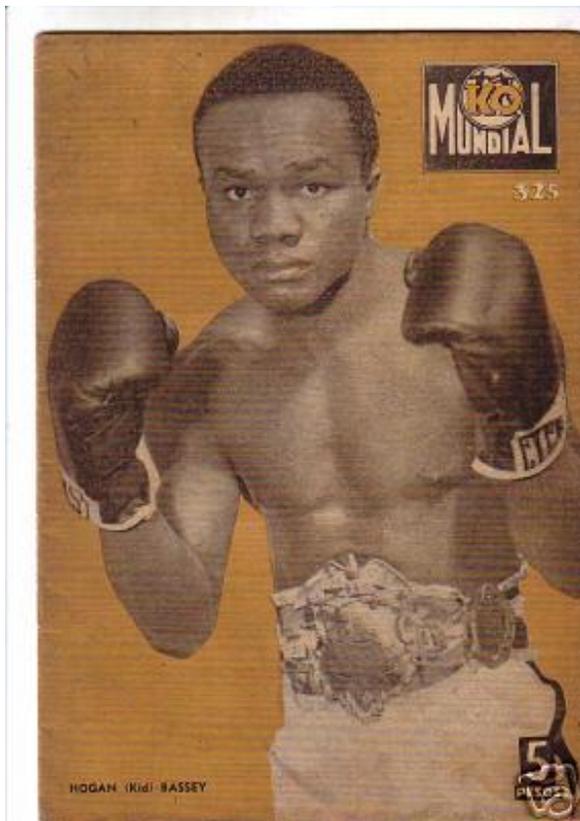


# The Boxing Biographies Newsletter

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**Name:** Hogan ([Kid](#)) Bassey  
**Birth Name:** Okon Bassey Asuquo  
**Born:** 1932-06-03  
**Birthplace:** Calabar, Nigeria  
**Died:** 1998-01-26 (Age:65)  
**Nationality:** Nigerian  
**Hometown:** Calabar, Nigeria  
**Stance:** Orthodox  
**Height:** 5' 3" / 160cm  
**Reach:** 66½" / 169cm  
**Boxing Record:** [click](#)  
**Manager:** George Biddles  
**Trainer:** George Biddles, Jimmy August

When Hogan "Kid" [Bassey](#) won the world featherweight championship in 1957 he created a sensation as the first Nigerian to win a world title.

Bassey won the world title on June 24,1957 when he stopped Cherif Hamia in the tenth round in Paris. The ordinary young Nigerian boy, born

June 3, 1932 in a village called Ufok Ubet in Creek Town, Calabar, in Eastern Nigeria was now champion of the world.

Times were not easy for young Hogan as he had to work on the family's small farm, in between going to school. Money was always being in short supply. He learnt to fight when collecting water at the communal tap in the village. While waiting with the bucket in the long queue, there were always those bullies who would jump the queue. Hogan decided that no one was going to jump the queue on him and became involved in fist fights and found out that he had a natural aptitude with his fists.

At the age of eleven he went to live with his Aunt in Lagos and started boxing at a local club and at the age of sixteen, challenged for the Nigerian flyweight title in his first professional fight, which he won when he defeated Dick Turpin over 12 rounds in 1949 and soon afterwards took the Nigerian bantamweight title when he defeated Steve Jeffra .

With very little money to be made in Nigerian boxing, Bassey with the help of some friends who assisted with the cost of his passage, decided to try his luck in Britain and arrived in a cold and damp Liverpool in December 1951, making his debut in England in January 1952 with a stoppage win over Ray Hillyard.

Hogan was kept very busy and had eighteen fights in his first year in Britain, winning 14, and losing only three fights on points against quality opponents like John Kelly, Frankie Williams and Pierre Cossemyns.

The year 1953 was not as busy, with Bassey having ten fights, which included a stoppage win over the highly rated Spaniard, Luis Romero.

After a six month holiday trip to Nigeria, Hogan came back to Liverpool, having put on a lot of extra weight, so decided to campaign in the featherweight division. Despite thoughts that his small size would be a handicap, the move up to featherweight paid off when he beat the fancied Sammy McCarthy who had an unbeaten streak of 28 before meeting Bassey.

The next big one was for the British Empire featherweight title in Belfast on November 19, 1955 against the Irishman John Kelly. Bassey had lost on points to Kelly in their previous meeting in April 1952, so he was facing the toughest challenge of his career, especially in Kelly's back yard at the King's Hall in Belfast.

In his book "Bassey on Boxing" this is how he describes his fight with Kelly " When I stepped into the Belfast ring I realised how alone I was in the vast hall thronged with Irishman. The cheer that Kelly received when he went to his corner was almost frightening. Plans can so easily go awry, and they nearly did so that night. It was the bugbear of all boxers, the cut eye. It happened in the fifth round. My greatest fear was that the referee would stop the fight. As I stepped towards the middle of the ring for the seventh round I knew I had to go in and fight. He had become a little over-confident and had been lured into my trap. As he came in I feinted to throw a left hook and, just as I had hoped he would, he swayed to his left. I put everything into a right cross that crashed against Kelly's jaw like a trip -hammer. I knew he had no chance of beating the count. Actually Kelly was down for five minutes before he fully recovered. I was the new British Empire champion".

In 1956 taxation nearly crippled boxing in England with a lot of the small halls closing down. Having recently married, Bassey was unable to get enough fights to live and maintain a wife and home, so he was forced to get a job as a motor mechanic's assistant in a big firm in Liverpool.

In September 1956 Bassey met a young man who had been boxing in Britain for several years, Alby Tissong, the South African featherweight. He had built up a reputation for himself up and

down the country. The match was made for Liverpool Stadium, where Alby had put up some of his best performances. The fight was won by Bassey on points over eight rounds in a what the press claimed as a boxing epic, something on par with the Nel Tarleton vs Al Brown contest at the Liverpool Football Ground some years before.

Shortly after this Bassey broke up with his long time manager Peter Banasko and joined George Biddles from Leicester. Biddles began negotiations for a contest with Elijah Mokone the South African featherweight champion, but Bassey was refused permission to enter South Africa. A fight with Flash Elorde from the Philippines also fell through and Bassey became so despondent he even thought of giving up boxing. However, at last there was a break in the clouds when it was announced that Sandy Saddler, the world featherweight champion had decided to retire from the ring and so the the search for a new champion was on.

Manager George Biddles wrote to the British Boxing Board of Control staking the claims of Bassey, but the Board had other ideas. Bassey must defend his Empire title against Percy Lewis. On April 1, 1957 he successfully defended the title against the awkward southpaw.

Next up was an eliminator for the world title against the Puerto Rican, Miguel Berrios in Washington, USA in a fight which the American press gave Hogan very little chance of winning. However, he proved them wrong and was a good points winner over 12 interesting rounds after being down on the canvas from a left hook in the first round.

Now for the big one at the Palais des Sports in Paris, against the Frenchman Cherif Hamia on May 24, 1957. After a quiet opening round Hogan found himself on the canvas in the second when Hamia caught him with a vicious right cross to the jaw. The big shot had given Hamia a right hand complex which ultimately proved to his detriment. He threw his right on every conceivable occasion, while Bassey concentrated on his boxing. The Frenchman began to weaken as the fight progressed and in the tenth round, Bassey landed with a terrific left hook on the jaw and in his efforts to prevent himself falling, Hamia grabbed Hogan around the shoulders and brought them both down to the canvas. Bassey was up immediately, but Hamia was forced to take a short count. Hamia was really in no condition to continue when he got to his feet, but the referee let it continue. The Frenchman took a severe beating and as he was about to sink to the canvas the referee called it off and crowned Hogan Bassey the new featherweight champion of the world.

After Hogan became champion he decide that he needed a rest and set off to his home country, Nigeria. Little did he know that there would be very little time to rest when he got home as Nigeria's first world boxing champion. Thousands of people welcomed him home when he arrived at the Ikeja Airport. Wherever Hogan went he was given a hero's welcome by thousands of people which at times became frightening for the new champion.

Possibly one of the greatest moments in his life was when in the New Year's Honours List Hogan was awarded an M.B.E. by the Queen.

In two non title fights, Bassey won a point's decision over Victor Pepeder and gained revenge over the Belgium, Pierre Cossemyns early in 1958 before facing the first challenge to his featherweight crown from the hard hitting Mexican Ricardo Moreno.

The fight took place in Los Angeles on April 2, 1958 and in the first round Moreno came straight into Bassey, but Bassey was up to the task as he slugged it out with the challenger through rounds one and two. In round three Hogan smashed Moreno to the canvas with a shattering left hook to the chin, which sent him down to the canvas with no hope of beating the count. The crowd went wild, as Moreno had never been knocked out before in his career.

As has happened so many times in the past the reported fancy purses that fighters are supposed to earn is not always true. For the first defence of his title Bassey only received four thousand pounds from a purse of twenty five thousand pounds after expenses and income tax had been paid.

After the successful title defence Hogan had three non title fights, stopping Jules Touan in seven and the legendary Willie Pep who was far past his best in nine and then a points wins over Carmelo Costa and Ernesto Parro.

Up next was the second defence of his title against Davey Moore in March 1959. With the first five rounds going to plan, Bassey was well in the lead and had Moore cut on the cheek, but it was at the end of round six that trouble came. The bell went and he dropped his hands, but before he could turn away Moore hit him with several punches to the face which opened two cuts near his eyes. Hogan was so dazed his trainer had to lead him to his corner.

Bassey is adamant that no matter what anyone says, those two punches after the bell cost him the fight, because after those two punches he only came to his senses in round thirteen when his manager George Biddles stopped the fight because of the cuts and the bleeding.

Bassey tried to regain the title in August 1959 in a return with Moore, but it was not to be. Once again his eyes were cut and Moore stopped him in ten.

Moore was to die tragically on March 23, 1963, two days after losing his title in a fight with Sugar Ramos.

After failing to regain the title, Hogan decided that while he was still healthy it was time to get out of boxing after a ten year career with 74 fights, winning 59, losing 13 and 2 draws.

Not yet 30 years old, what now ?. Should he use his garage experience and go into the motor business. However, while still deciding what to do an offer came from the Government of Eastern Nigeria to become the National Boxing Coach. One of his first tasks was to build up a team to represent Nigeria at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome.

On reflection Hogan felt that boxing gave him a lot in life and if he had his time over he would still be a professional boxer without hesitation.



## **Hogan 'Kid' Bassey - 1957 Featherweight World Champion**

By Peter Demeyin

The history of Nigerian boxing cannot be complete without a mention of Hogan 'Kid' Bassey who shot Nigeria into international spotlight by winning a world boxing title in 1957.

Though Bassey Okon Asuquo, popularly known as "Hogan Kid" Bassey, is no more, he is still well celebrated in Nigeria today as a boxing legend, a worthy sports ambassador, a patriot, and a devout

Christian noted for startling disciplinary record.

The famous boxer gave up the ghost in January 1998 after a failed battle to surmount a heart ailment which defied medication.

A cursory glance through his boxing profile indicates that Hogan Bassey was the country's first boxing icon who won a world boxing title in 1957. Aside his world title feat, it is also important to recall that he was the youngest boxer to win the national flyweight title way back in 1950 at the age of eighteen when he was still in the secondary school. For the Calabar-born pugilist who breathed his last at the age of 65, boxing brought him honour, fame and glory.

Before he plunged into boxing, he never knew what the future held. He started out with street soccer as was the case with many of his peers in those days. "I played a lot of soccer in school and at home even though we used improvised balls most of the time. I love sports and was a kind of an all-rounder", Hogan recalled in a book titled: "the Nigerian Stars of Sports" written by a frontline sports commentator, Sebastine Ofurum.

Before coming to Lagos in search of greener pastures, Hogan, born to Chief and Mrs. Okon Bassey Asuquo in 1932, started his elementary school education at Creek Town School, Calabar from where he left for Ahmaddiya now Breadfruit Primary School, Olowogbowo, in the heart of central Lagos.

He was still in school when he started making his marks in boxing as an amateur in 1947. Reminiscing on his early breakthrough in the pugilistic sport, Hogan explained that if not for his strong will and love for the sport, he would have quit due to the indisposition of his parents who wanted him to concentrate more on his education. But the young Asuquo hung on in the face of

his parents' objection. In no time, his boxing prowess became glaring and later on, his parents left him alone as they felt he was mature enough to chose his own vocation in life.

By 1949, Hogan Bassegy joined the professional rank after distinguishing himself in the amateur cadre. His first fight was against Jack Salami who, after absorbing Hogan's solid punches got floored by a ferocious punch in the head. Shortly before passing out of school in 1950, he won the national flyweight title at the expense of Dick Jurein.

After winning the flyweight title, Hogan worked briefly with the Ordinance Depot in Lagos as a store keeper under a Briton called Sergeant Pearson. His boss, Hogan Bassegy narrated, wanted to send him to United Kingdom to polish his boxing skills, but the idea of traveling abroad did not really appeal to him. He had resolved not to travel abroad because of the cold climate in Europe.

But much later, he changed his mind in 1951 when another Briton named Jack Fransworth paid his fare to Britain. London turned a bed of roses for the little Nigerian as he had little problem passing the British Boxing Board of Control which issued him a British boxing license to enabled him fight in the United Kingdom. With the enormous challenge of professional boxing, Hogan employed a new manager, Peter Banasko to polish him ahead of his first professional fight in Britain. Before then, the stocky boxer had graduated from the flyweight to the bantamweight class. He later moved up to the featherweight class where he won the world title in 1957 by defeating Algerian-born Sherif Hamia who fought as a French citizen. The fight which took place in Paris saw Hamia badly bruised as the Nigerian boxer courted victory with deadly blows.

Hogan successfully defended the title twice before losing it to Davey Moore through a deep cut in the right eye which he sustained in the seventh round of the world title fight. That fight turned out to be Hogan's last fight as he quit the boxing ring at the age of 27.

But before then, he had become a Member of the British Empire (MBE) when he was knighted by the Queen of England, Elizabeth II on January 1, 1958. He was also honoured with the Lion of Africa award in Senegal. Six years later, in appreciation of the honour he brought to Nigeria, the then Head of State, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo bestowed the great lion of Africa with the Member of the Order of Niger (MON) award in 1979.

On his retirement, Hogan became a boxing coach and a successful one at that.

It is to his credit that some of Nigerian boxers were nurtured from obscurity to limelight, the likes of Nojeem Maiyegun who won the first Olympic medal for Nigeria in 1964, Isaac Ikhuria, bronze medalist at the 1972 Munich Olympics, Joe Mensah, Obisia Nwankpa and Davidson Andeh all passed through his tutelage at one time or the other.

Hogan Bassegy also helped late Dick Tiger who won a world title for the country in the middleweight and light heavyweight categories respectively. According to him, the late Dick Tiger had it rough when he got to Britain in the fifties. "He lost his first four fights and he risked having his licence revoked.

I sympathized with him and got him a new manager and ensured that he was well acclimatized to the freezing British weather which enabled him to win his fifth fight and that gave him the impetus to continue as a boxer," revealed Hogan in the book "Nigerian Stars of Sports."

During his lifetime, Bassey was noted for his blunt position on contemporary sporting issues. Asked at one time what was responsible for the dwindling fortune of boxing in the country, Bassey averred that the right set of people were not given the opportunity to administer boxing. He added that square pegs were put in round holes. With such situation, he remarked that the game will continue to plummet. "Government should take a cue from developed countries like America where people with the right qualification, knowledge and technical expertise administer sports," he said.

Another cog in the wheel of progress, he intoned is the fact that politics has been mingled with sports administration. He bemoaned a situation whereby merit had been sacrificed on the altar of tribalism and ethnicism. As a matter of fact, Bassey wanted the country's selection process to incorporate merit if Nigeria really wanted to excel in sports. In death, Hogan Bassey's memory still lingers on because of his remarkable contributions to sports development in the country. His first daughter, Pauline Hogan Bassey stated: "Hogan was more than a fighter, he was a wonderful companion to all who knew him."

Former scribe of the Nigeria Amateur Boxing Association (NABA), Olusola Luke described him as a humble and humane person. "When he gives you his words, you can take him for it. We really missed him because his type are rare to find," Hogan "Kid" Bassey was revered by friends and foes alike.

He had made his marks before passing on. And even though today, Hogan Bassey is gone, his legacy will forever stand the test of time.

Demeyin is a Lagos based writer. <http://www.nigerdeltacongress.com/harticles/hogan.htm>

**November 21 1955**  
**The Daily Mirror**  
**A Man of flesh and blood turned to stone**

ANY two men can make a fight.  
 What makes a GREAT fight?

Skill, courage, punch, the ability to come from behind, to triumph over grievous, bleeding handicap, to transform slow, inexorable defeat into breath taking dramatic victory.

And it WAS a great fight that we lucky thousands saw at the King's Hall, Belfast, when Hogan (Kid) Bassey became the first Nigerian to win an Empire boxing title by knocking out Billy (Spider) Kelly. the featherweight champion from Derry, in the eighth of their scheduled fifteen round battle.

## WHAT A KNOCK-OUT IT WAS.



As I saw it, Bassey landed a left hook to the jaw of the ever-crouching Irishman, hard enough to turn his head sideways so that the right could be planted with the force of a bullet on the angle of the jaw.

The cagey Kelly was petrified — a man of flesh and blood turned instantly to stone, A living tree cut right through, bark and sap and pith, by a stroke of a black axeman's blade.

He fell straight backwards, unconscious before he even reached the floor, and then doubly so as the back of his head banged on the canvas

### Red-faced Gnome

Scottish referee Peter Moir, a red-faced gnome. hovered quiveringly over him, taking up the shouted count of timekeeper Michael Ross, who rang the bell for Kelly's father, the original Spider, when HE was champion seventeen years ago.

*They could each have counted to a hundred instead of ten, and it would have brought no solace to Billy boy — no hope of his Beating 'even that count*

He lay on his back and, while a rigor seemed to envelop his trunk, his legs and his extended thighs shook in the palsy that a punch can bring. The count reached the definitive ten and still Kelly's eyes were propped wide open, blank as broken electric bulbs, gazing sightlessly against the glaring ring lights

### Unknowing Eyes

He lay there still while the tiny Bassey was hoisted high in brawny dusky arms. He lay there while they felt his heart and folded a towel gently under his head and, very sadly, great pear-shaped tears squeezed out of the Irishman's unknowing eyes.

And then, praise be after the long minutes, he was on his two feet again — thread legged though he was — and, after a brief sojourn on his corner stool, he was able to pose briefly with his conqueror.

But how had it happened even in retrospect that explosive ending seems to smack of magic — black magic, if you will. For Kelly was so surely on the road to success. Of the seven completed rounds. I gave four to him, only one to Bassey.

More than that, it was highly unlikely that Bassey could have continued — or would have been allowed to — for more than, at most, a couple of rounds more. As early as the fifth, an ominous redness had appeared on his left eyebrow. His seconds worked on it but the referee inspected it at close range once between rounds, and was keeping a wary eye on it as the fight progressed.

In the seventh, and the completed part of the eighth, Bassey had to dash the red tears out of his eyes.

### **Out of Focus**

It was obvious that he would never go fifteen rounds like THAT, and in any case, that he could never focus well enough to outpoint the sharp-shooting Kelly, who so often bent double like someone making a back at leap-frog.

So Bassey decided to hit and to fight instead of jabbing and boxing. Perhaps if Kelly had stuck with his boxing, he might have won. Kelly had been the more adroit mover and, after the first few rounds, had been beating his man to the punch.

But I was astonished that he was never warned for his constant ducking below the waist — and he also did most of the holding. Then instead of pecking and jabbing at the damaged eyebrow and drifting away out of trouble, Kelly elected to try to swap punches. I presume with the idea that another really good one would force the referee to intervene.

And it was only poetic — if drastic — justice that he should be coming up out of one of those exaggerated crouches when he ran into the punch which spelt O-U-T.

### **Congratulations**

So congratulations to Bassey — and to the crowd who, after the hush of the moment of untruth, gave the Nigerian an acclamation and proved themselves much better sports than they have sometimes been. And after that Bassey spoke to Nigeria via the radio, and so did his fiancée. And the Commissioner for Nigeria in Britain spoke to his country, too, and even manager Pete Banasko got in a few words.

Now Bassey hopes to meet Fred Galiana, of Spain, who recently stopped Ray Famechon, for the European featherweight title — because, as Banasko told me: "We would regard that as a final eliminator for a world title."

The little Nigerian might bring it off at that,  
CERTAINLY IT COULDN'T HAPPEN TO A NICER BLOKE.

**The Daily Mirror**  
**20 December 1957**

**Peter Wilson recalls his greatest thrill of 1957**

The scene is Paris, Paris in June... which conjures up a picture of green fringed boulevards, elegant ladies making a fashion parade of the pavement cafes, the sun burnishing the Seine into coils of copper, and traditional romances being wafted by the balmy summer breezes.

But this was a very different Parisian scene. In the very shadow of the Eiffel Tower, an ebony-black, teak-tough little Nigerian from Calabar was challenging an alert French-Algerian, the colour of old piano keys with the face of an intelligent monkey.

**THE PRIZE**—the world's featherweight championship, laid vacant by the retirement of Sandy Saddler, the American Negro with the red-tinged hair.

Cherif Hamia was the favourite, Hogan "Kid" Bassey was a dedicated man.

On the Sunday before the fight I had sat with him while he ate a modest lunch of cold chicken and tomatoes and, after permission from his trainer one bread roll.

***DAZZLING***

I have never seen a fitter little man as he sat relaxed in a dazzling white sleeveless singlet with his skin gleaming like black satin, I have never listened to a man so utterly determined to win. He said to me: "Mr, Wilson, I'd rather die than lose this fight. It means everything to me.

" I am just longing to go back to my homeland, Nigeria — **AS WORLD CHAMPION. PLEASE GOD.**"

Now it's the moment of truth in the ring of the Palais des Sports, with the Jet bomber from Nigeria facing the rangy North African. It was a fast first round, with the chunky Bassey sawing away at Hamia's wasp-waisted body, then switching his attack to the head and advancing behind one of the best left hands in the business. Shortly before the bell he bent backwards blood-red ropes.

**THE SECOND ROUND ALMOST SAW DISASTER FOR BASSEY.**

There was a mix-up in the centre of the ring and then a whistling right cross landed on the Nigerian's jaw and cropped him to his knees. He was not dazed, but he was clearly hurt, as he showed by taking a count of seven.

But when he did get up he showed himself the kind of fighting man I love to see. Instead of backing away or holding, he plunged into Hamia, and at the bell they were swinging furiously at each other.

### ***FOOLISH***

From the third round onwards I thought Hamia fought a foolish fight. Instead of using his greater speed, which seemed his one asset, he was content to mix it. And Bassey, hooking to the head with his left and banging a right solid as a door stopper under the heart, gradually went ahead. By the sixth Bassey was well in front. There was blood bright as holly berries coming from Hamia's right eye and Bassey was now blanketing his man with a saturation of punches.

### **Glistening**

The inexorable advance of the superbly fit Nigerian —glistening with sweat under the lights— continued during the seventh. Hamia's nose was swelling now and he was having difficulty in breathing. There was more damage to his right eye and for the first time he showed such signs of fatigue that I began to wonder whether he could last the distance.

The ninth was a signpost in capitals to those who can "read" a fight. The crowd, violently pro-Hamia, had gone very silent. And opposed to the solid, sinister PLUNKS of Bassey's left hand you could hear only a feeble *slap, slap* from Hamia's right .... Proving that his ivory coloured fist was too numb to close the glove properly. Twice in this round Bassey draped his man over the ropes like an empty sack,

Now it's the tenth and Bassey is truly the knight in black armour achieving the laurel wreath of the grand tournament. From the long lances of his left he has shifted to wicked hooked punches like the sword blows of a foot soldier.

A left hook' distorts Hamia's jaw as though it is made of rubber and he totters backwards into those blood-red ropes.

### ***MOWED DOWN***

The blows rain on the wilting Algerian, biting and crunching into his face until he is mowed down like the tall corn before a reaper. Slowly, slowly he slides down the ropes, and in the heaving sea of overwhelming unconsciousness he grasps like a desperate drowning man at Bassey and pulls him down as well.

The Kid shakes himself free while French referee Rene Schemann counts over the crumpled North African. Somehow Hamia, using the fighter's last resort, blind unknowing courage, drags himself up. But the black death . . . the sable slayer . . the dusky destroyer', thunders home yet another barrage like thumping truncheons which cuts Hamia's eye yet again.

Surely this must be the end — yes, yes, it is. Schemann

has stepped between them, pulling Bassey away.

The little Nigerian has become the first world champion ever to be produced by this country. And well he deserved it. His boxing, particularly his left hand hitting, was classic. The blows with his right fist “killed” the body so that in the end the body died.

### ***BLACK X***

His d e f e n c e — arms crossed in a great black X covering face and body was a burglar-proof safe. Almost before Bassey could be announced as the official winner, the whole tribe of shouting, sweating, almost sobbing Nigerians fizzed out of the crowd and into the ring. The burly gendarmes with their stout batons were swept aside and Bassey was then in far greater danger than ever he had been against Hamia.

Outside in the corridor scores of anguished North Africans were sobbing, too, and even banging their heads on the walls and against the floor. It was like being in the Kasbah in Algeria during a mass funeral.

**All in all, quite a night.**

## **The Daily Mirror**

**23 Jan 1958**

### **Little Champ Keeps His Word**

THE little man who always keeps his word is topping the bill at Liverpool Stadium tonight. Almost six years ago to the night a little Nigerian appeared there against a certain Ray Hillyard. He won in four rounds, and to anyone who would listen, he confided, under pressure, that he had been working as a clerk in an ordnance factory in his native country, and that yes he was the bantamweight champion of Nigeria.

The only trouble was that there weren't many listeners. There were always plenty of coloured boxers and they all claimed to be champions of somewhere or other.

So Hogan Kid Bassey—for that was the name he gave you, if you pressed him — started on the round of the small halls where boxers learn their craft and where so many other good men before him had sweated it out. He boxed at Hanley and he boxed at Blackpool, Preston saw him, and he lost his first fight in Europe in Belfast. He appeared at Manchester and West Hartlepool and Leeds — and now the people who knew their boxing were beginning to talk about the little man, as compact and shining as the black ball in snooker,

### ***AGAINST THE GOLDEN BOY***

ONE of the men who did more than talk was Harry Ormisher, a well known bookmaker and sportsman— oh, yes, you CAN be both ! — who had seen Bassey's first fight at Liverpool.

It was Ormisher who gave Bassey the backing which led to his best win up to that date. He was matched for £500 a side with the golden boy of the South "Smiling" Sammy McCarthy. McCarthy, one of the most brilliant amateurs I have ever seen, had turned pro and had a run of twenty-eight fights without a defeat.

Little more than six months earlier I had seen Bassey lose to the French North African, Emil Chemama. It was one of the only two fights that Bassey ever lost inside the distance, and I still remember the shriek of agony he gave when he broke his thumb on Chemama's head. It wasn't much of an omen for Bassey's success against "Smiler" McCarthy.

### **HE KNELT TO PRAY**

There was a lot of betting at the Albert Hall that October night with the clean-cut kid from Stepney carrying a pile of Cockney money. But there were shrewd men from the North to cover all the bets — and Bassey justified them by inflicting the first pro defeat on McCarthy. After scenes of roaring excitement at the end I wrote:

*“ And then came the moment that the still cheering crowd did not see — the moment of solitude. Behind his dressing-room door, the way barred against his admirers, Bassey dropped to his knees and prayed for a full five minutes. A little black boy grateful to God for what he had been able to accomplish.”*

Last summer came Bassey's big chance when he met another French North African, Cherif Hamia, for the world's title left vacant by the retirement of Sandy Saddler.

Before the fight he had said to me: " Mr. Wilson, I'd rather die than lose this fight." And that was the way he fought — only it was Hamia who did the " dying," ending up out on his feet with the referee intervening in the tenth round. *Bassey, the first Nigerian ever to gain global fame, was champion of the world.*

### **IN THE BIG MONEY**

NOW it has been announced that he is to go to Los Angeles in March to meet the Mexican, Ricardo Moreno, for the largest sum ever earned by a featherweight from outside the States—at least £25,000, but the little man had to keep his word first at Liverpool. Almost exactly five years ago at Leeds a bristle topped little Belgian, Pierre Cossemyns—whom I once saw boxing in Singapore — outpointed Bassey

That night he made himself a promise — he would in the future defeat Cossemyns. Later he made another promise to the late great Johnny Best who gave him his first chance at Liverpool. He said that when he had won the world title he would appear at the dear old Stadium—and that he wouldn't want the earth for doing so. That's why Hogan " Kid " Bassey tops the bill there tonight against the Belgian.

End

## **The Daily Mirror**

### **1 April 1958**

For me it's got to be Hogan Kid Bassey to retain his world featherweight title against Ricardo (Little Bird) Moreno of Mexico, at the Wrigley Field Baseball Park here tomorrow night.

THAT IS IF THE FIGHT TAKES PLACE AT ALL THEN.

I make that stipulation because they certainly couldn't have staged it today.

### **ROAD BLOCKED**

Come to sunny California, they say. Come where the sun is always shining – they say. So what happens today ? – Off and on for six hours the rain came down in stair rods. For Los Angeles read Manchester. Sunny California is under water. Part of the coast road is blocked of by a landslide. As with meteorologists all over the world the Americans are bravely optimistic.

The odds are roughly two to one in favour of Bassey and British Boxing Board of Control kindly skip the following words.

*There is a clause in the contract calling for a return match inside ninety days should the champion lose.*

But Bassey does not figure to lose

### ***HIS FANCY***

With his customary low voiced modesty he has quietly maintained on TV in mass interviews and in private conversation:

**" I RATHER FANCY MY CHANCES."**

He has every reason to be confident. In the past four years he has had twenty-five fights and lost only two of them. One was on points to Joe Woussem and one on a silly cut forehead verdict against Jean Sneyers whom he had previously twice beaten. Against this Moreno, who has not yet completed four years in the professional ring has had thirty-three fights of which he has won twenty-nine — all inside the distance — lost three — one inside the distance — and registered one *technical draw* in two rounds.

And if you're going to ask me what that last one means I'm going to have to tell you that I don't have a Technical clue.

## UNKNOWNNS

On paper, or on canvas for that matter, this is an impressive record. But you've got to consider the quality of the opposition and in fact up to 1956 the men whom Mereno had met were virtually unknowns.

Then in January of that year he was outpointed over ten rounds by Memo Diez , the Mexican who stopped European flyweight champion Young Martin in one round.

*To offset that he beat his first two " name " fighters, Oscar Suarez and Pappy Goult.*

## EXCITING

In 1957 his last three fights resulted in his beating Italian – Tunisian Gaetano Annaloro In five rounds, being knocked out by Jose Coterio in seven and stopping the highly rated American Ike Chestnut in six.

As a sports writer I'm neutral, but as someone who loves British boxing I can't help saying that I hope Bassey wins. More importantly I think my hopes will be justified.

Moreno belongs strictly to the modern crash, bang, wallop school and his brand of fighting can produce riotously exciting nights. But any connection between this peculiar skill and what we used to like to call the noble art of self defence, is purely coincidental.

***Bassey is different He has the knack of crossing his arms into a great black X which provides a defence which is almost burglar proof.***

## BLAZING

But he is no smothering flypaper of a fighter. His blazing — but controlled— rage when he was dropped by Frenchman Cherif Hamia before winning his world crown, had to be felt to be believed.

As I see it, Moreno will go all out for an early win — his points defeat by Diez was the only time he has gone ten rounds. All his other bouts have finished inside seven rounds and this one, of course, is scheduled for fifteen. Unless he scores a knockout or Heaven forbid, a bad cut — within the first five or six rounds, I think he will punch himself out.

And then Bassey will go to work on him with a small but exceedingly efficient circular saw and cut him down to less than life size. It's difficult — and usually daft — to forecast a fight when you haven't seen one of the men in action.

*But I have a notion that Bassey will win either on a knock-out or the referee's intervention some time between the eighth and twelfth rounds.*

**The Daily Mirror**  
**20 March 1959**

**Blind Bassey Superb in Defeat**

As I write this a spot on my right sleeve—now turning rusty —keeps catching my eye . .  
. a very small red badge for very great courage.

I'm back in the luxury Surf Rider Inn. It's three o'clock in the morning. The only ceaseless sound is the susurration of the Pacific. And as some 400 people slumber round me I think of just one whose blood decorates my sleeve—for on my side of the boxing ropes we don't bleed.

**HIS NAME IS HOGAN (KID) BASSEY. HIS TITLE—EX-FEATHERWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD.**

He has had five stitches over his left eye, four over his right and tape to cover his gashed cheek. He has lost his crown after thirteen rounds to Davey Moore, "The Springfield Rifle" — a tough, mustachioed Negro minister's son from Ohio, who carries an invisible tomahawk in his gloved right hand.

***GALLANTRY***

And all I can wish Bassey is sound sleep, for what else is there for you when you have lost your most prized possession. Lost it with gallantry and without sacrificing your skill, but lost it all the same. And, as the Americans say "There's no such thing as a good loser."

Before I tell you how he lost it, let's go behind the scenes to the dressing rooms after the fight. Bassey, as superb in defeat as he has been in victory, began by apologising.

**YES, SO HELP ME HE DID.**

He said: "*I'm sorry, Mr. Wilson, if I let you down.*" There was the corkscrew gash over the right eye; the deep-cut red scimitar following the curve of his left eyebrow, the cut on his cheek as raw as a dog bite. And on the floor there are patches of his blood where they haven't been able to staunch the bleeding as he moved restlessly about. He says: " It wasn't that I was hurt so much, but I couldn't see. It wasn't my night, but Moore is a great fighter

Then his manager George Biddles says to me:

“ I wanted him to pack it in after nine rounds, but he won't hear of it. So it goes on round after round with the blood running into his eyes so that he can't see, and he gets hit with punches which would never normally catch him. At the end of the thirteenth I say “Can you see ? ” and he says, " No." And I say, " Well, that's enough then—he was on a good hiding to nothing. And he says very quietly

"All right Mr. Biddles," and I call the referee over and — well you were there, y o u saw it **THAT WAS ALL.**

Along the smoky, grimy corridor Willie Ketchum, manager of the new world champion, mentions the return fight.

### **UNLIKELY**

It's scheduled to take place within ninety days. But I can't see Bassey being able to go back to Liverpool, return here and start heavy training — as he would have to do — in a couple of months' time. Promoter George Parnassus breaks in with. " It was a great fight — it will make a great return."

He says it could take place in November at a new 20,000-seater stadium in Los Angeles.

Moore comes in from under the shower—sleek and glistening like a brown seal He says; "It was the toughest fight I've had, Bassey is a great champion, I can't take anything from him.

### ***P's ANO Q's***

" I had to be on my P's and Q's all the time. Yes, that's what it was—I had to be on my P's and Q's.

" He hit me with one left hook here " . . . he points to a "mouse" under his right eye which counterbalanced a red, raw slice on his left cheekbone, "AND FOR A TIME I WAS SEEING TWO OR THREE OF HIM. I concentrated most on body shots because I'd never gone fifteen rounds, and that was the way to slow him down."

### **HOW DID IT ALL HAPPEN ?**

How did Bassey fail in this ring drenched with the heat and blinded with the glare of the TV lights so that sweat and blood were almost indistinguishable ?

For the first five rounds, a third of the contest , Bassey was the dark matador dominating the plunging challenger in this sweaty bullpit, There was an even and uneventful **FIRST ROUND.** Then in the **SECOND**, a left to the liver like an assassin's thrust and a left hook to the jaw which half dropped Moore.

The **THIRD** was even more clearly the champion's, We could still call him that then. Nothing much in the **FOURTH** except that just before the bell Moore was cut on the cheek.

But in the **FIFTH** Moore out of distance , off balance and slowed down by rights under the heart , was pushed down by a confidently advancing Bassey. The challenger was assisted up by referee Tommy Hart.

It was Nigeria all the way. Rarely can you pinpoint the moment when a fight completely changes . . . when the incoming tide turns to the ebb in a flash.

### **T H I S T I M E Y O U C O U L D .**

In the **SIXTH** Moore caught Bassey with a good left hook and a bonecrushing, nerve-shattering, brain-numbing right cross. They were far and away the best punches he had so far delivered. The champion was hurt and slightly dazed. Almost at once he was considerably more so. At the bell both men were fighting furiously , and neither the boxers nor the referee heard it.

As the bell continued to ring, referee Hart dashed between them. Bassey dropped his hands and Moore, still unaware of the position, landed three smashers on the champion's jaw before being turned towards his corner.

### ***TO BLAME***

Bassey strayed vaguely and stilt legged into a neutral corner where he stood dazed, while precious seconds of rest ticked away, These are hard words to write, but I do think that blame for his defeat must go in part — perhaps a large part—to his corner.

For when he finally got there blood was seeping from over his left eye, and from that moment it was never checked. Up to the **SEVENTH** round it had been Emperor Hogan deftly chastising an upstart pretender. Now Bassey was a monarch on the rung against an arrogant insurgent.

### ***DAZED***

The **EIGHTH** was even. But in the **NINTH** Bassey, who seemed to be getting on top again, was dazed by another of Moore's overhand rights, Now the blood mingled with the sweat and ran non-stop into his eyes.

**ROUND TEN** - and Bassey's right eye was beginning to look really bad. There didn't seem much hope left in the chest now, and the, **ELEVENTH** was bad too. Blood was flowing like scarlet treacle down Bassey's. face as Moore scored with heavy rights to the head.

Bassey boxed coolly again in the **TWELFTH**. But in the **THIRTEENTH** Moore kept on cramming those right-handers down the champion's throat, and the blood would not stop. At the bell Bassey was desperately tired.

It was no surprise, and in a way a relief, when suddenly it was **EX-CHAMPION** if you were talking about Hogan Kid Bassey, On my score card I had Moore ahead by six rounds to four, with three even.

End

**16 August 1959**

**After-the-Bell Punch Beat Me, Bassey Says**

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The manager of ex-featherweight champion Hogan (Kid) Bassey Friday blamed an after the bell punch for the little Nigerian's downfall last spring. But he said it won't happen again when Bassey meets Davey Moore for the title Wednesday.

"Bassey was in charge of the first fight until the bell ' rang at the end of the sixth round," said George Biddles. "Then he dropped his hands and Moore cut his eye with an after the bell punch."

Moore won the fight and the title when Bassey's cuts forced him to retire after the 12<sup>th</sup> round. "Now I'am not accusing Moore of being a dirty fighter," Biddles said. "It was up to Bassey to protect himself at all times. "He failed to do so, but has learned his lesson the hard way - losing his title."

However, Biddies admitted that Moore had opened up a cut over Bassey's eye with a sizzling and extremely legal left hook in the early rounds.

"But it was the illegal punch after the sixth that did most of the damage," Biddies insisted.

\* \* \*

THE ENGLISH tavern owner said he is confident that his little African lion will take the title back to England. "I'm not taking anything away from Moore," Biddies said. "He's a good fighter and an aggressive one. "But Bassey is a better workman in the ring and will be ready for him. "You won't see Hogan bleeding as he was the last time. First, he'll protect himself after the bell and second he'll have an expert in his corner.

"Johnny Villaflor, the cut man from California, is one of the fight game's great experts in his profession."

End

Davey Moore, the pint-sized boxer who won the world's featherweight championship from Hogan (Kid) Bassey of Nigeria here last March, Saturday was an 8-5 favorite to do it again Wednesday night in their nationally televised rematch at Olympic Auditorium.

The scheduled 15-round contest will be telecast but will be blacked out within a 300-mile radius of Los Angeles. Moore, 25-year-old son of a Kentucky minister, cut Bassey over both eyes in their first meeting and was awarded a 13<sup>th</sup> round knockout.

But Bassey, born Okon Bassey Asuquo 27 years ago to a tribal chieftain in Calibar, Nigeria, was well behind on the scorecards of all three officials when his manager, George Biddles, halted the fight.

The initial meeting, which was Bassey's second defense of the 126-pound title, drew a crowd of 7,400 fans and a gross gate of \$65,000 at this same Olympic Auditorium. Promoter Cal Eaton

was predicting a near sellout of more than 10,000 and a gate between \$90,-000 and \$100,000 for the rematch.

Biddles, although insisting that Bassey will regain the crown, had hired one of California's veteran "cut men," Johnny Villaflor, to attend to the between-rounds welfare of his boxer. Noticeably absent from the Bassey entourage are the two corner men who were unable to stem the flow of blood in the first fight.

The bout will be the first for both fighters since the title changed hands. It will be Bassey's fourth appearance in Los Angeles and Moore's eighth. Bassey won the title by stopping Cherif Hamia in 10 rounds in Paris on June 24, 1957, in the finale of an elimination tournament prompted by the retirement of champion Sandy Saddler.

The gentlemanly Nigerian, who now lives in Liverpool, made one successful title defense — knocking out Mexico's erratic Ricardo (Pajarito) Moreno in three rounds here at Wrigley Field Apr. 1, 1958. His other showing here, last December, resulted in a 10-round non-title decision over Ernesto Parra of Mexico at Hollywood Legion Stadium.

**21 August 1959**

### **MOORE STOPS BASSEY IN 11 TO RETAIN TITLE**

LOS ANGELES (AP)—It, was a deliriously happy champion Davey Moore who jumped for joy in the center of the ring after stopping a determined but beaten Hogan (Kid) Bassey in the world featherweight title rematch Wednesday night. And it was a dejected Bassey who sprawled on his stool in his corner after refusing to come out for round 11.

Just before the round opened, referee Frankie Van peered down at the little ex champion from Nigeria and asked him if he was alright. Bassey squinting up at Van with a partly closed right eye, pushed away the mouthpiece a second was trying to put into his mouth and said:

“No, I wish to go out”

One of the seconds shouted “Go,go” and again tried to put the mouthpiece in Bassey’s mouth, but Bassey merely shook his head.

His manager, George Biddles, leaned through the ropes and told Van: "My boy is getting beaten. He doesn't want to continue to fight."

BY THIS TIME, the bell had rung and the champion was jiggling, happily in front of the anxious knot before Bassey's corner. Van raised Moore's hand in victory. Moore jumped up and down and bounced across the ring into the arms of his manager, Willie Ketchum.

The two little warriors then met in an embrace while the crowd — an estimated 8,000 — warmly applauded both for one of the most gallant title fights in the 126 p o u n d division's history.

A small mob of police, sportswriters and hangers on followed the two battlers through the aisle to the dressing room. In his dressing cubicle, Bassey slumped on a stool while handlers applied an ice pack to his closed right eye and swabbed away the blood from a slight cut on the side of his head. When a sportswriter asked what made Bassey decide not to come out for the 11th round, he replied in his British accent: "I could not see out of my right eye and I could not throw my right hand because it hurt very much."

Bassey said he hurt the right hand when he bounced it off the champion's head in the seventh round. "The gloves didn't fit. They just weren't right," Bassey said. He was quickly seconded by trainer Charley Fox who said: "Hogan hurt his hand because the gloves didn't fit."

When the writer asked if manager Biddles had any complaint about the fight and especially the gloves, he replied: "No, it was good fight. We lost to a great champion." Bassey said he was not hurt, even in the wild 10th when he tottered drunkenly before Moore's swinging barrage. Bassey said he has no thoughts of retiring, and when asked if he would like to meet Moore again, he replied: "With pleasure."

Down the hall the champion, unmarked and smiling, affably met the press. He said he was confident of victory and felt he would have knocked out Bassey had the Nigerian come out for the 11th round. "The difference was the body punches," Moore said. "They really slowed him down. I wasn't trying for a knockout because I didn't want to take chances and I knew Bassey was very determined," Moore said. The champion said his corner throughout the fight told him to press the action because he was behind in points. "But they always tell me that," Moore said, "So I didn't pay it too much mind."

When the fight was stopped Moore was leading on all cards by from three to seven points. Moore said he wasn't surprised that Bassey didn't continue — because he knew he had a bad eye. Referee Van said later the damage to Bassey's eye was bad enough for the fight to be stopped.

Moore gave the gallant Bassey, from whom he won the title last March, credit for being one of the toughest he has met in his 42-fight career. But he said he was never hurt, even in the tumultuous fifth when Bassey scored his shots. Moore just shrugged when asked whom he'll fight next.

### **Davey Calls Kid 'Game Others Not So Generous**

LOS ANGELES (UPI)—Featherweight champion Davey Moore graciously praised one-time titleholder Hogan (Kid) Bassey as a "game and good fighter" Wednesday night, but some observers were less enthusiastic.

Moore retained his crown on an 11<sup>th</sup> round knockout at Olympic Auditorium when Bassey bowed out with eye and hand injuries. Referee Frankie Van cast doubt on the legitimacy of Bassey's sudden exit, intimating to reporters the little Nigerian easily could have continued.

Van said Bassey was still in the thick of the fight, although he himself had Moore ahead by three points. The judges had Moore ahead on points.

BOTH BASSEY and manager George Biddles readily admitted asking for the disappointing termination, although both insisted the title would have changed hands had not Bassey been handicapped by ill-fitting gloves.

"I don't like to fight with a handicap," Bassey said in his dressing room. "I thought I fought a better battle this time. It was a good bout and I only hope everyone enjoyed it." "He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day," Bassey told a reporter.

### **Manager Asks Bassey to Quit Ring**

LOS ANGELES (AP) The manager of Hogan (Kid) Bassey said Wednesday night he has asked the gallant little former featherweight champion to retire. Bassey had just been defeated by Davey Moore. Bassey, who arrived at a press party with dark glasses hiding his swollen right eye and a bandage over a badly bruised right hand, admitted that manager George Biddles had suggested he call his fighting career quits.

Bassey, quietly and in his British accent added: "This is not a decision I can make in a moment. I must think it over. I will decide next week." Biddles, who guided the tough little Nigerian to the world title in 1957, said that he does not intend to have Bassey "fighting for a \$1,000 here and \$1,000 there and getting hurt in the process."

Bassey's manager said that he is well aware his game little fighter can still make many dollars in the prize ring. But Biddles added: "Hogan has made money and I, as his manager, have also made money. And I am not that hungry to see Hogan hurt in the ring. "He is a fine little gentleman and I would like to see him retire now unscratched."

### ***Round by Round Account*** Bassey Quits at the End of 10

#### **ROUND 1**

Neither man did any damage in the first round nor did either land a telling blow Bassey went on the offensive, ticking lefts off Moore's head while Moore counterpunched primarily with lefts to the body. The best blow of the round was Bassey's straight left to Moore's stomach. As Bassey returned to his corner, a trickle of blood was noticeable from the corner of his left eye. **Round even.**

#### **ROUND 2**

Bassey's eye was still bleeding as he came out for the bell. He continued his flicking attack, but Moore changed his style, concentrating on the challenger's head. Moore got in the best blows, a series of lefts and rights to the head, midway in the round. Moore's round.

**ROUND 3**

There was little action in the first 90 seconds of the round. But things began to happen in the latter half after Referee Van broke up the first clinch of the fight. Moore scored heavily with an alternating head to body attack, but Bassey countered somewhat with a good roundhouse left to the head. Moore's infighting was more telling. Moore's round.

**ROUND 4**

Bassey got in his best punch of the fight early in the round with a looping left to the head, stunning Moore. Midway in the round, Bassey slipped and fell to the mat when pushed by Moore. It was not a knockdown. Late in the round, Moore was warned by Van to keep his blows up. Moore scored heaviest in a late-round exchange which saw the two men trade body blows. Moore's round.

**ROUND 5**

Bassey scored his best round. He had the champion groggy and hanging on for a good part of the round after he caught him early with a hard right to the head and followed it up with alternating lefts and rights to the head. He also caught Moore with another right stinger at the bell. Bassey's round.

**ROUND 6**

Moore came out fully recovered at the bell and staggered Bassey with a clubbing left to the head. But the Nigerian bounced right back once again and scored two telling blows midway in the round—a hard right to the head and a right uppercut which snapped Moore's head. Bassey's round.

**ROUND 7**

The action slowed a bit as both men did some infighting. Moore tried desperately to break through a well covered Bassey who put his head down and wrapped his hands around his ears. There were no decisive punches. Round even.

**ROUND 8**

Bassey staggered Moore with a right to the head as he caught the champion coming in early in the round, but Moore was pretty much in command as he staggered the challenger. Bassey came back late in the round, but it was Moore's round.

**ROUND 9**

Both men appeared to tire as the action again slowed. Bassey was swinging wild, missing his mark and Moore countered well with alternating punches to the head and body. Bassey's eye appeared to be well repaired as it had not bled for the past four rounds. Moore's round.

**ROUND 10**

Moore had Bassey hanging on for the last minute of the round and had his right eye all but closed. He caught the Nigerian with a straightaway right to the head midway in the round and followed with wild swinging rights and lefts to the head. Bassey appeared to be in a bad way as he went to his corner.

**ROUND 11**

Bassey did not come out for the 11th round, the fight was over and it went into the records as a 11round knockout.

End

**21 August 1959**  
**The Daily Mirror**

When a man vanishes through the door which is marked in red lights "EXIT," it is *never* a joyous occasion. Particularly when this is a man whom you have seen fight bravely and skilfully in many different lands. But friendship cannot transcend truth. When Hogan (Kid) Bassey failed to answer the bell for the eleventh round of his world featherweight title fight against Davey Moore, the man who conquered him last March, this was an exit without the almost inhuman courage, the dignity, the blind guts which the professional ring demands. For twenty-nine minutes of fighting. Bassey, on my score card had done well.

***VOLCANIC***

In the last minute of the tenth round he took explosive volcanic punishment. It almost closed his right eye, twice hurled him back into the ropes, the cage around the canvas but this time a crutch to a tottering man, and gave Moore the round by almost the largest margin possible.

Does one minute's battery entitle a man who was the best fighter at his weight up to five months ago, a man who has profited mightily out of the ring, a man who is bearing the flags of two countries in a foreign strand to "call it a day," to terminate his career as a serious challenger for global honours ?

**I DON'T THINK SO.**

***NICKED***

You can — and no doubt will — say that it's easy to be courageous from the safe side of the ropes. You can point to Bassey's left eye nicked in the first round and his right, bruised underneath in the seventh. and beginning to close. I shall not argue those points with you, but I still believe that the Bassey of two years ago would have gone, out for one more round at least, one tremendous gallant stand which might have sent him flat on his back but which would have brought the crowd and — more important — his many friends here to their feet

***REGRETTABLE***

I should then not have had to listen to one of the most regrettable statements I have ever heard a beaten warrior make. It was Bassey saying: " He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day." We should not have had to hear manager George Biddles pleading desperately

" Hogan has the proud record, of being brave all over the world and doesn't quite understand English proverbs."

There wouldn't have been George Parnassus who has promoted Bassey in three world title fights, livid-grey with anger, hissing

"Sure I was disappointed. You don't get the kind of money we pay to do that sort of thing." And Bassey making it worse by saying: " I 'm the kind of fighter who doesn't like to fight under a handicap."

So as I write this with the shade of midnight etching the wall I wonder what went wrong when it all turned sour. You think of Bassey taking the first three rounds with left jabs and hooks, and blocking Moore's attack. The flow of blood which had sprung like a gusher from the corner of his left eye at the end of the first was now checked. The fourth was Moore's first winning round on my card.

***BUMPED***

It was significant that it was the first time that Bassey chose to fight instead of box and he got himself bumped by this tough, muscular, minister's son.

Bassey went down backwards, pushed and shoved instead of punched down, and the referee indicated that it was not a knockdown and Moore moved to help Bassey up. But the Nigerian got to his feet himself rather contemplatively, not like a man who wants more than anything to get at the throat and chin and eyes of an opponent who has wronged him.

The fifth was a thriller, Bassey landed a right, a left and another right to the jaw and then he scythed his right high to Moore's head. Bassey lashed to the body and Moore did the same thing. For extra measure they fought after the bell and Bassey had the better of that, too.

The sixth was Bassey's and the seventh was Moore's. Bassey's right eye was beginning to show signs of minor damage. In the eighth Bassey was a chunky cube of ebony ice in boxing boots and gloves. Now it was the ninth and this was a "nothing in it" round.

So to the tenth. This is how it looked from the ringside, Bassey landed a right and left to the head. Moore ducked and as he came up Bassey caught, him with a left hook.

### ***HOOPED***

Moore buried a fish hook of a right to the body and then crossed his right to the jaw and Bassey went into a croquet hoop with his feet and fingertips supporting his body. But he was up before a count started and tore into his man.

Now finesse was gone and fury had taken over. Moore in his turn came back and a thudding right sunk into the point of Bassey's jaw. He reeled back and the ropes supported him. Moore sprang in, all attack now, and Bassey's head shook from side to side like an ebony pingpong ball.

HIS corner screamed hysterically to him. Cobwebs and blotting paper replaced his brains. At the bell he was bemused and he lurched back to his stool. They worked over him frantically. He didn't respond.

Someone gestured to referee Frankie Van and he talked intimately to Bassey rather like a family solicitor asking a dying man if this is his real intention. And then when the bell clashed and Moore advanced across the ring and that was it, and the crowd didn't understand it.

And when they did realize that the last minute had decided Bassey to give up, sitting down, their silence changed to the bitterest sound in all —the booing of the dissatisfied.

### ***TOUGHER***

And dont say that it was not all right for them to boo. for some of them HAD been in the ring themselves and others felt that if you go through that red-lighted door marked "Exit" you must be carried out on a stretcher.

So back to the dressing rooms and here are the last quotes of the men most concerned. —

Davey Moore, for instance, who said: " It was tougher than the last time. When Bassey was hesitating in his corner at the end of the tenth I was praying he would not go on. But if he had come out for the next round. I don't think he would have finished it."

There are only three more- From Bassey's manager George Biddles; "He's a working lad and

I'm a working manager. We've both done well. We could make some more money but he's taken too much punishment round the face. I'd like him to retire now, but I'll let him sleep on it. It would be better to go while people remember that he was world champion,'

***I WISH..,***

Harry Ormesher, the North Country bookmaker who has spent thousands following and supporting Bassey: " I should like Hogan to sleep on it but the truth is he doesn't have to struggle for money these days.

Bassey's wife. Maria, said nothing.

**I SAY THIS: I WISH I'D NEVER HEARD THE  
KID SAYING "HE WHO F I G H T S AND RUNS AWAY.**

**End**