

# Boxing channel could help interest in sport

By Huel Washington

In the early 1960's when boxing seemed on its way out because of the untimely death of Cuban Benny Paret at the hands of Emile Griffith, a youngster from Louisville got the credit for reviving the sport.

After that rebirth by Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr., now Muhammad Ali, another gentleman from Cleveland, Ohio, Donald "Don" King, became the leader in promoting boxing around the world when he convinced Robert Mobutu, the head of Zaire, to finance a title bout between the former champion, Ali, and then current champ George Foreman in his country in 1974.

The two combatants received \$5 million a piece, the largest purses ever.

King's ingenuity rode that successful venture into Las Vegas, Nevada, where he began promoting bouts at Caesars Palace starting with the historic heavyweight title bout between the World Boxing Champion Ken Norton and challenger Larry Holmes.

Holmes won a 15 round decision and the title and King was on his way promoting at Caesars Palace for a number of years with Julio Cesar Chavez and later heavyweight sensation Mike Tyson.

However, although King was established in Las Vegas as a promoter, he began a sojourn through the area putting on bouts at the Mirage, the Thomas and Mack Arena, the MGM Grand Garden Arena, and the Mandalay Bay Event Center during the next 20 or more years.

Among the other cities where his more than 300 bouts promoted have been held are Madison Square Garden in New York and Atlantic City, New Jersey. He even tried the Houston Astrodome for a title bout, Holmes and Randy Cobb.

With his Don King Productions based in Deerfield Beach, Florida, King is the chief executive of King Pay-Per-View and has a relationship with Home Box Office(HBO).

Now, according the latest news in the boxing profession, he and HBO are not getting along.

So, like the newly founded Tennis Channel and Golf



## SPORTS PACE

By Huel Washington

Channel, Don King, the Hall of Fame promoter, has begun plans for a boxing channel that will feature live bouts, tapes of historic fights, martial arts matches, and also some music, both blues and hip hop.

King is so enthused over this idea he has stated that he will contact such media giants as Rupert Murdoch, the man who owns almost every print outlet in the world, the owners of Cablevision, Charles and James Dolan, in Canada, and the owners of Comcast Cable.

He became most disenchanted with the way HBO handled the publicity leading up to the Felix Trinidad and Ricardo Mayorga bout which Trinidad won by an eighth round knockout several weeks ago.

Also, King was not pleased with the network's lack of promotion of his November 13 bouts after he

had flown the participants to New York to appear during the telecast of the Trinidad-Mayorga fight.

King has said he will honor his contracts with HBO, but according to his director of public relations, Allen Hopper, "Mr. King is pursuing television opportunities beyond HBO." By his track record, his ability to go where others have feared to tread has been phenomenal."

Having acquired his own airplane, King is currently somewhere in the Far East, attempting to demonstrate to the citizens in other parts of the world that all of the things written about him are not always true and they can get it from the "horse's mouth" when they see him in person.

According to reports, initiating a boxing channel will not be a easy task (as witnessed by the difficulties of the Tennis Channel). Boxing matches are more popular due

to the public's desire for extreme sports trends shows.

King has stated that his idea is not a pipe dream, and if he can convince one of the richest men in the world, Murdoch, that this idea can become a reality, he has got one foot in the door for the Boxing Channel.

Murdoch is the primary stockholder in DirectTV and

the person who started Gannett Publications in this country with USATODAY when most of the citizens thought he was way off-base. He knows what difficulties

are in the business world. If anyone can pull it off, Donald King is the man to not only start the Boxing Channel but to promote it also.

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Issued: October 8, 2004  
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Proposals will be accepted at the address specified above on or before 3:00 p.m. November 15, 2004.  
Published: Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice — 10/14/04

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Published: Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice — October 14, 2004



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