Grand, Las Vegas, on 23 July.

"Myself, Santa Cruz, Frampton, Cuellar, Mares and Russell Jr are all advised by Al Haymon, so all those fights are in-house and could be easily made," said Selby. "If I could beat one of the American-based fighters over there, I'd turn into a big star over there because they're big names. My



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Tyson-Klitschko

questions put on ice

Paul Daley looks at the issues that will be at stake when Tyson Fury and Wladimir Klitschko finally rematch for the real heavyweight championship of the world

In November 2015 in Dusseldorf, Germany, the heavyweight division crowned its new champion. Britain's Tyson Fury did the unthinkable, breaking the shackles that Wladimir Klitschko had held on boxing's premier crown through a dominant, nine-year period. The challenger outpointed the Ukrainian with surprising ease over 12 rounds to capture the WBA, WBO and IBF belts.

The result sent shockwaves through the sport, which was amazed at the fall of the man who had reigned supreme, batting away challengers with ease. What was more, the serene and cerebral champion had been dethroned by a brash, often cocky and certainly controversial figure, a man that the world can't seem to get a handle on.

'Dr Steelhammer' was due to get his chance at revenge on 9 July in Manchester, but an ankle injury suffered by Fury meant that was called off just two weeks beforehand. Both fighters' camps have talked about it in terms of a delay rather than cancellation, and we await news of the rearranged date.

It means more uncertainty for a heavyweight division where the title won by Fury has already fragmented; the political machinations of the ruling bodies mean he was stripped of the IBF belt that is now worn by Anthony

Joshua. It's a far cry from the years when Klitschko ruled the division with ease, but the old champ is certainly back, with a different mind-set and the goal of redemption.

"I love it, I just feel younger," said Klitschko, now aged 40. "I feel better. Believe it or not, I'm enjoying the position I'm at right now. I'm relieved, relaxed but alert. I want to show to myself and to my fans that I can become a champion again and can solve that challenge positively with a positive end for me. I never had a doubt before I made the decision and executed the option on the contract of a rematch. As a matter of fact, I'm very happy about it. I'm enjoying the stage and enjoying being an athlete. I know it's not going to last forever but at the current stage, I do love what I'm doing and I do like where I'm at right now as a challenger."

Much to the surprise of many, Klitschko was unable to dictate the first contest against Fury. "It's simple, I was not present," he now says. "My body was present but I was not present in that ring. I didn't let my hands go. Through the years, the attitude of defending the titles is different from conquering the man that stands in front of you. That attitude changed after I lost. I'm happier and I have a chance to make it straight and bounce back. I feel free. I do feel less pressure and just reloaded. It will be a boxing

match that will be so enjoyable for the fans and for me as well. I will knock Tyson Fury out."

A big statement considering that – in his adopted home country – Klitschko was outboxed by the bigger, younger man in 27-year-old Fury. Since that rather lacklustre bout the new champion has, by his own admission, been enjoying the fruits of his labour, showing the effects of a big appetite by ballooning up in weight.

Meanwhile, apparently tongue-in-cheek comments have come from Fury concerning his lack of motivation and his supposedly impending retirement.

"This will be my best fight, then I'll retire, 100%," said Fury online, before posting a photo of one of his children. "This is the reason I'm retiring after my next fight, to spend time with these guys."

Whether this is mind games or not, if Fury faces Klitschko again it will be with the belief that history is on his side. "I'm a boxing historian," he said. "If the great Larry Holmes couldn't change his style after losing his titles, how will Klitschko? The man is not a fighter. I will tell you all once again, he's a manufactured, built-up boxer. He's not a fighter."

Has Father Time caught up with Dr Steelhammer? Does Fury still have the hunger to continue? All questions remain on ice... just like the champion's ankle.



Why does Tyson Fury say the things he says?

As we await news of heavyweight champion Tyson Fury's rearranged rematch against former king Wladimir Klitschko, the world and its media will undoubtedly be on tenterhooks, waiting to hear just what will pour out of Fury's mouth next.

While some of the zanier comments can be taken in good humour or as mind games designed to unsettle the opponent, the champion has repeatedly gone on record with unacceptable comments on homosexuality, paedophilia, Jews and women. The contrast with the quiet, dignified Klitschko could not be more marked and he has commented:

"I was in shock at [Fury's] statements. When he got to the Jewish people he sounded like Hitler. The man is an imbecile. We cannot have a champion like that. Either he needs to be shut up or shut down in the ring, or just

suspended, because you cannot create more hate. I'm fighting a guy who can't hold his mouth on certain things."

But perhaps the most perplexing thing about Fury's behaviour is that his most outrageous comments have been almost immediately followed by vehement and apparently, heartfelt denials from the Manchester man, who then stresses his god-fearing ways and the love in his heart. One of the journalists who knows him best, Steve Bunce, suggests the reason for the contradictions lies in the nature of Fury himself, and of the modern media world.

"If he just limited himself to talking to legitimate media sources, we wouldn't have any of this," said Bunce. "He's not saying these things in five-minute interviews in a proper studio. He's saying it when he's lounging around, swearing and shooting the breeze in long, sit-down

interviews with the online brigade who tend to swear when they're interviewing, where there are no editorial values. They go to interview Tyson about a fight and walk away with what they consider gold dust... the more outrageous he is, the more hits they get.

"He's bored. He's a lovely guy – that's not a defence of him, most of the stuff he's said is indefensible, if I thought he engaged even 5% of his brain in it I'd never speak to him again – but I know he doesn't."

"It won't distract him at all from the fight. He's a guy who needs distractions. He needs guys to sit with him, to talk rubbish... he needs to be able to suddenly go out and have eight pints a few weeks before a fight to let off a bit of steam. This is the way he works. There's a small, maverick percentage of boxers who just aren't bothered, and he's the king of that group."

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Unification glory awaits redemption-man Crolla

Anthony Crolla's fairy-tale story is one of the greatest in British boxing... Niall Hickman spoke to the Mancunian as he prepares for his world unification bout against Jorge Linares

For Anthony Crolla it was victory over a Welshman that really began his march to world championship glory.

Three years ago, Crolla faced former world light-welterweight title holder Gavin Rees as an underdog, having previously been beaten twice by Gary Sykes and halted by Derry Mathews. It was a pivotal fight in Crolla's career as the losses were beginning to rack up and Rees was always going to be a testing match-up. A brutal contest ended with Crolla taking a majority points decision and, since that day in 2013 at the Bolton Arena, the Mancunian hasn't looked back.

In fact, his rise and rise has been remarkable. It could have been taken out of the pages of a Hollywood script as the 29-year-old has become the biggest rags-to-riches success story in British boxing. Victories over Stephen

Foster and John Murray took him to the verge of global class in the lightweight division. Then a tough, hard-won points victory in Dublin over Gyorgy Mizsei in November 2014 triggered a shot at Darleys Perez's WBA world title. After a draw in their first meeting – Crolla was widely recognised as having won – the rematch loomed. This time, Crolla didn't need the judges as a stunning body shot finished Perez off, giving Manchester a new boxing king.

"I just got lucky," said Crolla, before quickly reassessing. "No, I didn't. Look, some of it has been down to talent and some of it plain and simple hard work. I think the Rees fight was big for me, in terms of gaining confidence. I had been beaten a few times and yet I was still hanging in there. Then I beat Rees and I thought 'I've just got past a former world champion. Hey, maybe I can go a

bit further'. Since Rees the victories have come thick and fast. I don't know whether that's down to luck, skill, talent, hard work or a combination of all of those things. All I know is it was the Rees fight which really started the second half of my career off."

Before the first Perez fight, Crolla also had to recover from a vicious assault, when he was set upon by two burglars armed with a concrete block. It left him with a broken ankle and multiple fractures in his head, requiring hours of surgery. Few thought he would ever get back in the ring, let alone win a world title, but Crolla defied the odds ahead of his memorable double-header against Perez.

"It was an amazing day," said Crolla, remembering the second, title-winning clash. "Everything I had ever dreamed about came true in the boxing ring. I could scarcely believe it, even to this day I'm still pinching myself. I thought my story only ever happened in Rocky movies. But it happened to me, in real life."

Crolla could have been forgiven for taking a relatively straightforward opponent in the first defence of his WBA belt but, oh no, he had to do it the hard way. "Ismael Barroso came into our fight with one hell of a reputation – and rightly so," said Crolla.

Venezuelan Barroso had just marmalised Londoner Kevin Mitchell, sending the former world title contender into retirement. The bookies had Barroso a hot favourite, but they'd got it wrong in the Perez fight, and they got it spectacularly wrong again. Barroso came out with all guns blazing, but Crolla kept up his stiff, tight defence. The challenger pummelled away, expecting Crolla to crumble, just



Victory over Gavin Rees was the spark for Crolla's success



Anthony Crolla and Ismael Barroso

"EVEN TO THIS DAY I'M STILL PINCHING MYSELF, I THOUGHT MY STORY ONLY EVER HAPPENED IN ROCKY MOVIES"

as Mitchell had done. By the end of round five it was clear that the tide was turning as Barroso was being dismantled in front of a baying, capacity Manchester crowd.

"It was incredible because I knew I was getting on top," said Crolla. "I could see he was knackered and there for the taking. As a boxer, you know the signs. I threw everything at him in the sixth round and he just survived. By the seventh I knew it was all over."

Yet again Crolla had come good – and life has been pretty perfect ever since.

"I've got a lovely kid, a lovely fiancé in Fran and I couldn't be happier at the moment," he said. "I think I'm just a good example for people everywhere, in any walk of life. You never give in. You keep plugging away at it and eventually you'll come good. Good things will happen to those who try, try and try again. Look at me."

Crolla hasn't stopped there, and a world unification clash with WBC belt holder Jorge Linares has been

confirmed for 24 September at the Manchester Arena. "Linares is quality, real quality," said Crolla. "He's been beaten a few times, but he packs a massive punch and I know what this fight means. He can bang, just look at what he did to Kevin Mitchell, but I can whack too and he has been halted three times, so there's definitely a weakness there. He started off as a super-bantamweight so I think I can take advantage of that as well. I need to step up, get the job done and get another world title under my belt. To be the WBC and WBA champion would

be amazing and that's what's going to happen on 24 September."

Don't bet against it. Crolla has made chumps out of the bookies twice before, and the hat-trick is looming.

"Yeah, the bookies can say what they want," he said. "They don't usually get it wrong do they? But they have with me. It's fair to say it all really started going right for me on the night I beat Rees. Whether it was confidence, I don't know. What I do know is it led to me being a world champion. Now I want to be the best in the division, the very best lightweight in the world."



Cleverly ready to take Braehmer's title

Nathan Cleverly is ready to end a frustrating year by becoming the first Welshman to reclaim a world title

After last October's thrilling defeat in a fight-of-the-year contender against Andrzej Fonfara, Nathan Cleverly had all the options open to him. But what's followed for the former WBO world light-heavyweight champion has been almost a year of frustration and thwarted ambition.

As we went to press with this edition of Bocsio, it seemed like that could be about to change. Cleverly's trainer Darren Wilson told us that the 29-year-old Cefn Fforest man was expecting to hear in early July that he had secured a shot at Juergen Braehmer's WBA title on the champion's home turf in Germany. "We're just waiting on the phone call from [promoter] Eddie Hearn," said Wilson. "Nathan's been training for months and he's ready."

A showdown with Braehmer has been on the cards for many years, but the Is have never quite been dotted or the Ts crossed with his promoters, the Sauerlands. As early as 2011, Cleverly was WBO interim champion and chasing Braehmer as the full belt holder. The German's problems with the law and a string of injury problems meant the fight never happened and he was stripped of his belt, giving Cleverly the world crown.

More recently, a Braehmer-Cleverly bout has been touted for much of 2015 and 2016, but the Welshman has also been close to an even bigger bout. One of the world's leading pound-for-pound fighters, Andre Ward, has moved up from super-middleweight to light-heavyweight and has been seeking an opponent for a show at the end of July. He sees that as very much a warm-up for November's super-fight against Sergey Kovalev, but Cleverly was intent on ruining those plans.

"Ward's camp said they wanted it, we said great, but then we heard nothing more," said Wilson. "Nathan was confident of beating Ward, he's got the extra size and strength against a man coming up in weight."

With Ward off the menu, Wilson is equally confident that his man can eat up southpaw Braehmer. "He's coming up for 38 now, while Nathan's in good form after his last fight, we're 100% sure he would have won the Fonfara fight had it not been for the broken nose," said the trainer. "Braehmer's a fight we've wanted for years, we're definitely confident of getting a win." Speaking earlier this year about a proposed match-up, Cleverly said of Braehmer: "It's a big ask, going to Germany and upsetting Braehmer, he's a good world champion... but I

strongly fancy it."

Should Cleverly succeed he will be making history; no Welshman has ever managed to reclaim a world title. The only one to even get another shot at a world belt after losing their crown was Enzo Maccarinelli. The Swansea man dropped down from cruiserweight to light-heavyweight, where he was able to secure a fight with none other than Braehmer. 'Big Macc's' chances were scuppered by a horrible eye injury in the first round; the fighter maintains he is "100% confident" he would have won without that problem.



"ANDRE WARD'S CAMP SAID THEY WANTED A FIGHT WITH CLEVERLY, WE SAID GREAT, BUT THEN WE HEARD NOTHING MORE"
Darren Wilson



Kennedy closes in on McKenzie's crown



Craig Kennedy (right) v Joel Tambwe Djeko

Cardiff's Craig Kennedy is finally set to get a shot at his long-term target of the British title, having been made mandatory challenger for Ovi McKenzie's cruiserweight crown

Craig 'the Kid' Kennedy's battling route to the top looks set to finally be rewarded as he has been made mandatory challenger for Ovi McKenzie's British cruiserweight title. The British Boxing Board of Control (BBBofC) has announced that purse bids for the fight will close on 13 July and that the bout must take place by the end of October. It's likely that McKenzie's Commonwealth crown will also be on the line if the two clash.

"The Commonwealth and British titles are things I've been chasing for so long," said Kennedy, looking to become the second Welshman to hold those crowns, following Enzo Maccarinelli. "It's at breaking point with McKenzie, he'll either have to defend or vacate."

Cardiff's Kennedy, who is trained by Steve Robinson, is now aged 31, but remains fresh, a serious shoulder injury in his amateur days having delayed his entry to the professional ranks until the age of 27. His progress through the pro ranks has been dogged by bad luck with the repeated withdrawal of opponents from bouts, but he has now built an impressive 15-0 record, his heavy-handed style earning him eight knock-outs. That perfect record was nearly lost in his last outing in May, though, the dangerous and avoided Joel Tambwe Djeko dropping Kennedy

twice and taking him the distance in a thrilling bout at Ice Arena Wales.

"It was the toughest fight of my career to date, he really tested me," said Kennedy. "I was cut within 30 seconds, and then in the second round I was put down for the first time in my career... it's never even happened in sparring before. I'd never experienced anything like that, what was alarming to me was that I didn't see it coming – he was fast and had punch power in both hands. When I was on the canvas I just thought 'what am I doing here', but I regrouped and got back to the game plan. I dusted myself down and got the victory. I know that I'm a lot better than that, there's a lot of room for improvement, but he was a big, live opponent. I can see why he's been inactive – he can't get fights. He's tall, dangerous and punches with both hands."

McKenzie, now aged 36, has an apparently mixed record of 25-12-1, but 'the Upsetter' has operated at a high level for many years, his ledger showing two bouts with Maccarinelli (one win, one defeat) and two losses against Tony Bellew. In his last outing in October, the Derby man travelled to Buenos Aires with 11 days' notice to face Argentina's Victor Emilio Ramirez for the IBF world title. After 12 hard-fought rounds he came away with a draw from a fight that many felt he had won clearly.

Jamaica-born McKenzie was due to have fought Dmytro Kucher for the vacant European title in June, but injury forced him to withdraw, meaning that Maccarinelli stepped in. The British and Commonwealth champion will now have to decide whether to take the challenge of Kennedy, or to give up his Lonsdale Belt as he pursues higher honours. If he chooses the latter option, 'the Kid' will get a shot at the vacant British title.

Evans also has British title in sight

Welterweight Dale Evans is also closing in on a Lonsdale Belt, the BBBofC having given him a final eliminator against Mike Towell for the right to challenge for Bradley Skeete's British title. Highly rated St Clears-man Evans, 24, has struggled to find opponents, but purse bids for the Towell bout close on 13 July, with the fight to take place by the end of October.

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Will professionals fight at the Olympics?

AIBA's decision to allow professionals to compete at the Rio Olympics sent shockwaves through the sport. Sean Davies takes a look at what the news means...

The Olympics are the pinnacle of world sport, lying at the end of a long, four-year cycle for the elite athletes who target the Games. Traditionally, a gold medal has been the greatest prize an Olympic athlete can aim for, and this still holds true for many of the most iconic events, such as track and field. In recent times, though, the golden sheen has lost a little lustre with the inclusion of sports where the participants acknowledge that Olympic glory is far from the ultimate prize; tennis, golf and football are just some of the examples.

In boxing, Olympic gold remains the highest possible attainment in the amateur sport and the medal has, historically, catapulted young champions like Muhammad Ali and George Foreman into the professional arena with a reputation and public profile. But this traditional, developmental structure of the sport was thrown into the bin a little over two months before the Rio Olympics with the announcement from AIBA (the

International Boxing Association) that professionals would be allowed to compete at the Games.

The move was met with almost universal scorn. Robert Smith of the British Boxing Board of Control (BBBofC) stated: "It is the belief of the BBBofC that such a move is against the spirit of the Olympics, disrespectful to the many GB amateur boxers who, throughout the Olympic cycle compete around the world in qualifying tournaments and ultimately dangerous." The IBF has recently announced that, if any of its world champions chooses to compete in Rio, they will be stripped of their title and will lose their ranking with the organisation.

Despite the outcry, it's unlikely that the changes will have any effect on the Rio tournament. AIBA has issued an open invite to all professional world champions to take part in an Olympic qualifying event in Venezuela in July. At this event a professional boxer would have to boil down to make

weight repeatedly throughout the course of a 10-day qualifying tournament. Should they do this and advance far enough to meet the qualification standard, they will be eligible to represent their country at the Games, if their country has yet to fill that slot in its team.

But even if a professional is willing and able to jump through these qualification hoops, would they be able to compete with today's amateurs? Boxing journalist Steve Bunce described the AIBA news as a "beautiful smokescreen that means absolutely nothing", pointing out that the real change happened in 2012 when the organisation altered its rules as it made its bid to control more areas of the sport. Since 2012, AIBA has effectively overseen three types of tournament; traditional, Olympic-style boxing with three three-minute rounds; the World Series of Boxing (WSB), which has five three-minute rounds; APB Boxing, which is essentially professional boxing, fought over up to 10 three-minute rounds. Fighters have been free since 2012 to move between these categories, meaning that competing in the APB or WSB would not rule a boxer out of the Olympics.

Such rule changes and the growth of national organisations like Team GB, where funding is linked to performance, have created a generation of 'professional' amateur boxers who will dominate the medals table in Rio. "The big problem this time isn't that we might have the likes of Wladimir Klitschko or Manny Pacquiao competing," said Bunce. "It's that a group of amateur boxers who aren't amateur boxers has been created. Team GB are almost the world leaders in this, with boxers who've been in the system for four years, who've never had a job, who get cars, massages and accommodation paid for. They fight in the WSB and spar with professionals... Anthony Joshua's two main sparring partners for his IBF world heavyweight title fights were from Team GB."



Andrew Selby says pros would be too slow

Many doubt whether any professionals trying to make the Olympics could compete with these leading amateurs. Andrew Selby was Wales' greatest amateur, but he is in the process of adapting to the professional game and feels it's a different sport. "A seasoned professional takes three-to-four rounds to warm up," the British flyweight champion told the Fighting Talk Wales chat show. "Over three rounds the amateurs would be too quick." Selby also has a different take on the safety angle. "If an amateur did get caught by an experienced pro who can bang it could be dangerous, but it could also be dangerous for the professional," he said. "If an unknown amateur beat a big-name professional with his speed, it could end the pro's career."

If Bunce believes little will change for this summer's Games, he is concerned about Tokyo 2020 where we may see fighters who have starred in Rio, turned professional, then



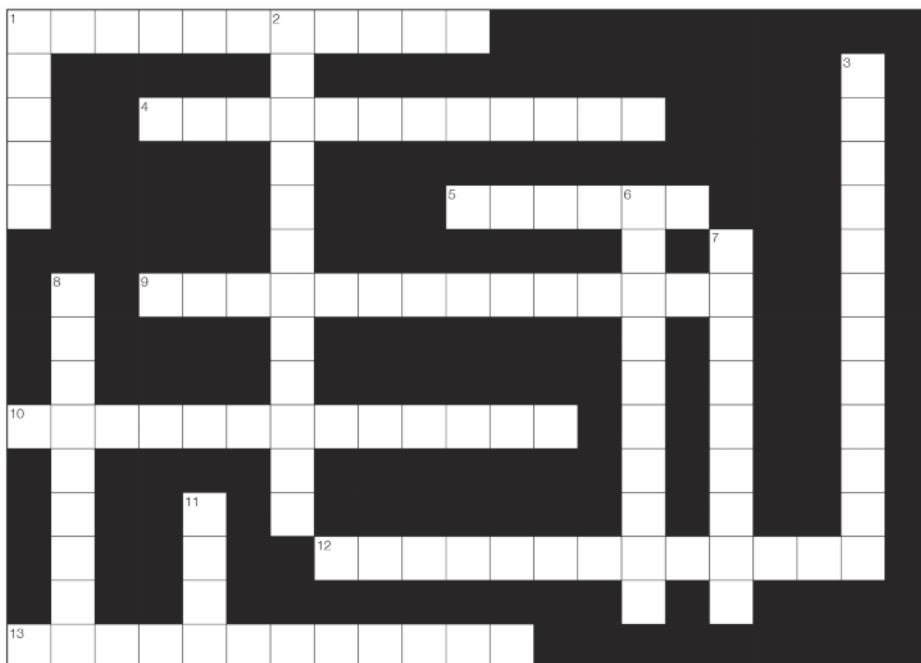
Could the likes of Manny Pacquiao and Amir Khan compete at the Olympics?

returned to the 'amateurs' for the Olympics. His greater fear, though, is for the mismatches and inequalities that may be created. He has cited the example of Cape Verde super-heavyweight Davilson Morais, a true amateur who heads to Brazil only

because Tunisia declined to take up a place. In Rio, Morais may find himself against Team GB's hardened 30-year-old Joe Joyce, fresh from his sparring work with Joshua. If there are safety concerns about amateurs against professionals, it should surely focus on such bouts.

BOXING BOCSIO CROSSWORD

Boxing's bad boys



ACROSS

- 1** '60s heavyweight champ who led a gang of toughs in his youth & was rumoured to have mob connections that maybe led to his death
4 The Panamanian who cared nothing for anybody & wasn't averse to knocking the odd horse out
5 Fernando, he lost to De La Hoya and was allegedly connected to some of California's most

notorious gangs

- 9** Flamboyant Nicaraguan 'El Matador' who slapped the butt of Shane Mosley's partner prior to their last contest
10 Boxer with the moniker 'Terrible' whose career spanned 1880-1918: he was a notorious gambler, drinker and womaniser, institutionalised at the end of his career.
12 '70s and '90s heavyweight champ who was a young tearaway bully, signing up to the job

corps rather than going to prison

- 13** Polish heavyweight brawler who instigated a foul-fest series with 11 down in the '90s

DOWN

- 1** Anthony, the British fighter cleared of plotting to join IS
2 Nigerian heavyweight 'The President' who was jailed after allegedly imprisoning a call girl in a closet and committing sexual offences at an LA hotel
3 Argentine boxer repeatedly arrested for assaulting his wife and mistresses. He was eventually sentenced to 11 years for killing his wife
6 The Hawk, '80s fighter who stopped legend Alexis Arguello but has had to battle drug demons leading to arrests
7 Fought 298 contests over 13 years from 1913 from welterweight to heavyweight and regarded by some as one of the best but dirtiest boxers
8 Hall of famer who spat out some of Evander's ear cartilage
11 Riddick, heavyweight champion boxer who kidnapped his wife & five kids at knifepoint, driving her across state lines and stabbing her before she escaped

See www.bocsiomagazine.co.uk for the answers

Who's blocking Cordina?

The countdown is well and truly on as Joe Cordina bids to become the first Welshman to claim Olympic boxing gold. Sean Davies spoke to the Cardiff man in the build-up to assess his chances and analyse the formidable opposition he faces

Joe Cordina is into the closing straight of the road to Rio, comfortable and confident as he readies himself for the grand Olympic stage. "Training's been going well since qualification," says the 24-year-old, who'll compete at the Riocentro exhibition centre in the second and third weeks of August. "I've been in Sheffield with Team GB from Monday to Thursday, training three times a day. We'll be going to a little warm-up tournament in Romania on 5 July, then two weeks later we're off to Brazil to acclimatise."

The recent furore over professionals fighting at the Games has done little to upset the

preparations of the Cardiff lightweight.

"I've been training three times a day so it's like a professional schedule," says Joe. "It doesn't really matter to me if I have to fight a professional, I spar in a professional gym at St Joseph's where I'm in with a world champion in Lee Selby. They're different sports, the amateur sport is short, sharp and intense. I don't think there'll be many professionals in Rio, but if there were I wouldn't be worried, I'd be more than happy to draw one. They're not used to the three rounds and the pace, they look to the later rounds and for stoppages – by the time they wake up they'll have lost the fight."

Cordina will be following in the footsteps of St Joe's gym-mates Andrew Selby and Fred Evans who competed at London 2012, where Evans won silver. But he's looking to go that step further to become the first Welshman to claim gold, following in the footsteps of champions like Muhammad Ali. "I didn't start boxing until I was 16 and it was all about football and rugby for me, but everyone knew who Muhammad Ali was – he was like a god," says Joe.

As gold fever builds, though, the excitement needs to be tempered with the realisation of the scale of the challenge that awaits in Rio. According to the International Boxing Association 60kg (lightweight) rankings, these seven men are ahead of Cordina.

1. Lazaro Alvarez Estrada (Cuba)

The 25-year-old southpaw from Havana will be the man to beat in Rio. The 2011 bantamweight world champion took bronze in London 2012 after a semi-final defeat to John Joe Nevin. Since then he has enjoyed his move up the weight divisions and has proved a formidable opponent in the World Series of Boxing (WSB).

Cordina's verdict:

"Three years ago he was my first bout in the world

championships – that was a tough draw and I lost, but I'm more than confident that I can beat him if we meet now."

2. Otgondalai Dorjnyambuu (Mongolia)

The 28-year-old from Ulaanbaatar is riding high in the world rankings. Some of his impressive results have been in the Far East and in 2014 he was awarded the ASBC Asian Discovery of the Year award, but he's an increasingly familiar face in worldwide events where he always presents a formidable challenge.

Cordina's verdict: "I've only seen videos of him, he's very strong but limited. You don't get to be number two in the world without doing something right, but he's boxed some of my gym mates, including Calum French from the Team GB development squad. Calum beat him earlier this year."

3. Albert Selimov (Azerbaijan)

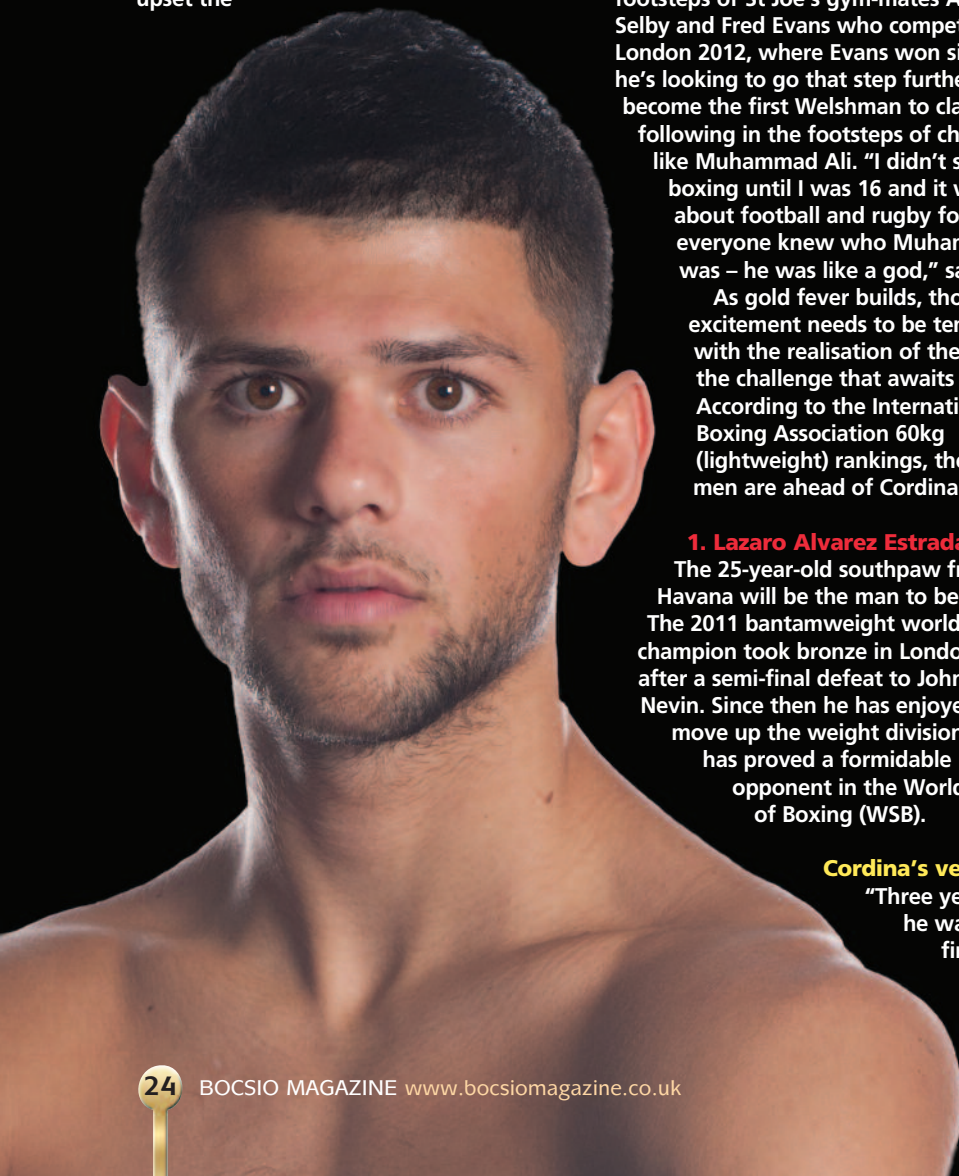
At 30, the Azeri is the oldest fighter in this list and all his younger opponents will be wary of the experienced, counter-punching southpaw. The stand-out achievement on his CV is victory at the 2007 world championship, but the reason that's so impressive isn't just the title; to claim that win he had to defeat the peerless Vasyl Lomachenko. An outstanding WSB performer, Selimov aims to crown one of the great amateur careers with a long-sought Olympic gold.

Cordina's verdict: "He's very experienced and even managed to beat Lomachenko, but he's starting to dip, he's on the slide. Last time I saw him in February he lost to Sofiane Oumiha, who I've beaten."

4. Reda Benbaziz (Algeria)

At 22, Benbaziz is one of the younger fighters blocking Cordina's path. But the Algerian has been boxing since the age of 13, has a wealth of international experience and has built a formidable reputation in the hard school of WSB.

Cordina's verdict: "He's a very talented boxer whose style reminds me a lot of my own. I haven't seen him much recently,



's golden path?



but his ranking says it all."

5. Robson Conceicao (Brazil)

"Representing my country at the Olympic Games staged here will be unique, a special moment," says the man from Salvador, Bahia. He will have the invaluable asset of home support when he steps into the Riocentro ring, but the 27-year-old also brings a lot more. Conceicao, competing at his third Olympics, won silver at the 2013 world championships and bronze in 2015, and – with a CV that includes wins over Cordina and Estrada – will be a real contender for gold.

Cordina's verdict: "I've boxed him twice before and he's very, very good. The first time I lost by two points, then we met in the world championship quarter-finals. I thought I'd won it reasonably well, but he was a much bigger name and he got the verdict. I'm learning all the time and I know what to do to beat him next time."

6. Sofiane Oumiha (France)

Cordina knows all about the stylish 21-year-old from Toulouse and the threat he poses, and can boast victories over him in their first two encounters. But

DON'T FORGET THE IRISH...

Although he's ranked below Cordina, in Rio the Welshman will keep a wary eye on the man who ended his London 2012 qualification dream, David Joyce. The burly Irishman's come-forward style again caused Cordina problems in the semi-finals of this year's European qualifiers in Samsun. After a hard-fought points defeat, Joyce went on to seal qualification with victory in the third-fourth place box-off.

Cordina's verdict: "It was very good to get the revenge win over him. He's very tough and experienced... you know exactly what he's going to do, but he'll fight to the end and has so much heart."

Oumiha is a clever, developing boxer and had learnt enough to overcome the Welshman in their showdown in the final of the European qualifying event in Turkey. The fight was very close, though, and Cordina will know that – on his day – he can get the better of the Frenchman.

Cordina's verdict: "My main goal in Turkey was to qualify and I switched off a little in the final, I wanted to make sure I got out unmarked. The way I felt in that fight, I feel very comfortable in facing Oumiha again."

7. Elnur Abduraimov (Uzbekistan)

The 22-year-old Uzbek is another fighter who has had his seasoning on the hard amateur circuit in the Far East. More of an unknown quantity than most of the names on the list, but certainly one to be wary of.

Cordina's verdict: "He's been around for a few years and has done well, but he's not someone I've seen a lot of. Again, you don't get a world ranking like his for nothing... every fight is going to be tough, this is an Olympic Games and you know the sort of challenge you're going to face."



Eddie Hearn conducts a little research...

Hearn seeking Cordina's pro signature

THE MOMENT THE Olympics end, attention will inevitably turn to which Team GB boxers will leave the amateur programme to join the professional ranks. If they can take an Olympic medal with them, they will, of course, immediately get a major boost up the pro ladder, helping them attract the limelight and the money. Top promoter Eddie Hearn already has a close eye on the amateurs and has named Cordina as his number-one target.

"You're in a cycle, and we're waiting for the Olympics to see who turns professional," said Hearn. "The last cycle threw up Anthony Joshua, Callum Smith, Scott Cardle, Martin Ward, Khalid Yafai, Anthony Ogogo, Andrew Selby, Luke Campbell... sorry if I've missed anyone. They're all doing fantastically well. Now we need the new crop, the question is, who's going to turn pro after Rio, and who's going to get them? The answer is, quite a few, and me!

"There are some very talented fighters, you've got Antony Fowler who's been very well thought of for some time, you've got Joshua Buatsi who's come out of nowhere. But I don't want to sit on the fence, the one who's probably impressed me the most has been Joe Cordina. There are a number who can win gold, but I'm backing him to do that. He's the one who's kept on improving, I watched him in a trial event at the York Hall about three or four years ago and I said 'he's a great fighter' – I was right! If he turns pro and doesn't sign with me... I take that back!"

Cordina confessed to being flattered by Hearn's praise, but understandably has his focus elsewhere for the time being. "It's nice to hear those sort of comments from someone like that," he told Bocsio. "It's a massive boost for my confidence, but I believe in one thing at a time. My main goal is to get a medal at the Olympics and we'll see what happens from there."

Copeland hits out at 'painfully slow' Olympic progress

Jack Cox gathers the thoughts of female amateur stars Stacey Copeland and Charlene Jones, who express their frustration at the lack of opportunities to join the global party at the Rio Olympics

Two of Britain's leading female amateur boxers, Stacey Copeland and Charlene Jones, have expressed their anger at the ground-shaking decision by AIBA (the International Boxing Association) to allow professional boxers to compete at the Olympic Games.

"I don't agree with it," says four-time Welsh champion Charlene Jones, who recently won the British 60kg title. "I think it's unfair on the amateurs who have earned their place and worked hard for years to get there."

Meanwhile, Stacey Copeland is more annoyed that such a focus can be given to this issue and not to more fundamental problems facing female amateur boxers. "Mostly, from a female boxing point of view, it's hard to digest that four years on from London 2012 we still have only three weights for women," says the European and Nations Cup gold medallist. "Progress is painfully slow, yet such giant strides can be taken in terms of changing the face of amateur boxing in the Olympics with pushing for pros to be allowed to enter."

In the UK, the professional/amateur argument is rather different in the women's sport given the lack of opportunity on the female professional scene. With the amateurs so well

"IT'S HARD TO DIGEST THAT FOUR YEARS ON FROM LONDON 2012 WE STILL HAVE ONLY THREE WEIGHTS FOR WOMEN"

Stacey Copeland

looked after, especially in Team GB, it raises the question of whether it's ever worth female boxers moving into the professional ranks.

"It all depends what you want to achieve in the sport, really," says Jones. "I wouldn't say it was worth turning professional at the moment, especially in Britain. Maybe in America where female boxing is a lot more popular, but not in Britain. It'll take someone like Nicola Adams turning professional to raise the profile of it, but at the moment it's more worthwhile being an amateur on the GB team. Things are progressing, though, and I do look at going professional in the future. That wouldn't be for the money side of it, just for the love of the sport and wanting to win a WBC belt."

Gold medal-winner Nicola Adams had massive success in 2012 and propelled women's boxing in the right direction in the UK, but what would more success do to inspire women and girls to take part in boxing?

"Nicola's success may well inspire women to go and give boxing a try," says Copeland. "But I think more women are going to boxing gyms for a multitude of reasons. There have been some very effective campaigns to get women trying the sport which have had a significant impact on both a local and national level." Jones adds: "Yes,



Charlene Jones

most certainly, I can imagine after the last Games the increase in women taking up boxing changed, so if Nicola can do it again it will only inspire more."

With only three divisions in Rio, both Copeland and Jones believe that Nicola Adams (51kg, Team GB), Katie Taylor (60kg, Ireland) and Claressa Shields (75kg, USA) will be the favourites to win, but they remain disappointed that only two GB female boxers have qualified. "It is disappointing, yes, it's a shame that no-one in my weight division is going," says Pembrokeshire-girl Jones. "I remember watching Natasha Jones in London 2012, it was really inspiring."

Despite the disappointments and frustrations, Manchester's Copeland is looking on the positive side. "On the flip side we're all over the moon that two female boxers have qualified," she says. "I'm so happy for Nicola and Savannah Marshall. In Sav's case she has had a tough road to Rio in terms of all sorts of injuries over the last four years, the ups and downs of the last Olympics and the journey to this one... I'm particularly pleased for her. She inspires so many young boxers and is a lovely person to know so I'm really happy she's qualified and I know she's capable of some outstanding performances out there."



Stacey Copeland

Wales' golden hope for Tokyo 2020

As excitement builds for the Rio Olympics, Sean Davies speaks to Team GB's new, rising star targeting gold in 2020 – Pembroke's Mickey McDonagh

As we wait to see whether Joe Cordina comes home from Rio with Wales' first Olympic boxing gold, the big news on the man who seems likely to carry the country's hopes in Tokyo 2020 slipped somewhat under the radar. At the beginning of June, 17-year-old GB Junior & Youth Three Nations champion Mickey McDonagh was officially welcomed into Team GB, where he will be fast-tracked on the Podium development programme.

"I'm the only youth boxer on Team GB," says a proud McDonagh, who hails from Pembroke Dock. "They told me that they don't usually take on youth boxers unless they recognise them as something special. It's been brilliant, I'm learning something new all the time and working under top coaches like Rob McCracken and Richie Woodhall."

McDonagh has been recognised as something special almost since the day he walked through the door of Pembroke & Pembroke Dock ABC at the age of eight, his interest in boxing piqued by nights with his father watching Ricky Hatton fight. Working with coaches Andy Edmundson and Ralph Gammer, McDonagh won three Welsh titles before moving on in 2012 to join coach Graham Brockway at Merlins Bridge ABC in Haverfordwest.

"I think he can go as far as anyone, the possibilities are endless," says

Brockway. "He's outclassed everyone in Wales and Britain this year, he can go all the way, he was over the moon when he heard the Team GB news. He's only a teenager but he lives for boxing, loves every minute of it. He's in Cardiff from Monday to Thursday with Colin Jones and the Welsh elite squad, then he comes home and trains with me until he goes to Sheffield the following Thursday. He's there until Saturday then comes home, ready to go back to Cardiff on the Monday."

McDonagh lists amongst his boxing heroes Vasyl Lomachenko, Guillermo Rigondeaux, Floyd Mayweather Jr and Joe Calzaghe, while he also cites Cordina as an inspiration who he looks up to and has received good advice from. The youngster's own path to the top is clearly mapped out, and in the next few months he'll travel to tournaments in Spain, Serbia and Ukraine before the world championships in St Petersburg in November. "I'm going for gold at the worlds, these are exciting times," he says. "The main opposition usually comes from Cuba, Kazakhstan and Russia, but I've already beaten the Russian this year."

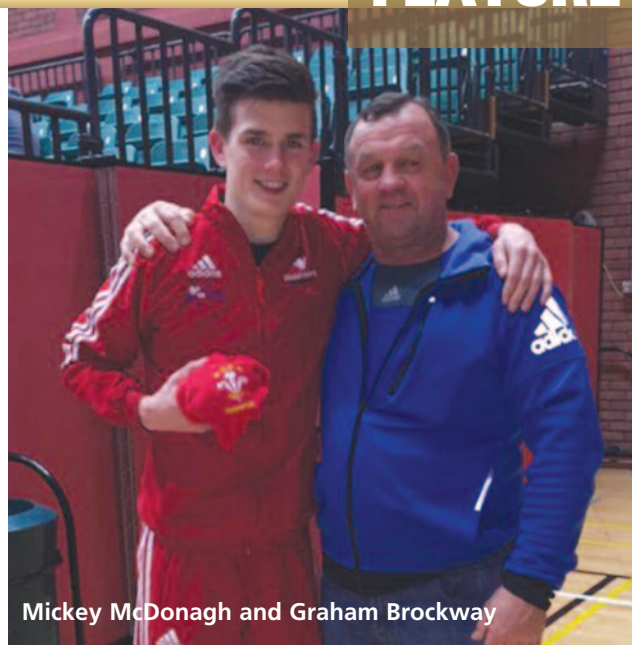
Beyond that, McDonagh has a clear focus on the 2018 Commonwealth Games, which take place on Queensland's Gold Coast; in training with the Welsh elite squad he has the

familiar company of Merlins Bridge gym-mate Charlene Jones. After that, the countdown will really be on for the Tokyo Olympics, although some have suggested that the recent decision to allow professionals to compete at the Games could rule young amateurs out of contention. The Team GB set-up is, though, arguably a more professional camp than that enjoyed by the majority of 'pro' fighters, and McDonagh is confident that his Olympic dream will

"HE'S OUTCLASSED EVERYONE IN WALES AND BRITAIN THIS YEAR, HE CAN GO ALL THE WAY"
Coach Graham Brockway

not be compromised by the law change.

"I don't think the professionals will be any good at the Olympics, it's a different sport," says McDonagh. "I don't think it's really fair letting them in, but you could say the more the merrier. I think they're two different sports and the better young boxers tend to stay amateur, and they often get better preparation. I don't think the professionals will be able to compete with us over three three-minute rounds."



Mickey McDonagh and Graham Brockway



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The Somme tragedy of Wales' first world champion

As the nation commemorates the centenary of the battle of the Somme, Sean Davies looks at the profound impact that hellish bloodbath had on the life of Wales' first world boxing champion, Percy Jones

The Great War story of Wales' first world boxing champion, Percy Jones, is one of the most tragic in the country's sporting history.

The Porth flyweight had claimed his epoch-making title in January 1914 with a 20-round points win over Bill Ladbury at the National Sporting Club. As a prominent, popular and skilful fighter, Jones now looked well set to capitalise on his title and reap the rewards for his efforts in battling up from his mining background.

After the Ladbury bout, Jones fought five more times before the outbreak of war, but his progress was hampered by weight and injury problems. The nadir came with a May 1914 stoppage defeat to Joe Symonds, where Jones was only able to keep his world and British belts because he had weighed in over the flyweight limit at 8st 8lbs.

The struggling champion continued his professional career after the start of the war with a low-key September 1914 win in Abertillery, before an October showdown with Scottish great Tancy Lee at the National Sporting Club. Again, though, Jones failed to make the weight, and he was stripped of his titles. The fight went ahead at a catchweight, with Lee claiming a 14th-round stoppage win.

Jones was only aged 21 at the time and there is little reason to believe that his weight problems would be anything other than a blip in a stellar career. But with his star on the wane, when he joined the forces he was sent to the front line.

This contrasts with the treatment of some of Jones' prominent boxing contemporaries, the likes of Jimmy

Wilde, Jim Driscoll and Johnny Basham. They seem to have benefited from their high profile when it came to recruitment, the army capitalising on their propaganda value by using them as fitness instructors and to put on shows for the troops.

On 9 January, 1915, the Pontypridd Observer carried the following report: "Percy Jones, the 8st champion of England and Wales who in consequence of failing to do the weight in his last contest with Tancy Lee, has joined the army. On Saturday he presented himself at the recruiting station and was attached to the Glamorgan Bantams Battalion (17th Service Battalion) of the Welsh Army Corps. By his lead many other boxers may also come forward."

According to BoxRec, Jones did box four more times in 1915 and twice in February 1916. These seem to have been low-key army barrack shows, although the highlight was an October 1915 win over his old foe Ladbury at New Cross Baths.

But Jones was on the front line when the battle of the Somme began in July 1916, and early in the 141-day conflict he was gassed and wounded in the leg. He refused to take a stretcher and dragged himself back to safety, but the mud got into the wound and left him with blood poisoning.

On 29 July, 1916, the Pontypridd Observer carries the following letter from Captain Arthur E Grant of the 17th Welsh regiment of the BEF in France: "Sir, I have just seen me a copy of the Porth Gazette out here, dated 15 July, 1916, that there is a rumour current in Porth that Percy Jones (ex-flyweight champion) of Porth, who is a sergeant in the 17th Welsh Regiment, has been killed. I am glad to say that there is absolutely no truth in this rumour. Percy Jones is still alive and well."

But Jones' leg injury required nearly 30 ultimately unsuccessful operations; in 1918 the leg was finally amputated. The fighter never fully recovered and was recorded as being in a somewhat pitiful state as he was presented as a hero to Welsh post-war boxing crowds. With his weight reduced to just 4st 2lbs, Jones died of trench fever on Christmas Day, 1922, one day short of his 30th birthday.

Ladbury, the man who Jones had

stripped of his British, European and world crowns, had pre-deceased him. The New Cross man was killed while serving in France in 1917, aged just 25.

**I'm grateful to local historian John Stone for providing the contemporary newspaper references to Jones*

ABUM, Berw Road, Pontypridd.

PERCY JONES JOINS THE COLOURS.

Percy Jones, the 8st. champion of England and Wales, who in consequence of failing to do the weight in his last contest with Tancy Lee, has joined the Army. On Saturday he presented himself at the Recruiting Station and was attached to the Glamorgan Bantams Battalion (17th Service Battalion) of the Welsh Army Corps. By his lead many other boxers may also come forward.

SUCCESS OF A TREALAW EMPLOY

PERCY JONES.

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ARTHUR E. GRANT, Capt.,
17th Welsh Regiment,
B.E.F., France.

Welsh's conquest of all-time great Leonard

The 28 July marks the centenary of one of Freddie Welsh's greatest nights, his New York triumph over fellow Hall-of-Famer Benny Leonard

The enigmatic Freddie Welsh (1886-1927) was one of the greatest lightweights of all time, a reputation that the Pontypridd man had already secured by the time of his July 1916 showdown with Benny Leonard.

Fighting in the division that was second in prestige only to the heavyweights, Welsh started his career in the States in 1905 and spent much of his career there as he engaged in a long, cross-Atlantic pursuit of the world title. Despite meeting and beating most of the leading fighters in his class, it wasn't until 1914 that 'the Welsh Wizard' was able to secure his long-overdue shot at the crown. A huge purse guarantee finally tempted champion Willie Ritchie to risk his title against Welsh, the challenger securing a comprehensive 20-round points win at London's Olympia Theatre.

Wales' second world champion – Percy Jones had become the first six months before – returned to America before World War I broke out, and would never fight in Europe again. In the States, Welsh embarked on an astonishing, exhausting schedule of fights against all the leading contenders. Having been forced to wait so long for his chance, the new champion was determined to make as much money as possible from the belt and so controversially exploited the 'no-decision' rule that meant he had to be stopped in one of the 10-round bouts to lose his title.

The punishing schedule – including 21 fights in his first year as champion – began to wear him down and injuries mounted. The champion refused to slow down and he began to lose a number of newspaper decisions, notably to the fast-rising

Benny Leonard in a big-money bout at Madison Square Garden.

The 'Ghetto Wizard' would, like Welsh, go down as one of the all-time great lightweights, thanks to his superb technique, lightning speed, and a flawless fighting heart and mind. His dominance of the first fight made the 20-year-old a huge favourite to claim the title in the rematch, the New York Globe noting: "Boxing fans like to be in at the death of champion, and there isn't one in a hundred who does not believe that Benny Leonard is just the boy to take champion Welsh's laurels away."

The return bout was set for Washington Park Sporting Club on 28 July, 1916, a former Brooklyn Federal League baseball ground that would be packed beyond its 15,000 capacity. Welsh was well aware of the threat and prepared himself physically in a way he hadn't

done for years, while telling the papers of his huge motivation because of the way he'd been denigrated as champion. If he needed any further motivation, it may have come as Leonard insisted on the champion's prerogative of entering the ring last, because he had won their first bout.

Welsh confounded the young pretender by ditching the cagey style he had employed as champion, instead immediately taking the offensive and staying on the front foot for the full 10 rounds. He was soon seen smiling at the

challenger and showboating by hanging out his jaw. In a clinch in the sixth he was overheard saying: "Old man, eh? Well, what does sonny think of the old man now?"

Unusually, almost all observers were as one in proclaiming Welsh the clear winner, and one New York paper reflected: "Father Time sat meditatively

at the ringside last night, and marvelled at Welsh's new turn of speed and punching ability. He missed one this time. Benny Leonard escorted the old man to Washington Park to toll the 10 seconds over Welsh's prostate form, but Father Time's task consisted of 'watchful waiting'."

According to the New York Evening World: "Freddie Welsh 'came back' last night, and long before the 10 rounds were over Benny Leonard wished he had stayed away. Fighting in

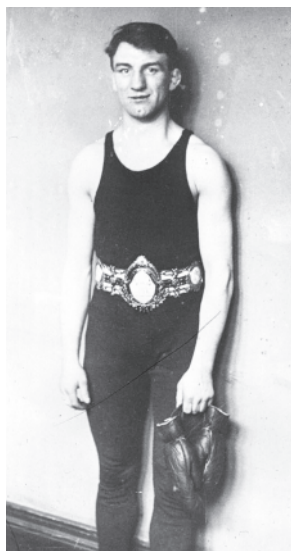
his old style – the fearless and aggressive style he used before he became champion – Welsh took the lead in the first round and never lost it."

Welsh's biographer Andrew Gallimore notes in *Occupation Prizefighter*: "[Freddie] wasn't as fit or as strong as he'd been in his first fights in Philadelphia, he wasn't as fast or as clinical as he'd been in his definitive contests in Los Angeles in the summer and autumn of 1908. On 28 July, 1916, however, Freddie was sublime. If only he had finished that night in Brooklyn. But it's just not the way an old fighter leaves the ring."

Welsh's breathless schedule continued, while Leonard rebuilt his reputation with 17 impressive wins from 19 fights. Their third bout ended with Welsh draped over the ropes in the ninth, meaning the title finally changed hands.



Benny Leonard



Freddie Welsh

'Team Chocolate' talent and humour shine through tragedy

Graham Thomas learns the moving back story of Morgan Jones, the fast-rising light-heavyweight bringing an unexpectedly carnal frisson to the prize-fighting rings of south Wales



It might be said of a man who calls himself 'Sexual Chocolate' that he lacks perspective, or at least the self-awareness that life is not always so sweet he would want to eat himself. It shouldn't be said about Morgan Jones. The Aberdare-based light-heavyweight has tasted enough bewildering tragedy in his 25 years to have permanently soured someone less resourceful.

His mother died when he was only eight-years-old and his father passed away three years ago. Last year, he suffered another unimaginable loss – that of his three-week-old son, William, who was overcome by carbon monoxide poisoning.

But Jones retains a remarkably positive outlook, particularly towards his boxing which he credits with having helped him through his darkest moments. He wants to become a world

champion and, seven straight victories into his professional career, he's made a convincing enough start.

His back story is as colourful as his ring nickname. Born in South Africa after his father – also called William – went off from Wales to work as a gold miner, Jones spent his early childhood in the melting pot of Cape Town just as the city, and the country, was coming to the boil.

"My mother was South African," he says. "My father was a Welshman who went out to South Africa to work in the gold mines. He went out there as a qualified electrician and met my mother. They got married during the apartheid era in South Africa, when the marriage was actually illegal. It was against the apartheid laws for whites and blacks to marry, so he was... for want of a better word, banished. He was unable to stay with the white community, so he lived with the black people out there which was pretty interesting at the time for a Welsh guy."

Far from home and proud of his Welsh roots, William Jones named his son Morgan. He was born on an auspicious day – 29 November, 1990, the day laws were passed in South Africa to end apartheid, just nine months after the release from prison of Nelson Mandela.

If young Morgan was living through tumultuous times, that was nothing compared to the personal turmoil of his mother's death and the upheaval of a move to Wales in 1998.

"My mother died when I was eight years old, which was the main reason my father came back here," he says. "He took the family back to Carmarthen. When I arrived, it was cold and I had to get used to a completely

different way of life. It was a complete transformation. But I embraced the change and I actually found the people in Wales way more friendly and welcoming. It didn't take me too long to adjust and make friends. Wales very quickly became my home. I love it here.

"I've gone back and fore to South Africa a few times since and half my family is still out there. I don't neglect my South African side at all, but I certainly consider myself Welsh. Although I was born a South African, I feel I've been bred here in Wales."

Jones dabbled with football as a youngster before starting boxing in his teens in Merthyr and making his amateur debut at 17. After representing Wales, he turned pro two years ago, outpointing Chris Ware at Rhydycar Leisure Centre, before knocking out the Latvian Edgars Sniedze in his second fight. Points victories followed over Mark Till, Casey Blair and Luke Allon, with his most recent two bouts being stoppage victories over Charlie Brown and Richard Harrison. Jones' performances and confident style have marked him out as one of Welsh boxing's most promising fighters, yet most of his career has been played out in the shadow of the most awful personal circumstances.

"My son passed away last year at three weeks old," he says. "It was due to carbon monoxide poisoning, so that's an ongoing legal issue that my partner and I have to deal with. The courts have yet to come to a conclusion. Of all the things I've been through, that has been the most difficult – the most painful thing anyone could ever have to deal with. It was a blessing to have him for his short life and I carry his memory now,

"WHEN MY SON WILLIAM PASSED AWAY, BOXING ACTUALLY HELPED ME THROUGH THINGS. I WOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF, OTHERWISE... IT WAS A TERRIBLE TIME, HORRIFIC"

with a symbolic tattoo on my chest. It's an elephant as William's mother would dress him in little elephant stuff and he would have little elephant toys.

"Boxing has definitely helped me find some strength and taken my mind off things. I feel as though he's there when I fight, an angel on my shoulder. He's with me. I also have an elephant symbol on my shorts and there will also be one on the new shorts I'm having made, too.

"When William passed away, I had only had three fights and my fourth fight was coming up. I decided to carry on with that fight, although it was very hard, because I felt my son would want me to try and be a strong person. Boxing actually helped me through things. I wouldn't have known what to do with myself, otherwise. It was a terrible time, horrific – but you have to believe things happen in life for a reason and that you have to try and become a stronger, better person for what happened."

Based in Aberdare, but training under Tony Borg at the blossoming St Joseph's gym in Newport, Jones takes his inspiration from stablemate and current IBF world featherweight champion, Lee Selby. The champion's handling by manager Chris Sanigar also provides the roadmap for Jones' own ambitions. Next stop is a fight against an as-yet unnamed opponent on Sanigar Events' Merthyr Mayhem

promotion at the town's leisure Centre on 23 July.

"My boxing career is 100% mapped out in my head and in the mind of my manager and promoter, Chris Sanigar," he says. "We're going to follow in the same steps as Lee Selby. I train with Lee, which is great for me, because he's already become a world champion. There are also going to be big things to come for Andrew Selby. I had some sparring sessions with Lee a while back, but there's a bit too much of a size difference with Andrew, even though it would sharpen up my reflexes. They are flying the flag for the Selby name, for the gym, and for Wales.

"I want to do exactly the same. It'll be a slower progression for me than for Andrew, as it was for Lee. Andrew was already a seasoned fighter from the amateurs. I want to go down the route of Welsh, Commonwealth, British, European and then world title. The plan is to have this fight in July and then go for a Welsh title fight.

"In order to make that happen, this fight needs to be a big occasion and draw a lot of support. That would then give me a much better chance of securing a Welsh title fight. I do the boxing and Chris makes things happen. I've got complete confidence in him."

Confidence is not something Jones is short of, which is just as well for a fighter

with his chosen moniker. The Chocolate One is not for melting.

"Style-wise, I like to think of myself as a sharp counter-puncher," he says. "I may not always get a one-punch KO, but my team knows that when I need a stoppage, it will come. I know there's power there, but like all the Welsh fighters coming up at the moment, I like to do things with a bit of style – just like the very best there was here, Joe Calzaghe."

So, whose fantasy is Sexual Chocolate and is it just a bit too sickly smooth for some sponsors' tastes?

"My best friend came up with the nickname," says Morgan. "It's a little bit tongue-in-cheek. It sort of makes sense, though, because when I fight it's a very smooth operation.

"It looks effortless, but it can be a little difficult to attract sponsors when you have the word 'Sexual'. So, because of that, we've been going with the name, Team Chocolate. I'm a confident guy, 100%."



Famous Welsh belt revived in Merthyr

Merthyr Leisure Centre on 23 July will see the crowning of the first Welsh heavyweight champion for 27 years as Dorian Darch clashes with Hari Miles

The Welsh heavyweight belt has a long and illustrious history, having been worn by the likes of Jack Petersen, Tommy Farr and Neville Meade. For too long, though, the belt has been put out to pasture, with fighters like former British champion Scott Gammer never competing for it. In fact, the last time the belt was up for grabs was at the Star Leisure Centre in Splott in 1989 when Llanelli's Chris Jacobs beat Newport's Andrew Gerrard on points.

That long period of abeyance will come to an end at Merthyr Leisure Centre on 23 July when Aberdare's Dorian Darch steps into the ring to challenge Blackwood's Hari Miles for the belt.

Seasoned 32-year-old Darch (11-4-0) has won his last three fights, and his last two defeats have come in classy company – the Welshman falling to 'Fast' Eddie Chambers and Anthony Joshua. That is likely to make him a firm favourite against his friend and regular sparring partner Miles (9-10-0), who has moved up the divisions and lost his only previous heavyweight bout, to Nick Webb in May. But the 30-year-old southpaw says he is confident of an upset:

"On paper, Dorian is the favourite because he has got a better record than me, but he has fought a lot of journeymen," said Miles. "I've fought a lot better guys than he has – Webb probably would have knocked out Dorian. I've just come up to heavyweight so he has got to make the most of that, but he is shorter than me and a few years older. I've done 10 rounds a few times, Dorian struggles to get past six, so the only way he will win is by knocking me out."

Miles told the South Wales Argus that there would be no problem putting aside the friendship he shares with his opponent: "We are quite good mates," said Miles. "We've sparred hundreds of rounds together over the years and I helped him out when he got to the final of the Welsh ABAs. We'll have to put our friendship on hold for the night in

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Merthyr, we have to because we both want to win the title. It's a big fight for both our careers and whoever loses will really have to think about where they go next."

The fight is part of a packed card put on by the Sanigars, their second show at the venue in 2016, and will again feature local heroes Dai Davies and Morgan Jones. Also out on the night will

be Tony Dixon, Robbie Turley, Ashley Brace, Jermaine Asare, Anthony Trow, Kyle Jones, Richie Canning, JJ Evans, Kristian Touze, Sonny Lee, Jonathan O'Kelly and Gavin Gwynne.

**Tickets £35 unreserved seating, £50 & £60 VIP table seating including a hot meal. Available from all boxers or call the box office on 0117 9496699*



Regan enjoys champion's night in Monte Carlo

Robbie Regan marked the 20-year anniversary of his winning the WBO bantamweight title in some style, celebrating with an evening in his honour held in the millionaire's playground, Le Café de Paris de Monte-Carlo.

If the location seems a somewhat unlikely one for the 47-year-old from Cefn Fforest, it came about from the telling of his riches-to-rags tale. Medical problems meant that Robbie never had the chance to defend his belt, that disappointment contributing

to a string of out-of-the-ring problems that sent him off the rails.

His story was heard by the business contacts of Robbie's agent, Ieuan Powys Llewellyn, and reached the ears of two expats in the Prince Albert Foundation, Bradley Mitton of Club Vivanova and Russell Morgan of Expat Advisory Worldwide. They helped organise the evening of celebration at the world-famous Café de Paris in Monte Carlo's Casino Square, the backdrop to so many glamorous events, from Bond films to Grand Prix. After a successful dinner, Regan,

Llewellyn, Eddie Avoth and others partied with the likes of Prince Albert, Eddie Jordan and a host of the finest dignitaries and celebrities that Monte Carlo could muster!

It was a long way from the south Wales valleys, but Robbie's local fans have another chance to celebrate closer to home. A tribute dinner for the champ is being organised for 1 October at the All Nations Centre in Cardiff (situated next to the Heath hospital). For tickets and information, please contact Mr Llewellyn on 07801-370936.

'The Beast' out to complete redemption

Richie Garner speaks to Rhys Saunders as the Cardiff light-welterweight looks to continue his impressive winning run at Ice Arena Wales on 16 July

Rhys Saunders' passage through boxing life has been a troubled one to say the least. In fact, his journey through life itself has been filled with controversy and strife, from WABA amateur stardom to periods of custody at HMP. He doesn't like talking about the wild days of his past, claiming "it's like I'm a different person now... I do still have to think about all the mistakes I made and live with them." But the Cardiff crowd-pleaser they call 'the Beast' has finally managed to turn it around and has a chance to showcase his skills and punch-power in the Frank Warren show in Cardiff on 16 July.

Saunders' professional career didn't continue where his amateur one had left off. After winning a number of Welsh vests in the unpaid ranks, his first four pro fights resulted in zero victories. The first, in October 2010, still rankles; he was stopped by journeyman Gary Cooper in a one-sided contest that should have been little more than a stepping stone.

"I should never have taken the fight with Cooper, he was a lot heavier than me," remembers Saunders, now aged 29.

"He knew the weight would count and put it on me early. Looking back I should have just walked away from it as soon as I realised how heavy he was, but the promoters put pressure on me. I'd sold a lot of tickets and didn't want to let people down. It set my career back five years, but I learnt from it."

After the loss a once-promising fighter seemed certain to be reduced to journeyman status, but things began to turn around in 2013 when he hooked up with trainer Richie Garner. In their first fight together, Saunders faced the highly rated Brett Beadon, who he dropped heavily in the first.

"I was only one punch away from the stoppage," says Saunders. "But I hadn't been taught about timing and distance, his experience saw him through. We've worked a lot on that and you can see the improvements. With the training I've had, I feel I could beat him if I faced him again."

Saunders then clocked up three straight victories against fancied opposition, culminating in April's first-round stoppage of the much-vaunted Kerry Evans in Stoke-on-Trent for the International Challenge belt. Evans was at 6-0 at the time, his record including a spectacular stoppage of 'Mr Reliable' Kristian Laight.

"We were offered a number of fights against tough, experienced lads," says Saunders. "The Evans fight included an opportunity to fight for a belt, Richie was very confident and told me that we should take it, that I was too strong and I'd walk through him."

From the start of the contest Saunders looked in total control, hurting Evans repeatedly with stiff, sharp shots as it became clear that Evans hadn't faced anybody with his opponent's punching power. It took Saunders little more than two minutes to leave the referee with little option than to wave the fight off, with Evans sagging on the ropes, about to pay a third trip to the canvas.

"Evans was a crowd favourite, he'd sold a lot of tickets and they really didn't like the way I took their man out," says Saunders. "It was a total shock to them, but I knew, from the time I began my ring walk I was full of confidence. When my entrance music started I looked at Richie who winked at me and told me 'Don't worry, we've got this. This'll be your easiest fight.' He's always brutally honest and told me I'd have to dig deep for the other ones, so when he said that I just knew I'd win. In the end I got a polite round of applause and left with the belt."

Looking to the future, an upbeat Saunders says: "I've got people talking again, I'm able to sell tickets... people only want to buy when you're winning. I'm looking for sponsors, too – it's not in my DNA to settle for a journeyman role and I'd love to fight for a British title, maybe then a European and who knows what else. I fight for my family now, my partner and my two beautiful daughters. I've put my past firmly behind me and I intend winning titles."

**At the time Bocsio went to press, Saunders' 16 July opponent had yet to be named, but tickets can be obtained by calling 07859-910433*



Morgan's title win just the beginning

In his regular feature on women's boxing, Jack Cox reflects on Kelly Morgan's victory over Lisa Cielas and rounds up the latest news

In my last column I discussed the lack of promotion and other issues that have hindered the development of women's professional boxing in the UK, problems that previously led to the cancellation of a title fight for the WBC Silver middleweight championship in Swindon between Kelly Morgan and Ghanaian Gifty Ankrah.

After the initial disappointment had passed, the WBC agreed to the rearranged date of 10 June. Grange Leisure Centre in Swindon was the venue, with Neilson Boxing naming the show New Beginning and headlining Morgan on the show's card.

But it was to be an entirely 'new beginning' as Gifty failed to obtain the visa she needed to fight in the UK. A late opponent was allowed in little-known Lisa Cielas. The German had drawn one and won two of her professional fights and arguably proved a more testing opponent than Gifty.

In the build-up, Morgan had sparred with several boxers including IBO international champion Danny Butler, WBC super-welterweight champion Mikaela Lauren and her own stable-mate, Ryan Martin, giving her great preparation.

After an entertaining undercard featuring local, talented boxers, Morgan and Cielas took to the ring in front of a crowd packed with support for the adopted Swindonian Morgan. The fight would go the full distance, with neither fighter willing to give ground and both pulling out explosive combinations. It was Cielas who tired first, though, trying to smother Morgan as the home boxer took control of the fight in the later rounds.

At the final bell a unanimous decision by the judges found in favour of the home boxer Morgan,

and as she raised the belt above her head the crowd erupted in celebration.

"I'm thrilled to come through it," said Morgan the morning after the fight. "I haven't been to sleep yet and I'm just letting it sink in. My nerves were unrivalled before the fight and Lisa was the toughest opponent I've faced. I've never really had a home town and I've been adopted by Swindon, I'm just happy that my boxing journey has brought everyone in my life together."

It may be a long wait for Kelly to get a full title shot, though. Holder Kali Reis may have to commit to a rematch with Maricela Cornejo, meaning the next step for Kelly could be a defence of her Silver title. This doesn't phase the British fighter, who has started putting plans in place for either a full title fight or a defence of her newly acquired belt. The hope is that she will get her full title fight and inspire more female boxers in the UK to turn professional.

July will see another two of the four registered British female boxers fighting, with Ashley Brace of Ebbw Vale in action in Merthyr on 23 July against a yet-to-be-named opponent. Marianne Marston takes to the ring on 2 July against South African

Gabisile Tshabalala in the hope of securing the WBFed, WBU, WIBA and UBO super-bantamweight titles. If she can do that at the age of 42, it will be a great achievement.

**What do you think about the state of women's boxing? Let us know @bocsio or facebook.com/Bocsio*



WELSH BOXING RANKINGS

Bocsio's Paul Daley gives his take on the top Welsh fighters in each weight division, and on the overall Welsh pound-for-pound list

POUND-FOR-POUND TOP 10



1. Lee Selby
2. Nathan Cleverly
3. Liam Williams
4. Craig Kennedy
5. Andrew Selby
6. Kerry Hope
7. Tom Doran
8. Chris Jenkins
9. Mitch Buckland
10. Craig Evans

*Lists compiled before Tom Doran's fight with Chris Eubank Jr

What do you think of Paul's Welsh boxing rankings? To give your thoughts, go to @bocsio or facebook.com/Bocsio

Name	Record	Residence
HEAVYWEIGHT		
Dorian Darch	11 - 4 - 0	Aberdare
Andy Jones	3 - 0 - 0	Mynydd Isa
Darren Morgan	8 - 5 - 0	Swansea
CRUISERWEIGHT		
Craig Kennedy	15 - 0 - 0	Cardiff
Danni Griffiths	7 - 1 - 0	Nantymoel
LIGHT-HEAVYWEIGHT		
Nathan Cleverly	29 - 3 - 0	Cefn Fforest
Morgan Jones	7 - 7 - 0	Aberdare
Nathan Thorley	5 - 5 - 0	Cardiff
SUPER-MIDDLEWEIGHT		
Tobias Webb	16 - 5 - 1	Swansea
Alex Hughes	7 - 0 - 0	Maerdy
MIDDLEWEIGHT		
Tom Doran	17 - 0 - 0	Connahs Quay
Kerry Hope	23 - 7 - 0	Merthyr Tydfil
Chris Ware	6 - 1 - 0	Swansea
Frankie Borg	9 - 5 - 0	Cardiff
LIGHT-MIDDLEWEIGHT		
Liam Williams	14 - 0 - 1	Clydach Vale
Bradley Pryce	37 - 20 - 0	Newbridge
Barrie Jones	22 - 10 - 0	Tylorstown
WELTERWEIGHT		
Dale Evans	10 - 3 - 2	St Clears
Kyle Jones	5 - 0 - 0	Pontypridd
Adam Goldsmith	3 - 0 - 1	Newport
LIGHT-WELTERWEIGHT		
Chris Jenkins	16 - 1 - 1	Garnant
Mitch Buckland	11 - 0 - 0	Cardiff
Romeo Romaeo	10 - 0 - 0	Cardiff
LIGHTWEIGHT		
Craig Evans	14 - 1 - 2	Blackwood
Craig Woodruff	5 - 4 - 0	Newport
SUPER-FEATHERWEIGHT		
Mark Evans	11 - 3 - 2	Holyhead
FEATHERWEIGHT		
Lee Selby	23 - 1 - 0	Barry
Dai Davies	13 - 24 - 2	Merthyr Tydfil
SUPER-BANTAMWEIGHT		
Robbie Turley	16 - 6 - 0	Cefn Fforest
Paul Economides	18 - 5 - 0	Connahs Quay
BANTAMWEIGHT		
Kyle King	4 - 3 - 0	Cardiff
Robbie Forster	0 - 3 - 0	Caerphilly
SUPER-FLYWEIGHT		
Najah Ali	5 - 4 - 1	Clydach Vale
Jay Harris	7 - 0 - 0	Swansea
FLYWEIGHT		
Andrew Selby	5 - 0 - 0	Barry

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BOXING SCHEDULE

Bocsio's Paul Daley presents his schedule for the upcoming worldwide action in July and August (bouts are subject to late change).

2 July

TBA, USA (ESPN)

Premier Boxing Champions

8 July

Dolman Hall, Ashton Gate Stadium, Bristol

Hasan Karkardi	v	Scott Westgarth
Ash Lane	v	tbc
Dan Sarkozi	v	tbc
David Bailey	v	tbc
Ryan Wheeler	v	tbc
Tim Cutler	v	tbc
Duane Winters	v	tbc
Jack Budge	v	tbc
Lee Nutland	v	tbc
Dane Kelly	v	tbc

9 July

Manchester Arena (HBO / BoxNation)

Tyson Fury	v	Wladimir Klitschko
Terry Flanagan	v	Mzonke Fana

Tachi Palace Hotel, Lemoore, CA, USA (UniMas)

Jose Carlos Ramirez	v	Tomas Mendez
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San Mateo, CA, USA (beIN / ABS-CBN 2)

Albert Pagara	v	Cesar Juarez
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11 July

DIVS, Ekaterinburg, Russia (HBO)

Sergey Kovalev	v	Isaac Chilemba
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16 July

Ice Arena Wales, Cardiff (BoxNation)

Mitchell Buckland	v	tbc
Liam Williams	v	Gary Corcoran
Guillermo Rigondeaux	v	Jazza Dickens
Bradley Skeete	v	tbc
Andrew Selby	v	tbc
Dale Evans	v	tbc
Craig Evans	v	tbc
Gary Buckland	v	tbc
Alex Hughes	v	tbc
Rhys Saunders	v	tbc
Jay Harris	v	tbc
Tommy Langford	v	tbc
Jamie Conlan	v	tbc
Joe Pigford	v	tbc
Gary Sweeney	v	tbc
Tyrone McKenna	v	tbc

Thyagaraj Stadium, New Delhi, India

Vijender Singh	v	Kerry Hope
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Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin, Germany (SAT 1)

Tyron Zeuge	v	Giovanni De Carolis
Arthur Abraham	v	Tim Robin Lihaug

Tijuana, Mexico (beIN)

Antonio Margarito	v	Ramon Alvarez
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Quebec, Canada

Adonis Stevenson v Thomas Williams Jr

21 July

Horncastle, Christchurch, New Zealand (Sky Arena / Main Event)

Joseph Parker v Solomon Haumono

23 July

MGM, Las Vegas, NV, USA (HBO PPV / BoxNation)

Terence Crawford v Viktor Postol
Oscar Valdez v Matias Rueda
Gilberto Ramirez v Dominik Britsch

Merthyr Leisure Centre

Dorian Darch v Hari Miles
Dai Davies v tbc
Morgan Jones v tbc
Tony Dixon v tbc
Robbie Turley v tbc
Ashley Brace v tbc
Jermaine Asare v Anthony Trow
Kyle Jones v tbc
Richie Canning v tbc
JJ Evans v tbc
Kristian Touze v tbc
Sonny Lee v tbc
Jonathan O'Kelly v tbc
Gavin Gwynne v tbc

30 July

Barclays Center, Brooklyn, NY, USA (Showtime)

Leo Santa Cruz v Carl Frampton
Daniel Jacobs v TBA
Amanda Serrano v Dahiana Santana

6 August

Casino Del Sol, Tucson, Arizona, USA (UniMas)

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Hughes upbeat after Catterall defeat

Erb's palsy sufferer Joe Hughes made national news ahead of his challenge for Jack Catterall's WBO intercontinental super-lightweight title in May. Jack Cox finds that Hughes' points defeat has done little to quell his enthusiasm for the sport...

Undefeated southpaw Jack Catterall is one of the hot young talents of British boxing and there's no shame in a points loss to him, but a battling performance seems of little comfort to Joe Hughes.

"I wasn't there to win over fans, I was there to win the fight," says the 25-year-old. "Usually I move around a lot more but I got stuck in a trap and couldn't get out. Jack has power in his shots, but I have a good chin and I knew that wouldn't phase me."

The Malmesbury super-lightweight has never had it easy. From an early age he was told he'd never be able to compete in sports due to suffering from Erb's palsy, a condition which can affect one to five of the primary nerves in the arm. This means that Joe has basically fought his entire career with one arm (his left).

Despite the inevitable problems this causes, Joe has led the boxer's life since he left school. He attended a boxing academy in

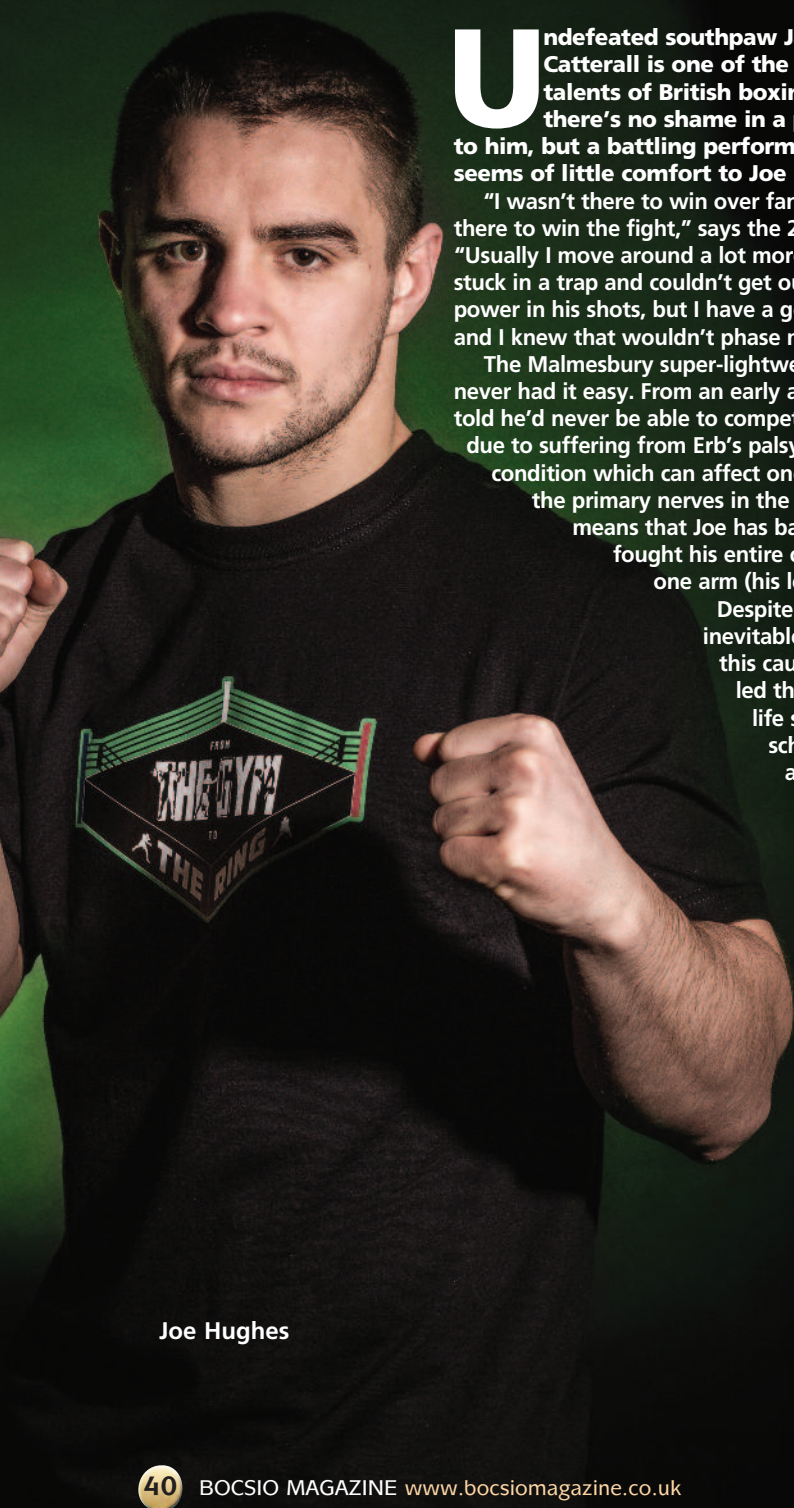
Manchester when he first started out, but realised six months in that it wasn't for him and so decided to do it his own way. Based in Bristol, he has found a home at Paddy John's, a small boxing gym in Kingswood that has that classic feel to it. Everybody knows each other, and, as we sit there talking, local west country boxers including Danny Butler and Kelly Morgan come in and out.

"I have worked my ass off to get here," says Joe. "I was in and out of hospital as a kid, but when I was told I would never go far in sport I saw it as a challenge. My dad took me to taekwondo lessons and then on to boxing so I could exercise my arm more."

A lot of his early critics believed that his fighting style would stop him being competitive, not realising that he suffered from Erb's palsy and that this was why he was unable to make more use of his right arm. Despite the limitations, Joe has now won 14 of the 16 fights he's had in his professional career, claiming baubles along the way including the IBO International super-lightweight and English light-welterweight titles. "It was the best feeling winning those titles," he says. "They were a long time coming, but it's been great to prove people wrong and it shows that all the hard work has paid off."

Having overcome so many challenges, Hughes is sure that he'll bounce back after the Catterall defeat. But, in the short term, the family man has other pressing considerations on his mind. "Hopefully the fight on BoxNation [against Catterall] has proved what I can do and that can bring some bigger fights in the future," he says. "Although I'll be back training soon, I won't be looking to fight until later in the year as I have a baby on the way and that's my main priority at the moment. After that, though, I'll take it one fight at a time and build myself back up."

**Joe is currently looking for additional sponsorship to help him concentrate on his boxing career. Anyone wanting to sponsor Joe should contact joeughesboxingltd@hotmail.co.uk*



Joe Hughes

Here come the girls

Our ring-card girl for this edition is 'Joltin' Joni, 30, from Swansea. 'Joyous,' we hear you say. 'Let's have a jabber with Joni'...

Q: Who's your favourite boxer, Joni?

A: Kickboxing and going to the gym to keep fit.

A: I can't decide between two legends from my home town - Enzo MacCarinelli and Colin Jones.

Q: What's your favourite exercise at the gym?

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: I love the treadmill and weights.

Would you like to hire a ring card girl for fight nights or other promotional events?

Just contact Bocsio: email: bocsiomagazine@gmail.com Tel: 07593-903265



Book review: A Champion's Last Fight

Bocsio's Andrew Collingbourne reviews Nick Parkinson's new book, detailing the struggles faced by boxers when they leave the ring

"BOXING IS THE only sport you can get your brain shook, your money took and your name in the undertaker book."

That memorable quote from Joe Frazier provides the central thesis for this excellent contribution to boxing literature by journalist Nick Parkinson. The book is divided up into 12 chapters, which are called rounds.

Rounds one-to-12 look at the complex tales of former boxers whose lives after boxing have been blighted. The causes include alcohol and/or drugs – Benny Lynch, Ken Buchanan, Scott Harrison, Ricky Hatton; financial mismanagement/debts – Maurice Hope, Riddick Bowe; suicide – Randolph Turpin, Freddie Mills; prison – Naseem Hamed; mental illness – Frank Bruno.

Those are just a small selection of the boxers referred to in the book; Parkinson is a good historian and looks at fighters from the 19th century to the present day. The book is only 256 pages long, but packed with facts and figures. For boxing aficionados, the stories told here will be well known, but the pacey style of writing and mixture of narrative and excellent quotes keeps you interested throughout.

But it's in the book's best chapter that it provides fresh

insight and important new analysis, the section entitled Fighting Depression and the Risk of CTE. In the chapter, Parkinson provides both historical background and up-to-date scientific analysis of a condition which was initially identified in 1928 by pathologist Harrison Martland. Then, it was called punch-drunk syndrome; later, it would be referred to as dementia pugilistica. A brain disorder caused by repetitive blows to the head, the condition is now known as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE).

Parkinson draws together medical evidence from leading experts in this field of medicine to show a link between CTE and dementia, alcoholism and depression, which can lead to suicide. He then provides examples of former boxers to support the clinical findings. "World champions believed to have been suffering from dementia and CTE symptoms caused by boxing include Joe Louis, Sugar Ray Robinson, Jack Dempsey, Ben Jack, Wilfred Benitez, Emile Griffith, Paul Pender, Willie Pep, Floyd Patterson, Ingemar Johansson and Joe Frazier," says the author.

Parkinson looks at why boxers are so ill-equipped for life after the ring, how they're left to fill a huge void in their lives that creates loneliness and a sense of isolation. Ricky Hatton has faced many demons following his retirement including litigation with former trainer Billy Graham, a fall-out with his parents and a large weight increase caused by bingeing on alcohol. In his interview for the book, Hatton sums up in a concise, succinct way the dilemma boxers face upon retirement:

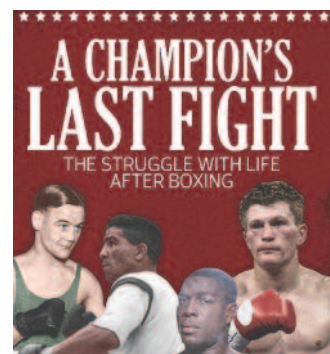
"Boxers come from council estates, they're not from Cambridge or Oxford, so inevitably they end up potless, or have other problems," says Hatton. "They come from ghettos, we're not the most educated of people so we need help more than most. When you have to give it up, it's heartbreaking. It's all you've known. There are no team-mates, no crowds, it's all on you. It's a very lonely sport, there's no club or association behind you."

The book contains some excellent photographs of Benny Lynch, Jimmy Wilde, Sugar Ray Robinson, Randolph Turpin, John Conteh and other fighters. Particularly notable is a haunting picture of Ken Buchanan in 2005, then aged 60, at the International Boxing Hall of Fame. The mixture of black and white and colour photographs works well.

Parkinson has looked at the dark, seedy underbelly of boxing, has taken on the medical issues and successfully dissected them. The last word goes to Wales' former world champion Robbie Regan:

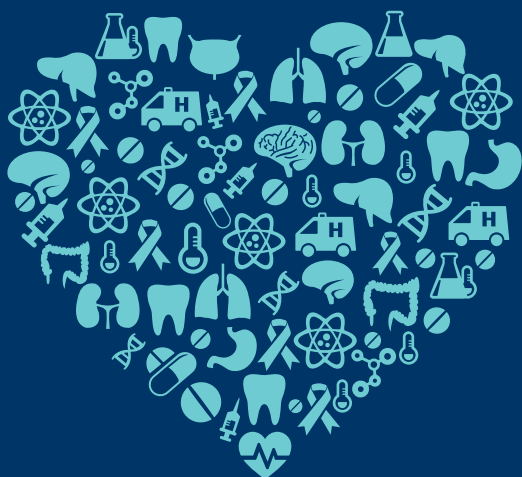
"A lot of people wants to be around when you are champion and when you aren't they scarper."

*Nick Parkinson's *"A Champion's Last Fight: The Struggle with Life after Boxing"* is available from Pitch Publishing with a cover price of £12.99



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Ambitious Johns has UFC in sight

David Owen catches up with Cage Warriors and Titan FC world champion Brett Johns for a Q&A session, with the help of readers' questions from Twitter

Bocsio : How did you get into MMA, Brett?

I started judo when I was four with a dream of making it to the Olympic Games. When I was 16 it became clear that this was an unrealistic goal, so I made the switch to become a champion in MMA.

Bocsio: Who are your MMA idols and have you been lucky enough to meet them?

I like loads of MMA fighters, some of my favourites include Sean Sherk, Chael Sonnen and Conor McGregor but I've never had the chance to meet them. I have met other great MMA idols of mine such as Greg Jackson, Dustin Poirier and Stefan Struve.

Bocsio: You've won two world titles. But which title-capturing night was the best?

They were both very special nights. I fought twice in one night for the Cage Warriors crown and beat a UFC veteran for my second world title. I couldn't pick between the two.

Bocsio: You've never been beaten in the cage but you have lost titles on the scales...

Yeah I've had loads of trouble cutting weight, sometimes I lose a total of 12kg in six weeks... it's a really tough few weeks! The first time I missed weight was due to my inexperience of cutting weight, the second time was due to a bug I picked up before the fight that made me very ill.

Bocsio: Is all that behind you now? Do you have a nutritionist working with you, or are you still dealing with the cutting alone?

Yeah, it's all behind me, it's been behind me since the first time it happened so it's all good and I'm ready to step foot back in there.

Bocsio: Let's chat about UFC 200. It's a huge night for MMA, what or who are you most looking forward to?

All the fights are great on the UFC 200 card but I'm looking forward to watching TJ Dillashaw v Raphael Assuncao, that's a big fight for me. I'm going for TJ by unanimous decision.

Bocsio: While we're talking about the UFC, have you ever had any contact with them, or any indication they've been watching you? Do you see yourself making the step happen soon?

Yeah, they've been in contact loads over the past few years. Me and my coach Chris Rees are waiting for the right time. I'm still only 24 so still quite young.



Now for questions from Twitter using the #AskBrettJ...

@littlemanpaul: Do you have any lucky rituals? Lucky pants?

No, nothing lucky, I'd like to think I make my own luck... but I do bounce off the cage before every fight!

@Ware_HouseABC : How's your shoulder, champ? Did you have any boxing experience before you started MMA?

Shoulder is healing very nicely, still loads of recovery to be done but I'm training just as hard as I was before. I haven't had any boxing experience before, that's something I regret really considering I'm a big boxing fan

@Adam_Carter92: What's been the most memorable fight of your career?

My most memorable fight would have to be David Haggstrom, who was top five in Europe when we fought was 18th in the UK and I beat him by a strong decision.

Bocsio: Last question... in three years' time, where you?

I'll be in the UFC hopefully, making Welsh fans proud at opening the floodgates for Welsh fighters everywhere. As well as being wealthy!



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Welsh MMA round-up

David Owen with his take on the latest news from the action-packed world of Welsh MMA

Adrenalin Fight Nights continue to grow

Swansea-based promotion Adrenalin Fight Nights hosted another packed card at the beginning of June, with two new titles on the line in a pair of cracking fights. The card boasted no less than 20 bouts including K1, amateur and pro MMA, and the promotion seems to be going from strength to strength.

In an amateur clash, Ireland's Paulie O'Brien fought Port Talbot's Will Davies in a middleweight title contest, Davies coming out on top and taking the title by guillotine choke in the second round.

In the co-main event, Charlie Ward and Gareth Williams went to war in a brutal but very entertaining encounter. This was Ward's first time back in the cage since he fought Joao Carvalho on 9 April, a fight that tragically led to the Portuguese fighter's death. Ward came out on top against Williams, winning by majority decision in a contest that had the entire crowd on their feet in appreciation.

Tributes paid to Mike Saint

After the success of the show, Adrenalin Fight Nights and Welsh MMA as a whole was shaken by tragic news. KGB gym member Mike Saint had been a



Mike Saint

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successful combatant on the night, but just three days later he was involved in a traffic accident and sadly passed away. The 38-year-old was a talented kickboxer and mixed martial artist who had been on a fine run of form, and his death was keenly felt across the MMA community. Adrenalin owner James Wallis hopes to put on a show in October and he told Bocsio that the event will be dedicated to Saint's memory; the thoughts and prayers of everyone at Bocsio are with his family and friends.

Samways hopes for success in Vegas

Welsh mixed martial artist Wayne Samways has the chance of a lifetime as he travels to Las Vegas in July to compete in the IMMAF World Amateur MMA championships. The biggest and most prestigious of all amateur tournaments takes place as part of UFC fight week in Vegas and will be shown live all over the world on UFC Fight Pass.

Samways, who has had to fund the trip himself, has received tremendous support and help to try to make his dreams a reality. "Everyone wanted to help and donate," he said. "But I didn't want handouts, I wanted to do something for people's donations so I started doing personal grappling and striking sessions to give something back. There has been so much help, Cage Warriors came to Newport and they also had a collection for me. I want to thank everyone."

We wish Wayne the best of luck and will be sure to catch up with him when he returns from the competition to get all the news from the City of Sin.

Budo Fighting Championships acquires UFP

Promotions

As mentioned in the last issue of Bocsio, former top-ranked bantamweight Dino Gambatesa has taken the step into the promoting side of MMA after his retirement, launching UFP Promotions. After a successful first show in Neath at the end of April, Budo Fighting Championships was impressed enough to go out and acquire UFP with immediate effect, turning it into Budo Wales.

This is a hugely



Will Davies

encouraging step for Welsh MMA and Budo has wasted no time in scheduling its next event, penning it in for 24 September in Swansea. Gambatesa will remain the figurehead of Budo Wales and has already got the ball rolling, having booked veteran Jordan James and recent Bamma fighter Marley Swindells for the September show. An exciting time for the new promotion that we will monitor closely.

Cage Warriors 76 puts Welsh MMA on world map

David Owen welcomes the exciting return of the Cage Warriors franchise to Wales, following a thrilling night at the Newport Centre

The 4 June saw Cage Warriors, Europe's premier MMA organisation, return to Wales after its acquisition of Pain Pit.

Working under the Cage Warriors Wales banner, the organisation delivered a stellar evening of mixed martial arts at the Newport Centre that showed the world what fantastic talent Wales has to offer. Reporting from ringside, this was the most professional and exciting show I have

ever attended and it drew the likes of Dan 'the Outlaw' Hardy, the UFC star himself a former two-weight Cage Warriors champion.

The evening, headlined by Tillery Combat's middleweight Jack 'the Hammer' Marshman, was beamed around the globe on UFC Fight Pass, as well as being screened in Scandinavia, Africa, the UK and Ireland.

In front of this global audience, it

was Marshman who came away from the main event with an impressive and slightly controversial submission win against Manchester-based Iranian Ali Arish. The home fighter showed impressive takedown defence early on to stifle any attempts the highly skilled wrestler Arish made to take him to the ground. But halfway through the first Arish caught Marshman with a hard shot upstairs and was then able to complete the



Jack Shore

takedown. 'The Hammer' then escaped an attempted guillotine choke from Arish before applying one of his own. Although seemingly not in tight, Arish tapped twice on Marshman's leg with an open palm. This led referee Peter Lavery to step in and call a stop to the contest, a move that immediately prompted protests from the Iranian who claimed he was punching his opponent's leg and had not, in fact, submitted. But with the replays on the big screens in the arena showing what seemed like a legitimate tap-out the result stood, taking Marshman that one step closer to a shot at the vacant Cage Warriors middleweight title.

In the night's co-main event, former UFC fighter Andreas Stahl sent quite a few Welsh fans home unhappy after halting Lew Long's five-fight winning streak. This was the step up that Long wanted in order to test himself and it soon looked like a step too far. The Swedish fighter took control in the first with a huge takedown, dumping Long onto his face and dominating the home fighter for the majority of the round. Long did rally in the second, gaining some success with a flurry of shots midway through the round and in doing so getting the crowd to their feet in support. But it was to be over early in the final round as Stahl landed punches and some brutal knees against the cage, forcing the stoppage at 31 seconds of round number three. A disappointing night for Long, but one he can learn a lot from.

Jack 'Tank' Shore stole the show on his Cage Warriors debut. He gave a performance of total domination against a late replacement in Frenchman David Tonatiuh-Crol to take his professional record to 2-0. As both fighters met in the ring it was Shore that took Crol straight to the mat and it was from there that he seemed able to do as he pleased. The 2015 IMMAF European champion took the Frenchman's back numerous times, remaining patient until the opportunity for the rear naked choke

arose. When Shore sunk that in he was able to force the tap at 3.46 of the first round. This was a hugely impressive performance from the 21-year-old and, with the world watching on UFC Fight Pass, there would have been some very influential spectators.

Bristol-based featherweight Nad Narimani picked up his third win on Cage Warriors with a third-round submission via guillotine choke against Daniel Requeijo. This was an exciting encounter that went back and forth for most of the fight, with both fighters teeing off on one another, much to the crowd's delight. As Narimani became more comfortable he grew into the fight and early in the third managed to get the standing guillotine to come away with yet another submission win on a Cage Warriors show.

Crowd favourite and experienced bantamweight Kris Edwards once again put on a great show. Despite dropping a unanimous decision against Sam Creasey (30-27, 30-27, 29-28), Edwards supplied some of the most memorable and exciting moments of any fight on the card. When he was able to keep the fight standing Edwards planted his feet and let his hands go, bringing the Newport crowd to their feet. Both fighters stood and unleashed on each other until Creasey had had enough and decided to take the contest back to the mat. This was an all-action fight that had the whole arena on its feet.

There were also wins on the professional preliminary fight card for Tillery Combat's Josh Reed and for Ross Houston. Reed looked extremely impressive in overcoming Ben Rees, winning by TKO at 1.17 of the second round, while Ross Houston picked up a submission win over Welshman Dane Morgan via armbar at 4.55 of the first round.

Welsh MMA can only continue to grow under the Cage Warriors banner and credit has to go to Richard 'Shakey' Shore, who worked tirelessly to get Pain Pit Promotions to a standard where the premier



Jack Marshman

mixed martial arts promotion in Europe wanted to get on board. A sell-out show with 1,200 fans packed into the Newport Centre and a potential audience of millions around the world on UFC Fight Pass, the talent-filled show offered Welsh MMA the platform it deserves. Another Cage Warriors Wales show is pencilled in the diary for October and the team are already starting to make the match-ups. I strongly urge you to attend one of these events and sample the electric atmosphere for yourself, you're sure to catch some future UFC stars in action.

Giving Welsh boxing the exposure it deserves



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