



Sports round-up

By MARK QUEEN

WHEN WELTERWEIGHT champion Emile Griffith and former champ Luis Rodriguez resume their bitter feud at the Las Vegas Convention Center a week from tomorrow night (June 12), they will be duplicating a situation that has occurred several times in the long history of the 147-pound division.

Emile and Luis each hold a 15-round decision over the other in title fights, with Griffith having an edge in their series thanks to a close 10-round verdict before either held the championship. All three bouts created heated controversy. Last June, for instance, when Emile regained the title from Luis in New York City, one judge voted for Rodriguez, 10 rounds to five, and most of the newspapermen at ringside had the official loser ahead on points at the finish.

Many of you are familiar with the celebrated series between Ted (Kid) Lewis and Jack Britton, in which those two worthies met on numerous occasions and exchanged the welterweight title half a dozen times. This great rivalry has been widely publicized down through the years and even made Bob Ripley's "Believe It or Not" collection of amazing facts.

BUT HOW MANY of you realize that the first recognized welterweight champion, Mysterious Billy Smith, and the redoubtable Joe Walcott, who fought 'em all right up through the best of the heavyweights, staged one of the roughest series in the annals of pugilism?

Smith, whose real front handle was Amos, claimed the welter crown in 1892 after stopping Frank Kelly in the 37th round and held it until Tommy Ryan outpointed him in 20 rounds two years later. Ryan at that time was considered second only to Jim Corbett in boxing skill.

Smith and Walcott met for the first time on March 1, 1895, at Boston in a brawl that has been described as one of the most desperate ring fights ever staged. Both indulged in the roughest sort of tactics, heeling with the glove repeatedly and butting each other whenever the opportunity presented itself. On one occasion, Smith tried to stick his thumb in Walcott's mouth in an attempt to tear open the Negro boy's cheek. After 15 rounds, they called it a draw, but Walcott was generally credited with having the best of it.



WHEN GRIFFITH REGAINED TITLE--Emile Griffith (left) and Luis Rodriguez exchange stiff lefts last June 15 in New York as Griffith regained world welterweight title he had lost to Rodriguez in Los Angeles three months earlier. Evenly matched rivals meet again one week from tomorrow night (June 12) at Las Vegas Convention Center.

A second meeting on April 14, 1898, at Bridgeport, Conn., over a 20-round distance proved another terrific struggle, with the official decision again being a draw. This called for a rematch in Bridgeport on December 6 of the same year and after 25 rounds of furious battling, the result was the same--a draw.

They met a fourth time on Sept. 14, 1900, but this time Smith was disqualified for foul tactics in the tenth round.

NOTHING IN HIS career proved the gameness and fearlessness of Smith more than his willingness to meet Walcott on any occasion the Negro wonder desired any part of his game. While heavyweights frequently dodged the issue with the "Giant Killer", Smith always welcomed the opportunity to climb in the ring with the Barbados Demon.

The many encounters between Lewis and Britton, Benny Leonard and Johnny Dundee, and even the series involving Jimmy McLarnin and Barney Ross were pink tea affairs compared with the fights between Smith and Walcott. The latter were born of a grudge and were always for blood.

There's reason to believe the same condition exists between Griffith and Rodriguez.

LOUIS SEEKS REFEREE JOB

Joe Louis is among those who have put in a bid to referee the Emile Griffith-Luis Rodriguez world welterweight title fight at Las Vegas Convention Center June 12. Former Harlem Globetrotter basketball star Zach Clayton also has applied for the job according to Nevada boxing official Jim Deskin.

It is considered likely that the third man in the ring will be a Nevadan.

New Liquor Store Opens

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