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Being a boxing junkie my entire life, I've formulated some major pet-peeves over the years. However, one of the ones that has to rank at the top is, I can't stand when discussing an all-time great with someone, and they say "he wasn't that good, look how many times he lost!" What that genius fails to take into account is who the fighter with all the so called loses fought and lost to. The Won-Loss records of many past all-time greats does not give an accurate portrayal of their careers, or just how great they were. Just like the glowing Won-Loss records of some of today's top fighters isn't a true indication on how good they are and where they rank?

It borders on moronic to think that featherweight champ Marco Antonio Barrera 57-3, could've beaten former featherweight champ Sandy Saddler who retired with a career record of 144-15-2. Or, that lightweight champ Floyd Mayweather Jr. 30-0, may haven been able to get by former lightweight champ Ike Williams who retired with a final career record of 125-24-5. Fans, and many boxing writers get too hung up on Won-Loss records. All anyone has to do is look at the fighters of today who have the reputations for fighting the best available. How many of them are undefeated, or only have one loss?

Some of today's fighters who fight the best available are, Holyfield, Barrera, Tapia, Mosley, Tua, De La Hoya, Lewis, and Byrd. I know I left some out, but the point is that any fighter who fights the best of the best on a regular basis is going to lose sometimes. This doesn't mean they aren't outstanding/great fighters! In most cases these fighters have fought rematches with the other top fighters in their division. Imagine if they fought the same caliber fighters throughout a career that lasted 80 or 90 fights. Suddenly having more than a handful of loses isn't such a mortal sin! Many of the greats who fought through the late 70's, had to fight longer because they needed the money more often than not. This is where a majority of them accumulated the greatest percentage of their defeats!

The thought that fighters are only special if they're undefeated, or only suffered a couple of loses is an awful perception. Whitey Bimstein, who worked the corners of such greats as Harry Greb, Gene Tunney, Sixto Escobar, Benny Leonard, and Jack Dempsey, was once quoted as saying, "show me a fighter who consistently fights the best fighters, and I'll show you a fighter who ain't undefeated!" It's impossible for any fighter to remain unbeaten if he consistently fights the world's best fighters! Only Rocky Marciano was able to go undefeated during an eight year career. Which is three years less than Oscar De La Hoya's been a pro.

When most writers and fans look at the Won-Loss record of some past greats, they automatically dismiss them when they see more than just a few loses. What is usually not taken into account is that these fighters consistently fought the best fighters around during their time, and in most cases more than once! One of the best things a fan can say about a past or present fighter is, he fought everybody and ducked no one! This is assuming he won more than he lost.

How about if I said who is the better fighter, and who would win? Fighter A is a former welterweight, junior middleweight, and middleweight champion with a career record of 41-1.

Fighter B is a former welterweight and middleweight champion, with a career record of 85-24. Some of Fighter A's best opponents and wins are versus Yory"Boy"Campas, Oba Carr, Hector Camacho, Pernell Whitaker, David Reid, Fernando Vargas, Oscar De La Hoya, William Joppy, and Bernard Hopkins. Fighter B's best opponents and wins are versus Denny Moyer 3x's, Benny "Kid" Paret 3x's, Ralph Dupas 2x's, Luis Rodriguez 4x's, Holly Mims, Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, Dick Tiger 2x's, Nino Benvenuti 3x's, Jose Naploes, Rafael Gutierrez, Carlos Monzon 2x's, Armando Muniz, "Indian Red" Lopez, Bennie Briscoe 2x's, Vito Antuofermo, and Alan Minter. If you guessed fighter A as being Felix Trinidad, you are correct, and if you guessed fighter B as being Emile Griffith, you are correct again.

When comparing Trinidad's record to Griffith's, it's obvious that Trinidad's is more eye-catching, being that he only has one loss. However, the fighters listed behind both fighters names are either former world champions, or fought for the title along with facing many world champs during their careers. Seeing who both fighters shared a ring with, it's absurd to make a case for Trinidad over Griffith. What could Trinidad possibly show or do to Griffith that he hasn't seen or been up against before? I'll answer that, Nothing! Griffith has fought better punchers than Trinidad, and better boxers than Trinidad. Griffith saw it all!

Here's another match up and you make the call. Fighter A is a former welterweight champion who fought many middleweight champions and a future light heavyweight champ. He has a career record of 107-13. Fighter B is a five division champion who made his biggest mark as a welterweight and junior middleweight champion with a career record of 36-3. Some of fighter A's best opponents and wins are against Benny "Kid" Paret 2x's, Virgil Akins, Emile Griffith 4x's, Curtis Cokes 3x's, Denny Moyer, Holly Mims, Rubin "Hurricane" Carter 2x's, Benny Briscoe 2x's, Vincente Rondon 2x's, Nino Benvenuti, and Tony Mundine. Fighter B's best opponents and wins have come against Julio Caesar Chavez, Oba Carr, Arturo Gatti, Hector Camacho, Pernell Whitaker, Ike Quartey, Felix Trinidad, Shane Mosley, and Fernando Vargas. If You guessed Luis Rodriguez as fighter A, you would be correct. If you guessed Oscar De La Hoya as fighter B, that would also be correct.

Again, De La Hoya's record of 36-3 is more glowing than Rodriguez's 107-13. In a fight between Rodriguez and De La Hoya at welterweight or junior middleweight, how could anyone realistically pick De La Hoya to win? There is absolutely no comparison between the level of competition that De La Hoya faced compared to the fighters Rodriguez fought many times over! And like Trinidad, De La Hoya is one of the rare fighters of today who has fought the best opposition available. Like with Griffith, Rodriguez fought better punchers than De La Hoya and better boxers than De La Hoya.

Regardless of what anyone says, a fighter only becomes better by fighting. It doesn't matter how much time he spends in the gym on the bag and the pads. He'll only get better by fighting, and not just set-ups. When writers and fans compare fighters of today to those of the past, all they do is look at how many times they lost. It's easy to look at Trinidad's record and see that he was only beaten once, compared to Griffith who lost 24 times. But, when you look at the opponents who Griffith fought, and how many times he fought them, Trinidad's record pales in comparison. Also, Griffith fought into his late 30's where he accumulated many of his defeats. A case can easily be made that Griffith fought as many top fighters in two years of his career, as

Trinidad did his entire career!

Former heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield's career is a perfect illustration of this. Holyfield is probably the most respected heavyweight champ since Muhammad Ali when it comes to receiving accolades for fighting the absolute best fighters of his era, and more than once. If there has been a fighter in recent times whose career most resembles that of some of the past all-time greats, it's Holyfield!

Holyfield has fought the best fighters of his era throughout his whole career. Never ducking a fighter or a perceived tough match up. Also, like many of the past greats, he's fought well into his late thirties and early forties, suffering most of his defeats at the tail end of his career. Going into his fight with James Toney, Holyfield has a career record of 38-6-2 after fighting 46 professional fights as a cruiserweight and heavyweight. Although he has been defeated 6 times, I seriously doubt that I could find one respected boxing historian in the world who would not include him among one of the greatest heavyweight champions of all time.

Despite losing 6 times, Holyfield fought 18 different title-holders and champions. How could any fighter go through a career fighting the caliber fighters that Holyfield has and not suffer more than a few defeats? They couldn't!

Imagine if Holyfield fought 92 times instead of 46 against the same caliber fighters. His record would probably be something like 76-12-4 or worse. Would having 12 defeats diminish his standing as an all-time great? No way!

The point is that when one is looking at the Won-Loss record of past greats or current champions and top contenders, the number of defeats doesn't provide the entire picture. When a fighter fights the best fighters consistently throughout his career, there is no way that they are only going to suffer a few defeats. It doesn't matter who they are, Armstrong, Robinson, Pep, Louis, Charles, Moore, B. Leonard, or Ali. Even the greatest of the greats are not infallible when facing the best of the best!

"Show me a fighter who consistently fights the best fighters, and I'll show you a fighter who ain't undefeated!"
Whitey Bimstein

"Show me a fighter who's undefeated deep into his career, and I'll show you a fighter who ain't fought nobody!"
Frank Lotierzo