

Ballroom Blitz by: Earl McRae

March 21, 2008

You thought Louis/Schmeling was a spectacle? Ali/Frazier? Hearn/Hagler? Tyson/Holyfield? You ain't seen nuthin' yet. The spectacle of spectacles will be Marcotte/Robinson on Friday, March 28th, at the Westin Hotel ballroom.

Terry "Special Delivery" Marcotte, sports director of CTV.

"Artificial Sweetner" Walter Robinson, Sun columnist, former executive assistant to Mayor Larry O'Brien, former head of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

Three 90-second rounds of fisticuffs, the main event. Five other amateur bouts on the card. The night's purse going to the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation. Tickets by phoning the sponsor of the extravaganza, The Final Round boxing club (613-248-0629), and watching Marcotte and Robinson pound away on each other will be worth the admission: \$1,500 for a table of eight, \$2,200 for a ringside table of eight, \$50 a single ticket.

Both fighters have been in secret training for months, but I corralled one of them, Special Delivery Marcotte, eating breakfast at Moe's World Famous Newport Restaurant.

You'll both be wearing 16-ounce gloves, will this be just a pitty-patty exhibition bout, trying not to do damage?

"I heard Walter would like it to be that, but no, not with me it's not. I'm out to win."

I hope so, because imagine the ignominy you, TV jock guy, losing to some cerebral policy wonk. What do you know about his style?

"He's got a lot of height on me, and his personality, he seems a little more blustier than me. I saw a video tape of one of his training sessions. I studied it frame by frame. He looks like he's been punched a few times in the past. His nose looks like it's been rearranged a few times. He punches in flurries, but he throws like a girl."

Your strategy? He said in his Sun column the other day he's going to beat you and retire from the ring undefeated.

"I'll let him come in trying to punch the hell out of me. I plan to rope-a-dope him and when he gets tired from flailing away at me like a girl, come up through the middle with my left and take him out."

How's your left?

"My trainer and sparring partner is a 20-year-old kid, Scott Whittaker, an amateur boxer, and every time I throw it against him, he counters with a fast right to my head. Every time. Whacks me on the head. My left's slow, but it is getting faster."

Nothing about Artificial Sweetner worries you then?

"He has the reach advantage on me, that worries me a bit."

He's younger, too -- he's 40.

"I'm 50. I think I peaked when I was 25."

Heavy bag

How long have you been training for him?

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“I’ve been in the ring at the Final Round since January. Sparring. The heavy bag. Scott’s teaching me balance, footwork, how to throw punches. But I think he’s getting discouraged with me.”

How so?

“I don’t think he’s seen a whole lot of progress. He says ‘No, no, not true,’ but I think the only thing consistent about me is that I’ve been consistently mediocre.”

All this putting yourself down, sounds to me like you’re just trying to lull Artificial Sweetner Walter Robinson into a false sense of security. When’s the last time you had a fist fight?

“Never in my life. I was always able to talk myself out of fights. Once in hockey a big, tough guy hit me and put me down. But his hands were all bloody from punching my helmet. So maybe you could say I won. Or my helmet.”

Scott Whittaker. With a leak from the Robinson camp. “Walter, as we speak, is sunning himself on the beach in the Dominican Republic and sipping martinis. He’s obviously taking us lightly.”

Girly puncher or not, bad move.