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With Manny Pacquiao's victory over Miguel Cotto a couple weeks ago, he's now captured a piece of a world title ranging from 112 pounds up to 145. That encompasses seven titles over 33 pounds. And as much as it's obvious that he would've defeated Cotto at 147, the fact is he beat him at 145.

Pacquiao's sensational victory to capture the WBO welterweight title has sparked debate regarding what fighters have made the most impressive jump in weight among boxers who have competed in the modern era. Pacquiao has been given his just due in this space since beating Cotto. However, the jump from 106 to let's say 147 since Pacquiao will most likely fight against a welterweight not constrained to come in at 145 in the future - is not the most impressive feat in boxing when it comes to fighters moving up in weight in the eyes of this observer.

That distinction belongs to former light heavyweight/heavyweight champ and all-time great Michael Spinks.

Before making the case for Spinks, the argument that suggests he only jumped two weight divisions and is automatically rejected because Pacquiao won seven titles, De La Hoya won six, Sugar Ray Leonard and Floyd Mayweather won five is ridiculous. Everyone who follows boxing knows how there's a weight class every 5/7 pounds from straw-weight up to junior middleweight. Roberto Duran and Shane Mosley skipped junior welterweight and jumped from lightweight to welterweight. So it can be argued that Mosley could've won four titles and Duran five. And Duran beat an all-time great and the best welterweight on the planet to capture the welterweight title.

Moving up in weight is a barometer of greatness, but acquiring titles every five or so pounds is semantics in some ways and isn't the be-all end-all. And that's not taking anything from Pacquiao, Duran, Leonard, Mosley and Mayweather. But Spinks has some arguments that support his claim that most overlook because he wasn't flashy or as exciting as Leonard and Pacquiao. Although he was every bit as complete and versatile of a fighter as the afore mentioned.

The case for Michael Spinks begins with him weighing 165 pounds for his pro-debut on 4/16/77, and never weighing over 170 until 12/15/78. After winning the light heavyweight title at 173 3/4, Spinks made 10 successful defenses and unified it along the way. From 1977 through 1985 Spinks never faced an opponent who weighed more than 175 pounds. During his eight year tenure campaigning at 175, Larry Holmes was the WBC and IBF heavyweight champ and considered the best heavyweight in the world for the last seven of those years.

Heading into the fall of 1985 Larry Holmes made 20 consecutive defenses of the heavyweight title, trailing only Joe Louis's 25. At that time Holmes and Spinks were short on name challengers and decided they'd attempt to make boxing history using each other as the foil.

Holmes at 48-0 was looking to break Rocky Marciano's record of 49-0 - and Spinks would attempt to become the first reigning light heavyweight champ in history to dethrone the reigning heavyweight champ.

Prior to the fight there was no discussion regarding Holmes' weight even though he would come in 46 pounds heavier than any opponent Spinks ever faced. Spinks was about winning the title without any catch or contractual clause to tilt the odds in his favor. And it can't be that he couldn't have insisted on Holmes coming in less than he wanted to because they were fighting as heavyweights. As long as Holmes was 200 pounds or over, he was a heavyweight. Had Spinks pressed it he could've pressured Holmes to come in at 209 (the weight he was for his title winning bout versus Ken Norton) for the fight if he wanted to. Remember, it's boxing and anything can be put into a contract to make a fight.

Holmes was allowed to weigh as much as he wanted, use the same gloves he had in every one of his previous title defenses along with whatever else applied when he defended the title in the past.

On fight night Spinks was 29 and weighed in at 199 3/4, Holmes was 35 and weighed in at 221 1/2. Holmes was 21 3/4 pounds heavier than Spinks and 46 1/2 pounds heavier than any other fighter Spinks had been in the ring with - and 56 pounds heavier than Spinks was when he turned pro. Professional heavyweights hit harder and can do more serious damage than fighters in the lower divisions can. That's not even a debate. So without a single tune-up fight at cruiserweight or forcing Holmes to weigh less than he was used to fighting at, Michael Spinks outboxed an all-time great heavyweight champ when he was undefeated and became the first light heavyweight champ to capture the heavyweight title. Granted, it wasn't Holmes at his peak, but Holmes was a better heavyweight in 1985 than Miguel Cotto was a welterweight in 2009.

Spinks was dwarfed by Holmes much more than Pacquiao was by Cotto, Leonard by Hagler and Duran was by Davey Moore and Iran Barkey. Holmes was also undefeated and hadn't endured any significant punishment during his career and title reign, and he was truly an all-time great heavyweight.

In no way is this meant to be dismissive of the great accomplishments that Leonard, Duran, Hearns, Pacquiao and Mayweather achieved. They're all fascinating feats and are worthy of monumental praise. However, Spinks defeating an all-time great like Holmes who weighed 221 3/4 pounds nine years after he turned pro weighing 165 is more off the chart than Pacquiao, De La Hoya, Leonard and Duran winning multiple division titles.

Michael Spinks made boxing histories' most impressive leap in weight more so than any other fighter who's ever moved up in weight in this writer's opinion. The only thing my case lacks is the sizzle of calling him a four/five/six or seven division champ. He just did it in one leap and beat an all-time great to do it when he was undefeated who also went on to beat top ten contenders for over a decade after he lost to Spinks.

Michael Spinks made history and prevented it on the same night. His career accomplishments and ability as a fighter are often overlooked by too many fighters, writers, historians and fans.

Michael Spinks made perhaps boxings' most impressive move up in weight in boxing history, he just didn't compile a title for every 5/7 pounds he went up.

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