

SANSTÖL AGAINST BROWN IN OSLO

Behind the scenes

By John W. Wiksén

It was in the hard thirties, when finding a job was like finding gold in the Klondyke. This probably has little interest today, where you can dabble in offers through many pages of Aftenposten.

But I have to mention it because boxing back then was one of those places where you could scrape together a bit of coin for daily operations.

We had it like this: "The guys on the corner" met early in the morning and went in a group up to Aftenposten, and looked through what was available. Divided the squad into the various available jobs and met again at the Employment Office.

It happened that one or the other went outside the "clique", started early in the morning to sort of get the inside scoop on any available jobs given in Aftenposten. Such comrades were frowned upon for a long time, and had to find themselves being left out if the "clique" somehow managed to get hold of grits and had a "celebratory" gathering.

Like the others, I gained good experience: turned up for an available job - preferably a showboy, handyman and so on - never a real job. When you arrived, you had a long face. Without exaggerating, the queue was approximately 100 meters long. A couple of times I managed to get through to "interrogation". I had previously been a display boy in a colonial store up in Theresegaten, had been a helper on a car at Norsk Frugtcompagnie af 1898 - as well as a couple of years at sea. This "at sea" immediately settled the matter.

- Sailor? Not of interest.

We had to meet at the Labor Office where we got food tickets for Sct. Halvard in Pilestredet. Preferably soup and meat sausages. On the days it was porridge, we sold the tickets and instead went to Bygdøy and bathed. Without food.

But then something happened. As a member of the Oslo Atletklubb, where our great boxers, Otto von Porat, Peter Sanstøl and Haakon Hansen had worn their childhood shoes, I was also well regarded in the Norwegian Sports Confederation. The matter was that the Norwegian Sports Confederation was then based on the second floor of the Sports House in Pilestredet.

This union was not of today's size. You entered a rather long and large office where the now deceased Gunnar Hansen ruled. He was in fact alpha and omega in what moved the association. In a smaller office inside, sat the boss himself, Helge Løvland – the man who captured 10-match gold in Antwerp. I saw little of him, but I suppose he had something to say when the big decisions had to be made.

However, the day-to-day manager was Gunnar Hansen. He was also a member of Oslo Atletklubb. The man who supported us OAK boys as far as he could. Invited us for coffee/sandwiches for lunch in the cafe around the corner. Occasionally at dinner in Pilen Restaurant. In short, he did his best to ensure that we were comfortable outside of training and matches.

The only thing he couldn't do was get us a job, although he often tried.

Enough of that, I came up one day - saw coffee/sandwiches on the horizon.

- Pit has come home, said Hansen.

- So what?

- Need a sparring partner, and I have recommended you.

Pit was Peter Sanstøl who was home visiting. Figured in the top tier among the world's bantamweight boxers, approximately 53.5 kilos.

It was the hardest lesson of my life.

After carrying 10 to 15 kilo bags on my back every single day from Therese-gaten to Rådhus-gaten plus other hotels in the city, I had eased boxes of jam and cucumbers from Sct. Olav's street around the whole city. On the side, I had worked like hell myself for 10 kroner a month plus one øre from every barrel extracted from whales down in the Arctic Ocean. Fought a number of matches around Norway and, among other things, got beaten by Henry Tiller in the Norwegian championship up in the Sportshallen at Kampen.

It's funny that the Sports Hall should be located at KAMPEN. Because there it was what a fight for "føa".

In my case, 24 amateurs started for the NM title in lightweight, approximately 61 kilos. I met an Ålesunder in the first round. Fight for life in the first round. Johansen from Ålesund lost his trousers in the second round, which caused me to gain a psychological advantage.

Met Henry Tiller in the quarterfinals.

- I'll take the blue corner, I said to Henry.

- No, I'll take the blue, answered this trusting young trønder.

He got the blue, and I a crack in my confidence.

It didn't last long. Had seen Henry in the preliminary fights and found he was open to a left hook.

Quite correct.

He was open enough.

Battle the country.

The next thing I heard was the judge's six - seven - eight - - I can't be bothered to get up, I thought and took it easy.

And that was it - as far as the NM in 1931 was concerned.

Met Henry many years later in the form of professional boxing in Trondheim.

- Why didn't you get up - I saw you weren't done? he asked.

- There was something that I did not understand, and when I sat there on the podium, I thought simply that here I sit - and it will be nice to get out of it.

It all boils down to the struggle to live, training and words, never money, never anything proper place to live - in short: Nerves got the better of me.

It was the tram home from Kampen.

In front of me sat a tall, hinged guy.

- But isn't that you, Rolf?

- Yes, in good health.

- Were you in the Sports hall?

- Yes, I fought to the best of my ability, but it didn't work. Went out in the first round.

- Yes, then you meet a mate, because I did too. But this with boxing is ugly stuff - what do you think?

- Never again. It's the devil himself.

And it must be certain.

In those days we usually walked from Majorstuen up to Frognerseteren. That is, we who should keep us in shape and entertain a bloodthirsty audience.

The following Sunday we walked the route.

Back then, boxers were at the top in Norway next to footballers. It was something like today's youth who flock to musicians and singers.

I heard it on the way up towards Frognerseteren.

One was really nasty.

- If I were you, I would buy knee pads. If I didn't know better, I'd think you were Catholic from the way you knelt.

There was nothing to be done about it.

Traveled to Skien and Sandefjord and other places to correct the reputation and at the same time bring in some grit.

It went excellently. In fact, there were only victories.

That is probably why Gunnar Hansen from the Norwegian Sports Confederation invited him to spar with Sanstøl.

Peter Sanstøl from Moi who had now become Pete Sanstol.

This Sanstøl turned my life upside down.

In boxing as in life.

I shall soon forget the entrance.

- Sparring partner? There is no such thing as that - here we will try to find out about each other. You can give me something, and I can give you something. Don't try to imitate me,

because I am me, and what suits me may not suit you. If you can find something with me that suits you, take it, but remember that I can't teach you boxing.

I am Sanstøl - my boxing, my life - I have found out. For me, the lark cheering high in the sky is as much an inspiration as any article in a newspaper. We will train together, eat together, discuss together - but never forget that I cannot teach you how to box. You have to find out for yourself.

If I figured it out?

I pretty much had to.

It started at six in the morning. In the Castle Park. With running and gymnastics.

Breakfast at eight o'clock. The juice of an orange and a schonrok with a little butter. Rest until twelve o'clock. New running and gymnastics in Slottsparken. Dinner: egg omelette with orange juice. Six o'clock: Punching ball and hard gymnastics before we went into the ring - where I got beaten for three rounds.

Every eternal day.

It lasted a couple of months - got in really good shape.

It was the sign of a new championship in Bergen.

The King's Cup went to featherweight, approximately 57 kilos. As scrappy as it was, I weighed approximately 60 kilos.

- Go for the King's Cup in Bergen, said Sanstøl. - Whoever wants, he can.

This is absolutely correct - when it came to Sanstøl.

I saw him - or rather joined him - in Mandal, where we fought a display in three lively rounds. He didn't eat before we left - not during our stay in Mandal - and only a day later did he take food in the form of an omelette.

Now you would think that the man was completely "out", but on the contrary: He was as game live. Actually in the best vigor.

Our faith in him grew tremendously.

We didn't eat, and we didn't drink.

Came to Bergen more dead than alive and was beaten by a light-legged Bergen while we were standing in the ring, and I asked him to come and fight. Which of course he didn't do, and I myself was so listless that I couldn't move my legs more than absolutely necessary.

In other words: What suited Sanstøl did not suit me.

It took me three months to get back to my natural weight - after cream and trancures.

Met a Filipino at Bislett whose weight was 67 kilos - healthy and fine.

But as Sanstøl said: - You didn't believe - first of all you have to believe. Had you believed, then you would have had the King's Cup.

Plain and simple for Sanstøl. But he was something out of the ordinary. Studied and practiced yoga. Lived as an ascetic and did not visit a doctor.

On the other hand, he was regularly visited by Marcello Haugen, known as the "psychic" man, who checked that the body was in order.

As I have never seen the equivalent of a "doctor's examination" either before or since, it may be appropriate to describe it.

Marcello Haugen looked impressive when he quietly hung up his outerwear. Took a quick overview of the apartment in Wergelandsveien 5, before setting eyes on Sanstøl.

- Undress and lie on your stomach on the sofa.

Sanstøl then did, while I followed the development with wide eyes. With his 53 kilos, Sanstøl was a pure dwarf against Haugen. He therefore almost disappeared when Haugen climbed onto the boxer's back – lying on his knees while he "looked" over the body below him from head to toes. Knocked a little here and there. "Looked" once more over the whole thing, after which the examination was done.

- You're fine. There are no signs of weakness.

Whereupon he just as quietly collected his coat and disappeared.

You can take it as you like, but the fact is that I worked with Sanstøl for several years and never saw him sick or indisposed. It was more than wonderful all the time that his food was so light that one almost had to believe that the body did not need food at all. Even more amazing was that he was always alive and in the best of spirits.

But as he said: - You have to believe in yourself - believe firmly that you can win the whole world.

Or as he also stated: - My name is Peter – Peter means the cliff – on that cliff I build.

His goal, of course, was to win the World Cup.

Unfortunately, it was the Negro Al Brown from Panama who ruled the world bantamweight boxers, and this Brown was something for himself.

With his approximately 53 kilos, he measured 1.75 m on the stocking. So unnaturally high for such a low weight. Next came the long arms - the reach was a full 1.86 m - i.e. from fingertip to fingertip. One would think that these long arms were used to keep an opponent at a distance, but they were wrong. He allowed his opponent to enter the so-called half distance, after which he unleashed something between a hook and an uppercut. This blow had sent practically all of the world's best bantamweight boxers to the floor. One of the few who stood the rounds, and who was even awarded the victory by one of the judges, was Sanstøl.

It happened in Montreal in 1931.

Brown was best in the first eight rounds, and Sanstøl in the last seven.

Sanstøl thus did not reach his goal, but he promised himself no rest until he did get Brown into the ring for another match.

But Brown had also learned from the meeting in Montreal.

- No more Sanstøl for me, please.

But like everyone else, Brown eventually had to capitulate to age. Not only age, but also a rather "sweet life" in Paris, caused him to lose his title to the Spaniard Sangchili in Valencia. A decision that was otherwise more than questionable, but not to be overlooked.

After losing the title, Brown became more "willing to work".

Here at home, another meeting between Sanstøl and Brown had become a bit demanding.

One fellow who forged while the iron was hot was Oscar Olsen. In his time, a skating sprinter of rank, and one of those who gave the Finn Thunberg enough to think about. At this time he was the publisher and owner of the sports newspaper "Sportsmanden", and was known as an extremely smart and rough fellow. Olsen contacted Brown, and got his signature on a contract for a meeting with Sanstøl in Oslo.

Sanstøl, on the other hand, was in Montreal, where he prepared for a 12-round fight against the new wonder in the bantamweight class, namely Sixto Escobar from Puerto Rico. A match which, with victory, would mean another chance at the world championship, with the winner facing Lou Salica in a match for the vacant title.

Sanstøl therefore received the message about Olsen's maneuver calmly.

- Oscar Olsen is a smart guy - so smart that he should be in America - of course I would like to meet Brown in Oslo, but if I win over Escobar, a World Cup match is of greater interest.

But Sanstøl lost on points.

Age had left its mark on him too. Thus Oscar Olsen began the big game.

- Sanstøl does not dare to meet Brown, but I will smoke him out of the den. I offer him NOK 5,000 and everything free in exchange for him meeting Brown in Oslo, and that all profits go to the Olympic Committee.

Sanstøl could not stand for that.

First, he realized that he had passed the height of his career. Second, he knew that Brown was also on the rope. Thirdly, he finally got an opportunity to meet Brown again, and fourthly, it was a prestigious affair for the Norwegian boxing public, as well as a fairly good financial contract.

In short: Sanstøl was born in Oslo.

Now it must be mentioned that during his previous visit to Norway, Sanstøl came into contact with other interested parties to build a sports hall in Oslo. The site was behind Majorstuhuset towards Sørkedalsveien, where there are now blocks of flats.

I do not know the details of the agreement, but according to Sanstøl, his part was to build up a training institute in the basement of Majorstuhuset. An institute with all possible comfort, which at the same time would act as changing rooms for actors in the planned sports hall. Underground passages would then lead from the hall down to the institute.

The basement in Majorstuhuset was really built and equipped with two rings, mirrors on the walls, punching balls as sandbags, lovely sanitary conditions and offices.

All in all, the best that existed in Norway at the time.

The place was called the "Sanstøl Institute", where he invited everyone from small boys to tired businessmen to exercise or teach them the details of The Noble Art of Selfdefence.

The plan seemed brilliant.

Representatives from the business community arrived at 4pm and motioned afterwards best ability. Many crossed paths with Sanstøl and were probably satisfied.

Later came the small boys' class, the middle boys' class and finally the boys in the "teenage" age.

It was packed every single evening.

Sanstøl was the alpha and omega for a long time. Immensely popular, friendly and careful, while at the same time he had this wonderful ability to make anyone believe they were almost World Cup candidates. Presumably Sanstøl had calculated the whole thing as a financial investment to pay off when his active career was over.

I don't know what happened, but suddenly his hard training for new matches began.

As usual, I had to go through hard rounds until he said: - I'm going to Sweden to meet an Englishman in a warm-up match. From there to Germany for a couple of fights, and all going well, I'll continue to Montreal for a fight against Sixto Escobar.

You can take care of the institute until I return.

There were two matches in Gothenburg. Englishman Joey Carr was knocked out in the first round. The German bantam champion went out in the seventh round.

In Berlin, the German featherweight champion, Hans Schiller, was given a round which caused the German trade newspaper "Box Sport" to write: "Over the years we have seen very good boxing, but the match of the experience the Norwegian Sanstøl gave us last night, has we haven't seen the match. Our featherweight champion and a considerably heavier man, got a lesson in boxing that he won't soon forget. It is said that Sanstøl will meet our lightweight champion. We hope it will not be serious, because we are afraid that the little artist from Norway will make a clean slate among our boxing guard".

Thus, the Escobar fight was on its way.

Which for Sanstøl was a loss on points.

It was a match that left its mark on Sanstøl. Firstly, he injured an ankle in the seventh round, so that his smooth work in the ring was hampered. Secondly, Escobar managed to damage one eye so badly that he arrived in Oslo with a black patch over it.

The training was immediately added to the ring at the back of the main house at Bislett.

The black patch was gone, but I remember well that the eye was quite red. I also immediately realized that this with the ankle was not a "scam".

In all the hundreds of rounds we had sparred together, I had never managed to land a really good shot. Which was not so remarkable, because our best boxers such as Haakon Lind among the amateurs and Harald Hansen among the professionals, could not get anything done either.

For us boxing fans - and there were many of them at the time - Sanstøl's display in the Sports Hall will never be forgotten. The arena, which normally accommodated 3,800 spectators, was completely blown up. Between the rows of benches sat people - even women who had no idea what boxing was - but everyone as one was going to see him there "Adonis" in the ring.

The one who suffered the worst was Haakon Lind.

This plug of a hard lightweight, who was considered one of Europe's best in his class.

Sanstøl let him stand about two feet from him and said: - Try if you can hit me!

Lind let the fireworks go off, but was unable to hit the champion, who stood impossibly still - only moving his head or body as the blows came.

The audience rejoiced greatly.

But Haakon Lind never forgave Sanstøl for that performance.

Back to this first practice session before the game against Brown.

Usually there were close to 1,000 spectators gathered around the pile behind Bislett.

The entrance fee was 50 øre. Considering the eye, ankle and travel fatigue on this first official training day, it was good that for the first time I was able to place a direct right cross. That the fight "took", there was no doubt, but like the driven and seasoned boxer he was, he let it all go for a few seconds before calling it quits.

On the way home it came: - I got a stitch in the head - and thank you for that. It won't happen again.

Neither did it.

We fought every day at Bislett. Sanstøl in the morning. Brown in the afternoon. The 50-somethings poured in. The spectators and the press were probably satisfied with what they saw. What they *didn't* get to see was the afternoon training that took place in the Sanstøl institute, where Sanstøl prepared to avoid those famous hook-uppercuts from the Negro. And at the same time where he emphasized getting into the body, where he let the blows rain down on the most vital parts.

It was a treatment we will not soon forget.

The treatment at Bislett in the official training was pure baby food against The "fight" that took place in the afternoon.

In all the rounds that had been sparred against this professor of boxing, I had experienced him as an oily figure who was flat out impossible to hit with a proper blow. Apart from the first training day mentioned earlier. This applied before the matches against the German champions, Riethdorf and Schiller, and partly before the big showdown against Escobar in Montreal.

This about being able to avoid blows was a detail.

The second was this pre-contested left stroke.

Sanstøl boxed in a crouched style where the right hand covered the head while the left hand lay loose and free along the body. Knowing that this left hand was hyper-dangerous - something the aforementioned boxers, as well as countless dangerous American Bantamweight boxers had discovered - not to mention myself - the concentration was on avoiding this irritating and dangerous blow. Something I couldn't do, and as a consolation - none of the best boxers we had at the time in Norway.

And there were many of them.

Round after round, day after day, month after month, I tried to figure out some maneuver to avoid this left blow that struck like lightning from the sky, and at the same time be able to counter with a well-intended right cross.

Which never worked out.

However, it was a consolation that internationally known figures such as the knock-outer Haakon Lind, the technically good and at the same time tough Harald Hansen - not to mention the technical marvel Sigurd Larsen, had exactly the same difficulty.

I had an advantage over the other sizes.

Sparred with him for months every day and thought I should know him inside out.

When the training before the match against Al Brown started, I was full of confidence.

- I will show you, was my motto. - Now you will get your own medicine.

It also went well - at the public training at Bislett. Where Olav Nilsen, me and a few others did quite well.

If I know Sanstøl correctly, it was quite simply so that the public and the press, and of course most of all Al Brown, would get the impression that he was not that dangerous. That he was on the fall rope since the Montreal game, so that Brown could count on a fairly "safe" game.

Two weeks before the match, I received orders: - We meet in the afternoon at 16.00 at the Sanstøl institute for sparring.

I was quite surprised.

The training at Bislett had gone well, so why train more at the Institute?

The answer soon became clear.

To train and box with straight left - right crosses - hooks and uppercuts - front audience, was *one* thing. How Brown was to be defeated was something else entirely.

The daily performances continued, so that the 50-year-olds rolled in.

Brown was successful with his sparring against our top featherweights, Fredrik Johansen and Olav Nilsen, as well as Wilfred Sjøgren. Brown even had a bit of trouble with Fredrik Johansen - this short, hook-hitting fighter from Pugilist - so much so that he stated: - This Johansen should be able to go a long way in a professional boxing ring.

But both Johansen and Nilsen, for their part, determined that against this boxing prodigy called Al Brown, our man, Sanstøl, had no chance. But they did not know what was going on in the afternoon at the Sanstøl institute.

From the American press we had read and partly learned that Sanstøl, when he found it desirable, could become what had marked his fights in America: namely, a whirlwind in boxing.

Those afternoons of special training to make cabbage at Al Brown, I will always remember.

Everything I had learned in training against this man was a waste. Against me I got a machine gun or a machine gun of sorts. Not at roughly the range I was expecting, but a storm of blows to the body and head from close range. It was dancing backwards to the best of my ability. In any case, it was a bug for me.

"The blonde Tornado" as he was dubbed in America, I realized fully, was no poster story.

I was on my feet after two weeks, but my head was buzzing as if I had taken in a swarm of bees.

Without exaggerating, I would say that it was two of the hardest weeks I have experienced in my life.

But everything has an end.

Now it wasn't enough that I had to spare Sanstøl. The famous German light heavyweight, Adolph Heuser, was to meet our Edgar Normann in a preliminary fight. Likewise, Richard Stegemann, German lightweight champion, against Harald Hansen. Since Oscar Olsen and Sanstøl had become good friends, it came about that these two would also train at the Sanstøl institute.

And spar with gloves.

- Sparring partners?

- John will take it, answered Sanstøl.

I thanked him for his trust and went round both against the heavy Heuser and the light Stegemann. Heuser just marked his punches, and I realized from the movements and everything that Norman was facing quite a task. Which was reasonable, since not long before Heuser had fought for the WC in America. An affair we shall return to, because this WC match against Maxie Rosenbloom in New York brought him a mascot – namely a green sponge.

This green sponge was going to give me a lot of trouble.

Stegemann, on the other hand, was a light-legged gentleman with good punches, and a fellow who should stand well against Harald Hansen, since they were actually quite similar in their boxing styles.

However, the sparring against these two Germans was child's play against Sanstøl's "secret sparring", where he laid out his plan of attack against Brown.

The plan was to burrow under the negro's long arms, where he would then fire off with body and head blows. A tactic that had cost famous French champion boxers Emile Pladner, Young Perez and Eugene Huat knock-out defeats.

As they tried to "drill in", they were met by one of those hyper-dangerous hook uppercuts which were Brown's specialty and which were feared by all bantamweight boxers in the world. Thus it was evening.

Sanstøl, for his part, had avoided these blows during the World Cup match in Montreal and believed he had learned how the tactic was to be successful.

The Sanstøl - Brown rematch had the audience and press waiting for three years. When Oscar Olsen finally got the two fighting cocks together in Oslo, interest was at its peak, and the daily topic of conversation was mostly: - Can Sanstøl finally get to fight his archrival, or will Brown with his long, hyper-dangerous arms once again set "The blonde Tornado" in place?

Oscar Olsen and his matchmaker, Alf Eriksen, had had their difficulties in getting the match in order. The fight date was initially set for 30 August 1935. However, Brown suffered an ankle injury during a visit to Brussels, after which the date was changed to 6 September.

Further postponed until 11 September. Now everything seemed to be going as it should.

But with three days to go, Brown sat down on the ring floor during training at Bislett, holding onto his ankle, and grimacing strongly told him something was wrong. His manager, Bellierez, took immediate action to examine the negro's right hand.

All the while there were close to 1,000 spectators present, the event attracted many stir.

- What was wrong? Was it the ankle or the right hand?

Brown was taken to the emergency department where a slight swelling of a finger on the right hand was noted. This was confirmed by the doctor, the press and the organiser, who promptly postponed the match day to Friday 13 September.

For the superstitious, Sanstøl's chances were thus significantly reduced.

- Friday the thirteenth! It means bad luck for our man!

Others took it as a lucky omen.

- Friday the thirteenth means bad luck and the color black - that is, Brown will be the unlucky one.

What really lay behind it, probably only Brown knew. We initiates did not take this with the finger so solemnly - he wanted a postponement for one reason or another - sounded the chorus.

Sanstøl, on the other hand, took it all in stride. Run his program as if nothing had happened.

When the news of Brown's injury, as well as the postponement of the game, reached us, we had a little discussion after the hard training session.

- What do you mean, Pit?

- I have taken this into account in my build-up for the match. I know Brown now, and have laid my plan. The thing is, in the World Cup match in Montreal, I actually didn't know when I was sitting in the corner of the ring, if Brown would show up in the other corner. In advance he had protested against the appointed judges, refused all photography and so on, so that if the organizer did not accept all this, then he went back to Paris - without a fight. But he showed up - and defended his title. All this made me somewhat nervous and I didn't get going until the last half of the game. This time I am prepared for everything from his side, so this "accident" means nothing to me.

Neither did it.

Friday 13 September 1935 was a rainy day. It was simply that man calling for a storm. Consequently, the influx of out-of-town spectators was greatly reduced.

Oscar Olsen & Co had expected around 20,000 at Bislett, but at noon it was realized that this figure had to be revised.

Fortunately, the floodgates of heaven were closed at 3 p.m. Which caused that close to 12,000 souls interested in boxing found themselves.

If Oscar Olsen was nervous?

You have to believe that.

He didn't invent himself at all.

Together with Arne Knardahl - our excellent flyweight from the 1920s and the man who stopped the Danish "prodigy", Anders Petersen - I got the job of seconding Stegemann and Heuser in the matches against Harald Hansen and Edgar Normann respectively. Just before we were to enter the ring for the Stegemann - Hansen match, a phone rang at the office in Bislett Sports Hall. Everyone was then heading for the lighted ring, so I found myself having to answer this phone.

Was somewhat surprised.

- How does it look? came a hoarse voice.

- Not so bad at all. There is a stay and we are ready for the first game.

- Spectators, for f - ! Is there anyone there?

- As far as I can see - pretty full. Maybe eight - ten thousand.

- Thank God and thank you for that! It's Oscar here - !

Harald Hansen and Richard Stegemann fought an excellent lightweight fight over eight rounds. A proper aperitif before the bigger showdowns to come.

The referee, Ragnar Enevold, ruled a Norwegian victory, which Stegeman afterwards accepted, but thought a draw would have been better. The same Stegemann later fought his way up as one of Europe's best lightweight boxers, while Harald Hansen, thanks to a lack of background and helpers, was relegated to the sidelines. Which was a shame, because this technical and hardy boxer could undoubtedly do bravado as far as EC titles are concerned.

Adolph Heuser, this stocky light-heavyweight, who had given world champion Maxie Rosenbloom quite a fight in America, became a bit too big a task for Edgar Normann.

Heuser was looking for a new title fight for the WC. The fight against Normann was just one step further towards such a fight. Normann, for his part, saw a chance at the end of his career to move up into better-paid gigs.

As mentioned before, I got the job of assisting Heuser in the dressing room and in the ring. It was a bit of a palaver.

In the changing room: - Here you only have to do two things: You have to say every time the gong goes which round it is, and then you have to look after this one - -

So he pushed a green sponge up into my face.

- My mascot, which I will have in the ring when I meet that damned Rosenbloom in another World Cup match, and f - take it if you lose sight of it. You must deliver it to me as soon as we get back into the dressing room. Have you understood?

I had that.

We marched out - and the battle began.

It became the cat's game with the mouse.

During the first round - i.e. three minutes - Normann received as much beating as you rarely see a boxer receive in a six- or eight-round fight. For my part, I was sure that Normann's father - the one famous in Norway as the father of boxing alongside Georg Brustad - would secondarily throw in the towel as a sign of surrender.

But Dad didn't.

- Second round! I screamed into Heuser's ear, and might as well have said "second and last" - I thought.

But I was wrong.

Brave Edgar Normann went the full ten rounds. He never got the opportunity to place one of these right counters that he specialized in. In return, he was allowed to undergo half an hour in slow execution. Either Normann endured the unbelievable, or Heuser lacked this "punch" in his punches. In any case, Normann stood the fight.

But he never boxed again.

During these rounds I made sure like a ferret watchdog that the green mascot of a sponge was in place. Until Heuser's arm was raised in the air.

At this moment, there were young, zealous water carriers who saw their cut to change water in buckets and pails. Among other things, they took the famous sponge with them.

Sweaty, tired and in a fighting mood, Heuser was sitting in the dressing room when I entered.

- Where is my green sponge? he roared, seeing my face in the doorway.

I knew where the land was.

Turned on a two-ear.

Down the stairs in fine style, while the strapping Heuser came after me.

We continued into the crowd at Bislett, me in front, and Heuser in a bathrobe – roaring and fencing – behind.

But I tricked him. Disappeared into the rows of benches and lay before the knees of astonished onlookers for five minutes before I could raise my face to see if the waters were clear.

Well hidden by the ring, I got to see Sanstøl carry out what we had been working on for so many weeks. Saw him drill in and pepper the negro with punches from close range. Time and time again the well-intended knock-out blow whizzed over his head or by his side of.

It never hit.

Sanstøl scored a safe and clear victory as the winner of six rounds against Brown's three - and an even one.

The referee, the German Otto Griese, had no doubts about the decision.

During such big fights in the boxing ring, it goes without saying that rumors of "decided in advance" are formed.

During and after the Sanstøl - Brown match, a number of such rumors also arose. For us in the Sanstøl camp, this bit quite hard.

Sanstøl decided to put these rumors to rest. We knew that after the match Brown was a regular guest at the famous "Røde Mølle", which was then located opposite the National Theatre.

Consequently, Sanstøl and I teamed up one evening. Found Brown, as usual surrounded by a bunch of gorgeous girls.

- You have heard these rumors about our match being decided in advance? You know it's a lie. Have you or anyone else said anything like this?

- No, Pit – on my honor I have never said such a thing, and I can vouch for that
You are the worst man I have ever met in the ring. Is it enough?

Thus the tears flowed down the cheeks of the famous negro Al Brown.

He signed a declaration that he had lost honestly and fairly.

Thus one would think the Brown - Sanstøl episode was over.

But it wasn't.

Brown managed to damage the eye that was already in bad shape - after the injury from the Escobar fight. Sanstøl ended up at Rikshospitalet, where they narrowly saved his sight.

But boxing was over once and for all.

To finish the story, we can mention that the day after the match we were strolling calmly and unchallenged up Bogstadveien, when in the distance we saw a broad-shouldered, short figure wearing a black Alpine hat coming down.

- The green sponge! it struck me like lightning.

Whereupon we quickly turned around and disappeared before Heuser caught sight of "the damned devil who lost my mascot".

Incidentally, Heuser did not get another WC match.

On the other hand, just before the Second World War he went up to heavyweight and met his compatriot, the famous Max Schmeling.

He shouldn't have done that.

He was knocked out in the first round.

Presumably because I had brushed away his green sponge!