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Recently The Ring magazine published a Collector's Annual on "The 50 Greatest Fights You Never Saw!" I must commend them on this issue. It was very informative and well thought out. What I liked about it was, it wasn't the typical match ups that everybody thinks of when pairing all-time greats from different era's. Oh, it did have some of the popular ones that have been beaten to death over the years such as, (Dempsey vs. Louis, Ali vs. Tyson, and Sugar Ray Robinson vs. Sugar Ray Leonard). But, I must say a majority of the match ups were ones that have rarely been discussed.

Another thing The Ring did was give a brief summary of each fighters strengths and weaknesses, along with providing a style match up before projecting the outcome. In my opinion, the "What IF" hypothetical is one of the most fun things about sports. Nothing sparks emotion, and sometimes anger like the "What IF" in boxing. Yes, Magic's Lakers vs. Jordan's Bulls is real intriguing, and I'm certain that a heated argument would break out in trying to convince a non believer as to why you favor one over the other. But, I have no doubt that it would pale in comparison to the explosive argument that would erupt in trying to convince a Marciano fan that he would've lost to Frazier. Marciano vs. Frazier is the hypothetical match up I'd like to see most if I had a choice, and it is among one of the 50 included in this issue.

The staff at The Ring really did their homework in coming up with some of these fascinating match ups that require some real thought before trying to project a winner. Some of the purposed match ups that I thought were terrific and hard to handicap were, Tony Zale vs. Dick Tiger, Jack Johnson vs. Gene Tunney, and Mickey Walker vs. Jake LaMotta. And that's barely scratching the surface!

Most of the time when Boxing publications do these fantasy hypothetical fights, I feel they do it without much thought and they come off very flimsy. I also usually disagree with their projected outcomes, and don't feel that their reasoning for making their choice is sound. Often, I've found it easy to shoot holes in their arguments. However, I cannot say that about many of the match ups in this edition of The Ring.

I have no affiliation with The Ring other than knowing some of their very capable writers and editors. It doesn't benefit me in any way to hawk this "Collectors Edition", but I definitely give it my endorsement. Since I agreed with many of the outcomes in the 50 match ups they selected , I'll go over two that I definitely disagree with and why. Below are two match ups of fighters who I saw live, in which I completely disagree with The Ring's version and outcome.

George Foreman vs. Lennox Lewis

I know this will upset many Lewis fans, but I don't see Lewis ever beating the Foreman who fought Frazier and Ali in 1973-74. In this match up The Ring picked Lewis to stop Foreman in the 10th round. This after he was ruled down in the sixth round. Excuse me, but I can't recall the time Lewis got up to beat the count after he was dropped. Their theory is based on Lewis being able to circle and box while using his greater strength to hold Foreman off when he gets close. I

think it borders on comedic to even suggest Lewis is as strong as Foreman.

Let's make one thing perfectly clear. Despite spotting Lewis some weight, Foreman was definitely stronger than Lewis. In fact, Foreman at 42 or 43 was stronger than any version of Lewis. If Lewis is so strong, how was he pushed all over the ring by Ray Mercer, and Evander Holyfield in their second fight? A prime Holyfield couldn't physically control a 42 year old Foreman. Foreman, is stronger than both Holyfield and Mercer when he's sleeping. When it comes to punching power, Foreman is superior to Lewis with either hand. And that's not up for debate. An old Foreman rocked a prime Holyfield more so than Lewis did a shot Holyfield. There is absolutely no doubt, Foreman is physically stronger, and is a better puncher than Lewis with either hand.

Is there any comparison between Foreman and Lewis when it comes to who has the better chin? This is a no brainer. Foreman was only stopped once, by Ali. And that was due to exhaustion and being hit many times over the course of eight rounds. The only time Foreman was ever hurt by a punch was in his fight with Ron Lyle, who hit harder than either McCall or Rahman, the two fighters who stopped Lewis. Foreman also walked through Joe Frazier's left hook without being shook a bit. Like with Lyle, Frazier's hook is harder than anything that McCall or Rahman posses. To deny this is ridiculous. Lewis on the other hand was not only KO'd by McCall and Rahman, but he was hurt and shook by Akinwande, Tucker, Bruno, and Briggs. Again, nothing they throw is in the same zip code as Frazier's hook or Lyle's right. And Lewis cannot be given full credit for standing up to Tyson's punch, because Tyson never really tug Lewis with his best. Foreman at age 41, even walked through Cooney's best hook's. The bottom line is Foreman has one of the greatest chins in heavyweight history, something Lewis will never be accused of.

In a Foreman vs. Lewis fight, I see Lewis having one shot. Get Foreman deep into the fight. If Lewis could make it to the 10th round versus Foreman, he may be able to out box him and win a decision. However, I don't see Lewis making it that far against a prime Foreman. Lewis has nothing in his arsenal to keep a raging Foreman of the 70's from tearing through him. No doubt Foreman only needs one good one to knock Lewis out. In a match up with Foreman, Lewis' better boxing ability would be a non factor, he'd never last long enough to box him. In a fight matching the best Foreman vs. the best Lewis, Foreman walks through Lewis and stops him within three or four rounds. I don't even think this is an intriguing fight, it's too one sided in favor of Foreman. Lastly, don't believe the crap that Foreman thinks Lewis is the greatest heavyweight champ of all time. I know his brother and some others who know him personally, believe me he doesn't think as highly of Lewis as he says he does on HBO. Get him off camera and off the record and his evaluation of Lewis is dramatically different.

Roberto Duran vs. Pernell Whitaker

Duran-Whitaker is one of the hypothetical fights that has often been debated over the last few years. In this match up they picked Whitaker to win a split decision over Duran. I don't see it that way. Below is the outcome projected by The Ring: " After tasting Duran's hooks and thumbs, Whitaker reverts to the long range style he used to beat Nelson. His movement frustrates the Panamanian, who loses a point for low blows. Whitaker is landing more punches, but Duran's are much harder. In round 13, Duran slips a right lead and cracks home a knockdown inducing

right cross, Whitaker gets up, dances out of trouble, and goes on to win via split decision."

First off, I must concede that I think both Duran and Whitaker are two of the greatest lightweight champs in boxing history. But, in my opinion, Duran is the greatest lightweight ever. Duran was a very fast fighter. He had great hand and foot speed, and was hard to hit due to his constant feinting and movement. Duran was also a master at cutting off the ring and forcing boxers to fight him instead of boxing him. Duran at lightweight had a concrete chin and endless stamina. Another thing Duran had an abundance of was power. He literally had dynamite in both hands.

Granted, Whitaker was also a great boxer. The problem for Whitaker against Duran is that as elusive as he was, he wasn't a great mover with his feet. Whitaker had good foot speed and movement, but not enough to trouble Duran. He had great movement from the waist up, but that's the kind of movement Duran usually broke down with his pressure and body punching. Duran forced many good boxers like Buchanan, DeJesus, and Leonard to fight instead of allowing them to move and box. I see him doing the same with Whitaker. I just can't see Whitaker holding Duran off and being able to box. If a close to prime Duran was able to handle Sugar Ray Leonard's speed and boxing ability, I don't see him being stumped by Whitaker.

Since Whitaker doesn't have the power it would take to slow Duran, Roberto would control the pace and flow of the fight. I see Duran working Whitaker's body early in the fight forcing him into a flat-footed stance later in the fight. Once Whitaker is slowed, Duran would overwhelm him with his superior strength and quicker hands. Duran just has too much for Whitaker at lightweight. Whitaker would be surprised by Duran's overall speed and power. After not being able to keep Duran off of him, Whitaker would fight to survive in the last third of the fight and lose a unanimous decision. Duran beat too many great fighters his weight or bigger for me to envision him losing to Whitaker.

Again, I love Whitaker and consider him an all-time great at lightweight. It's just my opinion, but I believe Duran is the greatest lightweight of all time. In fact I'll go one better. I think Duran at lightweight was the second most unbeatable fighter ever at any weight. The only fighter I place above him is Sugar Ray Robinson at welterweight.

The Ring's edition of "The 50 Greatest Fights You Never Saw" is certainly a keeper. It's very informative and easy to read, and it's just enough to keep the reader interested. It gives you a nice tight synopsis on the fighters and a reasonable evaluation as to why they chose the outcome they did. Although I don't agree with some of the capsules they have on the fighters, I totally enjoyed reading the entire edition.