

What Should Have Been But Never Was

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Pipino Cuevas has been inducted into the International Boxing Hall Of Fame. I struggled with this for a while. Did he really deserve to get in ? There are so many deserving former boxers that you can make a strong case for.

After wrestling with the matter of Pipino's induction I was able to come to terms with it. Why ? Because during his tenure as champion he was a Holy Terror !!! That is why !

He did not just win fights. He broke bones. He was a devastating puncher with a wrecking ball left hook. He left a trail of fractured jaws, etc... In a word, he was awesome !

Then Tommy Hearn exposed his chin and Roberto Duran followed suit. Herman Montes ended the legend but give Pipino his due. During his prime he was feared !

He crushed legit opposition like Harold Weston Jr., Clyde Gray, Angel Espada and Pete Ranzany. He came to fight and he had the classic kill or be killed mentality.

While Pipino was recognized as the W.B.A. titleholder, another popular West Coast boxer emerged to win the W.B.C. version. He was Carlos Palomino and he won the crown with a spectacular KO of John H. Stracey. He defended the crown with pride turning back the challenges of rugged Armando Muniz and the highly touted Dave "Boy" Green.

Why did these two never meet ? This could have been a West Coast bonanza ! Who would have won if they decided to trade hooks ? As mentioned, Pipino lost his crown to Hearn. Palomino was outfoxed by a wizard named Wilfred Benitez and relinquished his title claim. Carlos was then outsped by a highly motivated Roberto Duran. Carlos retired but returned. The saga ended years later in an ill fated comeback that accomplished little.

Carlos Palomino was inducted to the I.B.H.O.F. this year. Did he deserve to get in ? YES !!! He was a class act who was good for the sport. So was Cuevas. It's too bad that they ushered in the Golden Era of the 147 lb. division. They had to make way for the Leonard, Hearn, Duran, Benitez era.

What a shame. Two world class champions who may only serve as footnotes.

Only time and history will tell us how Pipino and Carlos will be remembered. Being enshrined in the I.B.H.O.F. is a wonderful start.

If there were no Sugar, Tommy, Roberto and Wilfred. Carlos and Pipino would have faced off. Who would have won this "should have taken place" Super Bout ?

Give me two guys with heart, punch and talent and I say the "chin" will win. My choice is Carlos.

It's all about the beard !