

Respecting the fighters first and foremost...

By Daniel Doiron

Not so long ago, the words leading contenders or champion were inseparable. Boxing fans understood who was rated and why. To become a leading contender and then champion meant you beat the man that beat the man that beat the man. The onus of boxing organization is not merely putting together rules, rankings and sanctioning title bouts.

In fairness to boxers that sacrifice tirelessly to get where they are going, the Canadian National Boxing Authority is working diligently to turn back the clock to a time when rankings and titles reflected the actuality in the ring as often as possible. Boxers are people and deserve fair rankings, to be treated with respect and dignity. Allowing boxers with insufficient experience or extensive losing records to challenge for titles with elite boxers is an unsafe practice. If you have earned your way to the top your options should not be shut down by those running organizations without concern for your safety, that throw caution to the wind! In the spirit of fairness, each of us must be cognitive of the inherent risks that fighters take when the bell rings. We all want to be successful – sometimes though, we fail in our goals and that's alright. Sometimes our best doesn't take us where we dreamed of going, that doesn't mean we are less than. Allowing boxers to step into a boxing ring in fights past their prime, or when their skills have faded is a highly dangerous practice. We can't pretend everything is alright when certain boxers are given latitude beyond their capabilities and allowed to fight beyond their prime simply because of their popularity.

Rankings boxers must be a priority – just as surely as signing off on title fights. To do less it to put unfair demands on boxers who often may not be capable of enduring the heat of battle. I applaud boxers, trainers, managers, commission and all organizations that take proactive measures and have clarity on this matter, that will not subject boxers to take punishment from superior fighters. I also believe the majority want safety enforced. It takes courage to stand up behind your principals – to say no sometimes is the toughest words you will ever say, but saying nothing at all can have the most brutal outcomes of all. Coming from a boxing family, having boxed, officiated and as a former promoter promoting boxing was about having meaningful fights where the better fighter won, so matchmaking took time and fighters were often disappointed because they didn't get the big fight or main event. I had to be truthful and understand that each boxer isn't the same – some are great four round fighters while others soar to the top, challenge and defeat seemingly impossible odds. This is what makes boxing what it is!

I remember watching Jerry Quarry, one of the toughest fighters and a prominent heavyweight of his generation who paid the ultimate price for fighting far beyond his best years. This article was written so all of us remain mindful of what can happen when we keep on believing they'll get there if their just given one more chance to prove us wrong. How much more proof will it take before we stop seeing what is most obvious of all?

Not so long ago, the words leading contenders or champion were inseparable. Let us remember that being at the top means you are in high places where the stakes are high – where fighters must decide the outcomes in fairly matched contests because the rankings that got them there in the first place were second to none...

Daniel Doiron – CNBA President