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Former champion boxer killed in car crash

Harvey Rosen
Special to The CJN

WINNIPEG — The item in the sports section of the Nov. 19 *Winnipeg Free Press* was just a filler. But when I read beyond the inconspicuous headline “Boxer dies in crash” and learned it was former Winnipegger David Dusang, who had moved to Toronto, it was like a shot to the mid-section followed rapidly by a sharp teeth-rattling uppercut to the jaw. The former fighter had gone down for the count after being blindsided by a speeding semi-trailer trying to make time, while robbing a 48-year-old man of his.

It was back in the spring of 1980 amateur boxer Dave Dusang was a real up-and-comer.

Dave's Jewish mother was the late Elaine Masarsky and father Ken Dusang is a Jewish convert who, incidentally, had a few pro matches himself, but for the most part had been in the managerial end of the sport.

As an amateur, David made his mark winning a variety of titles and boasted a

record of 30-7-1. The former Talmud Torah student had been the Manitoba boxing champion at various weight levels and also claimed the Saskatchewan championship which he held in 1974-75; the Rochester Golden Gloves title in 1977-78; the Hibbing, Minnesota Golden Gloves title in 1977-78; and in 1979 the Minnesota Golden Gloves.

His Jewish upbringing was important to Elaine and Ken and he had his bar mitzvah at the B'nai Abraham Synagogue in June of 1976.

Besides a Jewish environment, young David was also introduced early to the “The Manly Art” when dad Ken set up a gym in the basement. Jeff at 10 and his brother Dave, 8, would work out together and they even put on a boxing exhibition.

Dave had his first pro match in February 1981 in Edmonton, not long after his 18th birthday.

The Alberta debut was swift and decisive when Dusang was dropped to the canvas in the first round at the hands of welterweight Laurie Mann, who would later become the Canadian champion.

Other than his out-of-town debut/disaster, I believe I witnessed all of Dusang's other bouts. He also took on the likes of aspiring pugilists and trial horses named Kareem Ali, Tom Tarantino, Dennis Brisson, Kenny Payton, “Sugar” Marsh.

Fighting as “the Jewish Bomber,” Dusang compiled an 11-2 pro record with six knockouts. Dusang had talent; fast hands and foot speed were his calling cards, but unlike his opponents he was not raised on the mean streets of Chicago or New York, where desperation and profanities abound with every take down in the game of life.

In 1983, Dusang had just beaten Milwaukee's Tom Tarantino for the vacant USA Boxing Mid-American welterweight crown and was scheduled to fight Mann in a rematch on Dec. 5. “The winner of that fight was to get a shot at Davey Hilton for the Canadian title,” Scott Taylor reported in *Fight-news Canada*.

Mann, however, brought the Jewish Bomber down, Star of David and all, at 2:36 of the opening round.

Perhaps it was then that the seeds of retirement were sewn. He closed out his career with a unanimous decision over Larry Mayes in Winnipeg early in 1984.

Luckily, the kid was on the family plan and it was they that were in charge of the one-time aspiring Canadian champion's

career. So it was back to the drawing board for Dusang. He earned degrees at the Universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba, travelled to Toronto where he raised his family and became a major executive in sales and marketing.

He served as vice-president of sales and marketing for SkyDome from January 1993 to December 2005, and negotiated the 2004 SkyDome naming rights deal, which was the largest naming rights transaction in Canada at that time.

Above all, Dusang was a real mensch.

As his father told Taylor, “We brought him up right. David was proud to be Jewish and he even wore that pride on his boxing trunks. It's just so sad and so terrible. On Nov. 17, 2010, we were all in Israel for his son's bar mitzvah and now, one year to the day later, he's gone. But I wanted everyone to know, I deeply appreciated all the support we received.

“He was a good boxer as a young man back in the day, but he was really a better adult. He had a wonderful career in business and was a great husband and father. David was a fine, fine man.”

Dusang is survived by his father Ken, brother Jeff, sister Laurie, wife Janna Pollock, son Joshua Ryan, daughter Rachel Samantha, relatives and numerous friends and colleagues.

The Canadian Jewish News

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BEIT HALOCHEM BIKERS: Tami and Yossi Zimmer, seen here wearing Canadian colours, were part of a group of 60 North American cyclists, 52 of them from Canada, who joined 55 disabled Israeli veterans on a five-day adventure through southern and northern Israel. Sponsored by Beit Halochem Canada, the group raised more than \$350,000 for cycling rehabilitative programs at Beit Halochem Centres in Israel. The bikers started in Ashkelon and cycled to the Dead Sea. From there, they turned north to Rosh Hanikra. The North American cyclists were impressed by the courage and determination of the disabled Israelis – those without use of their legs used hand bikes and those with visual or hand injuries rode on tandem bikes with more able-bodied partners. Beit Halochem's rehabilitative centres in Tel Aviv, Haifa, Nahariya, Jerusalem and Be'er Sheva have enabled them to rebuild their lives.