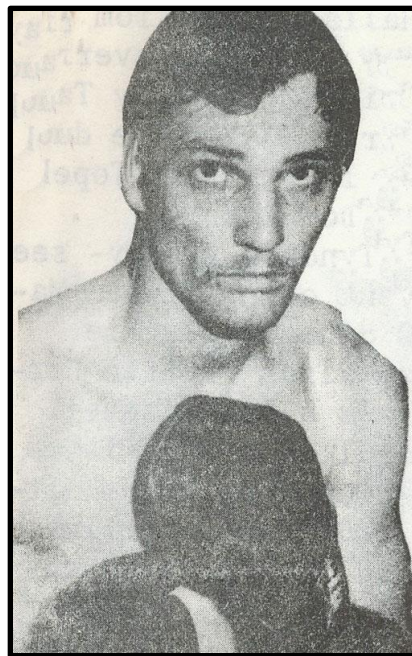


# COVID CLAIMS BILLY WAREHAM

By John DiSanto – [PhillyBoxingHistory.com](http://PhillyBoxingHistory.com)

Former Philly middleweight and longtime VBA member, Billy Wareham passed away from COVID-19 on December 21, 2020. He was 64. Wareham, nicknamed "Snow White", fought professionally during the 1970s, four times at the Spectrum and once at the 69th Street Forum. In all his had fourteen bouts, posting a career record of 12-2 with 9 knockouts. Although his career was firmly in the club fighter realm, he did appear in undercard bouts of both Roberto Duran and Sugar Ray Leonard.



Wareham turned professional on December 17, 1976 with a third round knockout over charismatic boxer Nikita Tar Hocker at Liberty Caterers in Northeast Philadelphia. The pair would clash again three months later with Wareham scoring another third round stoppage.

The start of his career was a whirlwind. In his sophomore year in the ring, he fought seven times, including five starts at the Goodwill House Fire Hall in Bristol, PA. During this stretch, Wareham added another five victories (three by KO) and suffered his only two career losses - both to Darryl Lampkin of Allentown. Both defeats were by six round decision.

It was his second bout with Lampkin that landed on the big Spectrum card headlined by the WBA world lightweight championship bout between Roberto Duran and Edwin Viruet. September 17, 1977. It was Wareham's first time fighting at the legendary South Philly venue. 7,910 fans were in the house that afternoon.

Wareham returned to the Spectrum for his next fight, a first round TKO over Greg Joiner on January 17, 1978. That night, Billy shared the bill with local standouts Jimmy Rothwell, Mike Everett, Wade Hinnant, Augie Pantellas, Rudy Donato, Richie Bennett, Jerome Jackson and Teddy Mann.

In his next bout on February 4, 1978, Wareham traveled to Baltimore's Civic Center and TKO'd Richard Jackson in three rounds. His bout preceded Sugar Ray Leonard's eighth career victory (W4 Rocky Ramon). 7,277 fans watched the show.

After three more wins, including one at the Spectrum and one at Upper Darby's 69th Street Forum, Wareham closed 1978 with an 11-2, 8 KO record. He finished his career back at the Spectrum on February 5, 1979 with a second round TKO of Donald Leary. The main event that night was the 10-round match between Bennie Briscoe and Philly killer David Love, who defeated Briscoe by decision. Billy's final record was 12-2 with 9 KOs.

Willis "Billy" Wareham was born October 12, 1956 in Abington, PA. Prior to his pro career, he competed in the Philadelphia Golden Gloves. He was the father of four children, Willis Jr., Joseph, Diane and Mackenzie. He also had three stepchildren, twenty grandchildren and one great grandchild. At the time of his death, Billy lived in Horsham, PA with his second wife Charlotte (as well as Mackenzie and his three step children - Thomas, Stacey and Jaelyn).



Wareham was a fixture at the Veteran Boxers Association Clubhouse (VBA - Ring 1) in Port Richmond where he attended monthly meetings and often held court at the club's bar, telling stories and talking boxing. He will be greatly missed by his many friends there.

**Note: A graveside service was held for Wareham at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery on January 2, 2021. The family asked that in lieu of flowers, contributions in his honor be made to the Veteran Boxers Association (2733 E. Clearfield St., Philadelphia, PA).**