

# Sugar Ray is a 'Killer' in the Ring

(Cont'd from page 16)

He was what we call 'a natural.'" Jacobs continued.

Leonard is like two different people. Out of the ring, he's sweet, lovely person. In the ring, he's a killer. If he hurts his opponent, he'll finish him real quick. To date, he has shown that it does not matter who is standing in front of him. Suddenly, there's a flurry of combinations coming so quickly that even the slow-motion replay can miss it.

"Ray's the hottest commodity in boxing right now," says promoter Bob Arum.

He has almost singlehandedly established the lighter weight divisions as moneymakers. He pocketed \$1.5 million when he took the WBC welter-weight title last Nov. 30, stopping former champ Wilfred Benitez six seconds from the final bell - the biggest purse ever for a fighter who weighs less than a heavyweight. Benitez took home \$1 million - the second biggest ever.

"The Benitez fight was my toughest," says Leonard. "This guy was a champion at 17, and he hit me with some dynamite shots." Sugar Ray noted, "When a guy tags me with a shot that could scar my face, I get angry. Then-boom! It happens. A change inside of me that I can't explain. I want to make his head go flying off his shoulders. Between rounds I may lose that hate. But it can come back at anytime. And when it does, only the bell can save him."

A crashing drop back to reality followed his rise to Olympian heights. The fairy-tale existence of this triumph became a living nightmare. First, his mother, Getha Leonard, became seriously ill - his father also was sick. Both of his parents had to quit their jobs.

Then Leonard was named in a paternity suit, which became a cause to celebre in the Washington press even though he had never denied being the boy's father and, in fact, had his son's picture pasted to the side of his athletic socks throughout the Olympics. He wore red-white-and-blue tassels and his girlfriend's picture taped to his shoes. His father, Cicero, suffered a near-fatal illness.

"I almost had a nervous breakdown," Ray said in retrospect. "I was catching hell for everything I did

and getting hate mail from as far away as Germany. When things got real bad. I called my old friend, Janks Morton."

It was Morton who introduced Leonard to Maryland attorney Mike Trainer, who, in turn, helped form the corporation that launched Leonard's pro boxing career. Trainer incorporated Leonard. Ray is the sole stockholder and he can deal with everyone on a one-on-one basis and be his own man.

After only three pro fights, Leonard felt sufficiently affluent to buy his family a \$65,000 home. He draws a weekly check of \$475 from his ring earnings. The rest of the money is safely invested in blue-chip securities.

All kinds of people these days try constantly to get a piece of his action. Some want to loan him money or give him bonuses to sign a pro contract while asking from one-third to one-half of his future earnings.

The present momentum is steadily building toward the Sugar Ray Leonard-Robert Duran match-up, which could be one of the biggest financial fights of all time - Ali bouts included. The question still looms, is Leonard truly ready for the hard-hitting Duran. That remains the big question.

That match-up is big enough to have brought together those arch-rivals of boxing promotion, Don King and Bob Arum.

King figures that the arena gross could conceivably bring in \$6-7 million and that with closed circuit television revenue and other ancillary rights, the income to mushroom to \$30 million. For this one, the real smart ones are Leonard and Duran. Both have accepted percentages instead of guarantees for their June 20 title fight.

As of this writing, the location is still not set. The one thing for such, the total money that will be involved and the over-all dynamics of this fistic war could be mind-boggling.

"You have to keep your perspective and sometimes that's hard," Leonard says. "At times I've found my views getting distorted. But I've found my view getting distorted. But I've always believed in myself. If I don't, who will? That's a slogan that

has carried me to majestic heights. I never doubt myself."

In the meantime, Duran's followers are growing to unbelievable proportions. The case in point is the 10,000 Panamanians who will be coming to the fight.

The location still looms problematical. This one will be a monster.

Through it all, sugar-flavored Leonard is ready to pop, snap and glide ... snap, snap, pop ... boom-boom-boom.

## Bonanza School Jazzists

Jazz musicians at placed first in the Novice Bonanza High School Division and the Bonanza evidently knew how to High School Jazz Combo follow the beat of their finished fifth.

Clark County own drummer during recent competition in two schools have been competing in the Reno International Jazz Festival since 1964, according to Music Resource Teacher Fred Steinbaugh.

The bands also brought home superior ratings after competing at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona. Jazz I won first place honors in the large school division and Jazz III took second in their beginning students, category.

Band Director Alan Lewis took his upbeat kids to the Reno International Jazz Festival in which Jazz 1, Bonanza's advanced players, finished second in AAAA Competition and third overall. This is the highest finish for any Las Vegas school in the 19 year history of the festival. Jazz III, the III took second in their beginning students, category.

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