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One Elkay Manufacturing Teamster Proves He is a Natural Contender

Teamster and Boxer Germaine Sanders is "Silky Smooth" in His Recent Chicago Boxing Victory



Germaine "Silky Smooth" Sanders

*(Photo courtesy David Loew/
www.chicagoboxing.com)*

With his blue hardhat and safety glasses in place, Germaine Sanders takes a buffing tool and begins polishing a steel sink's corners to a lustrous satin shine. With every sink, he works carefully and concentrated to perfection and it is no wonder he is so focused in his personal life as a semi-pro boxer and competitive bodybuilder.

When he's not busy with his duties as a Teamster polisher at Elkay Manufacturing in Broadview, Illinois, Sanders spends his time training for professional boxing matches—training he has done for 25 years.

Germaine "Silky Smooth" Sanders—the name boxing fans know him by—is a welterweight and has often been called Chicago's slickest fighter. He credits his drive for physical training as something that keeps him busy and motivated.

"I completely immerse myself into a training and diet schedule, eating clean and rigorously exercising for months on end," he said. "Abstaining from everything unhealthy for several months really improves my performance in the ring and on stage."

And the hard training definitely shows, as it did when "Silky Smooth" fought and defeated Luciano "El Gallo Bravo" Perez in the "Wave of Fury" boxing championship on June 10. Promoted by Chicago boxing promoter 8Count Productions, the fight was televised live on Univision and drew hundreds of boxing spectators.

The Sanders-Perez fight was featured as the co-main event and was refereed by Gino Rodriguez, Local 714 President and professional boxing referee.

From the opening bell, Sanders pummeled Perez with quick left hand jabs and never seemed to lose his energy.



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Sanders-Perez fight, June 10, 2005

(Top photo Teamsters Joint Council 25. Bottom photos courtesy David Loew/www.chicagoboxing.com)

“Germaine came in looking as good as ever,” claimed a news article on Saddoboxing.com. “Perez has been one of Chicago’s most exciting fighters in recent years with his straight forward no nonsense banging style of fighting, but on this night he was schooled by Sanders.”

The fight went on for 10 rounds with Sanders circling and jabbing while avoiding heavy punches from a fatiguing Perez. The three judges scored the fight 97-93, 98-92 and 99-91, all for Sanders as the champion.

Sanders began boxing in 1980 at the age of 10 when a close family friend introduced him to boxing at a community center. Ever since then, he’s been hooked to the sport.

“Boxing is a great sport for kids,” said Rodriguez, who has professionally refereed fights all over the world for 23 years. “First and foremost, it teaches kids discipline—mental and physical. It also teaches them what to eat and how to take care of their bodies—to not smoke or drink. It also teaches character. If a kid knows how to box, he’s not going to want to fight in the streets with people. They become sure of themselves and positive about life.”

Sanders fights in three to four boxing matches a year, and competes in regional and national bodybuilding competitions annually. He placed second in the medium category at the Midwestern National Bodybuilding Competition last year.

He credits his competitions with helping him keep a sound mind and body.

“Competing forces me to stay focused in everything—mentally, spiritually and professionally,” said Sanders.



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Sanders polishes a sink bowl to a shine at his job at Elkay Manufacturing.

It is this mentality that makes him such a strong person as an individual competitor and also as an Elkay Manufacturing team player.

Elkay Manufacturing is an industry leader in the United States in the manufacture of stainless steel residential and commercial sinks. The company is also a long-time unionized workplace—it has been organized with Teamsters Local 714 since the early 1940s.

“Being a Teamster is a good thing, especially in the current economy,” said Sanders, whose first union job was with Elkay six years ago. “It is nice to have a strong voice and to have a solid contract.”

Elkay, which is ranked 40th in “Crain’s Chicago Business” list of Chicago’s Largest Privately-Held Companies, has more than 3,800 employees in production and distribution facilities across the United States and select international markets.

In his job as a polisher, Sanders inspects the bowl for defects and fixes any flaws to make the sink as close to perfection as possible. He takes the same approach with training and its end results.

“Training for boxing and weight lifting competitions is an art and definitely a challenge,” said Sanders. “You have to be focused and disciplined, but once you achieve your personal goals it is so naturally uplifting.”

He is also enthusiastic about being a positive role model for others.

“If you want to be motivated you can do it by yourself, you don’t need a diet book or magic pill,” said Sanders. “I hope that one day my hard work will help motivate others to get healthy and improve their lives the way it helped mine.”