

Embarcadero Card a Building Block

LOCAL PROMOTER **Peter Howes** knows he can't reverse nearly 40 years of boxing neglect in one night. Much as he'd like to bring world championship boxing back to San Francisco, that's not going to happen right away. So for his May 22 card at Pier 32, he'll settle for putting together what he hopes will be appealing fights, then try to build from there.

Unranked heavyweights **Robert Davis** (25-1, 16 KOs) and **Terrence Lewis** (29-8, 20 KOs) will clash in the main event of a six-bout card Howes is calling "On the Waterfront." ESPN2 will televise the event, which also will include a super-middle-weight bout between former world champion **Lupe Aquino** and undefeated prospect **Anthony Hanshaw**.

Howes also has lined up a women's fight and bouts featuring local boxers such as San Jose super-middleweight **Ricardo Cortez** and San Francisco bantamweight **Enn Fairtex**.

It's not exactly **Dick Tiger** wresting the middleweight title from **Gene Fullmer** at Candlestick Park in October 1962 — the last world championship bout San Francisco has hosted — but it does mark the return of boxing to the city.

"Obviously we're not in a position to have

Lennox Lewis. We've got **Terrence Lewis**," Howes cracked. "We're not in a position to bring in **Mike Tyson** or **Oscar De La Hoya** right now. Maybe in the future, if get enough people to support boxing here. We're headed in that direction."

Howes has booked the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium for July 27 as he continues his efforts to revive the long-defunct local boxing scene.

If nothing else, he has caught the attention of some well-heeled fans, as three of the first four rows for next month's card — at \$300-\$350 — already are sold out. Other tickets, ranging from \$25-\$200, are available at City Box Office (415-392-4400). The card starts at 5 p.m.

Howes originally planned to sign light-heavyweight contender **Julio Gonzalez**, coming off a riveting victory over **Julian Letterlough**, for his main event. But the exciting Southern California fighter is in line to face undisputed champion **Roy Jones Jr.** at the Los Angeles Staples Center on July 28, so that alternative fell through.

Former heavyweight champion **Tim Witherspoon**, on the comeback trail at 43, was another possibility.

"Names are good to have," Howes said, "but my primary focus is to deliver an exciting event complemented by exceptional matchups."

WHO WILL EAT CROW?: Longtime IBF champion **Bernard Hopkins** believes he belongs at the top of any list that ranks the world's best fighters pound-for-pound. In the ranking of the best fighters word-for-word, his superiority is indisputable.

Hopkins has used every term in the book to denigrate WBC title-holder **Keith Holmes**, his opponent tonight in the first bout of the tournament that will unify the middleweight crown for the first time since **Marvin Hagler** owned all three championships in 1987. **Felix Trinidad** meets WBC champ **William Joppy** on May 12, and the winners will face each other Sept. 15, all at Madison Square Garden.

Besides calling Holmes a bum and saying he's going to serve the vegetarian Holmes "his last meal," Hopkins has questioned his opponent's toughness and vowed to punish him for calling him a dirty fighter.

"I don't want to leave anything to the judges," Hopkins said, "so I'm going to insult Holmes' dog, his turtle and his fish so that he won't run from me."

Replied Holmes, a heavy underdog despite his record of 35-2 with 23 KOs: "I'm expecting him to fight dirty. You can't teach an old dog new tricks. He will never knock me out. I'm tricky, I'm slick and I'm a southpaw."

The fight will be shown live by HBO starting at 7 p.m. PDT, along with the rebroadcast of **Marco Antonio Barrera's** victory over **Prince Naseem Hamed** last Saturday.

ON BOXING

Jorge L. Ortiz