

SPORTS

Does Freeman Barr deserve recognition as world champ?

Boxing Commission's challenge of authentication

This question, I pose today. Does Freeman Barr deserve to be recognized as an authentic world champion?

For years now, a little over four decades, Elisha Obed has been widely recognized as the one true Bahamian world boxing champion. He accomplished what great national pugilists such as Yama Bahama and Gomeo Brennan before him, never did.

On that fateful night of November 11, 1975, when Obed annihilated the tough Spaniard Miguel

Barr defeated "Downtown" Jerry Brown on points over 12 rounds to become the International Boxing Organization (IBO) world middleweight champion. Now, to be frank, the IBO is down on the list of "most accepted" world boxing bodies. Considered on top is the WBC, followed by the WBA, then the World Boxing Organization (WBO) and the International Boxing Federation (IBF). The IBO, to most of boxing's people, falls directly under those four.

SPORTS SCOPE

By Fred Sturupp



"On that fateful night of November 11, 1975, when Obed annihilated the tough Spaniard Miguel de Oliveira to capture what was then known as the World Boxing Council Junior Middleweight (now also called the WBC Super Welterweight Crown), he made glorifying history for The Bahamas. Obed hit his peek at the right time. Boxing worldwide had evolved into various international organizations. The WBC in fact came out the World Boxing Association, the one accepted world body that previously verified champions. For more detailed history, the WBA mushroomed out of the National Boxing Association (an adjustment that made it more global)."

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Actually, Obed and the top boxers of his generation, were afforded an additional avenue of championship opportunity that was not available for Bahama or Brennan when they were at their best in the ring. Brennan did get a shot at a world title, but by then, he was an old fighter whose body had grown into a light heavyweight. He just did not have enough against the much taller Vicente Rondon.

Bahama, despite his brilliance, and being one of the prime time performers in the high profile Madison Square Garden when televised boxing was huge, never got a world title shot although he was top-10 ranked as a middleweight for an appreciable period of time.

Now, we come to Freeman Barr.

The current Bahamas Boxing Commission is mandated to establish a true history of boxing in the country. The full registration of boxers present and from the past is advocated, to finally package the authentic history of all of the divisions, the champions, the international campaigners, those who won regional titles and of course, world titles.

So, yes, we must address the Freeman Barr case.

On September 20, 1997,

However the IBO does pack credentials from the names of gallant warriors who relished being a title holder at one time or the other.

I listed them in a previous column and do so once again: Thomas Hearns, Wladimir Klitschko, Roy Jones Jr., Floyd Mayweather Jr., Manny Pacquiao, Pinklon Thomas, Bernard Hopkins, Antonio Carver and Chad Dawson. They are noted members of the international boxing family and they verify the status of the IBO, in my view.

And so it is, for the Bahamas Boxing Commission, as it goes about the difficult chore of regulating the boxing history in the country, to make the official determination regarding Barr.

Will he be anointed and given the same status as Obed?

Is he deserving of such?

Barr accounted himself very well in the ring. He finished with a 29-4-0 record, was voted into the Florida Boxing Hall of Fame, as was Obed before him. Barr is an inductee, also, in the Bahamas National Sports Hall of Fame.

He is a future member of the Bahamas Boxing Commission's Hall of Fame.

His attitude has been magnificent, with not a trace of controversy during a distinguished career.

He's been one of the good sporting ambassadors to come down the line giving representation to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, in locations around the world.

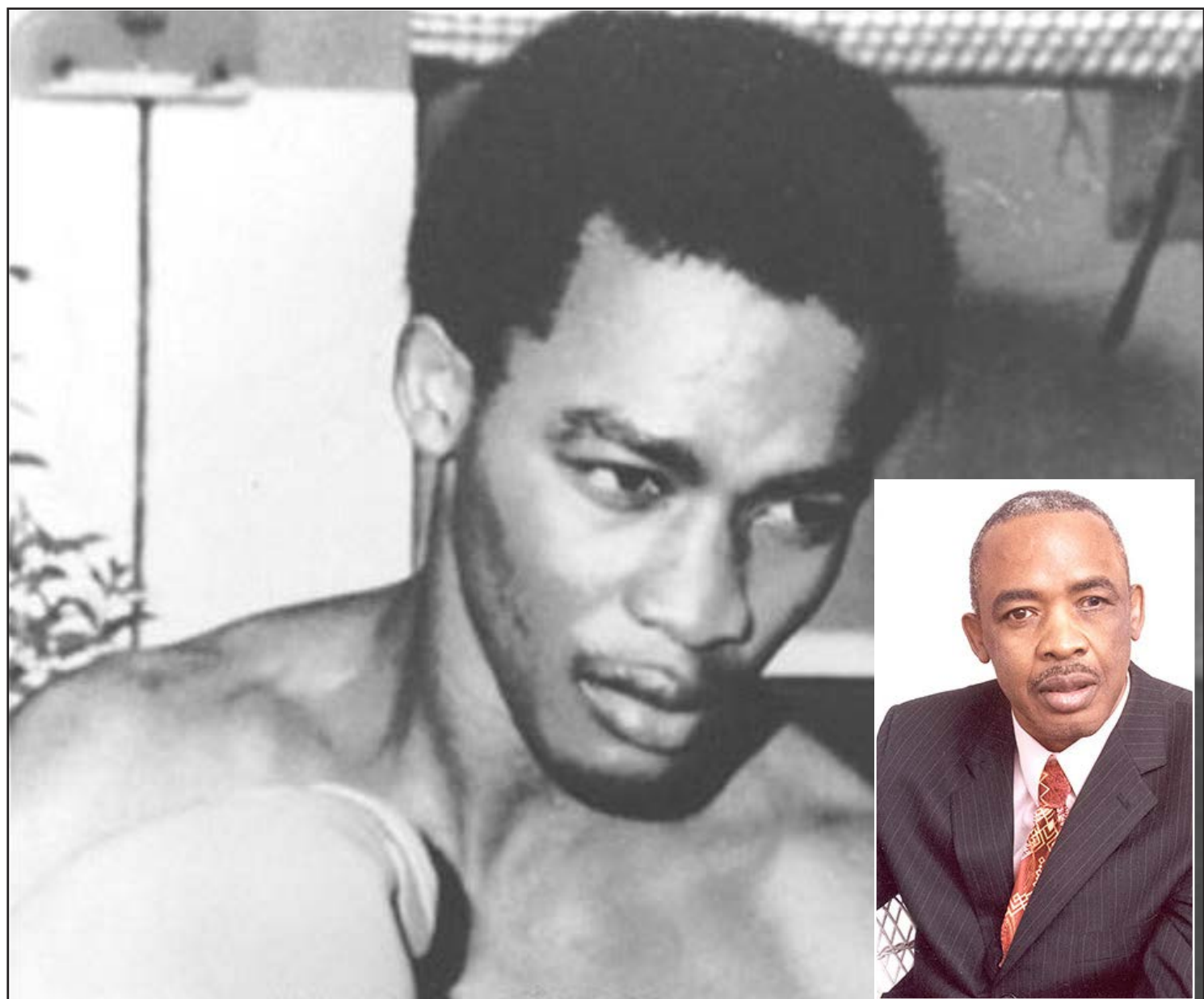
He was the IBO world middleweight champion.

Certainly, more is to come about this Androsian son of the soil.

• To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturupp at sturupp1504@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at 727-6363.



FREEMAN BARR – He finished an excellent career at 29-4-0 and captured the IBO Middleweight Title in 1997.



ELISHA OBED – He was 90-21-4 for his career and won WBC Junior Middleweight Championship in 1975.