

1975

Ali, Bugner Fight Tonight In Malaysia

By H. D. S. Greenway
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KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, June 29—Muhammad Ali makes the third defense of the heavyweight championship he won from George Foreman last Oct. 30 when he meets Joe Bugner Tuesday morning in a scheduled 15-round fight.

The 33-year-old Ali, whose record is 47-2-0, is a solid 3-1 favorite to retain his title against the 25-year-old Bugner, whose record is 51-6-2.

The match, which will start at 9:30 a.m. in Malaysia, can be seen in the U.S. on closed-circuit television (at Capital Centre) starting at 10 p.m. Monday night. There will be no radio or home television broadcasts in the U.S. of the fight.

It will be preceded by two fights originating from New York's Madison Square Garden: At 8:15 World Boxing Association light-heavyweight champion Victor Galindez meets Jorge Ahumada; and then middleweight champion Carlos Monzon faces Tony Licata. Both fights are also scheduled for 15 rounds.

Ali has said that his tactic against the British challenger will be to "discourage him in the first round and stay right on him. As soon as the bell rings I'm going to go right on him."

Today Ali told his fans that he had a "surprise planned for the first round. I have an attack—something I am going to do that I have never done before." Ali said he was not predicting a first-round knockout, but he did not rule it out either. He advised fans to get to the fight early.

Bugner took a little walk today and did some light gym work to "shake the moths out." This is in marked contrast to Ali, who still runs and trains furiously. Ali suggested today that Bugner had never pushed his body hard enough—had not felt enough pain.

Fans who paid \$2 to see Ali's next-to-last workout got their money's worth. The champ had just been telling the fans how he would like to retire after his upcoming fight with Bugner, rather than fight former champion Joe Frazier in the fall, when in walked Frazier—fresh from the United States.

Frazier, dressed in a white shirt, red, white and blue suspenders and a shirt across which blue balloons hid among red clouds, begged Ali not to retire before he had a crack at him. "I want you like a hog needs slop," Frazier told Ali.

Frazier said he was going to take his equipment to ringside to "jump in and give you a hand" should Ali run into trouble. "I don't want nothing to happen to you before I get a hold of you," Frazier said.

Ali jumped out of the ring and flung himself onto Frazier's entourage in mock fury while the gymnasium rocked with laughter. It was a vintage Ali.

Earlier, however, Ali put on an even more impressive performance in the ring—sparring three rounds with Jimmy Ellis. The sparring was fast and hard with Ali snorting as he threw fast jabs and rights which almost knocked Ellis down twice. Ali looked fit and quick and if his waist seems a bit thicker than in years past, well, perhaps as his trainer Angelo Dundee said, "it's middle-age spread."

Although Ali means no harm, his remarks about fighting for Islam have embarrassed the government here and frightened the police. Malaysia has its own racial problems between Muslim Malays and Chinese which, in 1969, resulted in bloody rioting in downtown Kuala Lumpur. Officials fear that the more unsophisticated Muslim Malays might riot if Ali should lose and extra security precautions are being taken the day of the fight. Some nervous Malaysians have even stock-piled food.

Ali said he would make his formal announcement on whether or not he would retire after the Bugner fight "half an hour before I go into the ring." But today he spoke of retirement longingly. He asked why he should go on fighting when he had millions in the bank, a pretty wife, pretty children and a "16-room English mansion" with two or three Rolls Royces in the garage.

Ali said he liked to think of himself as the "retired champion, briefcase in hand, going to lecture at Yale University."

"Ain't that nice?" he asked.





Associated Press

Challenger Joe Bugner takes a break in the ring while preparing for title fight with Muhammad Ali.

