

# Life a little different for new champion

United Press International  
NEW YORK — Mike Rossman picks up things quickly. Five days ago, he was just another fighter with a good left hook. Now he's the new world light heavyweight champion and he sees a big difference already.

"People are a little nicer to me," he said at the Friar's Club Tuesday during a luncheon thrown by Bob Arum of Top Rank, to whom he's under contract. "My phone hasn't stopped ringing yet."

It didn't ring nearly that often before last Friday night, which was when the 22-year-old Turnersville, N.J., underdog pulled a major upset by stopping Argentina's Victor Galindez in the 13th round and taking the WBA title away from him in New Orleans, just an hour before Muhammad Ali beat Leon Spinks in the same ring.

Galindez, with much more experience than Rossman and a string of 41 victories going into the fight, was a lopsided favorite. He was shrewder and stronger than Rossman, he had a lot more going for him and Rossman wasn't ready for him yet — that's what most of the fight people said anyway.

But it didn't work out that way. Rossman showed he was boss from the beginning, opening a deep cut alongside Galindez' right eye and punishing him so severely that the referee finally stepped in and stopped the bout.

"They kept telling me how strong

he was," Rossman said, "How he was gonna take me out in a couple rounds. Well, I'm strong, too."

Working in Rossman's corner the night of the fight was his father, Jimmy, who manages him, and his 20-year-old brother, Andrew, acting as one of his seconds.

"He kept telling us all during the fight that he felt good and was sure he could beat Galindez," his brother said. "He felt so good, he actually ran out of his corner when the bell rang for the 13th round."

Rossman's father is Italian and his mother is Jewish. He considers himself Jewish and points out rather proudly the last time a Jewish light heavyweight won the title was 44 years ago when Bob Olin beat Slapsy Maxie Rosenbloom.

During Tuesday's luncheon, Rossman showed some impatience over repeated questions about his religion.

"I'm Jewish," he said curtly. "Why does everybody keep asking me that? I've been fighting professionally six years and nobody asked me that before."

"You weren't the world champion before," someone reminded him.

Someone else asked him whether he planned to get himself an apartment in New York City now that he had won the championship.

"Why do I wanna do that for?" he asked. "I live in New Jersey."

"You might want to find yourself a girl friend," it was suggested.

Rossman frowned.

"I'm married," he said.

The truth of the matter is the new light heavyweight title holder is basically a young man with simple tastes, who doesn't run around much, prefers to stay at home with his wife, Maxine, and watch television or occasionally go to Veterans Stadium in Philadelphia and root for the Phillies.

Of Rossman's 35 victories, 21 have been by knockouts. He has lost four times and had four draws since turning pro in August of 1973.

Unlike some other fighters, Rossman isn't puffed up by his own importance. A few days before the fight in New Orleans, for example, he was working on the heavy bag when technicians doing a TV special on Ali and Spinks told Top Rank aide Irving Rudd they were picking up the sound of Rossman hitting the bag.

"Would you mind shifting to something else for a few minutes?" Rudd asked Rossman.

"Sure," he said, moving off to another corner where he busied himself skipping rope instead of punching the bag. Another fighter might have gotten up on his high horse and reminded Rudd he was training for an important bout also.

The waiter serving Rossman at Tuesday's luncheon informed him he was from Argentina.

"You don't have to apologize," the waiter reassured him. "You beat him fair and square."



Running the option

Aggie quarterback Mike Mosley fakes a handoff to running back Adger Armstrong (40) and prepares to execute the option against the Kansas Jayhawks. After beating the Jayhawks

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## Richard suffers because Astros suffer

By GARY TAYLOR  
United Press International  
HOUSTON — If he played for a team which scored more runs, record-setting pitcher J.R. Richard would be a leading contender to win the Cy Young Award.

If he threw his blazing fast ball and semi-blazing slider on either

the left or right coast, Richard's mug shot would appear on magazine covers and T-shirts.

But, alas, he toils for a losing team in a city that doesn't know to which part of the South it belongs. And through it all, the devoted Christian family man from Ruston, La. understands his underexposure and

quietly wishes he and his teammates were accorded more fame.

"The recognition has been very slow in coming," he said. "Very slow for the Houston area. I'd have to call it very poor. Guys like Cesar Cedeno and Bob Watson have been doing things over a period of years that have gone unnoticed. And the year I won 20 games, I didn't get much recognition."

In 1976, Richard won 20 despite the Astros suffering a losing season. This year, with the Astros in fifth place, Richard is 17-11 despite losing or receiving a no decision in seven close games.

Said teammate Enos Cabell, "J.R. deserves to be considered as one of the best. He is. He has worked hard. There is not a pitcher that batters fear any more than J.R."

His teammates cheer him, but local sports fans treat him for a number of reasons with indifference. Only 5,710 spectators paid Wednesday night to watch Richard go after a prestigious pitching record and, on top of that, to see if 39-year-old Jim Bouton of Atlanta really threw his knuckleball as slowly as reported.

Those who attended got everything they could have expected, unless they were unrealistic and expected a Houston win. Atlanta won 3-2 on Bob Horner's ninth-inning double off a relief pitcher. Richard had taken himself out of the game after his right forearm stiffened in the eighth.

An inning before, his strike out of Horner on a hard slider lifted Richard to the top of a record book heading which reads, "Most strike outs, single season, righthanded pitcher, National League, since 1900." His 11 strike outs in the game boosted his season total to 290, one better than Tom Seaver accomplished in 1971.

Although accorded three standing ovations and better attention than is often received from Astros fans, after the game Richard sagged as he slumped his 6-8 frame into a couch for a post-game interview.

"You can kill a horse if you work it long enough," he said.

Of the performance, which drew a large group of local sportswriters and sportscasters, he said, "Maybe people are beginning to notice. I worked for it. I've earned ev-

erything I've ever had. No been given to me. But I have been blessed — I was never black. I grew up middle-class. I've always been ambitious to work hard."

Richard showed he had the list of the major league strike out artists.

"I feel very good about my record. I'm the first man, the black man, the first righthanded modern National League pitcher to strike out 290," he said.

But Richard has his faith mounted, and local fans are disappointed when his pitches go wild. He leads the major league walks allowed, as well as unearned runs and has uncorked 50 pitches this year.

A wild pitch in the seventh against Atlanta Tuesday, evening he broke the record, a possible win.

"That's the way life is. Things to the best of your hope for the best," Richard said. "I'll be back throwing."

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