



The young heavyweight is sleepy-eyed, good-natured—out of the ring.

Up From Hell's Kitchen

A tough New York kid is boxing's new "white hope"

By JACK GUENTHER

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Hell's Kitchen is a tough, shabby neighborhood on New York's West Side. From there to Madison Square Garden, center of the boxing world, is only a few blocks; but it's a long distance if you have to fight your way. Johnny Colan made it in three years.

Out of the Slums

Colan, born John Joseph Colaianni, is just 20 years old—a hard, handsome boy of Italian parentage with thick, strong legs and a powerful wallop in either fist.

Johnny used to earn nickels shining shoes. The five Colaiannis lived in four tenement rooms with only two windows. The place was alive with rats. "There was never enough food for us, let alone the rats," Johnny remembers.

Today, Johnny has moved his family out of Hell's Kitchen forever. With the money he has made as a fighter, he has installed them in a new six-room house in suburban Queens. He has found jobs

for his two brothers, placed his ailing father in a sanitarium and relieved his mother of the need to take in washing. For the first time in their lives, the Colaiannis have food in the cupboard and money in the bank.

This dramatic change—climaxed this year when Johnny got \$5,000 for knocking out Jimmy Webb in just five minutes—was no accident but the product of a painstaking campaign. It involved rigid training, special exercises to develop an adequate physique and careful matchmaking.

They Planned It All

Not even Gene Tunney, who squeezed rubber balls by the hour to develop his wrists, ever worked harder than Johnny Colan. And no handlers ever did better with unpromising ring material than Colan's tutors (opposite page)—Al Ramo, another Italian American, and Paul Damski, a Lithuanian-born refugee from Hitler.



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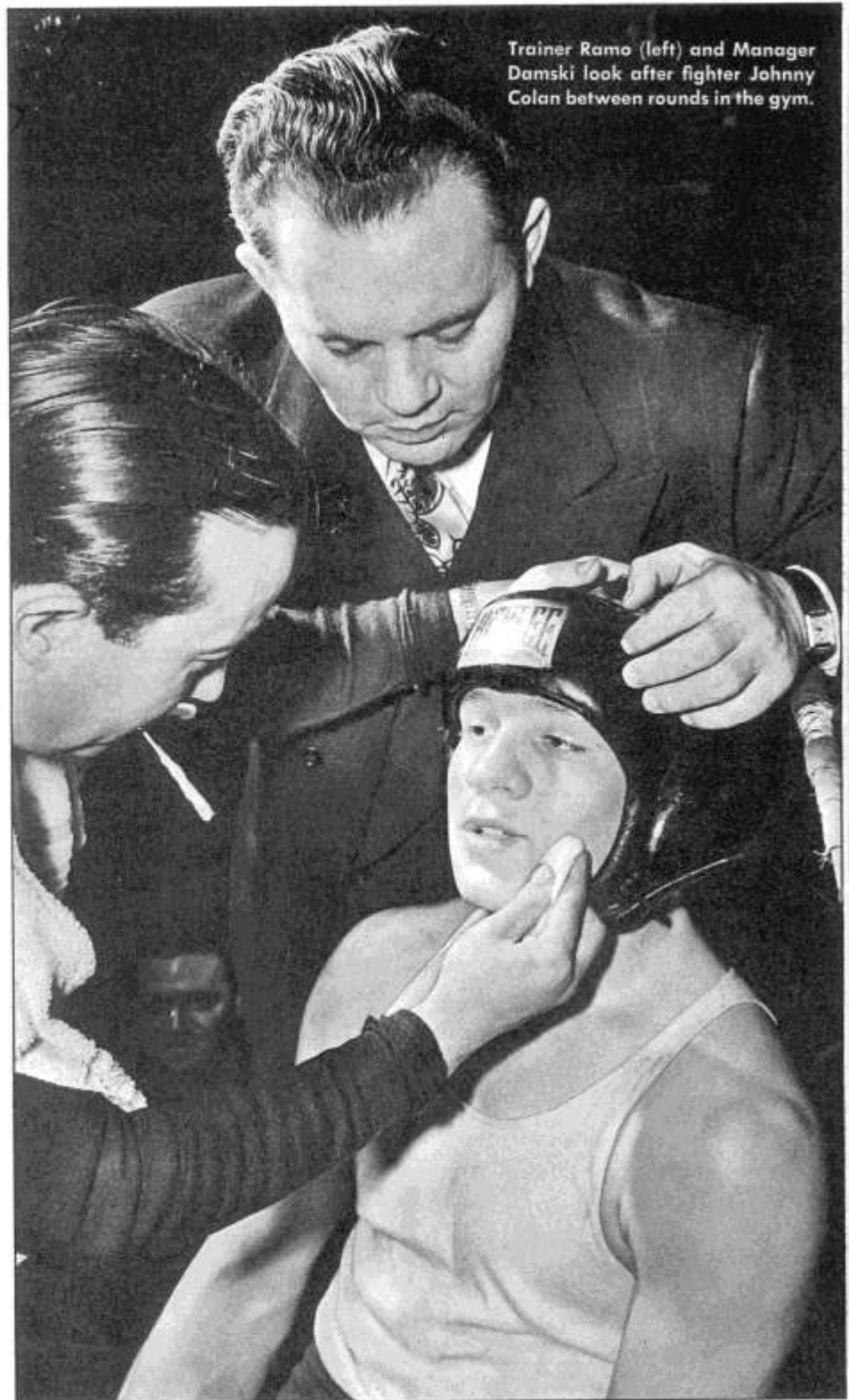


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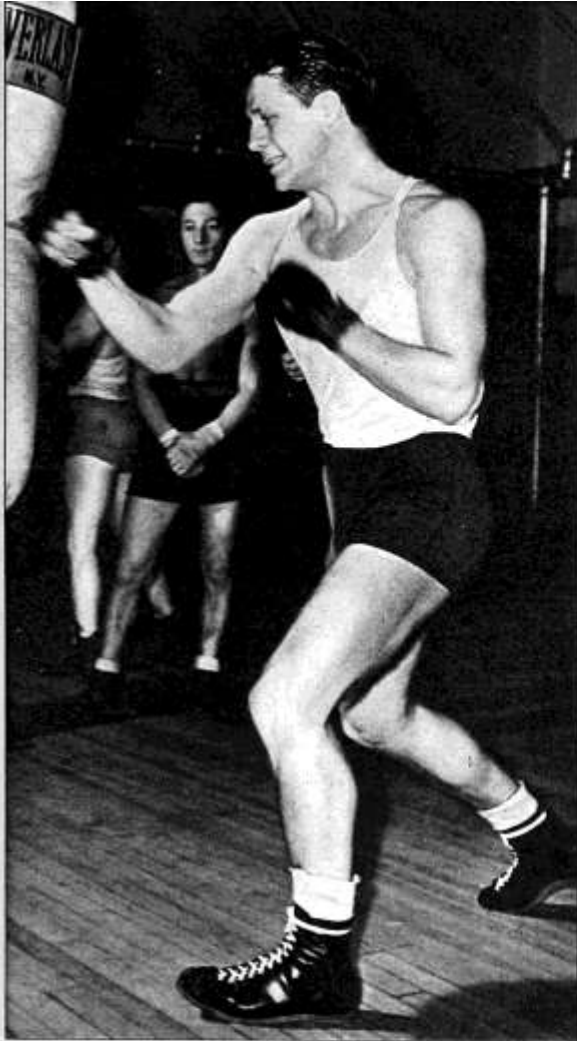


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WILDROOT



Trainer Ramo (left) and Manager Damski look after fighter Johnny Colan between rounds in the gym.



THE "KILLER INSTINCT" in Johnny Colan sets fight fans crazy. He knocked Jimmy Webb down five times; four times the referee had to drag the aroused Colan away from Webb and, as the rules direct, push him into a neutral corner.

desperately needed the \$65 he was to be paid that night.

Today, Johnny weighs 178 and has lost little of his old speed and foot. He has a neck like a bull. He is a rugged battler who glories in bodily contact and is noted for the fury with which he attacks.

Savagery in the Ring

Once, just before a bout, he heard his opponent, Ernie Vigh, call him a "punk kid." He goaded Vigh throughout that fight and gave Ernie a deliberately prolonged beating before knocking him out.

Johnny has a strict schedule laid down by Ramo and Damski. He gets up at 6, does an hour's road work, goes back to bed. About 10, he has breakfast and takes the subway to Stillman's Gym for a two-hour workout. After lunch (a

glass of orange juice), he visits his Hell's Kitchen pals, takes in a movie (he sees them all) or goes to a ball game. At 5 p. m., he dines at Carmen's Restaurant on 39th Street, on steaks, chops or (if he's not in training) spaghetti—his favorite dish.

Young Colan is a swing-music fan and has bought three radios and a phonograph. But he has no big interest outside of fighting. He doesn't smoke and drinks only a little ale. He occasionally takes a girl to a movie or dance palace—if those alert guardians, Ramo and Damski, say it's O.K.

Johnny is still unregistered in the draft. He'll fight Gus Lesnevich for the light-heavyweight championship this summer.

Joe Louis? "In a year or two," says Johnny. "I'll knock him out with lots of left hands."

END

"My wife's given me a new job for the duration!"



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