



(Times photo by Ray Clayton)

EX-BOXING JUDGE Dick Cotter of Narragansett reminiscing about some past and present boxing greats.

Says boxing enthusiast Dick Cotter

At 80, he's game for Ali

By JOHN JOHNSON

Dick Cotter of Narragansett would love a shot at aging Muhammad Ali and the World Heavyweight Boxing Championship. Of course, Ali's punch has lost some of its sting and Cotter is a little rusty too; its been 55 years since he's laced on a pair of boxing gloves but he's still game.

"For \$12 million I'd let Ali kick the hell out of me," said Cotter, who is 80 years old, in an interview Monday. "For that much money he could cut me up and I wouldn't care."

Cotter started his brief boxing career about 60 years ago at Manny Almeida's Gym in the Fox Point section of Provi-

dence, where he stepped into the ring a couple times a week. At 123 pounds Cotter didn't last long though.

"I learned young that most of those guys were trying to punch the hell out of me," stated the gray-haired Cotter. "It's tough on the eyes and face, so I gave it up."

Still in love with boxing but no longer interested in the contact aspect of the sport Cotter became a fight judge. While working for the Armour Meat Packing Company of Providence in 1927, Cotter began judging fights at the Rhode Island Auditorium for \$10 a night.

During his 30 years at the auditorium Cotter judged the likes of undefeated World

Heavyweight Champion Rocky Marciano at the start of his career and Sugar Ray Robinson at the decline of his.

"Marciano, now he could take a fighter out with one punch," declared Cotter while adjusting his hearing aid. "He could hit as hard as anyone I've ever seen. He was a great champion," added the personable Mettataxet resident.

"But the best fighter I ever saw was Robinson," said Cotter, who has resided in Narragansett for the past 30 years. "He was the only fighter I ever saw that could do everything well."

As a judge Cotter controlled one-third of the final decision of

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a fight with another judge and referee responsible for the other two-thirds. According to Cotter all ballots were kept secret until the announcement of the winner at the end of the fight.

"Every person who attends a fight sees something differently so it is easy to have arguments," he said. "You write down what you think you saw during the fight. At the end you use what you have upstairs to declare a winner and that's all."

Cotter feels that modern day fighters have become lazy and overpaid. He said they don't train as hard as the Marciano's and Robinson's of his day.

"Fighters nowadays don't want to keep in shape or do the work that is necessary for a championship," remarked Cotter. "They want the big money but they don't want to work for it."

According to Cotter, who is a Navy veteran, Ali and Roberto Duran are the best boxers in the world today although he says George Foreman could have "licked the world" at one time.

"In his prime nobody could

lick Ali but the trouble with someone like him is that his legs are going so he's not able to get out of the way anymore," said Cotter. "I think he would be crazy to give up \$12 million and retire. For \$12 million, even I would fight."

After retiring from Armour in 1957, Cotter worked for the Narragansett School Department as a bus driver and custodian for six years. Now in between "fiddling, doodling and dabbling around the yard" Cotter plans on taking it easy.

"How you feel is what is important, not how old you are," state Cotter with a twinkle in his blue eyes. "I feel 39-years-old and that's what's important to me."

Cotter will celebrate his 81st birthday this week.