Griffith Retains Crown; Low Blow Causes Uproar

LAS VEGAS (AP) — World welterweight champion Emile Griffith hung onto his title Saturday night after a tumultuous ninth round in which he scored a technical knockout over Jorge Fernandez of Argentina on a low blow that left the crowd in the Las Vegas Convention Centre in an uproar.

The champion from New York was awarded the fight when the challenger decided he could not continue after a blow to the groin felled him.

In what had been a bruising and close fight, Griffith was ahead on points at the end of the eighth round.

Griffith caught Fernandez with a savage right that was officially labelled low. It apparently hit him on the protective cup.

CRUMPLED IN AGONY

Fernandez crumpled quickly to the mat and rolled over in obvious agony. Referee Harry Krouse hesitated.

The fallen fighter was completely alone on the mat as manager Frankie Jacobs, and chief handler Chickie Ferrara, rushed to the side of the ring to argue with the chairman of the Nevada Boxing Commission, Jim Deskin.

Deskin had to pull out his rule book and thumb through the chapters as the crowd kept up an uproar and Fernandez remained prostrate.

On the advice of the commission physician, Dr. Donald Romeo, and under the rules, rules, Fernandez was given five minutes to recover.

WHISPERS DEFEAT

Additional time would have been given but the 27-year-old Fernandez himself weakly said he was unable to continue.

Under the Nevada regulations, when a fight is ended by an accidental punch of this sort, the fighter ahead on points receives the victory.

After eight rounds, the referee had Griffith ahead by three points. Judge John Romero had it even and the other judge, Bill Stremmel, had the champion in front by three points.

Many minutes passed before Fernandez was helped out of the ring.

It was Deskin who finally instructed the referee on the proper procedure and also told the ring announcer, Dick Porter, of the exact announcement to be made. The official time of the knockout was one minute, 34 seconds of the ninth.

This was the third fight between the two and the third time the match wound up in a rhubarb.

EMILE GRIFFITH

In 1960, they fought twice and Griffith was awarded decisions in both 10-round fights. Fernandez complained the split decision was unfair in the first fight and oddly enough, it was a low blow by Fernandez in the second fight that decided the verdict in favor of Griffith. The blow cost Fernandez a final round that could have meant victory had it not been ruled foul.

This was the second defence of the title by Griffith since he regained the championship in his tragic and fatal knockout over Benny (Kid) Paret in New York last March. Paret died from the effects of the punishment he suffered.

In his dressing room Saturday night, Griffith said of the controversial ending:

"I hit him a clean right hand to the stomach. I don't think Fernandez wanted to win the title very bad."

GROIN BRUISED

When the trainers removed Fernandez' trunks, they saw an ugly red welt in the area of the groin. Fernandez was writhing in pain on the table.

Deskin said later that examination did show a red bruise or welt at Fernandez' groin where the bottom of the protective cup fits.

Deskin also noted the rules of boxing in Nevada say "should any contestant fall or refuse to resume boxing when the gong sounds . . . the referee shall award a TKO decision to his opponent . . ."

Another rule says: "No contestant may be awarded a contest on a claim of a low blow foul."

Griffith, upset, said he did not want to win a fight "this way."

Co-manager Gil Clancy fumed and said Fernandez feigned the injury and put on an act—"the greatest since Barrymore."

Fernandez said:

"I wanted to keep him busy until I could pour it on in the last seven rounds. I would have chased him out of the ring."

Griffith was guaranteed $40,000 and Fernandez $12,500.

U.S. Cagers Swamp Canuck Team 69-38

MANILA (AP) — Canada's Lethbridge Nationals were given a 69-38 trouncing by the unbeaten United States basketball team Saturday night and forced into second place in the Philippine invitational tournament.

The Americans took over first place from Canada although each team has won four games. Canada suffered its first loss while the U.S. has no defeats so far in the seven-country competition.

In another game Saturday night, Puerto Rico crushed Australia 72-55, handing the Australians their fifth loss without a victory. Rafael Valle scored 17 points to lead the Puerto Rican team to its third triumph against one defeat.

Canada's coach Bob Hamilton said the United States team "played a very good defensive game" and blamed the loss by the Nationals on "inexperience."

APPEAR OFF FORM

The Nationals, who were behind 30-15 at halftime, appeared off form during the game.

The Canadians were "inexperienced" compared with the American team, said Hamilton, who played senior basketball in Lethbridge in the early 1950s and returned from Eugene, Ore. in 1959 to coach the club.

"We lost the ball 37 times and you can't win a game that way," he added.

SPORT ECHOES

By Norman Macdonald
Summerside Bureau of The Guardian

Impressive Record

The Prince County Combines have an impressive record so far this season and some of the "experts" are starting to pick them for top spot. It would take a superior brand of clairvoyance to arrive at this decision so early this season, which is speaking well for league balance, but the Combines have been showing some of the qualities that go to make up champions, particularly last Friday night. When they were down 3-0 to the Royals at the end of the first period, we hadn't quite given up hope. If those Combine cogs start to mesh, we thought, they can still win. But when the Royals scored the goal that made it 4-1 half way through the second period, our mental manager threw in the towel.

Even if the Combines start to click, we figured, any edge they might have on Sandy's buckaroos will not be big enough to overcome a three-goal lead with half the game over. Stu McLure arrived about that time to strengthen the Royals forces — and our prediction. But the Combines were full of that modern elixir — "go-go-go" — including Hook Walsh who, waiving the weighing-in ceremony, jumped from the Bontam to the Heavyweight division with a couple of well-directed uppercuts.

A lady in Montreal who is closely connected to two famous hockey personalities, was asked recently in an interview to name an all-star team. She picked Gordie Howe for right-wing, who she called "the best ever". Who was the lady. Why, none other than Mrs. "Boom-Boom" Geoffrion, wife of Montreal's great right winger, and daughter of the late and great Howie Morenz. Now if she picks Tommy Ambrose as the best Canadian male television singer, she's really heading for a green Christmas.

No Info On Groom

We had a phone call the other evening from a sports fan who wanted to know why no information was ever given out in the local papers about how Alfred Groom fared in the pole vault at the British Empire Games. The deep shroud of silence did seem a bit peculiar. Groom must have had a poor day, which can and often does happen to the best athletes. Harry Jerome was a big disappointment, but we have picked up hardly a paper in the last week that didn't have the name "Jerome" in at least one headline.

Of course the western sprinter had a thigh injury, but without obvious injury, an athlete's muscles sometimes refuse to give him perfect co-ordination on a certain day. A Toronto paper had Groom tied with four other vaulters for seventh position, and the recorded height could have been a misprint, for it had 13 feet (even) whereas the sixth 14 feet. Surely one of those five vaulters would have come in somewhere along that 12 inch void.

Makes Successful Defence

Jim Dwyer hangs on tenaciously to his all-star bowling championship. After wresting the crown from Earl Smith, he has defended it successfully against Harold Magg, Ed Dale, and Len Gallant. Len gave him the biggest scare, only nine pins separating the two bowlers when the last ball had been rolled. Next Saturday a lady named Scotty Gledenning will move in to do battle with Dwyer, and we shall find out if the female is really deadlier than the male. If Scotty wins, she should be called "the pin-down gal of Crest Lanes".

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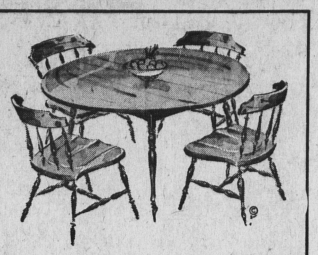

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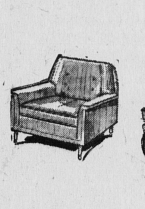

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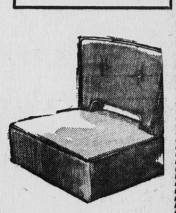

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