



– THE CHAMPION OF INTEGRITY –

IBO WORLD TITLE DOUBLE HEADER IN DUBLIN

BY JARED PARRY

A historic night awaits Dublin's 3Arena on May 20th as Katie Taylor gets her more than deserved fight in her homeland against undisputed super lightweight champion Chantelle Cameron.

The deep green IBO belt will be a prominent fixture in the return of boxing to the capital of the tri-color nation, as Cameron defends the title in the main event against Dublin's hero, whilst Kildare's Dennis Hogan makes the first defense of his IBO super welterweight title against Liverpool's James Metcalf.

Since the IBO's formation in 1988, six fighters from Ireland have lifted the prestigious world title. John Lowey became Ireland's first IBO world champion, travelling into Chicago in 1995 and stopping Juan Camero to pick up the vacant Super Bantamweight title, making Lowey the inaugural IBO Super Bantamweight champion.

Five years later, Damean Kelly became Ireland's second IBO World champion. Kelly unseated South African Zolili Mbityi to become the holder of the belt at Flyweight, Kelly defended the belt once, and that came against Paulino Villalobos by a unanimous decision. In 2004, Kelly became a two-weight IBO World champion, picking up a unanimous decision victory over Jason Booth to become the Super Flyweight champion.

In 2001, Brian Magee picked up the Super Middleweight IBO World title. Magee produced a first-round knockout of Ramon Arturo Britez to become champion and went on to defend the belt seven times, before eventually being unseated as champion at the hands of Robin Reid.

Ireland would have to wait just under 18 years for their next IBO champion, then three came within a month. Anthony Cacace became Ireland's first IBO World champion since 2004, producing a fine display on September 24th, 2022 to dethrone the Italian Michael Magnesi as the Super Featherweight champion. Two weeks later, Dennis Hogan became the Super Welterweight champion on October 8th, wrestling the belt away from Sam Eggington. Then, on October 22nd, Pdraig McCrory travelled into Leon Bunn's backyard and stop the German in round seven to collect the Light Heavyweight world champion.

An IBO title has never been defended in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland has once played host to an IBO Inter-Continental title fight as Ian McLeod got a seventh-round TKO over Patrick Gallagher at the Ulster Hall in Belfast back in April 1998.

Hogan will be the first person to defend an IBO World title in Ireland and will be looking to steal the show in his first time fighting in his home country. Based in Queensland, Australia, 'The Hurricane' gets his opportunity to fight in Ireland in his 37th contest.

Standing across the ring from 'The Hurricane,' Metcalf will be looking to turn his hot run of form into a world

title run. With his father, James Patrick 'Shea' Neary who boxed between 1992 – 2000 carrying on his father's legacy as an Irishman who also embraced being a Scouser as he moved from Ireland to Liverpool during the 1940s, Metcalf continues the family legacy, known as 'Kid Shamrock.' Metcalf will embrace the Irish family roots as he looks to capture the IBO title in his 26th contest.

Metcalf looks to become the second IBO champion hailing from Liverpool, and stand proudly alongside fellow Liverpoolian, IBO Featherweight champion James Dickens and proudly hold the deep green belt, but it won't be easy as Hogan will look to hold onto the belt he worked so hard to claim.

The main event is a fight that has captured the imagination of the world. Cameron became the undisputed super lightweight champion in her last fight against Jessica McCaskill in November, which saw her also become a two-weight IBO world champion, having picked up the lightweight title back in 2017 in just her fifth professional bout.

Now preparing for her 18th bout, 'Il Capo' will embrace walking into enemy territory as she looks to defend her belts in what will be a cacophony of noise in the Irish capital.

In her 22-fight professional career, Taylor has never actually held an IBO title despite winning every other world title belt in the lightweight division. Her first opportunity to pick up the deep green belt comes at super light in the form of Cameron, who will be looking to spoil Taylor's homecoming party and retain the gold.

The card also features a clash between two former IBO world champions, as Terri Harper takes on Cecilia Braekhus.

Harper picked up the IBO World Super Featherweight title back in 2019 and defended it four times, before current champion, Alycia Baumgardner ended the reign in 2021. However, Harper bounced back to become a two-weight IBO champion, stepping up to Super Welterweight to unseat Hannah Rankin as champion in 2022.

Braekhus is widely regarded as one of the greatest female fighters in boxing. Having only lost twice in 39 contests, 'The First Lady' looks to get back into title contention. In 2016, Braekhus picked up the IBO Welterweight title with a victory over Chris Namus. Braekhus defended the belt eight times before being handed her first career defeat by now-champion, Jessica McCaskill.

Harper and Braekhus both proudly held the IBO belt and the winner of their clash in Dublin can potentially set their sights on current Super Welterweight champion, Femke Hermans.

A massive night of boxing will unfold from Dublin's 3Arena on March 20th, and the IBO title will be defended in honor in a historic event.

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