

### **Snips and Snipes 5 April 2018**

The popular board game Monopoly has a "Get out of Jail Free" card which of course can come in very handy. It now seems that there is a boxing board game with a Get Out of Jail Free card and the card is one very useful for getting Mexican fighters caught doping out of any significant punishment. There is no mention of "Jail" on the card but in big letters is the word "Clenbuterol the Mexican Wonder excuse". Erik Morales and Francisco Vargas played it when they tested positive for the banned substance and now Saul Alvarez has used it as his get out of punishment card. Alvarez twice tested positive for Clenbuterol but hey there were only small amounts in his sample and in two subsequent tests he was clean. That proves nothing at all except that he had ingested a banned substance. He may well have had a substantial amount of Clenbuterol in his system a couple of weeks before the test more than could have been explained away by contaminated meat but it had worked his way through system by the time he was tested. His two subsequent clean tests are meaningless. Having tested positive for Clenbuterol all he had to do is take no more and the banned substance would have worked his way through his system and surprise, surprise he was clean.

I badly wanted to see the Gennady Golovkin vs. Saul Alvarez return fight but not if one of the fighters has tested positive for a banned substance. The WBC took a huge step when they introduced their Clean Boxing Programme but almost every step they have taken since has been a backward one. Alvarez is a millionaire with nutritional experts at his beck and call. He must know of the past instances where Mexican meat has been blamed for positive tests and yet he put this huge fight in jeopardy. So the WBC says he was not intending to cheat-an impossible thing for them to know-so he is not guilty. Less than six months ago the WBC decided that Luis Nery gave a positive test due to contaminated Mexican meat but he was not suspended. Luis Ortiz gave a positive test for two banned substance in his sample in September 2017 but claimed it was due to medicine he was taking to counter high blood pressure and he was let off with a \$25.00 fine. In March he gets \$500,000 for fighting Wilder for the WBC title which puts that slap on the wrist into context.

The WBC took strong action when Alex Povetkin tested positive withdrawing their sanction of the eliminator with Berman Stiverne but other than that it is difficult to think of one high profile case that has seen similar strong action. I have said before that if you introduce a testing routine which states in big letters THE ATHLETE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING THAT GOES IN HIS BODY!! You need to have the moral courage to apply that rule to every fighter whether he claims it came from contaminated Mexican meat or free roaming Scottish haggis.

France has also failed to support the testing. Their rising young heavyweight star Tony Yoka missed three scheduled test but has only been given a suspended suspension so fights this weekend in Paris. Can't give a positive test if you avoid getting tested-clever eh!

Still no positive information on who Gennady Golovkin will fight on 5 May. It won't be Billy Joe Saunders as he will fight Martin Murray on 23 June and it won't be Ryota Murata as he defends his secondary WBA title against Emanuele Blandamura this

month, Daniel Jacobs would be a good fill-in but he fights Maciej Sulecki this month in an IBF eliminator and both Golovkin and Jacobs would want more time to prepare for their return fight. Demetrius Andrade has pressed his case and looks as good as any and unbeaten Mexican Jaime Munguia has been mentioned but it has to be a fighter with a high profile as every Golovkin fight is a big event.

Anthony Joshua continues to be a phenomenon in British boxing. His last three fights have drawn a total of over 250,000. The fight with Joseph Parker was by no means a classic. Parker's only chance of winning was through his strong fast jab, slick movement and hoping that Joshua would tire over the twelve round distance. When Joshua showed a stronger, faster jab good movement of his own and was still full of energy over the later rounds Parker seemed to settle for second place and did not even try for the knockout he needed in the last round. Parker's reluctance to take any chances prevented the fight from being entertaining or exciting but it was job done for Joshua.

Talk of a fight with Deontay Wilder raises hopes but there is a long way to go towards that being signed and sealed. One of the biggest stumbling blocks will be that as a champion Wilder will be looking for parity and I can't see Eddie Hearn agreeing to that. Wilder received \$2.1 million for the Ortiz fight. Don't know what Joshua got for the Parker fight but the New Zealander's purse was reported to have been £8 million ( approx. \$11 million)so Joshua must have taken down around £20 million (approx \$28 million) which makes Wilder's purse look paltry. Even if that could be ironed out the other stumbling block could come in the shape of mandatory defences which the IBF, WBA or WBO may insist on. Tyson Fury won these three titles when he beat Wlad Klitschko in November 2015 and by December the IBF had already stripped him, Alex Povetkin is No 1 with both the WBA and WBO so there could be pressure there but the IBF do not have a No 1 as neither their No 2 Kubrat Pulev or No 3 Jarrell Miller has a win over a rated opponent (so how did they become No 2 and 3-don't ask-this is boxing and this is sanctioning body behaviour) and curiously IBF have actually called for purse offers for Pulev vs. No 6 Dominic Breazeale and the winner would be able to fill the No 1 spot.. As for Wilder, Ortiz was not No 1 so the WBC No 1 Dillian Whyte has a strong claim for a shot at Wilder. Joshua vs. Wilder will be huge. Bigger than Joshua vs. Wlad Klitschko and it could turn out to be the highest grossing heavyweight title fight in the history of boxing so let's hope the will is there to make it happen.

Wilder did boxing no good by declaring that he felt incomplete as he had never killed a man in the ring. He was sad that he did not have a fatality on his record and how he thought he might have got one when he knocked out Artur Szpilka. What a disgraceful comment. There is a punishment in some sports for bringing the sport into disrepute but Wilder's remarks must be way up there with the worst unfeeling and stupid remarks ever made by a boxer.

Former Saul Alvarez victim Amir Khan returns to action on 21 April against Canadian/Italian Phil Lo Greco. Actually that is unfair Khan is much more than an Alvarez victim he is also a two-time WBA champion and an IBF champion and he deserves great credit for those achievements. The fight will be carried by ESPN + in

what is planned to be an extensive programme of fights on ESPN + and Lo Greco is a reasonable level opponent for Khan's first fight in almost two years.

Still on British fighters Liam Smith gets a chance to regain the WBO super welter title when he faces Sadam Ali in Verona on 12 May. He is in with a chance and it remains to be seen how much of Ali's upset win over Miguel Cotto was down to Ali's talent and how much to Cotto being at the end of a long career. Rey Vargas defends the WBC super bantamweight title against Armenian Azat Hovhannisyan in the main support. This show will be at the Turning Stone Casino in Verona NY. My poor timing again as I shall be at the Turning Stone on 8 June to see a card as part of the International Boxing Hall of Fame Induction Weekend activities. Boxers Vitali Klitschko, Erik Morales and Winky Wright are being inducted and there are some other top names scheduled to attend such as Mike Tyson, Miguel Cotto, Gerry Cooney, Micky Ward, Sergio Martinez, James Toney, Marco Antonio Barrera and Leon and Mike Spinks and these guys will walk amongst us in the grounds. Every boxing fan should try to get to the Hall at least once.

There are rumours that the WSBB has been tapping up some boxers down in the super flyweight's to see whether they can put together a series in that division for their next adventure. That is a talent heavy division but it is by no means sure that the promoters of the top fighters will want their guys in WBSS promoted by someone else.

Thai Wanheng will be aiming to equal the record held by Floyd Mayweather Jr for the longest winning run for a world champion when he defends his WBC minimumweight title against his No 1 challenger Leroy Estrada. A win will put him on 50 wins and as he is only 32 and should be too good for the Panamanian he will be able to shoot for 51 to pass Mayweather's total. An added bonus for Wanheng could be the special belt that the WBC had made for presentation to the winner of Golovkin vs. Alvarez as the plan is to present it to him if he beats Estrada.

South East Asia looks to be throwing its hat into the ring metaphorically. On 20 April there is another in a series of shows that have been held in Singapore where Frenchman Karim Guerfi will face Filipino Michael Dasmarinas for the vacant IBO bantam title. Dasmarinas is nicknamed "Glove of Fire" That is not a reflection of his style of fighting but is due to a member of his family being so unhappy with the young Dasmarinas taking up boxing that he threw the young fighter's boxing gloves in the fire!

A much bigger event will happen in Kuala Lumpur on 8 July when Manny Pacquiao challenges Lucas Matthisse for the secondary WBA welter title. A risky fight for the great 39-year-old Filipino for the comparatively minor reward of a secondary title.

Still on the scene out East Daigo Higa will defend his WBC fly title against Nicaraguan Cristofer Rosales on the same show as Murata vs. Blandamura. It seems the Japan now has so many champions they have to put two or three title fights on a show to fit them all in. Jamie McDonnell faces a very tough task in defending his secondary WBA bantam title against unbeaten Japanese "Monster" Naoya Inoue. On the same show Ken Shiro will put his WBC light fly title on the line

against Mexican former WBC champion Ganiyan Lopez. Shiro won the title with a majority decision over Lopez last May.

Fights coming up include 13 April Bahamian Edner Cherry returns to action against Denis Galarza in Minneapolis with Jamal James 22-1 vs. Abel Ramos 18-2-2 also on the card. Busy, busy 21 April. In Brooklyn Gervonta Davis takes on Jesus Cuellar for the secondary WBA super feather title, Adrien Broner and Jessie Vargas go against each other and Jermall Charlo fights Hugo Centeno for the interim WBC middle title. Big show in Belfast on the same night with Carl Frampton vs. Nonito Donaire for the WBO featherweight title. A fight that neither man can afford to lose and also on the card a great match with South African star Zolani Tete vs. Omar Narvaez for the WBO bantam title. The 42-year-old Narvaez is aiming to become a three-division champion. Huge fight in Sundsvall, Sweden also on 21 April where Otto Wallin 19-0 takes on fellow-Swede 15-1 Adrian Granat for the European Union heavy title. Biggest fight in Sweden in years and one that hopefully will give boxing in Sweden a huge boost. Also 21 April in Czestochowa, Poland Mariusz Masternak vs. Youri Kayembre Kalenga for the WBO European cruiser title which will double as a WBO eliminator with Tomasz Adamek vs. Joey Abell, 39-0-1 Damian Jonak and a WBO Female super feather title fight between unbeaten local Ewa Brodnicka and Canadian Sarah Pucek also on the card. Abell is very popular in Poland and has done work at a Works Community Behavioural Health Centre there working with people with mental health problems. Joey has a degree in Humanities. Also on 21 April in Neukoelln, Germany unbeaten German heavy Tom Schwarz 20-0 faces 16-0 Senad Gashi European heavy champion Agit Kabayel 17-0 defends title against 19-1 Miljan Rovcanin and more to come as the year unfolds including Vasyl Lomachenko vs. Jorge Linares one to saviour.