

Marvin Ladson:

Fighter Dreams Of "Big Pay Day"

By M.A. Pharr

Thirty-two years of age is still considered a little young to talk about exiting a career. But it your a boxer it makes perfectly good sense. Marvin Louis Ladson, 32, has been to the pinnacle of his boxing career, and like others in their chosen profession he wishes he had done things somewhat differently.

Television and the "big money" purses the Tysons', Douglas' and Leonard's collect has shown the glamour of the boxing world, but the majority of the boxing would never get to see a championship shot or the huge purse. Most are like Marvin Ladson. Ladson, unlike many of his peers, is brash and determined enough to hold an eight hour per day job, spend time with his family and train within his craft enough so that when that "big money" fight comes... he'll be ready.

The 5'8", 147 lbs., junior welterweight, is first and foremost a husband and a provider. "My wife (Patricia) and I have three children Louis (10), Marvin (14), and Elisia (7)," said Ladson. The West Forsyth graduate is a realist when it comes to the profession. "If a title fight comes that's okay. But what I want is a big pay day," said Ladson. "My goal is to catch up on some bills and get my mother out of the projects. I would like to make a down payment on a home for her," he added.

Ladson reflected on his 38 wins and eight defeats in a respectable career. "I've been fighting since I was eight years old," said Ladson. "My sister, Laura Ladson, talked me into going to The Gladiators

(boxing club). That day I took in on one of the toughest fighters in my weight class. I knocked him out and I've been boxing since," Ladson adds.

Ladson has videotaped various fights, and he will have plenty of good memories about his career when it ends. Ladson fought in the nationals during the Sugar Ray Leonard amateur era. He also fought Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini. "Boom Boom Mancini is the only fighter to ever really knock me out," said Ladson. "Oh sure, I've been knocked down and dazed, but Mancini gave me a little something to remember him by," he added.

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Ladson

Ladson is the former Southeastern Title holder. In 1986 he beat Jimmy Hearn. "He was 10-0 at the time and I knocked him out," stated Ladson. Ladson lost the title to Vincent Petway. "Petway lost the title to Victor Davis not so long ago," adds Ladson.

Ladson credits his trainers, Anke Lowery (son) and Whit Lowery (father) for helping to point his career towards his dream of a large purse. For many years Ladson was handled by "Big Tom" Lawrence. Lawrence, who died last year, did what he thought was right for Ladson's career. Now that Ladson's older he

wishes he'd had more input. "Big Tom" put me in the ring with guys far more experienced than I was. I was just a baby, and a few of those fights were against contenders ranked as high as number four. It hurt my confidence and career," said Ladson.

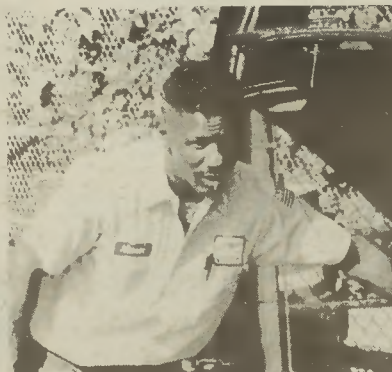
One fight that lingers in Ladson's mind was his match with cross-town rival, Ken Hardee. "Hardee beat me here in Winston-Salem for the N.C. Championship in 1987. People thought I was not in shape, but I thought the officiating was bad," said Ladson. "Hardee and I are good friends now; and it would be hard to fight him again. But if the money was right we would have to fight," he added.

While Ladson strives to be his best he seemingly surrounds himself with positive people who genuinely care about him. "It's tough working a nine-to-five and remain strong enough to train, but it's something I have to do. You have to be mentally tough to say 'no' to some of the things you come in contact with," said Ladson. "My true friends inspire me, especially around time for a fight. You'd better get some rest, you should eat this, etc..." he added. Ladson also has a lot of support from his co-workers at Modern Chevrolet. "My boss, Mr. Odell Cleary inspires me along with some of the other sale people on staff," said Ladson.

At the end of the interview Ladson looks me square in the eyes and states, "That big pay day is coming." As I walk past Mr. Odell Cleary's office a voice sounds off, "You're not going to jinx him are you." I respond, "Hopefully I'll help him win."



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