

LÁSZLÓ PAPP

25.03.1926-21.10.2003

Triple Olympic Boxing Champion Lazlo PAPP has died aged 77.

He won his first gold medal at Middleweight in 1948, and followed this up with

the Light Middleweight title in 1952 and 1956 Coached by Zsigmond ADLER. PAPP'S outstanding career began in 1945.

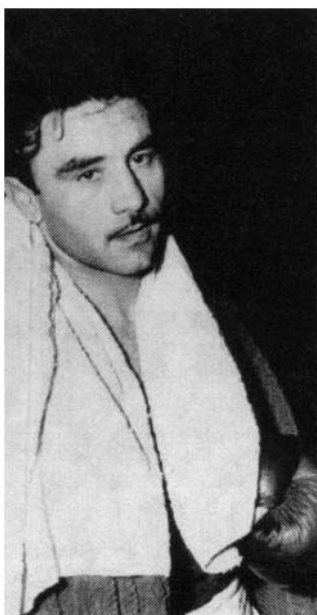
His early fights gave little indication of the glory to follow. He went out in the first round of the 1947 European Championship to Julius TOMA, an ethnic Hungarian fighting in Czech colours.

PAPP beat the Briton John WRIGHT to win the Olympic title a year later in London, and went on to win the European championship in 1949 and 1951.

At the 1952 Games in Helsinki he won his second gold medal beating the South African Theunich van SCHALKWYK but unexpected defeat came at the European Championships in Warsaw the following year, he lost to Olympic bronze medallist Boris TSCHIN (URS). He did not take part at the European Championship in West Berlin in 1955 as his coach ADLER was not given permission to leave the country.

But he did travel to Melbourne in 1956 and beat Jose TORRES to claim an unprecedented third boxing title. A feat emulated only by the Cubans Teofilio STEVENSON and Felix SAVON.

PAPP was only 1,67 m. tall but he was renowned as both a technically gifted boxer and a



strong fighter. As an amateur he fought 312 times losing only 12 and was national champion seven times.

After the Soviet army brutally crushed the Hungarian uprising in the autumn of 1956, many elite Hungarian athletes emigrated to the USA or to other European countries after the Olympic Games in Melbourne. They continued their careers or became successful coaches. PAPP did not emigrate and returned with his gold medal to Budapest. For his 'loyalty' he was rewarded with a sizeable sum by the new socialist government. He was the first athlete from the communist bloc to be allowed to turn professional in the West. He held a

professional boxing licence in Austria and made his pro debut in 1957. He fought mostly in Austria and Germany but it wasn't until 1962 that he finally took the European Middleweight crown stopping Christian CHRISTENSEN in Vienna. He carried on for another three years retiring undefeated with a record showing 27 wins and two draws. Unfortunately he was destined never to fight Nigerian Dick TIGER for the World title.

„Laci”, as PAPP was called, became coach of the Hungarian team in 1969, a role he was to fill for 23 years. His protege György GEDÓ became Olympic Flyweight Champion at the 1972 Games in Munich. He also trained World and Olympic Bantamweight champion Istvan „KO-KO” KOVACS.

Karl Lennartz