

Talented freelance boxing writer Joe Rein has a style all his own. And that style now manifests itself in his being named over an accomplished field of candidates as winner of the May 2005 CJ Award, bestowed by TheSweetScience.com (<http://www.thesweetscience.com>).

Rein's award-winning story, "[What a Tangled Web We Weave](#)," covered a Los Angeles press conference along the promotional trail for the upcoming middleweight title fight between Bernard Hopkins and Jermain Taylor, and did so with such lyricism as to separate itself from the level of reporting one usually sees from these self-serving events.

"What a wonderful surprise to hear I've won the CJ Award," said Rein, upon hearing of the honor. "It's especially gratifying, considering the talent on the site."

Rein got a #1 vote from all panelists, a first for the CJ Award.

"In another era, a writer like Joe Rein would be known by everyone interested in boxing," said Robert Ecksel, editor of The Sweet Science. "His quirky, idiosyncratic style elevates his work from pure 'journalese' and his boxing background gives his work an authenticity often lacking from the work of his equally enthusiastic but less experienced colleagues. This was an unusual bit of work from an unusual boxing columnist not beholden to any conventions."

"My only approach to this article, as with everything I write," says Rein, "is to have the reader experience it, painting the most vivid picture possible."

Rein, who currently teaches television production at UCLA, is a former amateur boxer who trained at the Fifth Street Gym on Miami Beach and fought for the University of Miami at a time when the sport was more commonplace on the collegiate level. He has contributed to a number of websites over the years and has an essay in the book "Shadow Boxers," which is now in release.

Runners-up for May were Mitch Abramson for "The Life and Rhymes of Don Majeski," and Greg Smith for "Ezzard Charles: Subtle Greatness."

Abramson, a New Yorker who has written for the New York Times and Village Voice among others, addressed the career of one of boxing's intriguing "underground" characters - the peripatetic Majeski, who is one of the sport's most influential behind-the-scenes operators.

"This story went below the surface, exploring a subject the average fan doesn't know very much about," said Charles Jay, editor-in-chief of The Sweet Science. "And it was extremely well-crafted. As such, it's an ideal CJ Award candidate."

Smith's story about Ezzard Charles, the former heavyweight champ, was long overdue, in Jay's opinion. "Ezzard Charles may have been, at one time or another, the best middleweight, light

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heavyweight and heavyweight in the world, or very close to it," he said. "Precious few fighters can say that. Yet he is not recognized enough by history, and certainly not by this generation of fight fans."

Special mention went to Tim Graham, boxing writer for the Buffalo News, who also writes a weekly column at The Sweet Science. Although none of Graham's stories received enough individual consideration for the award, each member of the voting panel put a different Graham entry into nomination.

"That is a testament to the depth and breadth of Tim's ability," Jay says. "He's versatile and professional, possessing a pundit's mindset and a reporter's work ethic. He's a heavy hitter for us."

Graham won a first-place "Barney" award from the Boxing Writers Association of America last year for his coverage of the Mike Tyson-Danny Williams fight, which appeared on The Sweet Science. It was one of four "Barney" awards the website captured - more than any other media outlet.

The CJ Award is a monthly honor named for Jay, an acclaimed boxing scribe whose "Operation Cleanup" books are regarded as the most hard-hitting look at boxing from the inside. It is the only award for boxing writers that is accompanied by money - the winner of each month's prize receives \$300, with the runners-up receiving \$100 apiece.

CJ Award winners are determined by the editorial board of The Sweet Science, a group of people involved with the sport that, aside from Jay, includes editor Robert Ecksel, web editor Chris Gielly, and Dino daVinci, founder of the International Brotherhood of Prizefighters (IBOP). Editorial board members and officers of TheSweetScience.com or IBOP are ineligible to win the CJ Award.

The Sweet Science sets the gold standard for boxing journalism. Updated on a daily basis, it includes hundreds of features, interviews, columns, predictions, odds, angles and more. Anyone interested in boxing will find a treasure trove at The Sweet Science, located at <http://www.thesweetscience.com>

. More details about the CJ Award, as well as links to the award-winning stories, can be found at <http://www.thesweetscience.com/cj-awards.php>