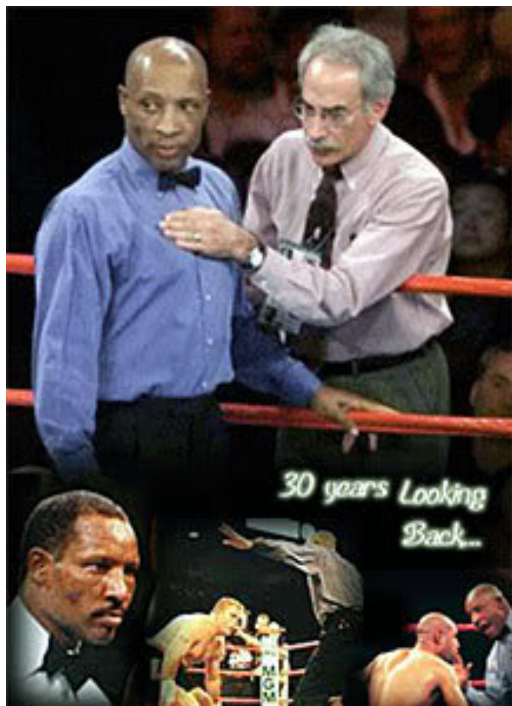


An Interview With Richard Steele

Written by {ga=fightdr}

Friday, September 14 2007 7:00 PM -

The name Richard Steele is one that is familiar to just about any fan or follower of boxing through the eighties and nineties. Steele is a Hall of Fame referee that called many of the biggest fights from that era and over 150 title fights in total over his illustrious career. Steele recently started a mixed martial arts organization called the IFO that has designs on competing with the UFC in time. And our Scott Swerbinsky had a chance to catch up with him recently to talk about it, as well as his career calling world class fights.



There are many fighters and faces I remember as a kid growing up when my love for boxing first started. Most of those that I saw at a very young age watching the "Sweet Science" with my dad and brother faded away. A few of the big names will always be branded in my mind as I look back. One of the most recognizable faces, and voices, that will stick with me forever is not one of those fighters however. The person I have the most vivid memory of is Hall of Fame Referee Richard Steele.

Richard Steele has over 150 title fights to his credit and was in charge of such fights as Hearn vs Hagler, Hearn vs Leonard, and Chavez vs Taylor.

Mr. Steele along with co-owner Steve Oshins recently started up a mixed martial arts organization. The IFO (www.SteeleCage.com) has had 2 very successful events, both in Las Vegas, and is looking to grow it and compete with the likes of

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the Ultimate Fighting Championship.

I was lucky enough to catch up with Mr. Steele and get some exciting information from him.

TCF: First off Mr. Steele I have to say it truly is an honor to speak with you. Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me.

RS: The pleasure is all mine, I appreciate your interest.

TCF: Please tell me and our readers a little bit about the International Fighting Organization?

RS: We are new to the mma scene and me and my partner Steve Oshins saw an opportunity to get into the growing world of MMA. We have had two very successful shows already and are looking ahead to many more.

TCF: With your long history in the boxing world, what made you get into mixed martial arts and promoting it instead?

RS: Boxing is very low right now. It's all the same fighters and the rise of mma is for real. More people are interested in it than people realize. Also, the fans are leaning more towards mma than they are boxing. It was a great idea to get into and we ran with it. Me and Steve were both involved in boxing and wanted to look into mma. I love building young people's careers and looked at it as a no brainer.

TCF: What are your long term goals for the IFO?

RS: We have a home in Las Vegas right now with good showings and a good following. Our main thing is wanting to have good competitive fights every event. The UFC has done a great job and we would love to compete with them. We want to have great champions and hopefully unify titles with the other organizations. The public wants titles to be unified and if we're lucky enough to have fighters compete at an elite level, we think it can happen. We're in it for the long haul, that's for sure.

TCF: How would you compare mma and boxing?

RS: MMA is a much harder sport. You have to prepare many more styles. In boxing, all you have to worry about is the other fighter's hands. The fighter's in mma are much more dangerous because other parts can hurt you.

TCF: What is up next for the IFO?

RS: We have an event in Las Vegas on September 21st and then one on December 15th. Both are going to be action packed cards with a lot of talent on the bill. The action can be seen on HDNet a week after the events.

TCF: Now you stated that boxing is down right now, why do you think that is?

RS: The sport isn't developing talent. They need new faces and new names. Some of these guys are hanging on too long and can't last forever. We used to have great talent, now boxing doesn't. I hope to see that pick up after the Olympics. The lack of good undercards hurts also, there are times people pay very good money to see 5 minutes of action.

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TCF: I have seen you referee many classic fights, what are your top three fights that you have been apart of?

RS: Hagler Hearns is the most memorable easily. Second would have to be Julio Ceasar Chavez vs Meldrick Taylor followed by Leonard vs Hagler.

TCF: I have to ask, what was it like being apart of a fight and it ending in controversy?

RS: It was all part of the job. All people won't agree with the way things go. If their guy lost of course they're upset. To me, I knew that I did the right thing whether it was popular or not.

TCF: With that being said, what do you say to the idea of you being "in" with Don King and that's why the Chavez vs Taylor fight was stopped?

RS: That's a joke. In 30 years of being around Don King, we have never even had a conversation. He was all about Don King and not much else. The doctors agreed with the stoppage and that's when I know I did the right thing. The safety of the fighters are always first.

TCF: Once again, Mr Steele has been an honor speaking with you and I plan on getting to Vegas in December to take in some live IFO action. Thank you for your time.

RS: I enjoyed speaking with you and looking forward to you coming to see us soon.