Written by Frank Lotierzo
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One of the biggest misconceptions in boxing, is the strength versus punching power correlation. Throughout the history of prize fighting, we've seen many examples of it in all weight divisions. Some fighters have possessed neck breaking power, but they were not super strong physically. An example of those type fighters or punchers would be Thomas Hearns and Roger Mayweather. Both Hearns and Mayweather carried one punch KO power, but they were sometimes controlled by their opponent from a physical standpoint.

This isn't always the rule. The point is, although a fighter can really punch, it doesn't always equate to him being exceptionally strong physically. However, sometimes it does apply, it's just not the rule. George Foreman and Jim Jeffries had the kind of power that could take a fighters head off. And they both were amazingly strong physically. They were never controlled or physically manhandled. Fighters like Foreman and Jeffries were always the physical force when they fought.

Foreman, who just may be the strongest heavyweight ever, was only tied up and moved around the ring by Ali. Jimmy Young never had to confront Foreman's strength because Foreman never really went after him other than in the seventh round of their fight. The Foreman who fought Young didn't know who he was or how he wanted to fight? I personally heard Big George say just that during a press conference discussing his comeback shortly before fighting Holyfield in Atlantic City in 1991.

The opposite of the fighter who can hit but isn't overpowering physically, is the fighter who is not a KO artist but is very strong physically. Three great examples of this type fighter would be Ali, Holmes, and Holyfield. Look at some of the biggest fights of their careers, they were usually versus fighters who hit harder and were perceived to be much stronger than they were.

When Clay fought Liston, Liston was supposed to manhandle him and throw him around like a rag doll. Yet when Clay was blinded by the monsil solution in his eyes from Liston's gloves, he was able to tie up Liston when ever he wanted to break up his assault. He did the same thing with Frazier and Foreman. I'll bet if most were asked who was the stronger man, Ali or Foreman, they would automatically say Foreman was by a significant margin. And he probably is, but it's not as one sided as some may think. In regards to Ali, he was very strong physically, but he is rarely given credit for it. This is mainly because he wasn't a one punch KO artist. However, all one has to do is look at his career and it's obvious to see that he was never manhandled by any opponent.

Holmes is another great example. In his fights with Shavers, Norton, and Cooney, he definitely proved to be the stronger man. Even though he wasn't nearly as hard a puncher as they were. Another thing that highlights this is their stamina. Stamina is also a form of physical strength. Ali and Holmes were both stronger and had more gas at the end of their fights when they fought the killer punchers, despite being hit by big shots during the course of the bout. Also, neither Ali or Holmes were ever punched around the ring by any of the big punchers they fought.

The only time Ali was really blown away by a single punch was by Frazier's left-hook in Super-Fight one in the 15th round. I know he was dropped by Sonny Banks and Henry Cooper, but he was a young pro and hadn't fully matured or filled out. In Holmes case, only two times was he blown away by a punch in his prime. They were by Shavers' right in the seventh round of their title fight, and by the right that Snipes dropped him with. Holmes was 38, and coming off a layoff when Tyson dropped him. However, it was still an impressive display of power by Tyson. In my opinion the left-hook Frazier dropped Ali with, and the right that Shavers dropped Holmes with have to rank among two of the hardest punches ever thrown in heavyweight history.

When reviewing Evander Holyfield's career, he like Ali and Holmes was also more than capable of standing his ground with the bigger punchers he encountered. In fact, the only time he was really controlled physically was by Foreman in 1991. And in his defense, Foreman along with Jeffries are probably the two strongest heavyweight champs in boxing history.

In the Holyfield-Tyson fights, Tyson appeared on the outside to be stronger but wasn't. Holyfield totally controlled Tyson and moved him around the ring. The same goes for his two fights with Lewis, especially the second fight. In the second fight, Holyfield bulled Lewis around the ring and kept him backing away. And it's not all because Lewis was trying to box him. Lewis is definitely the harder puncher but, I have some doubts if he is the stronger man.

In regards to the Holyfield-Bowe trilogy, the only fight where they really collided physically was the first fight. Holyfield moved away from Bowe in their second fight and boxed him. In their first fight, Holyfield went right to Bowe. Even while Bowe was landing vicious shots on Holyfield as he was coming in, Holyfield was still pushing Bowe back. I'm not saying Holyfield was stronger than Bowe, I'm just saying that the difference isn't overwhelming. The point is that punching power, physical strength, and huge ripped muscles are not related. Each fighter is a separate case. Some fighters have all three, some have two of them, and some only possess one, but they are definitely not related.

Just look at the contrast between Marvin Hagler and Thomas Hearns. After watching their eight minute war, is there anybody who would question Hagler's superior strength? I say not a chance. On the other hand, there is no comparison when it comes to who can punch better. Hearns mutilated and beat up fighters who went the distance with Hagler and were unmarked at the end of the fight.

For example, Hagler fought Marcos Geraldo and won a decision. When Hearns fought Geraldo, he knocked him out in the first round with one right hand. Roberto Duran was never shook once by Hagler in 15 rounds. In fact he was mocking Hagler at the end of their fight. Can anyone forget where they were the night Hearns drilled Duran so hard that he fell face forward because he was out?

When Hearns fought Sugar Ray Leonard the first time, he lumped his face up and injured his eye. In the Hagler-Leonard bout, Leonard at the most was slightly stung once. That occurred in the fifth round courtesy of a Hagler right uppercut. Not to mention that Leonard was completely unmarked after fighting Hagler. Yet when Leonard fought Hearns in their rematch, Hearns had

him down twice and on the verge of going once. Something Hagler never even was remotely close to accomplishing!

I've read where Shane Mosley can press more weight than Joe Frazier could in his prime. So What! Does anyone believe Mosley was stronger than Frazier? Can anyone envision either DeLaHoya or Forrest standing up under Frazier's best? If you answered yes to either, you don't know what you've been watching!

How about guys like George Chuvalo and Tex Cobb. They were both stronger than a country Ox, yet neither of them had real knock out power against fighters in the top ten.. Chuvalo had a pretty good left-hook to the body, and Cobb had a so-so right hand. However, they never scored any big KO's over any top contenders, (Chuvalo's KO of Quarry wasn't a clean knockout, Quarry jumped right up).

I remember Holmes saying during a press conference when asked about Shavers' power, he said, "Shavers hits like something from another Planet, but Randy Cobb is the strongest mother I ever fought." In boxing, overall physical strength does not necessarily mean a fighter can really hit. On the other hand, a fighter who is not known as a knockout puncher can be very strong physically. And weight lifting strength and ripped muscles mean zilch. Physical strength is God given, and punchers are born, not created.