

Ex-pro boxer with ties to Carson City, El Dorado County dies

By Robert D. Dávila, Sacramento Bee

Danny Nardico, a former professional boxer who was the only fighter to deck Jake “Raging Bull” LaMotta in the ring, died Nov. 22 of congestive heart failure, his family said. He was 85.

Fighting out of Tampa, Fla., Mr. Nardico was a challenger in three divisions: middleweight, light heavyweight and heavyweight. He was set to fight Rocky Graziano for the title but was upset by Charley Norkus. He had ended his professional career by 1955 with a record of 50 wins – including 35 knockouts – 13 losses and four draws.

His record included a historic match on New Year’s Eve in 1952 against LaMotta in Coral Gables, Fla. In the seventh round, Mr. Nardico landed a hard right that caused his opponent to fall into the ropes and go down. LaMotta got back on his feet at the count of nine but declined to answer the bell for the next round. Mr. Nardico’s feat was recorded on film, including clips available on YouTube. But there was no mention in the 1980 LaMotta biographical film “Raging Bull.”

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