

# Hearns-Duran fight moves to Las Vegas

NEW YORK — Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, which lost one big fight scheduled for June 8, today gained the rights to another on June 15.

Promoter Shelly Saltman announced here that the Thomas Hearns-Roberto Duran World Boxing Council junior middleweight title fight had been switched from Nassau in the Bahamas to Caesars Palace because of a

shortage of hotel rooms in the Bahamian capital.

"Because of the room shortage, we would have had to put up fans on cruise ships and in tents, and we were not about to do that," Saltman said in announcing the switch.

The 12-round fight for Hearns' title will be staged in a temporary 26,000-seat stadium set in a parking lot at Caesars Palace. The stadium was to have

served as the setting for the June 8 heavyweight title bout between Larry Holmes and Gerrie Coetzee of South Africa, which was postponed indefinitely last week because of financial problems.

Saltman said the postponement was expected to benefit the Hearns-Duran fight.

"With the demise of that fact, we now expect to

have far more closed-circuit locations and also more pay-per-view viewers at home," he said.

Though Duran holds the World Boxing Association junior middleweight crown, his title will not be at stake against Hearns, since he has said he will vacate it just before the bout.

The WBA has refused to sanction the fight on the grounds that the Panamanian must first make a mandatory defense against top-ranked contender Mike McCallum of Detroit, which Duran has refused to do.

Saltman said four cities had bid for the bout once it encountered space problems in Nassau.

"Houston and Detroit were in the running but

dropped out," he said. "Miami made a super offer to stage it in the Orange Bowl, but we finally decided to accept the bid from Caesars Palace because of their greater expertise in handling boxing shows."

Saltman denied published reports that the fight had been in danger of being called off. "It was never in any such danger," he told a group of reporters. "Both fighters have been in serious training for weeks."

Duran, who weighed as much as 180 pounds a few weeks ago, is now down to "less than 160," said Saltman, the head of Shelteron, one of the three promotional groups.

He said he thought it likely that the winner would meet Marvin Hagler for his undisputed middleweight title. Duran already has fought Hagler, losing a unanimous 15-round decision in Las Vegas last November 10.

"Hagler has got to be looking ahead to fighting the winner," he said.

Both Hearns and Duran will receive about the same purses, Saltman said. He declined to say how much that could be. "It will be substantial and about the same as Duran got for fighting Hagler, and Hearns received for the Sugar Ray Leonard fight," he said. Hearns' only defeat came against Leonard.

Duran, a 32-year-old former lightweight and welterweight champion, spent several weeks training in Los Angeles, another week in Houston, and for the last week has been working out in Nassau, where he is scheduled to remain until a week before the fight, Saltman said.

Hearns, who has been training in his hometown Detroit, will open camp at Grossinger's in the Catskills tomorrow before moving to Las Vegas two weeks before his title defense.

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Edited by EUGENE T. MALESKA

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