



“Irish Mike” goes the distance

Not many people can say they've battled Mike Tyson, George Foreman AND cockroaches. Mike Jameson can. By Lisa Lupo

Clark Pest Control Inspector
Mike Jameson battles Mike Tyson.

He made it to the Golden Gloves finals at the age of 19. He has boxed Mike Tyson, George Foreman, Evander Holyfield and knocked down Randall "Tex" Cobbs twice in a single fight. His fights are still shown on ESPN, and "Googling" his name with the word "boxing" brings up almost 900 hits. Before he fought bugs for a living, Clark Pest Control Inspector Mike Jameson fought people. "I fought a lot of boxing's big names," he said. "I was good enough to handle myself and go 10 rounds."

The pest management industry brings together people from all walks of life—with few growing up with the thought they would work around bugs. But even with such diversity, "Irish Mike" Jameson is one of a kind.

PROUD LINEAGE. Jameson grew up in a boxing family. "We were a bunch of Irishmen," he stoically states. His dad fought; his grandfather fought; and when he was old enough, Jameson stepped into the ring. With a short break to try out for the NFL (getting a free-agent shot at the San Francisco 49ers camp, but having to quit when he had a pin put in his arm), Jameson stayed in boxing for 14 years, going the distance with a number of top heavyweights, working under the promotion of Don King and traveling the world "on someone else's money."

Like any career, boxing has its ups and downs (though perhaps a bit more literally than some). And while it certainly had its share of downs for Jameson, he looks back on his career with an overall good feeling. "For me it was great," he says. "I got the chance to travel, meet people and see and do things I would never have been able to do otherwise."

His last fight was in 1992. In 1990, he'd gone five rounds with George Foreman at Caesars Tahoe, and decided he'd had enough. He was 36; it was time to retire. Then a friend called and asked him to do one more fight in Santa Cruz, Calif. "Fight for me," his friend asked. "I need to fill the seats!" And once he decided to do it, Jameson was glad he did. He fought Berry Basler and won on points. "I fought my last fight in front of a local crowd," he says. "I went out with my hand raised."

WELCOME TO PEST CONTROL. After such a prized career, how did Jameson get into pest management? Like many, by chance. Even while he was boxing, Jameson had to work odd jobs to pay for gym dues, food...and creditors. "AFAB, I call it," he says, "Anything For A Buck." Jameson was working with a security company after his retirement when he ran into Mark Myers, an inspector for Clark Pest Control, Lodi, Calif. The two had met before, but had lost touch. Seeing Jameson at work, Myers said, "You don't belong here, buddy. I want you to come meet my branch manager."

And once hired on with Clark, Jameson never looked back. "I love people," Jameson says. "So for me, it's great to be out, shaking hands, asking 'What can I help you with?'"

"The cool thing about Clark is that they send you to school," he adds. Not just so that technicians maintain their licenses but so they are knowledgeable about pests and pest management. "It's nice that I can go out now and educate somebody else." Jameson says he's always learning something new and people frequently call for information. "They're not pest control people! Even if they don't need my services, I tell them Web sites they can go to for information. I do whatever I can to help them not get ripped off," he says.

Jameson refers people to a variety of pest management Web sites, including Clark's at www.weneedyou.com. "Sit down and check these things out," he says. "It's like going on the Discovery channel!" He explains to consumers that the sites are easy to access and will provide a better understanding of the insect or situation with which they are dealing.

He enjoys using the knowledge he's gained in his eight years with Clark to help others. "Clark has given me the opportunity to do that," he says.

And yes, Jameson is often recognized by prospects, customers and people on the street. "I get it all the time," he says. Particularly when one of his fights is showing on ESPN. "Whenever they do a Tyson or Foreman thing, they always have my fight on there." Then, he says, he'll get calls from people saying, "Hey man, I saw you on ESPN Classics!"

Jameson says he also carries photos with him and is always willing to give them out with an autograph. "If it will help me make a sale, by God, I'll sign a picture for them!" he says.

But Jameson is very happy with where he now is in life. "I finally found something I can sink my teeth into," he says (no Tyson pun intended). "I'll retire here."

And one last question from PCT for "Irish Mike" Jameson: "You've fought people and bugs. Which is easier?" "Fighting people," he says, "is a little more difficult." 🦋

The author is a frequent contributor to PCT magazine. She can be reached at llupo@giemedia.com.



TALE OF THE TAPE

MIKE JAMESON

Hometown: Cupertino, Calif.

Division: Heavyweight

Date of Birth: June 19, 1954

Height: 6' 4"

Reach: 79"

Stance: Orthodox

Record: W 25 (4 KOs); includes international wins) • L 16 • Total 41

Source: www.boxerrec.com