

Boxing Every Day of the Week

Written by Matthew Aguilar
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Saturday is the holy day for boxing fans this millennium. If there is a major fight, chances are, it will come on Saturday. That's pretty much how it's been since Jan. 1, 2000.

But it hasn't been that way forever. Big fights have come on every day of the week, for one reason or another.

A look at some daily boxing history.

Sunday: Back in the 70s and 80s, Sunday was a big day for boxing. That's when fights were on network television, and fans were treated to pugilism on ABC's "Wide World of Sports"; CBS' "Sports Spectacular" and "Sports Showcase", and NBC's "SportsWorld". Check out some of the fights that happened on Sunday: Michael Dokes-Randall "Tex" Cobb (March 22, 1981); Roger Mayweather-Rocky Lockridge (Feb. 26, 1984); Pipino Cuevas-Harold Volbrecht (April 6, 1980). Networks would often show network-delayed broadcasts of bigger fights on Sundays, like March 31, 1984's Wilfredo Gomez-Juan LaPorte. But, with the advent of pay-per-view, network boxing died, and Sunday afternoon fights died right along with it.

Monday: In the 1980s, Bob Arum used Mondays exclusively as his big-fight night. The Top Rank boss reportedly did it to extend the party through the weekend and into the beginning of the week, so to pump up the fight a little more and give the casinos an extra day of big crowds and gambling. But it was always a pain for beer-drinking boxing fans, because they had to go to work the next day. Regardless, some of the more memorable fights in boxing history took place on Monday: Sugar Ray Leonard-Marvin Hagler (April 6, 1987); Leonard-Thomas Hearns 2 (June 12, 1989); Leonard-Donny LaLonde (Nov. 7, 1988), George Foreman-Gerry Cooney (Jan. 15, 1990), and one of the greatest slugfests of all time, Hagler-Hearns (April 15, 1985). Every now and then, HBO will have a show on a Monday, such as Michael Nunn-Iran Barkley (Aug. 14, 1989).

Tuesday: A day promoters pretty much avoid for major fights. But there are exceptions. Early in his pro career, Mike Tyson battled Mitch "Blood" Green on HBO on a Tuesday (May 20, 1986). Also, USA's "Tuesday Night Fights" series was a hit, even though the network inexplicably pulled the plug in the late 1990s. And ESPN resurrects Tuesday boxing in the summer with its "Tuesday Night Fights" series.

Wednesday: Only one really big fight ever happened on a Wednesday, but what a biggie it was: Sugar Ray Leonard-Thomas Hearns I. The original "Showdown" happened on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 1981, at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. The promoter was Main Events, and, for some reason, Shelly Finkel and Dan Duva had this date picked out by summer. The peculiar day didn't hurt much at the box office. Vegas was packed that night, and closed-circuit proceeds were through the roof.

Thursday: It always makes sense staging big fights closer to the weekend. Bob Arum

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experimented with Thursday. Arum put Marvin Hagler-Roberto Duran on Thursday, Nov. 10, 1983. And he put Leonard-Duran 3 on Thursday, Dec. 7, 1989. There have also been a few HBO shows on Thursday, one of the last being Roy Jones Jr.-Montell Griffin 2 (Aug. 7, 1997).

Friday: Now we're talkin'. Boxing fans let the good times roll on Friday as much as any other day. And, occasionally, the big networks would offer up prime time specials on Fridays, like Larry Holmes-Leon Spinks (June 12, 1981) and Holmes-Renaldo Snipes (Nov. 6, 1981). Other memorable Friday fights: Evander Holyfield-George Foreman (April 19, 1991); Mike Tyson-Razor Ruddock 2 (June 28, 1991); Riddick Bowe-Evander Holyfield I (Nov. 13, 1992); Pernell Whitaker-Julio Cesar Chavez (Sept. 10, 1993). But since about, oh, Oscar De La Hoya-Chavez I on June 7, 1996, major Friday fights have been few and far between. For the not-so-major fights, ESPN has its "Friday Night Fights" series.

Saturday: The only day that matters in boxing anymore. But, back in the 80s, some of the best fights were on Saturday afternoons, not evenings. Ray Mancini-Duk Koo Kim (Nov. 13, 1982), and Bobby Chacon-Cornelius Boza-Edwards (May 15, 1983) all happened on Saturday afternoon. More recently, promoters have realized this is the best day because, well, boxing fans can party (and order expensive pay-per-view shows) without reservation. Consider that every major fight the rest of the year, Kostya Tszyu-Sharmba Mitchell 2, Winky Wright-Shane Mosley 2 and Erik Morales-Marco Antonio Barrera 2, is scheduled for a Saturday night.

Just as it should be.