He didn't get his body or weight into his punches. His leverage was so-so at best. Basically, he was an arm puncher. He first won the heavyweight title in 1973 with a devastating knockout over an undefeated undisputed champion. After retiring in March of 1977, he came back in March of 1987 after a ten year hiatus during which he didn't fight once. In November of 1994 he won the title for a second time with a one punch knockout over an undefeated champ at age 45.

His name is George Foreman, and to me he is one of the biggest physical freaks of nature in sports history. Think about it, he has just about the highest knockout percentage in heavyweight history. Yet he was an arm puncher. He's the last guy you'd want teaching your fighter how to punch, because he didn't know how from a fundamental or technical vantage point. Basically, he throws a punch like a novice slaps, only his arm has a balled fist at the end.

When you match him up with past heavyweight greats as a fighter on paper, he should lose every time. George wasn't a good boxer, nor was he very fast, and his stamina was questionable in the 70's. Foreman fought with no strategy or game plan. His offense was his defense. And his attack plan was nothing more than throwing punches in the vicinity of his opponent in hopes of just maybe one of them connecting.

What George Foreman could do was punch. When you break Foreman down as a fighter, what can you really say about him? Sure he was very tough mentally and was also fearless. He had a great chin and his punching power was unmatched. His jab was a sledgehammer, and his hook and uppercut had neck-breaking power. However, all of those things, except for his mental strength and toughness, tie into his God given physical strength.

Foreman is sort of like Ali in a way. He did everything wrong, but his power bailed him out. Where Ali did everything wrong and was a flawed boxer, his speed outran and hid all of his mistakes, until father time caught him. That's what makes Foreman so amazing to me. At age 45 he was able to win the title from the man who beat the man. After a ten-year layoff, he still had the power to win the title and was even avoided by some, Mike Tyson for one.

In Foreman's first 25 or so fights in the 70's, he exhibited a pretty good jab. However, once he started clubbing fighters out, he just started going for the big shot from the onset. Foreman had some boxing skills, but he was allowed to abandon them because of his power. His trainer Dick Saddler fell in love with George's power, and he cut a lot of corners when teaching him basics. Saddler's attitude was, George, go run a few miles and then go pound the heavy bag. Because there ain't a man in the world who can stand up to your punch. This was something Saddler repeated often and was proud of.

In Foreman's first march to the heavyweight title, his lack of fundamentals and good basics only came into play twice where it cost him, or almost cost him, a fight. The first time was against veteran Gregorio Peralta, who extended Foreman the ten round limit on the Frazier-Ellis under card. In the fight with Peralta, Foreman's youth and strength bailed him out and was the

difference in the fight, which he won via a 10 round unanimous decision. The only time Foreman's power didn't bail him out was when he lost the title to Muhammad Ali in October of 1974. And in reality, Ali didn't out box Foreman. He just allowed Foreman to beat on him and wear himself out. The Ali fight is another tribute to Foreman's strength and power and is why I don't believe boxers like Tunney and Holmes could have beat Foreman circa 1973-74.

Think about it, Ali had to take a pounding before he was able to open up and fight Foreman. It's not like Ali outfought or out boxed him from start to finish. While Foreman had his strength, Ali really couldn't fight him. Had Ali not had one of the greatest chin's in heavyweight history, or not have the capacity to absorb the best body shot of any heavyweight in history, he would've lost to Foreman. It was Ali's durability and toughness that enabled him to beat Foreman, not necessarily his speed and skill as a boxer. That's why, in my opinion, Ali was the only mover or boxer who could've defeated Foreman at his peak. As tough as Tunney and Holmes were, there is no way either of them could take it to the head and body like Ali. That's why they would not have been around in the eighth round to see Foreman tire so they could out box him. I don't think they could've held the undefeated Foreman off like Ali did until he tired and wound down?

And forget the Foreman who lost to Jimmy Young. His head was so messed up after losing to Ali that he was a completely different fighter. Against Young, Foreman was so worried and concerned about his stamina, he didn't start letting his hands go until the seventh round. By then it was too late and Foreman was beaten mentally. This would've never happened to the undefeated Foreman who harbored no self-doubt or lack of confidence. His showing versus Young was due completely to the mind game Ali played on him. Young would have never lasted three rounds with the Foreman of 1972-74.

After Foreman lost to Young he retired. His first career was from June of 1969 thru March of 1977. During that time he won the title and held it for almost two years. His record when he retired was 45-2 (42). Although he fought in one of the best eras in heavyweight history, and beat an all-time great in Frazier to win the title, Foreman didn't have a clue about boxing basics. The only thing that enabled Foreman to go through the division and become champ was his strength and power that only he was blessed with at birth. Had Foreman learned how to get his body into his punches, and not been an arm puncher, it would have been illegal to allow him to fight.

Ten years after retiring, Foreman came back at age 38. During his prime in the 70's, he fought between 217-232 pounds. The second incarnation of Foreman fought between 240-267. This older version of Foreman was much slower, but fought at a much more measured pace. He fought more relaxed and loose. That's the thing that allowed him to go rounds without being exhausted. The amazing thing was although he didn't retain all the power that he had in the 70's, he still had dynamite in both hands and scored some devastating knockouts.

Four years into his comeback, Foreman fought undisputed Heavyweight Champ Evander Holyfield, who just won the title from Mike Tyson conqueror Buster Douglas. Holyfield was at his absolute physical peak at this time. Going into the Holyfield fight, Foreman was thought to have no shot and most likely would be stopped. In the bout, Foreman was out boxed and out maneuvered losing a unanimous decision. However, the strength and power of Foreman was

evident throughout the bout. During the 12 rounds Foreman shook Holyfield a few times, and forced him to fight moving away. The problem Foreman had with Holyfield was simply that he was too slow to mount a sustained offensive attack.

A little over three years after losing to Holyfield, Foreman fought the man who took Holyfield's title eight month's earlier, Michael Moorer. In a fight Foreman was clearly being outfought, he scored a devastating one-punch knockout in the 10th round to win the title at age 45. Foreman's knockout of Moorer put him in the history book's as the oldest man to win the Heavyweight title. A record that still stands.

The really amazing thing about George Foreman was that the only real weapon he had was his strength and awesome power. Although he was mentally tough and determined, along with being fearless, it was his power that carried him to the Heavyweight Championship twice. Think about it, he wasn't a good boxer, he wasn't fast, and his offense was his defense. His only true weapon was his strength and power.

Five and a half years after decisioning Foreman, Holyfield was thought to be shot. In November of 1996, Holyfield fought WBA-WBC champ Mike Tyson. Holyfield went on to stop Tyson in the 11th round. In this fight, Holyfield won no less than 8 of the 10 rounds they fought before stopping Tyson in the 11th. He out fought and muscled Tyson the entire fight. This was a 30-year old Tyson who just scored impressive knockout victories in winning both title belts only months earlier. Basically, an older Holyfield controlled and out muscled a 30-year old Tyson, something he wasn't able to do versus a 42 year old Foreman when he was in his prime.

Three years after beating Tyson, Holyfield defended both of his titles versus IBF champ Lennox Lewis twice. In their first fight, Holyfield was clearly out fought by Lewis, yet was the aggressor in the fight. In the rematch six months later, a better-prepared Holyfield lost a close decision. In this fight, Holyfield was the more effective aggressor and was able to push Lewis back the whole fight. The point is a 34 year old prime Lewis wasn't able to move an eroded Holyfield around the ring like a 42 year old Foreman did. In Holyfield's fights with Foreman and Lewis, Foreman's jab forced Holyfield to retreat, something Lewis couldn't do with his big right hand and uppercuts.

Against Tyson and Lewis, an older Holyfield was more in control physically, than a younger Holyfield was versus an older Foreman. In fact, Foreman actually had Holyfield shook a few times, something neither Tyson or Lewis were able to do once.

What other former heavyweight champ could've taken off ten years, and then comeback to win boxing’s greatest prize? When Foreman came back in the late 80's, he had one weapon, just like he had in the 70's, power and strength. Foreman wasn't a great boxer at any time in his career. In the 70's he fought in a rage that was nothing more than a charge from his stool to his opponent's chin. In the late 80's and 90's, Foreman's biggest weapon was his strength and punch. Some say he was a smarter boxer, but he really just fought at a more measured pace. Basically, he just tempered his aggression. His goal was to score a knockout regardless of what version of his career you're discussing.

In the 70's, Foreman was hurt badly only by Ron Lyle, who was a terrific puncher. And Foreman was in dreadful shape in the Lyle fight. It was his first fight in 15 months after losing to Ali, unless you count the Toronto-5 exhibition, which I don't. Ali stopped him, but it was due to Foreman's severe fatigue. Against Jimmy Young he was a head case and was beaten before his hands were even wrapped. In his comeback, he wasn't hurt or close to going down once. Not by Holyfield, who hit him with over 25 unanswered punches in the ninth round of their fight. Not by Cooney, who he devastated, or Bert Cooper who was very dangerous early in the fight. Not by Morrison, who was forced to run like Carl Lewis from him. And not by Michael Moorer, who hit him at will until Foreman dropped one short right hand on his chin.

George Foreman was a physical freak of nature. Never in heavyweight history has one fighter accomplished so much, while possessing just one weapon, strength and power. I can't imagine other big punchers like Lewis, Liston, Frazier, Louis, Tyson or Marciano taking off 10 years and then coming back at age 45 and winning the title? Remember, Tyson wanted no part of Foreman in the early 90's, which I know to be an absolute fact (although some Tyson fans try to pretend it's not). Lewis never asked for him during that time. And Holyfield who did fight him, was banged around despite winning and was holding on at the end. And Holyfield says to this day that Foreman was without a doubt the strongest and best puncher he ever fought.

When sizing Foreman up versus other big punchers in the last 70 years, many things are obvious. Louis was a far superior overall fighter. Marciano had better stamina. Liston was a better boxer and had better basics. Frazier had more stamina and was a better body puncher. Tyson had faster hands and better basics. Lewis was more versatile and a better boxer. However, Foreman's strength was in a different class. At 45 he had equal power and a better chin than all of them. And that wasn't even him at his peak. The prime of Foreman ended in The "20th of May" stadium on an October night in 1974. If George Foreman knew how to box and punch from a fundamental standpoint, it would've been illegal to allow him to fight.

George Foreman is definitely a physical freak of nature!