

FIGHTING TALK

WITH
PAT
MYLER



MYLER'S MIX

Burns calls in cleaners to knock out swine flu

SCOT Ricky Burns' gym currently smells more like a hospital ward than the more distinctive odours of leather, sweat and ointment.

The Commonwealth super-featherweight champion, who defends against Belfastman Kevin O'Hara in Glasgow on June 19, is concerned about the increase in cases of swine flu in Scotland.

"It's a worrying time at the moment, so we've had to take these measures. With a crucial title defence and a potential world title fight, I can't afford to let anything happen to me," Burns explained.

"A specialist cleansing team arrives in the morning before training and thoroughly disinfects the gym. In fact, the floor is so clean that I could eat my dinner off it."

Cotto ready for Clottey

MIGUEL COTTO says he won't allow Joshua Clottey, who bids for his WBO welterweight title in New York next Saturday, spoil his plans for massive fights with Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr.

"It doesn't matter what Joshua brings, I'll be ready," said the Puerto Rican. "I never wait for an easy fight, but always train for any rival, and Joshua is no exception."

The fight will be shown live on Sky Sports 2 at 2.0am.

Mosley to meet Manny

SHANE MOSLEY is willing to stake his WBA welterweight title on a big-money fight with Manny Pacquiao, even if he has to come in three pounds under the division's weight limit to suit his rival.

"I'll meet him half-way so we can make the fight," said Mosley. "I think I can make the weight and still feel comfortable."

Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, said they were prepared to face Mosley if the latter would agree to weigh in at 142 pounds, but Shane has set his limit at two pounds above that.

Woods gets second shot

SHEFFIELD veteran Clinton Woods will get a chance to regain the IBF light-heavyweight title when he meets American Tavoris Cloud for the title vacated by Chad Dawson.

Clinton held the IBF title from 2005 to '08, when he was outpointed by Antonio Tarver in Tampa, Florida. His bout with Cloud is expected to take place in England.

Quote of the week

"The best boxer in the sport today is Floyd Mayweather. He has the mastery of skills, the defence, as well as the bravado - and he has backed it up" - *DUBLINER Darren Sutherland, who took his pro record to 3-0 last weekend.*



GREEN WARRIORS: Barry McGuigan is pictured at the launch of the Fighting Irishmen Exhibition at the Ulster American Folk Park with (l-r) Paul McCloskey, Hugh Russell, Charlie Nash, Jim McCourt, Davy Larmour and John McNally Pic: Darren Kidd/Presseye.com

Big Mac trying to get back on track

DOWN but not out, big Welshman Enzo Maccarinelli says he has put recent setbacks to the back of his mind and is re-focusing on winning one of the world cruiserweight championship belts.

"I've had a miserable 12 months, losing to David Haye and then Oia Afolabi, but I'm determined to get back on track," said the former WBO champion, who has his next ring date at London's O2 Arena on June 27.

He meets Russian Denis Lebedev for the relatively unimportant WBO inter-continental title, but his promoter, Frank Warren, hopes it will lead the way to a world title challenge in the near future.

Big Mac has also landed an acting role in a forthcoming biopic about Welsh boxing legend Howard Winstone.

In the film, *Risen*, he'll play ex-fighter Eddie Avoth, who fought Dubliner 'Young' John McCormack three times in British light-heavyweight title bouts between 1967 and 1970, winning two and losing one.

He'll be joined on screen by other boxing stars including Alan Minter, Steve Robinson and Avoth, who has a cameo role.

TELLING THE TALE OF THE FIGHTING IRISH

IT MIGHT be an unnerving experience for some to be greeted by the outstretched arm of a man who died nearly 200 years ago, but that's the first thing visitors see on entering The Fighting Irishmen exhibition at the Ulster American Folk Park in Omagh, Co Tyrone.

The preserved right arm of Dan Donnelly, famed Irish bare-knuckle champion of bygone times, is just one of a fascinating range of boxing mementoes on display there until the end of November.

It includes a fur-trimmed overcoat that belonged to John L. Sullivan, a jacket worn by Jack Dempsey, robes belonging to John Duddy and Gerry Cooney, and Wayne McCullough's WBC bantamweight title belt.

Barry McGuigan performed the official opening and charmed everyone with his personality and willingness to meet every request for a photo or autograph. This man could give lessons to politicians on how to win friends and influence people!

"The Fighting Irish' is a bit of a cliché, but it's more than that. Boxing is synonymous with the Irish and synonymous with success," the former Clones Cyclone told the large audience. "So many Irish emigrated to America, before and after the Famine, and we were a downtrodden people, with low self-esteem. Boxing gave us self-respect, dignity and made us famous."

Many well-known faces from the world of boxing were in attendance, including Charlie Nash, Hughie Russell, Davy Larmour, John McNally, Jim McCourt and award-winning coach Gerry Storey.

Current star Paul McCloskey, who is due to fight Souleymane M'Baye soon for the European light-welterweight title, marvelled at the sheer grit of those who had made their mark in times past.

"Fighters complain nowadays, but back then you could imagine fighting for a pat on the back and the suggestion that you would get paid next time," said the unbeaten fighter from Dungiven, Co Derry.

Visitors can enjoy film footage of fights involving greats like Jimmy McLarnin, Mike McTigue and Barry McGuigan, or put on a pair of earphones and hear the voice of 'Gentleman Jim' Corbett.

Sailor Tom Sharkey's pocket watch is there, alongside a toy stool he played with as a boy in Dundalk before emigrating to America and lasting 25 bitter rounds with James J Jeffries for the world heavyweight title in 1899.

If some ring historians think Gene Tunney wasn't much of a puncher, they should take note of the deep dents he left in his punch-bag. The great man's well-worn sparring gloves are there, too.

Posters, programmes, photos, prints and

newspapers provide stirring reminders of great names, none more famous than Muhammad Ali, whose ancestry on his mother's side has been traced back to Ennis, Co Clare.

The exhibition is the brainchild of New York businessman and fight fan James J Houlihan, who first put his plans into practice three years ago. He is rightly proud of his achievement.

"There was a similar kind of exhibit done in the Jewish Museum in Philadelphia called 'Sting Like a Maccabee' and a friend of mine suggested we do one on the Irish. It sort of went on from there," said Houlihan.

"We tried to design it along the lines of Irish storytelling and make it interesting to everyone, not just people who are Irish or who are interested in sport.

"Everyone understands the concepts of hard work and perseverance and reward after toil, and that's the story we tell."

► FURTHER information on The Fighting Irishmen exhibition can be obtained from www.nmni.com or by phoning 0044 28 8224 3292.

Pat Myler's book on the life of Dan Donnelly will be published in September, coinciding with the showing of Andrew Gallimore's TV documentary on Donnelly on TG4.