

SPORTS BOARD

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July 16, 1981



MUSTAFA MUHAMMAD — MICHAEL SPINKS TITLE FIGHT AT IMPERIAL PALACE

Muhammad, Muhammad and Spinks — their names have been linked together so often, that they sound like a law firm, instead of the three most formidable light heavyweight fighters in the world. Professional boxing is afflicted with at least a dozen self-styled rating authorities — all of them hopelessly subjective, and often influenced by the Byzantine politics of the sport. It is a remarkable tribute to the ability of Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, Michael Spinks and Matthew Saad Muhammad that ALL of the experts rate them as the top three fighters in the 175 pound class.

On Sat., July 18 at the Imperial Palace hotel, in Las Vegas, Tiffany Promotions and B. Lewis Enterprises will present "The Battle Royal" — a fifteen round fight for the World Boxing Association light heavyweight championship of the world that will play a major roll in naming one man as the undisputed king of the

WBA 175 pound champion, and the last man to defeat WBC champion, Matthew Saad Muhammad, will defend his title against Michael Spinks, the undefeated 1976 Olympic gold medal winner, ranked number one in the world by the WBA and the WBC, and rated as the leading challenger to the two champions by "The Ring," "The N.Y. Post," "KO Magazine" and "Boxing Illustrated." The winner will almost certainly seek an immediate match with Saad Muhammad, to unite the title for the first time since 1974, when Bob Foster retired as the undisputed champion.

Mustafa Muhammad was signed to fight his fellow Muslim, Saad Muhammad, earlier this year in Madison Square Garden. The match fell apart, along with the promotional empire of Harold Smith, much to Eddie's disappointment. Sam Glass, president of Tiffany Promotions and co-sponsor of the ill-

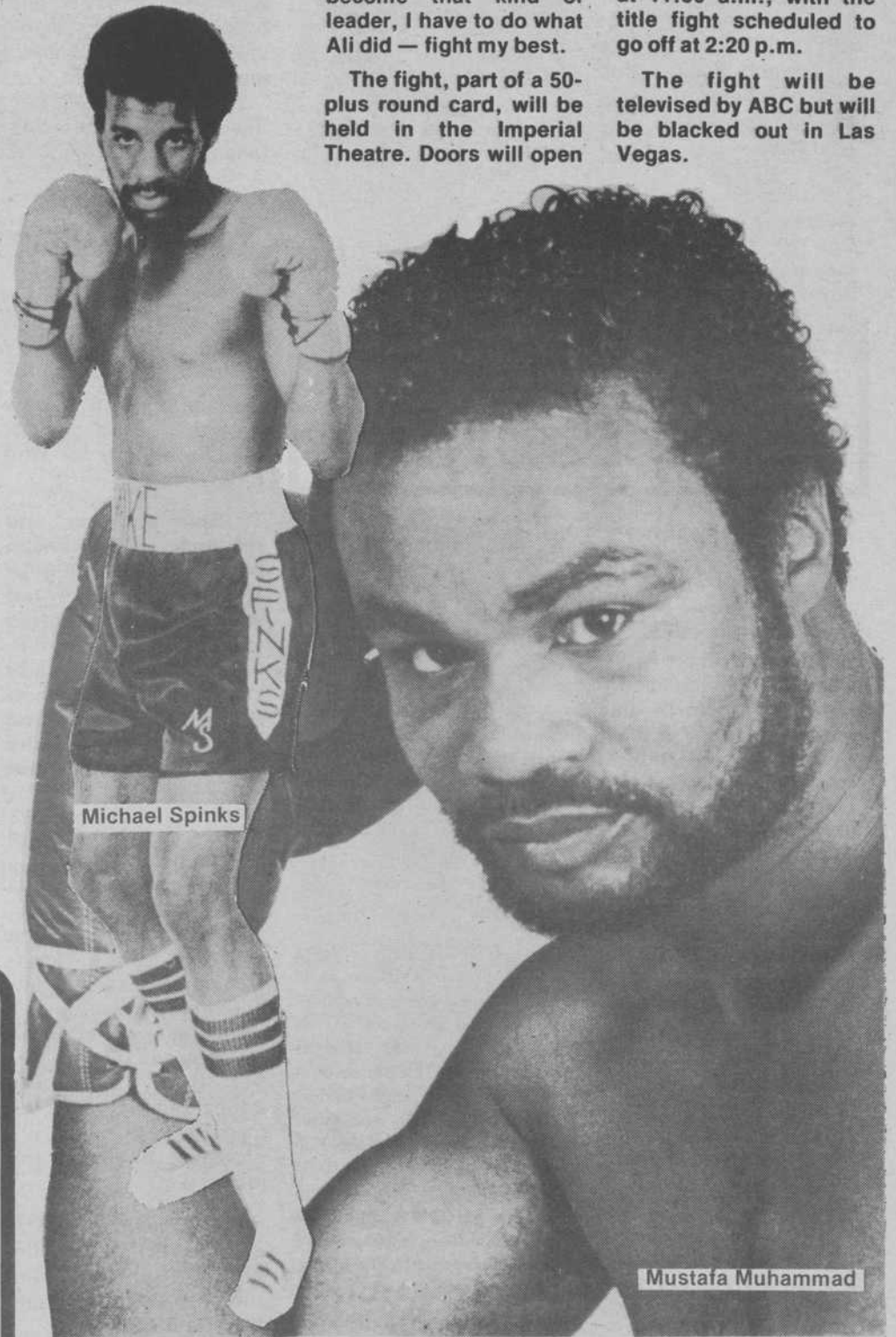
fated extravaganza, struggled desperately but unsuccessfully to save the light heavyweight title bout. Mustafa Muhammad, who was contracted to Smith's MAPS group, was impressed with Glass' effort, and granted him promotional rights to future fights. Eddie gave Glass a simple but different mission; to give him the opportunity to become the first undisputed light heavyweight champion in eight years. "The champion has responsibility to take on all comers," states Mustafa Muhammad. "A true champion always wants to fight the best challenger available. I could make plenty of money defending half of the title against bums. Some so-called champions go on like that for years. I want more. I want to be an example the youth of the world can follow. I want to help them get off the street corners, away from drugs and into themselves — like Ali did. To

become that kind of leader, I have to do what Ali did — fight my best.

The fight, part of a 50-plus round card, will be held in the Imperial Theatre. Doors will open

at 11:30 a.m., with the title fight scheduled to go off at 2:20 p.m.

The fight will be televised by ABC but will be blacked out in Las Vegas.



Michael Spinks

Mustafa Muhammad

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