

Philadelphia Promoters Are Crazy to Get Their Bout

Spirited Bidding to Stage the Kilbane-Kid Williams Set-to—Backers of Johnson-Willard Fight Are Wise Men and Will Get the Money Some where—Jim Corbett Off to Australia—His Final Letter.

By James J. Corbett.

NEW YORK, Feb. 27.—(Written especially for The Sunday World).—In that frenzied bidding contest for the Johnny Kilbane-Kid Williams match, Philadelphia promoters have made the well known place. Unfortunately for Gotham fans there is only one big club in existence here, and those back of it are working on a sure-thing system. This they can do, as they have no competition, and evidently nothing to fear in that line as long as the present board of commissioners are permitted to run the show. An arbitrary way as they have recently. And that is the sole reason why other clubs are not getting into the order of things come to the big town. The Madison Square Garden promoters will not guarantee a match after fixed sum any more. Or at least they will not take themselves up in any where there seems to be a possibility of loss to them. If they had some good live competition it would be entirely different. It would be quite unnecessary for matchmakers to bid so high that money would be lost, but the competition would mean that the clubs would have to share their profits with the public, and would have more and better attractions.

Gotham Fans Are Fish.

There is no other city in the world where the crowd will flock to a boxing match as they do in New York. If there is such a place I have missed it. I have traveled during my time I have traveled around a bit. Put on attractive bouts between good men and the prices charged, no matter how high, will not keep the crowds away. New York has hundreds of thousands of transients within her limits. The year around, and among them are men who come here to be amused and are willing to pay a stiff price for the privilege. And what is there in the line that appeals to a red-blooded man more than a boxing contest between boys of recognized skill and reputation?

Philadelphia can bid ten thousand dollars for Kilbane and Williams to box six rounds. But the matchmakers of big Madison Square Garden, with seven million people to draw from, can't even think in figures that high for a ten round bout between the same boys. Is it any wonder that boxing is not flourishing here as it should? Why, a man can see better bouts in almost any medium sized middle western city than in Gotham—and at prices that would make local promoters drop in a faint. I am told that Jim Corbett, the veteran California promoter, is on the look-out for a promising field of operation. They need look no further than New York City, the largest city in the country, the greatest boxing town in the world, and no competition worthy of the name to be had against. Think it over, men, think it over.

If anything should happen to prevent Jack Johnson from climbing into the ring next Saturday afternoon, it would not necessarily mean that the promoters had abandoned all idea of holding the fight. Those of those project, supposed to be Harry Frazee and Lawrence Weber, prominent New York theatrical men, have already dug pretty deep for preliminary funds, such as Johnson's traveling expenses, the cost of altering the race track, and the erection of seats, and a hundred and one other details that run into money. These men have entirely too much invested to draw out now, and should the fight be postponed from the date originally set I look for them to see the thing out later on.

Jim Thinks Different.

While the popular impression appears to be that the promoters are bound to lose money, I believe that it will be the other way about. If the fight is held as scheduled next Saturday. During that week the Texas Cattle Dealers' Convention will be in full swing at El Paso, and that alone would seem to assure a return that would go a long way to paying the prize and other expenses. Seats at \$25 and \$30 each run into big money very fast, and the cattle dealers' body is composed of men not likely to argue over the price of a seat for a world's championship boxing match.

However, if the bout is set back a few weeks, either to give Johnson more time to train, or for any other reason, the receipts will suffer materially, but I look for the promoters to thrash with the deal the same. Only in that event a Willard victory would be their sole hope for gain.

One of the few bouts arranged for the near future in New York that promises to be an interesting affair is the Willie Ritchie-Freddy Welsh match scheduled for Thursday, March 11, at Madison Square Garden.

Ritchie's arrival in town after his long lay-off has injected considerable interest into the local game, and as the ex-champion made himself solid with New York fans by his aggressive style of fighting, when he fought Leach Cross last year, the promoters are assured of one of the biggest houses of the season. Welsh with any other boy than Ritchie, or possibly McFarland, would not draw much money to the Garden just now. Freddy has appeared here so often of late, and his work has so greatly deteriorated that the fans have become very tired of paying from \$2 to \$10 to see him waltz ten rounds—if the mill goes that long—and he will have to be in much better condition than he has shown here in months to keep up the stiff fight. Ritchie is sure to set from the very first rap of the bell.

While Ritchie has not been seen in the ring in public but once since losing the title to Freddy, and therefore may not be at his highest speed, the crowd can depend that he will give them a good run for their money. He is already down near the weight he will have to make for the Welsh match, and will enter the ring a finely trained athlete.

Ritchie's ambition is to get back his title, and as there is little chance to do that from a clever boy like Welsh in a ten-round bout, he is working with the sole idea of making such a showing against the champion in the coming bout that the public will demand that Welsh meet him in a longer one.

Welsh in Some Real Work. And this battle should give us a real line on Welsh. In recent bouts the champion has shown very poorly by comparison with previous efforts, and the experts are of the opinion that the little Welshman has hit the old toogoo for fair. That may or may not be the case. There is no denying that the champion looked pretty bad in his last three bouts, but it is also a well known fact that he had not been taking very good care of himself either. And a few weeks' real work might make an entirely different boy out of him. Welsh has never indulged in dissipation to any extent, and may be pardoned for an occasional transgression now that he has reached his goal he has so long sought. But he should not try to burn the candle on both ends at the same time. Either he should take a vacation from the ring, or he should not try to do himself and the patrons of the sport full justice.

Ritchie, it is claimed, has not had a bout for so long that he will not be in proper shape either. But Ritchie has never given himself over to dissipation of any sort, and leads a model existence. True, constant practice is necessary to perfection, or near-perfection, and while, no doubt, would be better off had he taken on a few opponents during his long stay in the States, he is young, and he is in perfect health, and is far from being foolish. No one realizes more than he just what this match means to him, and that should be sufficient guarantee that he will put up the battle of his life against the man who outpointed him for the title in London last summer.

It is not likely that Ritchie will knock Welsh out in ten rounds. Therefore, the most the American challenger can expect is to earn the popular verdict. If Ritchie, not generally regarded as a scientific boxer, outpoints the champion, the conclusion will be that Welsh has gone back so far that his chances of successfully defending the title over a longer bout would be practically nil. Ritchie may be lucky enough to cross that good right of his to Freddy's jaw, but the latter is a wonderfully clever defensive fighter, and against so strong and hard hitting an opponent as Ritchie, is sure to make the battle a defensive one. As no referee's decision will be rendered, it will matter little to Welsh whether the newspaper verdict is for or against him.

This is the last of the series of articles Mr. Corbett has been contributing regularly to the sporting page of The Sunday World. By the time this article appears in print the former heavyweight champion will have well started on his voyage across the Pacific to fill an engagement in the leading vaudeville theatres of Australia.

Mr. Corbett has requested the sporting editor of The Sunday World to announce that he hopes to resume the series of interesting and timely boxing stories upon his return to this country next year.

Why Not Recognize Feds?

Why not recognize the Federal League? Is the sensational title of an article in the March issue of the Baseball Magazine. The article itself is too long to quote, but the arguments used are at least plausible. The author says that expansion is bound to come every few years in baseball, and that this expansion must be of the strictly major league variety. Minor league cities grow to major league size, and cities that can support one club grow to a size that could support two. Some suggest that Chicago and New York could support three or more clubs.

The article claims that the coming of the American League baseball and that normal expansion would equally benefit baseball today. The establishment of a third major league, it is argued, would not cut into the business of the present majors, but in the long run would increase that business just as the American League increased the business of the National. The claim is made for the Federal League that it has successfully passed thru the wildest or experimental stage, that its leaders are men of integrity and ability as well as financial backing, and measure up to major league standard in every way, that they have fought fair considering the difficulties in their way, and have proved game, a quality admired by all Americans. The only obstacle in the way of granting them major league rating, so the article states, is the argument that there are not enough major league players for three leagues. This argument was used in the days of the American League expansion and exploded by that league. With the enormous increase in professional players, the enforced cutting down of the roster of all major league clubs, and other sources of supply, the article claims that enough players would be unearthed and developed in the course of a year or two to put three major leagues on a sound playing basis.

Even if organized baseball wanted to continue a losing fight, it could do so by recognizing the Federal League. Injury by recognizing them, as it would mean that they were free from any further raids on its players.

THE BASEBALL SPECTRE



POKER by DRURY UNDERWOOD

WHILE on the twin topics of gambling and fish, Fred Lennox relates that he had a good deal at one stage of the game in New York by the activities of the police department's handbook squad. Some of them were severely discouraged by being pinched frequently, but a few of the faithful, including Lennox, stuck to the tip sheet and would lead them to obscure spots where they might get their bets down on the races.

In the fortuitous of this pillar to post chance-taking, one layer of odds gave out in information that there was a fish market over in Brooklyn with a telephone in the cellar and a bank roll for all the wise boys to shoot at. The outward appearance of the place carried out the idea and the significance of the sign above the door. Passersby could see all kinds of fish inside, but no great activity in trade. As Lennox entered he saw an old handbook man in overalls and jumpers behind the counter. Lennox knew him to be an outside man, but for the commercial world he was a sure enough fish salesman. There he stood with a fish about two feet long which he was scaling in a workmanlike way. An old woman looking the stock over said to the salesman:

"What is the price of shad?"

"I don't know," said the salesman. "I will have to wait for the second betting."

THE superstitions of gamblers are as numerous and ill-founded as the fallacies of any other division. Still, one of them comes true every now and then to keep a gambler. An odd one is to the effect that a gambler becomes lucky just before he is going to die.

Josh Biglow knew all the games, on the track and off, and was a splendid card player. He was particularly proficient at casino, which he was a layman. As a Dorcas society ring to it, but which brings out a great memory played two-handed.

Six months before Josh died he sat in for a dollar a side and won twelve games in a row—from no mean foe, neither. This seemed to be a hunch, and he played casino every day for a week, losing only rarely. At last he slipped his cards and said:

"Boys, I'm going to die."

They tried to laugh him out of the notion, but he was stubbornly fatalistic.

"No," he went on, "I shall cash before long, but in the meantime I'm going to try to roll up a little coin for my children. I'll play casino until I pass, for that is the fall of the cards."

When Biglow's estate was proved it was found to consist entirely of money in the bank, \$3,700 in casino currency, a committee from the fraternity called on the widow to discuss the funeral arrangements and two were deputized to make them final. They suggested as a floral monument, a broken column surmounted by a cross.

"Put two of them there," said the relict of Biglow. "I've often heard Josh speak about that sort of thing."

CHARLEY (MARK) MATTHEWS, long identified with billiards, used to work for George Hankins as a bartender when Hankins had his gambling house at 111 Clark street. Gardfield Park track was open then and the landlord took a keen interest in the track and in some of the horses.

One day when Matthews was behind the bar Hankins said:

"Charley, a filly is going to start in the 2-year-old race today that can't be beat. Go and bet anything you can on her; beg, borrow, or steal. She is a kind if there ever was one."

"At that time," relates the marker, "we used to keep a thousand or two on hand for possible use as cash bull bonds. I took a thousand and bet it on the filly at 4 to 5. She won all right and I was all smiles when the landlord took that night. I can see from the look of you that you took my hunch," said Hankins. "How much did you win?" When I told him

Johnny Regan, Bantam Would Fight Them All

Los Angeles Boxer, Now Recovering from Injury, Goes Far Out of His Class.

NEW YORK, Feb. 27.—Written in many of the chapters of the pugilistic history are names of boxers who, although they never held any championship titles, will be remembered for their feats long after some champions have faded from the memories of the fickle fans. Among them were Kid Carter, "Kid" McCoy, Tom Sharkey, Aurelio Herrera and others who might be mentioned. Such a man is Johnny Regan, of Los Angeles, one of the toughest, cleverest, gamiest bantamweights who ever drew on a glove.

Johnny Regan might well be termed "the handicap king of the ring." Not since the days of Joe Walcott, the old giant-killer, has there ever been a fighter who scoffed at the scale of weights with such care-free abandon as Regan. When bantamweights were available he fought them. If they were not, then the featherweights, lightweights and, on occasion, welterweights, were welcome.

Regan was in the game for what he could get out of it, and he barred none if money were to be had. He rarely met a man of his own weight, and it is a matter of record that Johnny Coulon, the champion, and "Kid" Williams, then an aspirant for championship honors, refused to fight him.

Cub Machine Had Comedian

"The famous old Cub machine had a comedian in the person of Ed Reulbach, the lanky pitcher. One of his favorite expressions when in a facetious mood was, 'I have a scheme.' Johnny Evers writes that he will never forget one of Ed's schemes. 'The Cub' were in Pittsburgh one day, and it was Reulbach's turn to work," says Johnny. "He warmed up for the customary ten minutes before the game and seemed to have a lot of stuff on the ball, as soon as he stepped into the box however, he lost it all. 'He walked the first five batters that faced him. After two runs had been forced in, one could stand it no longer. He walked over to Reulbach and said: 'What's the matter with you? Can't you lay the ball on the plate?' If you can't get out of the game."

"I have a scheme," replied Reulbach. "I haven't warmed up enough. Tell you what to do, Frank. Ask Umpire O'Day to call the game for ten minutes while I go behind the stand and warm up some more."



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