

# *Boxing Ringside With Bobby Franklin*

## **Remembering Ron Stander**

### *He Trained In Boston For His Shot At The Heavyweight Title Against Joe Frazier*

Ron Stander is best remembered for the courage he showed when he challenged Joe Frazier for the heavyweight title in 1972. The fight was stopped after the fourth round with Stander suffering multiple facial lacerations; however, he was never off his feet and had rocked Frazier in the first round.



*Ron At The New Garden Gym In  
1972*

Standar, who was known as The Council Bluffs Butcher after one of two places he called home; Council Bluffs, Iowa. He also lived not far away in Omaha, Nebraska where the fight with Frazier took place.

Tom Lovgren was a boxing promoter in Omaha and he arranged for the fight to take place there. He was also an enthusiastic supporter of Standar who believed his local hero had a real chance at upsetting Frazier. Tom decided to bring Ron to Boston to train under the guidance of local fight guy Johnny Dunn. Mighty Joe Young a talented heavyweight from Brooklyn, NY was brought in as a sparring partner.

Young was managed by Frank Gioseffi who had been a heavyweight boxer himself in the 1950s. Frank fought on the undercard of the Marciano/Moore fight. Gioseffi later changed his name to Frank Gio and became a successful actor playing in movies and television. He was in *Moonstruck*, *Once Upon In America*, *King Of New York*, and *Analyze That* among many others.

Frank wasn't able to make it to Boston with his fighter so I was asked to handle Joe for the training sessions. That was quite an exciting assignment for a teenage kid; working in the camp for a boxer training to fight for the heavyweight championship.

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I got to know Ron Stander while he was in Boston during that time. At first he was a bit scary and intimidating. His quietness could be taken as brooding, but in reality he was a very nice guy; very easy going.

The ring at the New Garden Gym was quite small, so the sparring sessions turned into spirited affairs. Joe Young was no soft touch and the two of them went at it pretty hard. In an early session Young caught Ron with a left hook that cracked his nose. Not wanting to postpone the bout and risk losing their title chance altogether, Stander and Lovgren opted to use a full face headgear for the rest of the sparring sessions. This protected his nose but limited Stander's vision while boxing.

After the workouts Dunn and Stander would head downstairs to the Ninety-Nine Club for dinner and pitchers of beer. While a hard worker in the gym, Stander wouldn't give up his beer.

Tom Lovgren told me he was convinced Stander had a great shot at winning against Frazier based on the time Ron kayoed Earnie Shavers. It was early in both men's careers with Shavers having a record of 12 wins and 1 loss with 12 knockouts, and Stander being undefeated in 9 fights with 7 knockouts.

Shavers gave Stander a real going over in the first two rounds but Ron withstood the battering. Lovgren told me Ron actually broke his arm during the exchanges. Stander came on in



*Ron Defeating Earnie Shavers*

the next two rounds and put Earnie down for the count in round four. Lovgren figured Stander could have a similar performance against Frazier. He even put his money where his mouth was by betting \$10,000 on Stander at ten to one odds.

The fight took place on May 25, 1972 in at the Civic Auditorium in Omaha. As expected, Ron came out swinging. In the first round he caught Joe with a right hand that shook the champion. Stander held his own and many gave him that round. The crowd was pumped.

Frazier went to work in the second round and by the third was starting to bust Stander up. By the end of the fourth round the referee intervened and put an end to the fight. Ron ended up with 32 stitches in his face, but he never went down and was swinging until the very end.

For his efforts, Stander's purse was \$100,000 of which he took home about \$40,000, the biggest payday of his career. Lovgren lost his bet but not his respect for Stander. He was proud of his fighter as were the fans at the Civic Center who turned out to cheer him on. Ron Stander had nothing to be ashamed of.

Ron Stander passed away on March 8th from complications related to diabetes. He was 77.

Ron's son Frank told Peter Huguenin of the Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil, "As a father, he was probably one of the

**WORLD'S  
HEAVYWEIGHT  
CHAMPIONSHIP  
FIGHT**

CHAMPION **VS** CHALLENGER

**JOE FRAZIER** **RON STANDER**

**THURS. MAY 25, 1972  
OMAHA, NEBR.**

**OMAHA CIVIC AUDITORIUM ARENA**  
PROMOTED BY CORNHUSKER BOXING CLUB

**PLUS  
5  
OTHER  
BOUTS**



*Trading With Frazier*

greatest guys in the world. He never would spank me. He was very, very gentle and loving to me and my sister. He was kind of a gentle giant. He was a different person when he was in the ring obviously, but he was very loving and caring and just always wanted me to keep it real with my deal and make sure I didn't ever do anybody wrong and he never did anybody wrong and just be a good, genuine person.”

That's the Ron Stander I remember from back in Boston in 1972.

Standar would continue fighting after the loss to Frazier. He stepped in with the likes of Ken Norton, Scott LeDoux, James Tillis, Jeff Merritt, and Gerrie Coetzee. He was never able to pull out the big win, but always gave it his all.



*Joe Frazier and Ron Stander*

He retired in 1982 with a career record of 37 wins (28 by knockout), 21 losses, and 3 draws. After leaving the ring he worked as a machine operator at Vickers Inc. He made a decent living and was a good father and grandfather, well loved by his family and in his community of Council Bluffs where he lived until his death.

Ron Stander may not have been the most talented of fighters, but he was among the toughest. More importantly, he is remembered as a good man, something much more important than being a champion.

**Rest In Peace Ron Stander**