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This June 13, former heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis 41-2-1 (32 KOs) will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. As most know, a fighter doesn't have to be an all-time great in order to be voted into the IBHOF today. In reality the IBHOF needs to bring fighters in for the induction weekend in order to help raise money. The best way to do that is to elect fighters who are still alive or in good health who can come in for the ceremonial weekend and mix with boxing fans. The thing that befuddles me about the IBHOF is, how can Ingemar Johansson be in and Lupe Pintor isn't?

Regardless of the Johansson/Pintor contradiction, Lennox Lewis is a no brainer when it comes to having Hall-Of-Fame credentials. When evaluating a fighter’s place in history you must wait until their career has concluded. Lewis is a perfect example of that. After seeing Oliver McCall knock him out in the second round back in 1994, never for a fleeting moment did I think Lewis was one of the greats, as I do today.

In the early seventies it was common to read in boxing publications how Ali, Frazier and Foreman were certainly not the equals of Dempsey, Louis and Marciano. By the early eighties that changed and the three greats from the seventies joined their contemporaries from the old school among the greatest of the greats. Today, we have the wisdom of hindsight to see just how great Ali, Frazier and Foreman were.

The same thing applies to Lennox Lewis circa 1993-2003. When looking at the current landscape of the heavyweight division, how dominant would Lennox Lewis, Evander Holyfield, Mike Tyson and Riddick Bowe be if they were in their prime and fighting in 2009? In regards to Lennox Lewis, it doesn't take someone with a high boxing aptitude to realize that he would be an overwhelming favorite over the best heavyweights in the world today if he were fighting and in his prime.

Why Lewis Is An All Time Great:

What made Lennox Lewis formidable inside the ring was he was pretty versatile for a fighter who stood 6'5" weighing between 227-245 at his best. Under Emanuel Steward he learned how to use his height and reach. Lewis forced his opponents to adjust to him and what he was trying to do. Lennox was a boxer-puncher and only Joe Louis and Sonny Liston were better fighting basically the same style. His left jab was a terrific weapon. It was long and powerful which enabled him to set up his big right hand. Other than Louis, Liston, Ali and Holmes it's hard to name another heavyweight who owned a better jab than Lennox Lewis.

His right hand carried one punch knockout power, and his right-uppercut was a tremendous set-up punch that he could deliver inside or from center ring. Lewis had two handed power and improved as a boxer dramatically as his career progressed. He was also equally capable of leading and dictating the tempo from behind his jab or he could move back and counter. And to his credit Lewis totally shut down attacking swarmers Tommy Morrison, David Tua and Mike

Tyson. All three of them were legitimate like-takers, yet not one of them could get near Lewis or get past his jab.

At his best Lewis proved he was capable of beating the best of his era by out-boxing or out-fighting them. Once he learned how to box and set up his power he was almost unbeatable when he showed up in top shape with an interest in the outcome of the fight.

When it comes to accomplishments the former Olympic gold medalist compiled an overwhelming body of work as a pro. For starters he never ducked any fighter during his career, yet was ducked by two of the best fighters of his era, Riddick Bowe and Mike Tyson.

Critics will say that during his title tenure he was stopped twice while at or near his prime. Granted -- being stopped by one punch twice gives the impression that Lennox wasn't the most durable heavyweight around. And despite neither Oliver McCall or Hasim Rahman scoring any other one-punch knockouts in their career over elite opposition, they were big heavyweights who could punch. On top of that Lewis didn't regard McCall as a threat going into their fight and he was rehearsing for his part in the movie Oceans Eleven while training for Rahman.

If getting stopped while being close to his prime omits him from HOF/ATG status, then Joe Frazier, George Foreman and Mike Tyson who were stopped in their prime should also be excluded. The difference regarding Lewis is he avenged both of his defeats by stopping his former conquer. And like Gene Tunney and Rocky Marciano, he never met a fighter he couldn't beat, and Lewis was only off his feet twice in his career. When he came to the ring in top shape, which was most of the time, Lewis was never stopped or dropped.

Lewis also fought outstanding opposition and it can be argued that only Muhammad Ali and Evander Holyfield met and defeated better fighters than Lewis. Adding to that Lewis only fought four opponents who weighed less than 220 pounds during the last 10 years of his career, not to mention many of those fighters during that period could really punch. Lewis is one of five former lineal champs to lose the title and then regain it, joining Floyd Patterson, Muhammad Ali, George Foreman and Evander Holyfield. And to top it off, only Louis, Ali and Holmes have won more heavyweight title bouts than did Lennox Lewis.

Lewis retired from boxing as champion and beat the fighter (Vitali Klitschko) who was perceived to be his biggest challenge and successor in his last fight. Only four greats in boxing history, Gene Tunney, Rocky Marciano, Carlos Monzon and Lennox Lewis retired as champion and never came back to suffer a humiliating defeat to a fighter they would've taken apart during their prime. And Lewis didn't just beat Klitschko, he did it when he was the least prepared and heaviest for any other fight in his career.

The reality is Lewis retired mentally as a fighter after he stopped Mike Tyson a year before he fought Klitschko. At the time of their fight Klitschko was young and hungry and fighting to make his mark, and Lewis viewed Vitali as a cumbersome robot who he couldn't miss with his eyes closed. Obviously, Lewis was wrong and Klitschko's awkward style troubled him, at least in the early going of the fight. However, Lewis won it fair and square. The bottom line is Lennox threw a punch with the intention of doing damage and it opened a cut over Vitali's left eye. They

continued to fight and the cut got worse and led to the fight being stopped. Once the fight was halted the scorecards meant nothing in that it was a scheduled 12 round fight, not a six. Lewis gets full credit for the win and retired at the perfect time, being that he left boxing with his health, wealth and respect.

Calling Lewis a Hall-Of-Famer is a no brainer. Some may dispute his worthiness as an all-time great, I'm just not one of them. As it's been the case with Larry Holmes in recent years, Lewis will gain supporters the more his body of work and what he brought to the ring as a fighter is examined.

As of this writing I can't think of 10 former all-time great heavyweight champs who put together a better resume and who were as formidable inside the ring as a fighter as Lennox Lewis was at his peak. Along with that, I can't think of 10 past former greats who I'd say would be a definite favorite beyond a doubt to beat Lewis on his best night.

Lennox Lewis the Hall-Of-Famer, yes. Lennox Lewis an all-time great heavyweight champion, same answer!

Last week my colleague and friend, Bernard Fernandez, did a one on one interview with Lennox Lewis. Look for Bernie's interview to be posted shortly. I'm sure the interview will shed new light on Lennox and his feelings on being inducted into the IBHOF. Feel free to email me at GlovedFist@Gmail.com *with feedback or tips.*